

# DAM: Ag, tourism need waters of Wallowa Lake

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This release of water during the mid-summer months will add to in-stream flows which will benefit fish migration into Wallowa County. The cold waters from Wallowa Lake will especially benefit the salmon as they migrate to the spawning streams in the county. Farmer/irrigators in the Umatilla area and others, short of water, will benefit if they lease the water. Long term benefits exist during the summer months if this water is added to the Columbia River.

8. The Wallowa Lake Dam, along with hundreds of other dams in the United States, was designated a "high hazard dam" in 1979 by the Army Corps of Engineers and Oregon Water Resources Department during their inspections of all dams.

This designation was placed on all dams (new or old) that stored 10 feet or more of water and/or 3000 gallons or more of water. Senate Bill 788 in 2009 further explained, if dams of this magnitude were to burst, it would most likely result in property damage and loss of life.

9. The Wallowa Lake Dam is an economic engine for Wallowa County.

Agriculture as we know it today in Wallowa County would be drastically different were it not for the Wallowa Lake Dam and the stored water behind it. Stored water from the spring runoff extends the growing season into late summer and early fall. Everyone connected to agriculture would be impacted. Think California drought. Tourism, the second largest revenue producer in Wallowa County, would be negatively impacted in late July, August, and September. The state park at the head of Wallowa Lake would most likely experience fewer visits in late summer. Lost revenue from these two major industries means lost revenue for all business owners in the county.

Drinking water for the city of Joseph would be impacted in late summer.

Sports fishermen would have a difficult time putting their boats in the lake in late summer and fall.

10. Who is objecting? The Associated Ditch Company Inc. (ADC) has made application to Oregon Water Resources Department for a permit for the above mentioned 4200 ac/ft of water. The permit has been ob-

## Economic impact figures updated

A paper titled "The Value of Irrigation Water in the Wallowa Valley, Northeast Oregon," written in 2005 by John Williams, Associate Professor, Dept. Rangeland Resource, Oregon State University, and Fred Obermiller, OSU Extension Specialist, Rural Natural Resources Policy, has been updated by John Williams and Bruce Sorte, Oregon State University Extension Community Economist. The summary is below. For a complete copy of the document and the associated updated paper titled "Input/Output Wallowa Lake Dam Scenario," visit the website for the OSU Extension office in Wallowa County: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/wallowa/local-publications/>.

Now we are in a position to project the total value of water storage behind the Wallowa Lake Dam to the Wallowa County economy. That value is \$36,079,000 or \$457 per acre-foot per year, not counting any possible additional decreases in value-added due to declines in property values and tax revenues. This value is direct

effect, does not include the indirect and induced value in the community.

As long as the Wallowa Lake Dam is maintained in good repair over the next century, it will continue to generate these annual agricultural and recreation benefits. Conversely, if the dam were to be removed or breached, these local values would be foregone. Under a removal or a breaching scenario, using a three-percent interest rate the present value of the stored Wallowa Lake waters is \$1.2 billion; at four percent \$919 million, before adjusting for dam and irrigation system maintenance costs.

This is assuming an increase in the value of water over that timeframe.

Given our assumptions and our data base, we therefore project the current present value of the Wallowa Lake water to Wallowa County and its residents to be between \$11,647 and \$14,873 per acre-foot. This is the range of values against which the net present benefits, if any, to Wallowa Lake Dam removal or breaching must measure up.

ected to by a small special interest group in Wallowa County called "Wallowa's Future Foundation," "President Robert Reading and founder John Lenahan." Others objecting are "Marc Stauffer, Chad Nash, Garrett Lowe, and Robert Hipple." The objections range from, water availability, other's water rights, release monitoring, affects of downstream bionomics, to effects on the downstream floodplain. None of which are valid reasons for trying to derail the permit.

Oregon Water Resources Department's response to written comments: "The Department carefully considered the comments, and no public-interest issues under the aegis of Oregon water law were identified."

Who supports the rehabilitation of the Wallowa Lake Dam: The Associated Ditch Companies Inc. (ADC); City

of Joseph; Minam Lake Reservoir Association; Northwest Electric Power & Conservation Planning Council; David Nelson, past Senate Majority Leader; Northeast Oregon Economic Development District; Nez Perce Tribal Fisheries; most residents of Wallowa County; Wallowa County Commissioners, Mike Hayward & Susan Roberts.

Tom Butterfield is president of the ADC Board of Directors, and David Hockett is ADC's project manager.

## OBITUARIES

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She is survived by her children, Peggy Adams, Pasco, Wash., Gail Tally, Enterprise, Ore., Dennis Tally, Magee, Miss., Deanna and husband Art Veyna, Issaquah, Wash., her brothers Gerald Gray, Clark Gray, sister Marilyn McIntyre, grandchildren Jennifer (Higgins) Mendenhall, Lezlie (Higgins) Kehr, and McKenzie Tally, and three great-grandchildren, Cora, Graden and Nash Kehr. She was preceded in death by her husband, Arlen, grandson, Trevor (T.J.) Tally; siblings, Lenis Bales, Leona Scott, Lela Fordice, Lillian Newton and John Gray.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Alzheimer's Association in care of Loveland Funeral Chapel, 1508 4th Street, La Grande, OR 97850.

Online condolences to the family may be made at [www.lovelandfuneralchapel.com](http://www.lovelandfuneralchapel.com).

# COUNTY: Columnist celebrates 44 years here

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Grace Bartlett had been a ski club member before the rope tow, when they found a Sunday hill and skied it. When we opened the bookstore in 1976, Grace brought us books of stories she'd rounded up about local people and places. And Alvin Josephy, who'd made his own journey from the East to Nez Perce country, came in each spring to scour the shelves for local books. His gift was weaving local stories into history; he'd started with the Nez Perce, and become a national historian of and advocate for Indians.

In 1988, Alvin and Grace and writers I'd met helped start Fishtrap, and for over 20 years we've heard stories of the West, and shared the stories we've found and made here

with the world.

And this weekend I'll go to the powwow in Wallowa and be part of the Nez Perce homecoming. We'll eat salmon, and

dream a new old story with Indian friends, that sockeye will run again in Wallowa Lake.

Columnist Rich Wand-schneider lives in Joseph.

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**Funds Raised for the Fireworks: \$11,492 (2015 Goal was \$11,000)**

*Without the volunteer ground work there would be no fireworks:*

**WC Sheriff Department**  
Chief Deputy Fred Steen (Marine Program Coordinator)  
Marine Deputy Lawrence McBurney and all other who helped

**Lending of Boat for Firework's Crew: Steve Krieger**

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**Grand Prize Winner, Jet Boat Trip on the Snake River: Carolyn Gilbert**