



Setting a new highwater mark for idiocy in journalism, the state's largest daily offered recent editorial thoughts on the effects of dams on Columbia Basin salmon runs. The piece, entitled 'Let Science Save Salmon' (it's done such a great job so far), cautioned against listening to those (including the Governor of Idaho) who advocate increasing river flow by drawing down reservoirs.

"Drawing down the reservoirs would speed the flow of water in the Snake River, supposedly aiding young salmon on their long and perilous swim to the ocean."

Supposedly?

"The theory driving the drawdown strategy is that if you can accelerate the velocity of the water, then the fish are less exposed to predators and other problems."

Theory?

"Another theory holds that the extra water is needed to get these ancient species from their streams of origin to the ocean in a certain period of time."

Theory?

"Some biologists believe that if that migration is extended too much, not only will the juveniles be exposed to predators and disease-causing warmer water, but they also may have trouble making the biological adjustment of going from fresh to salt."

Believe?

"Biologists have been consulted far and wide on the issue, but The Oregonian still cannot get a definitive answer that would support Idaho's aggressive drawdown strategy as the solution the region ought to pursue."

Especially since the salmon are thriving

"Indeed, there is no convincing evidence to show that drawdowns would do more good than harm. We just don't know."

Forget that salmon are indissolubly linked to the river system. Forget that their evolution did not include genetic instructions on how to leap ten story concrete walls. Or evade turbines. Or reason with nitwit humans who happen to own printing presses and do lunch with utility

executives. The editorial finally gets to the meat

"The Army Corps of Engineers this summer issued a report to the Northwest Power Planning Council (the folks who'd love to sell hydro-electric power to Southern California), estimating cost of from \$1.3 billion to \$4.9 billion to modify the dams so that reservoirs could be lowered each spring to aid salmon migration."

This is the same Army Corps of Engineers who promised new homes for Indians drowned out by construction of Bonneville Dam fifty years ago. Maybe they deal straighter now.

"Before the region sets course on permanent modification of dams--a construction process that would take 14 to 17 years and result in annual electricity rate increases of 5 percent to 10 percent after construction--the drawdown theory should at least be tested to see if it works."

That should take a decade or so.

"Whether drawdowns should be part of the region's salmon recover plan remains debatable."

To who? Certainly not the salmon.

"However, looking at the science, which provides mere snapshots of salmon migration behavior, it appears that Idaho exaggerates the value of drawdowns, especially compared to the cost of doing them."

Business is business.

Tick, tick, tick.



Manny got the word from a union memo. A new labor contract allowed his employer, HumungaMegaResorts, to begin random urine testing for, among other things, certain (ahem) herbal substances. Horror stories abounded. They could detect any indulgence for up to thirty days after! A single poppy seed muffin could bust you for opium! EEEK!

This is not to imply that Manny is a heavy duty doper, far from it. However, he does play in a band called Unclean Acts on weekends.

He imagined the band standing out back in the alley during a break. The pipe is making its rounds. It comes to him. "No thanks guys, none for me." He imagines the shocked pause, the sudden, premature expulsions of precious fumes.

What's this? They'd be thinking, Manny, a known pipe sucker, refusing a toke? Small suspicions would emerge. They remembered people who, busted, agreed to inform on friends to save their rumps from jail. Relations would grow cold, he might be dropped from the band. They'd hire that foxy chick bass player from up in the hills. There'd be a record contract. Manny would still be counting beans for HMR while his erstwhile friends were on world tour...trashing hotel suites...there would be groupies...(sob). Maybe they'd autograph an album for him...if he bought one.

Something had to be done.

Then Manny had a thought. Sweet One, his girlfriend, never, never put illicit substances into the temple that was her body. Hm...hm...

It took some convincing but a few days later Manny began carrying to work a small ziploc bag (Dave Barry is not making this up) containing a perfectly pristine sample.

He was called on to donate in the first round of testing. Time passed. The personnel manager wanted to see him. There was a sealed note attached to his clean bill of...of...(?) Manny opened and read:

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_;

Congratulations on your negative drug test. Our system here at Incrediprofit Labs automatically tests all samples for the full spectra of conditions that may be revealed in urinalysis. Thus, may I suggest you see your personal physician and consider calling a press conference? You appear to be pregnant.

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