

# Environmental groups want work halted on Snake River dams

By KEITH RIDLER  
Associated Press

BOISE — Environmental groups are asking a federal court to halt 11 infrastructure projects on four lower Snake River dams in Washington state that could ultimately be removed if a pending review determines the dams need to come out to help salmon.

The 45-page notice filed late Monday in Portland, Oregon, estimates the cost of the projects at \$110 million.

The National Wildlife Federation and the other groups in a separate, 29-page filing also late Monday asked that the federal government be ordered to spill more water in the spring over the four Snake River dams and four more on the Columbia River to help migrating salmon.

A federal judge ruled in May that the U.S. government hasn't done enough to improve Northwest salmon runs and ordered an environmental impact statement that's due out in 2021, urging officials to consider removing the dams.

The environmental groups contend that infrastructure improvements shouldn't be allowed at the dams during the review.

"These kinds of investments should be suspended to ensure a level playing field for all of the alternatives agencies must consider, including the alternative of lower Snake River dam removal," Kevin Lewis of Idaho Rivers United said in a statement.

The review process is being conducted under the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, an



Bob Brawday/The Tri-City Herald via AP. File

In this 2013 aerial file photo, the Ice Harbor Dam on the Snake River is seen near Pasco, Wash. Environmental groups are asking a federal court to halt 11 infrastructure projects on four lower Snake River dams in Washington state that could ultimately be removed following an environmental review now underway.

umbrella law that covers the Endangered Species Act. Thirteen species of salmon and steelhead on the Columbia and Snake rivers have been listed as federally protected over the past 25 years. Four of the listed species are found in Idaho.

The Snake River dams cited in the documents are Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose and Lower Granite. They're the four lowest dams on the 1,000-mile-long Snake River, itself a tributary to the Columbia River.

The four dams are managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and were built in the 1960s and 1970s.

Officials with the federal agency didn't return a call from The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Northwest River Partners, which

represents a coalition of businesses and river users and has intervened on the side of the federal government, is against removing the dams.

"We need to keep investing in critical infrastructure like the Snake River dams," said Terry Flores, director of the Portland-based group. "We need to keep them well maintained so we can keep the lights on and keep people safe and warm, and the economy running."

The \$110 million listed in the document filed Monday is an estimate by the environmental groups that said the Army Corps of Engineers declined to provide precise numbers. The groups say more than half of the money is being spent on Ice Harbor Dam and includes new turbine blades.

# Delegates urge Trump to fund Hanford work

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — The entire congressional delegation from Washington is asking President-elect Donald Trump to make environmental cleanup of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation a priority.

Hanford for years made plutonium for nuclear weapons, and now is engaged in a multi-decade cleanup of the resulting waste at a cost of some \$2 billion per year.

Both of Washington's senators and all 10 members of the House of Representatives sent Trump a letter on Monday asking him to support the cleanup that employs some 9,000 workers at Hanford, located north of Richland.

"This work is essential to protecting the health and safety of the Tri-Cities community, the Columbia River, Washington state, and our nation from

waste that was created from over 40 years of nuclear weapons production," the bipartisan letter said.

The letter noted that Congress and previous presidents have recognized the legal and moral obligation of the federal government to clean up Hanford, which contains some 55 million gallons of some of the world's most dangerous radioactive wastes. "A critical component to this support is proper funding levels," the letter said.

Studies have projected that the Hanford cleanup will take decades to complete and that funding should be increased to \$3 billion a year to achieve deadlines.

The 580-square-mile Hanford site was created during World War II as part of the Manhattan Project to beat Japan to the atomic bomb. During

four decades, Hanford produced more than 65 percent of the plutonium for the nation's nuclear arsenal.

In addition to the 55 million gallons of radioactive waste stored in 177 underground tanks, the site contains thousands of tons of used nuclear fuel, huge volumes of solid radioactive waste, thousands of contaminated buildings and contaminated soil and groundwater.

"This is the largest and most complex environmental remediation project in the nation," the lawmakers said. "Any lapses in funding for the site puts workers and communities at risk."

The letter noted that the federal government is subject to legally enforceable milestones for cleaning up the waste through a consent decree with the state of Washington.

## BRIEFLY

### Railroad sues to force approval of track expansion

MOSIER (AP) — Union Pacific is asking a federal judge to reject local rules that threaten to derail its plans to add a second main track along the Columbia River Gorge where a crude oil train derailed last June.

The Omaha, Nebraska-based railroad filed the lawsuit Tuesday against Wasco County and the Columbia River Gorge Commission, which moved to block the project last fall.

Union Pacific says federal rules govern railroads, so local restrictions like the ones Wasco County approved don't apply to the project.

The chair of the Wasco County board of commissioners, Rod Runyon, said Tuesday that he was surprised by the lawsuit. He says he had not yet seen the lawsuit to comment further.

The derailment last June sparked a massive fire near Mosier, Oregon, and renewed concerns about the safety of trains that carry crude oil across the region.

The complaint was filed in federal court in Oregon.

### Woman found dead at crash may have been stabbed

ONTARIO (AP) — A woman who died in a head-on crash following her reported abduction has been identified as an Idaho woman who had been married to the man suspected of kidnapping her.

Anita Harmon, 40, of Weiser, Idaho, died at the scene Monday after the Dodge pickup in which she was a passenger crossed a centerline on an Eastern Oregon highway and collided with an SUV, Oregon State Police said. The driver of the SUV, 38-year-old David Bates of Vale, Oregon, also died.

Police in Ontario, Oregon, were chasing the pickup after being alerted that a woman was being held against her will

and had been stabbed. Ontario Police Chief Cal Kunz said it has yet to be determined if the woman died from stab wounds or the crash impact.

The suspect driving the Dodge, Anthony Montwheeler of Nampa, Idaho, survived with serious injuries. He remained in a hospital Tuesday and has yet to be charged with a crime.

Harmon's car was found abandoned in the middle of a street in Weiser, 20 miles north of Ontario.

It was not immediately clear if Montwheeler and Harmon were separated or divorced.

The pair had co-owned a scrap-metal business based in Weiser. They were convicted of first-degree theft in 2012 after underpaying an elderly couple by more than \$10,000.

Montwheeler was sentenced to two years in prison and his wife was sentenced to 16 months in prison.

### Developers eyeing mine site expected to re-submit proposal

BEND (AP) — A proposed housing development on a former mining site in Deschutes County could again be up for approval this year.

The Bulletin reports that Lower Bridge LLC applied to create residential lots on 157 acres at the site west of Terrebonne, but they withdrew the application in May. Deschutes County Senior Planner Will Groves says he expects Lower Bridge to submit a new proposal in 2017 for the same project.

Grove says Lower Bridge officials intend to craft a new application that will avoid some of the issues the initial proposal faced.

Before withdrawing the application, county commissioners said parts of the site are zoned incorrectly.

A portion of the site was used decades ago to extract a type of rock containing silica. Hazardous and radiological waste was cleaned up from the site in the 1980s.

## Corrections

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

# EAST OREGONIAN

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AccuWeather.com Forecast. Includes weather icons for Today, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Regional forecast for Pendleton and Hermiston with temperature ranges. Almanac for Pendleton and Hermiston with temperature, precipitation, and sun and moon data. Regional forecast for Coastal Oregon, Eastern Washington, Cascades, and Northern Washington.

### REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	37	26	sn	40	25	s
Baker City	24	-1	sn	17	-2	s
Bend	24	7	sn	27	7	pc
Brookings	47	35	sh	48	34	pc
Burns	30	5	sn	22	-4	pc
Enterprise	26	5	sn	21	-4	s
Eugene	43	27	sn	36	21	pc
Heppner	22	8	sn	21	4	s
Hermiston	25	11	sn	21	8	s
John Day	30	12	sn	30	10	pc
Klamath Falls	34	15	sn	29	0	pc
La Grande	27	8	sn	21	3	s
Meacham	24	8	sn	24	2	s
Medford	44	29	sn	40	23	pc
Newport	42	29	r	41	27	pc
North Bend	47	33	r	46	30	pc
Ontario	35	10	sn	24	5	pc
Pasco	23	1	c	14	-1	s
Pendleton	23	9	sn	20	7	s
Portland	33	21	sn	32	16	s
Redmond	31	3	sn	22	5	pc
Salem	39	23	sn	35	17	pc
Spokane	17	-2	pc	15	0	s
Ukiah	22	5	sn	21	-2	s
Vancouver	33	20	sn	33	16	s
Walla Walla	21	7	sn	16	5	s
Yakima	30	3	pc	18	-2	s

### WORLD CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	44	20	s	42	21	s
Hong Kong	72	62	c	70	61	c
Jerusalem	54	38	s	57	41	pc
London	52	38	pc	43	33	r
Mexico City	72	44	pc	73	44	pc
Moscow	18	13	pc	22	19	sn
Paris	52	39	c	45	33	r
Rome	45	29	s	53	49	sh
Seoul	35	23	s	35	17	pc
Sydney	97	70	pc	80	71	pc
Tokyo	47	38	s	53	41	s

### WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Thursday
Boardman	NE 4-8	ENE 4-8
Pendleton	WNW 4-8	N 4-8

### UV INDEX TODAY

0 0 0 0 0 0

8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.

0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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### NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

National Summary: Milder air with spotty rain will affect the South and East as spotty snow and colder air seep into the North Central states. Rain will soak the California coast with lowering snow levels inland in the West.

### Yesterday's National Extremes:

High 88° in McAllen, Texas Low -17° in Lewistown, Mont.

### NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Thur.				Today			Thur.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W		Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	58	31	pc	55	36	c	Louisville	61	58	r	65	33	t
Atlanta	66	50	c	69	52	pc	Memphis	69	62	sh	70	48	c
Baltimore	49	42	c	63	46	c	Miami	79	67	pc	81	70	pc
Birmingham	69	59	c	70	57	pc	Millwaukee	39	21	c	26	8	sn
Boise	38	15	sn	27	8	pc	Minneapolis	12	0	sn	12	-14	pc
Boston	50	39	r	54	41	c	Nashville	66	61	sh	69	48	c
Charleston, SC	71	52	pc	75	51	s	New Orleans	75	62	pc	76	61	pc
Chicago	42	25	c	30	12	sn	New York City	51	45	pc	58	44	c
Cleveland	50	49	sh	56	23	r	Oklahoma City	73	38	pc	51	29	pc
Dallas	78	62	pc	77	60	pc	Omaha	35	9	c	23	9	c
Denver	50	29	pc	36	18	c	Philadelphia	50	42	pc	61	46	c
Detroit	44	39	sh	39	21	r	Phoenix	66	49	pc	66	51	c
El Paso	70	42	pc	68	42	pc	Portland, ME	46	35	r	46	36	c
Fairbanks	-6	-14	pc	-8	-29	c	Providence	51	36	r	53	41	c
Fargo	1	-11	pc	3	-22	s	Raleigh	51	47	c	56	51	s
Honolulu	82	68	c	83	67	s	Rapid City	4	-2	sf	13	2	c
Houston	79	65	pc	78	64	c	Reno	43	27	sf	37	24	sf
Indianapolis	55	53	r	59	24	r	Sacramento	56	43	sh	51	36	c
Jacksonville	73	50	s	75	52	s	St. Louis	63	43	sh	43	24	c
Kansas City	57	17	c	30	17	pc	Salt Lake City	42	26	sh	34	18	sn
Las Vegas	64	47	pc	57	45	pc	San Diego	65	54	r	61	51	r
Little Rock	71	60	sh	72	43	t	San Francisco	56	46	sh	52	41	pc
Los Angeles	63	52	r	57	45	c	Seattle	35	23	pc	35	24	s
							Tucson	71	42	pc	72	48	pc
							Washington, DC	51	45	c	64	49	c
							Wichita	65	21	pc	38	21	pc

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.