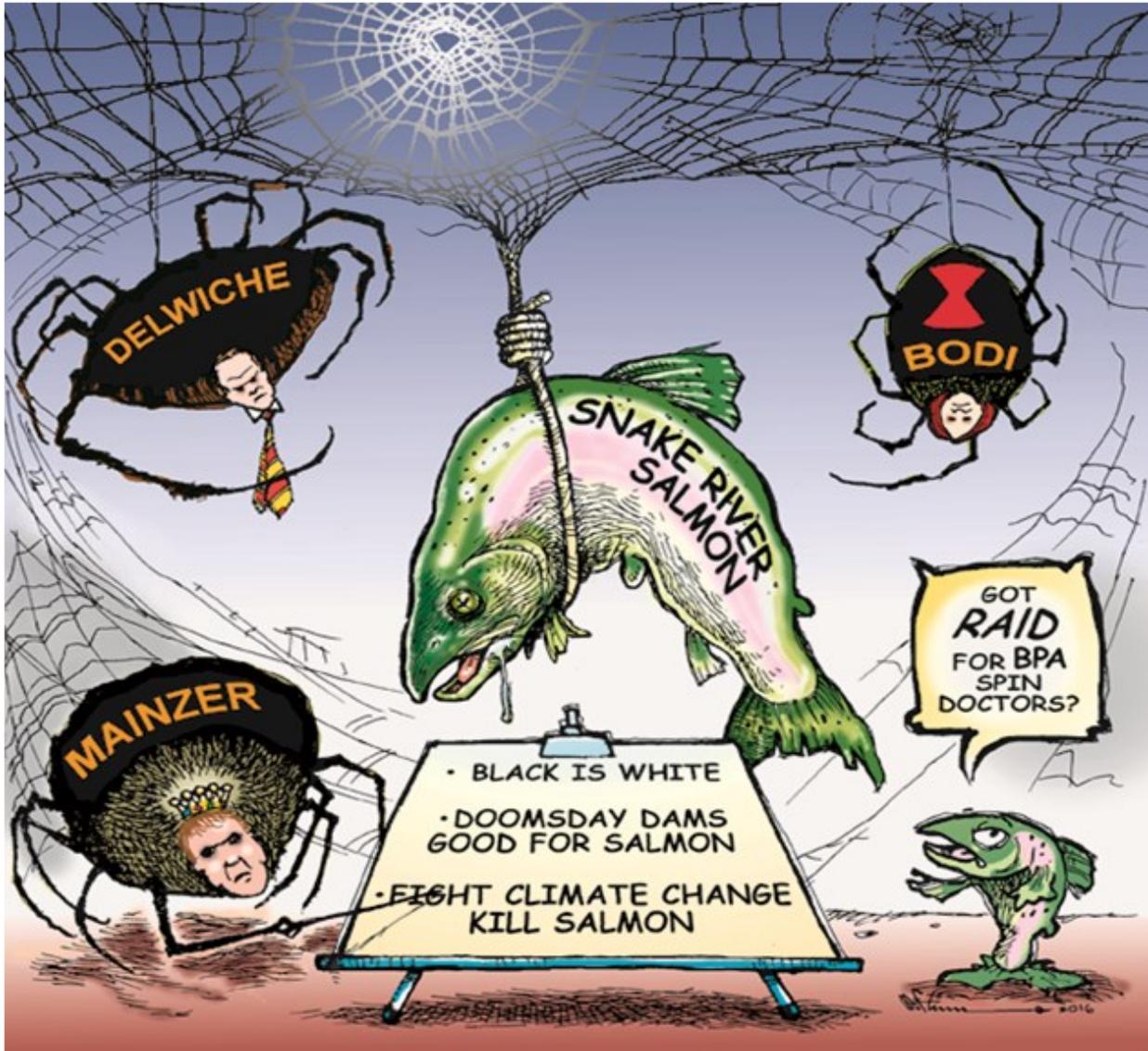


"Oh what tangled webs we weave
When first we practice to deceive."

-- Sir Walter Scott



The Northwest Big Short

Fact Sheet, A Northwest Energy Solution: Regional power benefits of the lower Snake River dams

Spin Doctors Hoist Bonneville Power Administration On Its Own Petard

Northwest Resource Information Center June 2016

Summary

We are eyewitness to an egregious corruption of government in the Pacific Northwest. The disastrous economic, ecological and social consequences extend 1000 miles inland and thousands of miles along the Pacific coast.

It has been happening in plain sight for decades, enabled by a complaisant hear-no-evil, see-no-evil, speak-no-evil Northwest congressional delegation, bribed state and Native American Indian governments and a myopic mainstream news media.

Through incompetence and malfeasance, Bonneville Power Administration and the Army Corps of Engineers over more than four decades have wasted billions of public dollars to protect four dysfunctional pork barrel dams on the lower Snake River in southeastern Washington.

With reckless disregard for the law and the cost to society, they deliberately drove Snake River salmon, one of the world's unique, irreplaceable, perpetually renewable natural resources, onto the List of Endangered Species.

The Corps ignored repeated warnings and negligently failed to design the dams to allow salmon to safely migrate from the vast headwaters to the Pacific Ocean as required by the law authorizing their construction. After futilely spending billions of dollars, the Corps conclusively demonstrated that the fatal design defect cannot be cured.

These dams have proven to be the most economically costly, ecologically destructive and socially damaging energy generating facilities in the Nation. They threaten the survival of salmon produced the vast pristine and near-pristine headwaters of the Snake River Basin. The economic, ecological and social damage extends nearly 1000 miles inland and thousands of miles along the Pacific coast.

Over the past four decades a self-replicating scofflaw culture metastasized in upper management of Bonneville and the Corps' Portland, Oregon District. Protecting the four dysfunctional dams on the lower Snake River became an idea fixe; an ideological holy war that must be won no matter what the costs to the people of the Northwest and Nation. They won. So far.

Billions of ratepayer and taxpayer dollars have been wasted on costly Rube Goldberg schemes, on junk "science", on political eyewash salmon

habitat projects to divert attention from the wholesale slaughter of juvenile salmon at the dams, on bribing state and tribal governments to support subverting salmon protection laws, on hush money to NGOs, and on a grotesque public relations scam of slaughtering sea lions and cormorants that prey on inconsequential numbers of Snake River salmon.

In spite of their success to date at subverting the law, the scofflaw Snake River salmon killers in upper management at Bonneville, the Corps and NOAA Fisheries have started to sweat. They feel the hot breath of the federal courts and the Endangered Species Act on the backs of their necks.

In addition, recently they were confronted with a fact attack by a retired Corps senior engineer that authoritatively challenges the economic viability of the dams, and by orca enthusiasts blaming the dams for reducing the salmon food supply of Puget Sound orcas which also are on the List of Endangered Species.

And then, in summer 2015, weather happened, again. Ninety-nine percent of returning endangered Snake River sockeye perished attempting to migrate past the dams and through overheated reservoirs to their spawning grounds.

Bonneville's signature Pavlovian response to these events was to unleash the spin doctors.

There is extensive scholarly literature on the nature of lies and lying. Here we adopt the commonsensical definition that any statement made with an intention to deceive is a lie, including a truthful statement out of context that is made with an intention to deceive.

The Fact Sheet

"There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics." – Mark Twain

In March 2016 Bonneville released *Fact Sheet, A Northwest energy solution: Regional power benefits of the lower Snake River dams*. It weaves a web of lies, half-truths, and lies of omission designed to deceive the public and decision makers.

The "Fact Sheet" is a variation on the con that Bonneville orchestrated in 2009 to dupe President Obama—through his Council on Environmental Quality—into adopting the corrupt Endangered Species Act policies of the G.W. Bush Administration.

The resulting Biological Opinions prepared by NOAA Fisheries (ghost-written by Bonneville) over more than a quarter century have been serially rejected five times by the federal courts, often with withering sarcasm.

The basic message Bonneville seeks to impart with the Fact Sheet is that these are Doomsday Dams. They can't be fixed, and they can't be deconstructed to prevent extinction of Snake River salmon without enormous cost to society.

Bonneville: It's not invented here—no matter what the law says; no matter how much damage.

The Fact Sheet has a three-part over-arching con.

1] Bonneville strives to make the lower Snake River dams appear *essential* and *critical* rather than merely currently being *useful* to, for example, help integrate intermittent wind and solar power and meet hypothetical emergency needs such as a sudden cold snap.

2] Bonneville disappears the dams' enormous economic, ecological and social damage that extends nearly 1000 miles inland and thousands of miles along the Pacific coast.

In fact, all the real and purported benefits of these dysfunctional dams could be achieved by other means which would end the disastrous ongoing damage and produce enormous net social benefits for the region.

3] Nearly 40 years ago the Northwest Power Act of 1980 gave Bonneville and the Corps the legal mandate—repeatedly affirmed by the federal courts—to make changes in the federal hydrosystem as necessary to restore Snake River salmon. The Act also gave Bonneville new authority and a blank check to acquire any new resources necessary to ensure a reliable and economical power supply.

Instead of complying with the law, a succession of incompetent political hacks in Bonneville upper management, working with their analogs in the Corps, NOAA Fisheries and Northwest Power Council, wasted billions of public dollars defying the law and causing an economic, ecological and social disaster of epic proportions.

Fact Sheet Details

The details starkly reveal, again, that Bonneville upper management is literally unhinged from reality and the truth.

- "The lower Snake River dams provide safe fish passage."

The dams threaten Snake River salmon with extinction.

- "Overall salmon runs were the highest on record since counts began ant Bonneville Dam in 1938."

These were mostly hatchery fish and none were wild Snake River salmon threatened with extinction. In 2015, 99 percent of endangered Snake River sockeye salmon died trying to migrate past the dams and reservoirs to their spawning grounds.

- "The dams are now on track to achieve standards of 96 percent average dam survival for young spring chinook and steelhead migrating downstream and 93 percent for young summer-migrating fish."

These "standards" are phony, meaningless numbers designed to con federal judges and for political eyewash—a typical Bonneville con. They are a proposed average survival rate for juvenile fish that arrive at the upstream side of each concrete structure and are still alive on the downstream side.

These phony "standards" do not account for the young salmon that die in the reservoirs and never make it to the dams, or for the young salmon that die after reaching the Columbia River estuary and ocean due to cumulative effects of delay and stress of passing eight dams and reservoirs.

The only time these phony, meaningless standards have been met is when river flows and water spilled past the dams are greater than called for in the serially rejected illegal BiOps.

- "The four lower snake River dams include some of the most advanced and successful fish passage systems in the world."

Earth to Bonneville: these "successful fish passage systems" threaten extinction of Snake River salmon.

- "The four lower Snake River dams produce over 1000 average megawatts of carbon-free energy. That's enough energy for over 800,000 average U.S. homes."

The dams produce 1000 aMW or more only *a few months of the year*; the energy output fluctuates wildly throughout the year. Most the year it would be "lights out" for many of these "average U.S. homes".

This lie is a retread of one of the whoppers Bonneville used in 2009 to dupe incoming President Obama.

- "If the region were to replace the energy produced by the lower Snake dams, it would most likely be with a fossil fuel, natural gas." . . . which would contribute to climate change.

Since the 1980 passage of the Northwest Power Act, which required changes in the hydrosystem to protect salmon, the region has added approximately 14,500 average megawatts of conservation and wind energy—*more than 14 times the 1000 aMW production of the four lower Snake River dams*. That power does not contribute to climate change; does not threaten Snake River salmon and dependent economies with extinction.

The regional energy system currently is running at about 84 percent of capacity with about 4,600 aMWs of surplus energy.

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Sixth Power Plan states that the region can retire all of its existing coal plants, and remove the four lower Snake River dams, and customer's monthly power bills will actually decline due to more efficient use of energy.

Additional capacity will be required sometime in the distant unforeseeable future to meet new load growth—not to replace the energy forgone by breaching the four lower Snake River dams now.

What Bonneville is really saying, is that in its obsession to protect the four dysfunctional dams, it would destroy

irreplaceable Snake River salmon now in order to delay the inevitable need for the region (not necessarily Bonneville) to add new capacity sometime in the unforeseeable distant future.

- Breaching the four lower Snake River dams would reduce the region's ability to keep the lights on ". . . in the event of an extended cold snap or another power plant shutting down unexpectedly".

This is a stark admission of malfeasance and incompetence. The region is awash with surplus energy far into the future. Bonneville has wasted decades of time and billions of dollars defending the dysfunctional dams instead of complying with multiple laws and court decisions requiring protection of Snake River salmon *and* ensuring the lights would stay on in an extended cold snap.

As if on cue, on April 19, 2016, about a month after the Fact Sheet was released, Bonneville demonstrated just how vital the lower Snake River dams purportedly are to keeping the lights on in the region.

A few days of unseasonably warm weather in eastern Washington resulted in higher than expected demand for power in the Tri-Cities area while scheduled transmission maintenance was underway. To avoid a power emergency, Bonneville and the Corps declared a "local transmission emergency" and reduced court-ordered salmon-saving spill at Ice Harbor Dam (lowermost of the four) in order to put more water through turbines and keep the lights on.

A few days of unseasonably warm weather in a localized area and Bonneville and the Corps had no choice but to kill more endangered salmon than usual in order to keep the lights on?

Coincidence or con? If the latter, it would not be the first time Bonneville and the Corps violated court-ordered spill and killed salmon to cover up their incompetence.

The Emperor Has No Clothes

When viewed in context of a half-century of multiple salmon protection laws and court decisions and the current regional surplus of energy far into the future, the so-called "fact sheet" and the ostensibly reinforcing "local transmission emergency" deliver a fundamentally different message than Bonneville intended: the emperor has no clothes.

The revealed naked truth is that over four decades Bonneville and the Corps wasted billions of public dollars protecting the four dysfunctional pork barrel dams on the lower Snake River with reckless disregard for multiple laws and federal court decisions, and the cost to society.

In Bonneville's own words, the Fact Sheet makes clear Bonneville and the Corps gambled the reliability of the Federal Columbia River Power System on an illegal house of cards that requires them to perpetually subvert salmon protection laws and inflict economic, ecological and social damage of epic proportions on the Northwest and Nation.

The good news is that it is now plain for all to see—even the hear-no-evil, see-no-evil, speak-no-evil Northwest congressional delegation—that the emperor has no clothes.

The ongoing regional catastrophe Bonneville and the Corps tag-teamed to create can quickly, easily and profitably be turned around by partially deconstructing the four dysfunctional pork barrel dams on the lower Snake River.

The bad news is that the scofflaw culture metastasized in Bonneville, Corps and NOAA Fisheries upper management has demonstrated it literally will stop at nothing to prevent that from happening. The agencies have the political cover of a complaisant hear-no-evil, speak-no-evil, speak-no-evil Northwest congressional

delegation, bribed state and tribal governments, and a myopic mainstream news media.

The Bonneville, Corps and NOAA Fisheries Snake River salmon killers know they will not be held accountable, no matter how much damage they do and how many people they hurt. They hide behind the corrupt policies they duped President Obama into adopting.

They have the "I'll be gone, you'll be gone" attitude of corrupt Wall Streeters that caused the greatest financial crisis since The Great Depression.

If Snake River salmon eventually become functionally extinct, the responsible bureaucrats will not be sporting the orange jump suits they deserve, they'll be secure in retirements paid for by the public they so egregiously betrayed.

It's the Northwest Big Short.

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Full report @ www.nwric.org/reports.html

The law locks up both man and woman
Who steal the goose from off the common
But lets the greater felon loose
Who steals the common from the goose.

--Anonymous ca 1800