

PRESIDENT  
HARRY W. BAILEY  
7286 - 29TH AVE. N. E.  
SEATTLE 15, WASH.

*Eng. Div.*  
SECRETARY  
FRANCIS C. WOOD, JR.  
412 - 36TH AVE.  
SEATTLE 22, WASH.

WASHINGTON FLY FISHING CLUB  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

September 5, 1963

District Engineer, Seattle District  
Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army  
1519 Alaskan Way South  
Seattle 4, Washington

Dear Sir:

The members of the Washington Fly Fishing Club are deeply concerned by your recently proposed project to dredge a Skagit River barge channel from Mt. Vernon to Concrete. Although such a channel will have many ramifications, the club members are particularly concerned about protection of the famous Skagit steelhead fishing.

The major threat to the steelhead run would be the loss of spawning beds. An estimated 30% of the steelhead in the Skagit spawn below Concrete. Although a single dredging might disturb only a portion of these beds, continued maintenance of the channel would probably progressively alter the gravel beds, severely interfering with spawning in the lower river.

A second concern is the loss of fishing areas. Steelhead are generally caught in holes and "lies" which would be difficult to retain in the presence of a barge channel. We are afraid that many of these areas would be lost, in turn increasing the fishing pressure above Concrete.

Thirdly, we feel that, although it is easy to estimate in dollars and cents the value of the barge channel to the logging and concrete interests, the potential financial loss to commercial and sport fishing interests is very difficult to assess. Your office has estimated that \$600,000 annually will be saved by shipping logs and concrete by river. However, the Skagit steelhead fishery alone is worth an estimated \$300,000 annually. It is not clear whether the costs to the government of maintaining the channel have been deducted from the savings to industries.

Aside from our own interest in the steelhead problem, we realize there are also possible extensive

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losses to the salmon interests, both sport and commercial fishing. Because changes in the Skagit spawning would affect fishing from Oregon to Alaska, the economic repercussions to this sphere would be nearly impossible to estimate.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that the members of the Washington Fly Fishing Club are concerned that a Skagit River barge channel will endanger important spawning beds for steelhead as well as salmon. The widespread economic losses and decreased sportfishing opportunities may well exceed any conceivable gain for the logging and concrete interests.

Cordially yours,

*Francis C. Wood, Jr.*

Francis C. Wood, Jr., M.D., Secretary  
Washington Fly Fishing Club

cc: Division Engineer, North Pacific Division  
Chief of the Corps of Engineers  
Senator Warren G. Magnuson  
Senator Henry M. Jackson  
Representative Thomas M. Pelly  
Representative Jack Westland  
Representative K. William Stinson

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