

ACTION COPY

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

L. COL. HEBBOL
COL. HEWITT

STATE OF
WASHINGTON

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
GOVERNOR

Arthur B. Langlie



DEPARTMENT OF
FISHERIES

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
DIRECTOR

C. L. Anderson

1308 SMITH TOWER
SEATTLE 4, WASHINGTON
ELLIOTT 3484

March 4, 1949

ENGR. DIR.
88
MB
Hewitt
By Nelson
Brown
M P

Colonel L. H. Hewitt, District Engineer
Seattle District
Corps of Engineers
4735 East Marginal Way
Seattle, Washington

Dear Colonel Hewitt:

Reference is made to your letter, file number 821.207, of January 25th regarding four proposed dams on the Skagit River. The Department of Fisheries, after consideration, hereby submits a qualitative statement regarding the effects on fish life.

A - Proposed Faber dam site: The Department of Fisheries could not approve this project in view of the fact that it would destroy the greater part of the salmon runs in the Skagit River and inundate the Skagit River State Salmon Hatchery at Marblecunt which has a current value of one-half million dollars. This dam would be the most destructive to fish life of all four listed in your letter.

B - Proposed Lower Sauk dam site: The damaging effects of this structure would be very serious since the Sauk and Suiattle watersheds are utilized by great numbers of the most highly prized species of anadromous fish in the Skagit watershed. The Department of Fisheries could not approve this project.

C - Proposed Cascade dam site: Although this structure would undoubtedly cause some damage to fish life the exact extent of the damages are not known at the present time. This Department will install a counting rack in the Cascade River during the coming season in order that exact information regarding the salmon runs in this tributary will be available when economic justification is under consideration.

file
my

re 15

58-4146-FILE 821.207 (32A) (10/10/50)

March 4, 1949

 D - Proposed Upper Baker dam site: This project would undoubtedly cause extensive fisheries losses since it would flood out several miles of valuable Baker River spawning area and destroy the natural beauty of Baker Lake which is now one of the outstanding natural beauty spots in the State of Washington. There are sizeable runs of silver salmon and sockeye in the Baker River, and with probable alterations in the Baker dam fish hauling devices, increased runs may be expected in the future.

The Skagit River is second only to the Columbia River in production of salmon. It is the greatest salmon producing stream flowing into Puget Sound basin within the boundaries of this State. The only major tributary of the Skagit that lies below the proposed Faber Dam site is the Baker River. The productivity of this stream has already been somewhat reduced by the construction of a 265 foot dam. The greatest part of the spawning in the Skagit watershed takes place above the proposed Faber Dam site. A large part of the spring and fall chinook salmon and steelhead runs of the Skagit River are in the Sauk River basin. A dam at either one of these sites would destroy the Skagit River as an important producer of anadromous fishes.

We would like to point out the fact that Bonneville dam, with a head of approximately sixty-five feet is the highest dam that has ever been successfully laddered. It is definitely known that considerable loss of fish takes place at this structure in spite of the fish protective devices. No means has ever been devised that will adequately handle the runs of migratory fish at high dams. The salmon hatchery is valuable as a form of insurance or a supplement to a natural stream, but is never ample as a total replacement.

This Department would appreciate the opportunity of submitting further information regarding the probable losses that would be incurred on the Cascade River in the event that this site is deemed most advisable. We appreciate the manner in which the Corps of Engineers has approached the fisheries agencies on this matter by contacting us before your planning program gets underway.

We hereby wish to offer the services of our technical staff in extending cooperation to the Engineers in the future planning of the Skagit River flood control. We would like to be kept informed of the progress of your studies in order that our work relative to the problem may be correlated with yours.

 We hope that the Avon cut-off and the Joe Leary cut-off will be given serious consideration by your staff, and that very careful studies of possible channel improvements in the lower Skagit River will be made. The Department of Fisheries wishes to see adequate flood control measures that will not destroy the valuable fisheries resources undertaken as soon as possible.

Very truly yours,



C. L. Anderson, Director
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES