



On Tuesday, November 29th Trout Unlimited needs your help!

Please try to attend the Columbia River Scoping meeting in Boise.

What: Public Scoping Columbia River Operations EIS – an environmental review of the 14 federally owned dams in the Columbia Basin – Including Libby, Albeni Falls, Dworshak, Chief Joseph, Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental, Ice Harbor, McNary, John Day, The Dalles, Bonneville, Hungry Horse and Grand Coulee.

When: Tuesday, November 29, 2016, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m

Where: The Grove Hotel, 245 S. Capitol Blvd., Boise, Idaho.

This is an informational Scoping Meeting. You can make formal comments at this time. Computer terminals and a stenographer will be available at the meeting.

You can also prepare and submit your comments by Jan. 17, 2017.

Via email to:

comment@crso.info

Or

Via mail to:

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Northwestern Division Attn: CRSO EIS
P.O. Box 2870
Portland, OR 97208-28**

Additionally, there will be a webinar on **Tuesday, December 13, 2016, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., PST**. For those that cannot participate in person, an online webinar will be provided to interested parties. The webinar will cover the material discussed in the in-person public scoping meetings. Detailed instructions on how to participate in the webinar may be found on the project website at www.crso.info.

Columbia/Snake River Dams NEPA Talking Points

General Comments re NEPA Process

1. This NEPA process provides an opportunity to take a fresh look at salmon and steelhead management in the Columbia Basin. It creates a set of actions that have potential to both provide healthy, fishable populations of wild salmon and steelhead and improve local economies. TU stands ready to work with all stakeholders to identify those actions.
2. This is an opportunity for all interests in the basin to shape our future. This is far better than having our future decided by the courts because we could not muster the will to act.
3. The analysis must be objective, transparent and based on the best available science and economic information.
4. The alternatives analysis must be done using a process that instills public confidence in the outcome. There should be opportunity for public engagement in the analysis itself, not just the opportunity to comment on a draft Environmental Impact Statement.

General Comment Regarding Dam Operations

1. The analysis should cover alternative dam operations, including spilling water, using water from upper basin projects to augment flows, fish passage, seasonal reservoir drawdowns and potential breaching.

Snake River-specific Comments

1. The Snake River basin holds approximately 70% of wild salmon and steelhead recovery potential in the entire Columbia Basin due to the high habitat quality, but fish survival as they migrate past the dams and reservoirs on the lower Snake and lower Columbia rivers must improve dramatically for recovery to happen.
2. Removing the lower Snake dams is the only action identified to date with the potential to yield the survival improvements necessary to recover wild Snake River salmon and steelhead. The existing problems with the lower Snake dams are only going to get worse as the climate warms. Accordingly, removal of these dams should be analyzed in the NEPA alternatives.
3. The analysis of lower Snake River dam removal should include related actions that will replace the benefits provided by the dams, such as improvements in rail transportation, new irrigation systems for irrigators who withdraw water from the lower Snake, and investments in renewable energy, conservation and electric grid improvements.
4. The potential economic benefits of restoring a free-flowing lower Snake River should also be analyzed, such as elimination of flow augmentation from the upper Snake River, reduced dredging costs, restored fisheries, and new recreational opportunities.