



Much of Idaho's back country is about the same as it was before the westward movement of civilization. Ship Island Lake in the Bighorn Crags is an excellent example of good fishing, abundant water and scenic grandeur.

Our Water Resource

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Idaho is one of the fortunate states where the pursuit of fish and game is generally coupled with success. One of the reasons for this is that much of Idaho's area is about the same as it was before the westward movement of civilization. We still have millions of acres of mountain wilderness and hundreds of miles of clear, cool, sparkling streams.

We have valuable runs of anadromous fishes—the steelhead and salmon—and slightly over two thousand mountain lakes and reservoirs, which support sport fishing for many other species.

Idaho is indeed fortunate, first in having this wonderful heritage of natural resources which renew themselves annually without too much effort on our part; and second, by having the land and the vitally important water necessary for our existence and the maintenance of our wildlife.

Wildlife Policy of the State of Idaho

Section 36-103 of the Idaho Code sets forth the wildlife policy of the State of Idaho: "All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish within the State of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the State of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed."

The authority and duty and the power consistent with the policy and with the constitution and laws of the state to administer the wildlife policy is vested in the Idaho Fish and Game Commission.

Idaho statutes recognize the continuous changes that are taking place

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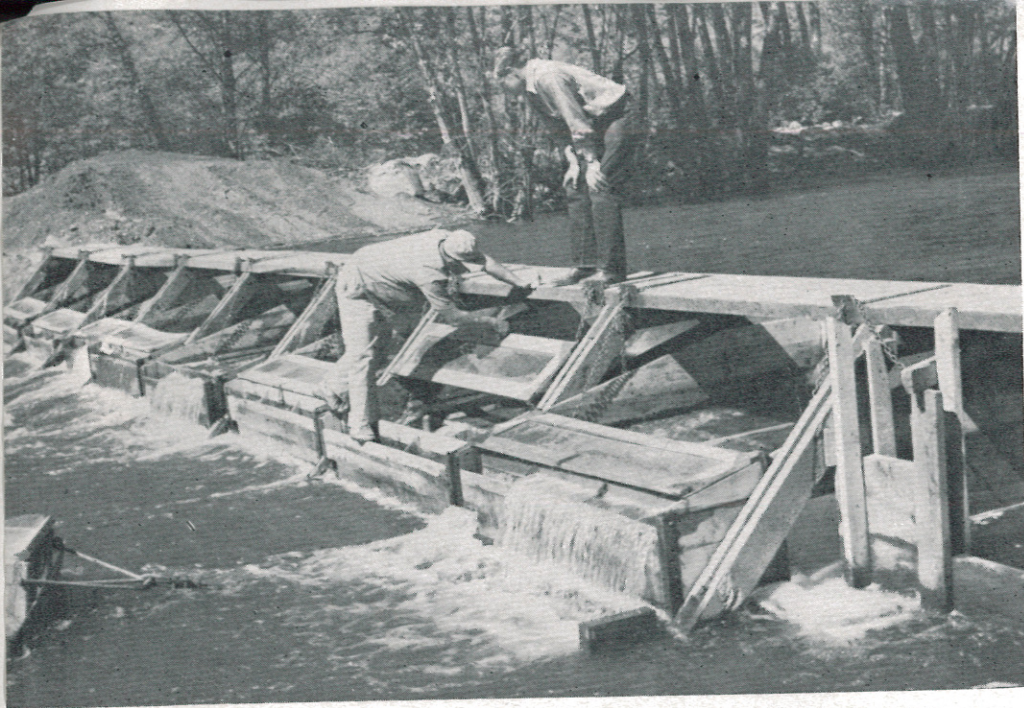
—The Editor

and the need for flexibility in the administration of the wildlife policy. To this end the need for ascertainment of facts from time to time is of paramount importance if the fish and wildlife resources are to be perpetuated.

Value of Adequate, Clean Water

The importance of adequate supplies of clean water for the maintenance of fish and wildlife is well recognized. It isn't enough to have water in order to live, however. The water must be of such quality that the living organisms may carry on their life functions, including that of reproduction, in a natural manner.

Trout may be able to live for years in silt-laden waters but their spawning can be a complete failure because of silt deposition on the eggs. Similarly, waterfowl may live on or near waters polluted with heavy metal salts but their reproductive process can be impaired completely.



Fish and Game Department biologists checking a weir used in Wildhorse River to count young salmon and steelhead in their downstream migration. More studies are needed to obtain important information on the effects of dam construction.

Water quality helps determine food quantity and quality and thereby is of primary importance in producing optimum living conditions for our fish and game resources.

Values of Hunting and Fishing

The full value of recreational pursuit of fish and game cannot be measured. From the monetary standpoint, however, it is worth over a billion dollars a year in the United States in fishing and hunting expenditures.

In Idaho in 1953, a direct expenditure of over 43 million dollars was made for fishing and hunting. With today's increased costs and increased numbers of sportsmen, it is estimated that this value exceeds 50 million dollars annually. Hunting and fishing is reported to be Idaho's third largest industry today, exceeded only by agriculture and the lumbering industry.

A good example of the value of a small segment of the fish and wildlife resources of Idaho is the steelhead trout fishery of the Clearwater River. In fish year 1957-8, it is estimated that the value of this run of fish exceeded \$1,000,000 when the downriver sport and commercial values are included.

In Idaho, angling expenditures for this one year by anglers seeking these fish exceeded three-quarters of a million dollars! These self-renewable resources are well worth "preserving, protecting, and perpetuating."

The Columbia River Fishery Development Program

In 1938 the Congress authorized certain biological and engineering in-

vestigations of problems affecting the fishery resources of the Columbia River which were undergoing a steady decline. In 1949 the Columbia River Fishery Development Program became a reality. This action program, confined then to the Columbia River and its tributaries below McNary Dam, was designed to halt the decline of the salmon and steelhead resources of this great river system.

In 1956 Idaho became an active participant in this fishery development program. We are grateful to the U. S. Senate for recognition of the value of the Idaho stocks of salmon and steelhead and for the inclusion of Idaho in this development program.

Since the inception of the Columbia Basin program about 15 million dollars have been spent in constructing hatcheries, installing fish ladders and fish screens, removing log jams and in other activities. The nature and extent of this program indicates the value which is placed on this important segment of our fish and wildlife resources.

Conflicts in Water Use

On numerous occasions when the Idaho Department of Fish and Game has objected to certain features of water use projects, or has recommended methods of mitigation or replacement of losses to fish and wildlife resources caused by certain projects, they have been condemned as obstructionists.

In attempting to carry out statutory obligations, the Department has never

opposed the orderly development of water use projects in the Columbia Basin. It will continue, to the best of its ability, to make recommendations of benefit in the public interest and thereby carry out their legally recognized duties and powers.

At today's accelerated rate of progress, the availability of water for use by all interested groups is becoming critical and conflicts in water use projects with the fish and wildlife resources are many and complex. A partial listing of these conflicting interests which affect our fish and wildlife resources are:

1) Over-Appropriation of Stream Flows.

The Idaho constitution provides "the right to divert and appropriate the unappropriated waters of any natural stream to beneficial uses, shall never be denied . . ." (limitation and regulation for power purposes excepted). In some Idaho rivers this has permitted the appropriation of all stream flows without regard to the needs of fish and wildlife and pollution abatement as well as other beneficial uses downstream.

With this constitutional provision, (and it seems to be quite common in the western states), there can be no multiple use, comprehensive development of water resources which would give consideration to **all beneficial uses**. The more recent actions of legislative bodies indicate it was not the intent of the framers of the constitution to have streams dried up by over-appropriation.

We need not go far from Boise to demonstrate the principle of over-appropriation. During the winter months, the Boise River, passing through our city limits, is dry or so reduced in flow that it becomes filled with sludge from industrial plants and is lacking in flow sufficient to dilute the effluent from sewage treatment plants. As a result, fish life is lost. Strangely enough, this has occurred at much more frequent intervals since the construction of a federal flood control dam, Lucky Peak, and for which recommendations were made by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and this State for releases of water adequate to prevent these losses.

2) Dam Construction.

The feverish haste with which dams are being proposed, authorized, planned and constructed points to the need for planned, orderly, multiple use water resource development. The construction of a dam may have many

and serious effects upon the fish and wildlife resource. The dam causes a migration block to fish and the reservoir to big and small game. Flooding in the reservoir area causes loss of spawning area and stream habitat for fish, nesting and/or rearing habitat for game birds and fur, and browse and critical winter range areas for big game. An area of decreased food productivity in the water fluctuation zone is created and abnormally increased populations of undesirable fish species are a product of the new impoundment.

Any one of these can affect an important segment of our fish and wildlife resources in a varying degree up to its complete destruction. Loss of several segments of the same resource becomes serious. It is estimated, for example, that over 40 percent of the original salmon and steelhead habitat of Idaho has been lost because of the construction of five dams, one each on the Boise, Payette, Snake, Owyhee, and Clearwater Rivers. On the other hand, one high main-stem dam could destroy all of the salmon and steelhead runs in Idaho.

Safe downstream passage of fish over high dams is still not a reality even though facilities are operating at three high dams in the Pacific Northwest. The best of present-day knowledge which went into the planning of these facilities needs to be augmented with much more intensive investigation to evaluate these facilities and determine why they are not operating adequately for protection of the downstream migrations of salmon and steelhead. Millions have been spent to build these facilities but money and manpower to evaluate them are unavailable.

Methods for replacement of vital big game winter ranges which would be inundated by pools of several dams proposed in the revised "308 report" of the Corps of Engineers need considerable study. Bruce Eddy is an example of a proposed project which is not authorized but for which about \$1,500,000 have been made available for feasibility studies.

Engineering feasibility studies are progressing rapidly but studies to determine what might be done with the fish and wildlife resources which would be seriously affected by this project are non-existent.

3) Pollution.

The problems associated with water pollution and pollution abatement need to be considered in multiple use water developments. Water pollution



Marsh Creek on the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the Salmon River is an important salmon spawning stream. The protection and conservation of waters such as this are vital to the future of our anadromous fishes.

affects fish and wildlife which need clean water to live at the optimum level. It appears that both State and Federal regulations need strengthening.

Resolution of Conflicts

In order to prevent or alleviate conflicts in multiple use, comprehensive development of water resources, there must first be a recognition of the needs and values of the respective water uses. All too often, developers of power, reclamation, flood control, industrial, and—yes—even fish and game projects fail to recognize and appreciate each other's problems.

There is particularly a lack of recognition of values which are of general public interest such as fish and wildlife. All too often the almighty dollar sign transcends the consideration of the public good.

Recognition of the law is not enough in consideration of the beneficial uses of water, there must also be a recognition of **responsibility to other uses**, including fish and wildlife. Public Law 85-624 is a giant stride forward in this recognition at the federal level. This is undoubtedly the most important conservation legislation in the past twenty to thirty years and opens up a vast new area of cooperation of federal construction and regulatory agencies with fish and wildlife conservation agencies.

This act, in stating ". . . **wildlife conservation shall receive equal consideration and be coordinated with other features of water resource development programs . . .**" certainly

points to the need for orderly development of water use projects.

That is exactly what this Department, in recognition of the need for water development, is requesting—an orderly development. That is why we favor some projects over others—because their effects upon this wonderful fish and wildlife heritage are less damaging than other projects with comparable flood control, irrigation, or power benefits. In taking this position, we believe we are discharging our obligations to the present and future generations of citizens of Idaho.

Summary

In summary we believe that for proper resolution of water use conflict we must first have full recognition of all the values accruing to the beneficial use of water, including the fish and wildlife use.

Specifically, we would recommend first the orderly development of water use projects in the Columbia Basin, and second that all provisions be made which are necessary for the maintenance, protection and perpetuation of our fish and wildlife resources; that when these resources cannot be maintained proper measures be taken for their replacement and mitigation.

We fundamentally believe that full recognition must be given to the establishment of the fact that the use of water for fish and wildlife purposes is a beneficial use along with the other vital uses of our valuable water resource.

