Resolution of the Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society
On Snake River Salmon and Steelhead Recovery
Adopted February 17, 2000 by a membership vote of 103 y, 0 n

Whereas: The first objective in the constitution of the AFS is to promote conservation, development, and wise use of fisheries, and the AFS further commits to promote enlightened management of aquatic resources for optimum use and enjoyment by the public;

Whereas: Past management of Snake River salmon and steelhead stocks and their environment has resulted in a failure to conserve and use wisely these fisheries, and precludes the optimum use and enjoyment of these fish by the public;

Whereas: Many, and perhaps most, stocks of Snake River salmon and steelhead are now extinct, all remaining stocks are remaining stocks are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act, and dramatic action must be taken soon to prevent extinction of the remaining stocks;

Whereas: Snake River salmon and steelhead extinctions and declines occurred as a result of the impacts from a variety of physical, chemical, and biological factors, including those that have been summarized as "all H's" - Hatcheries, Harvest, Habitat, and Hydropower;

Whereas: Dams and their appurtenant features can cause salmonid entrainment, passage impacts, water temperature alterations, hydrologic impacts, increased susceptibility to mortality from native and non-native predators, and other negative impacts;

Whereas: Recent incremental improvements and adjustments in management of hatcheries, harvest, habitat and hydropower facilities have not led to any apparent significant increases in Snake River salmon and steelhead abundance;

Whereas: Recent scientific reviews, including those conducted as part of the Independent Scientific Advisory Review process, the collaborative and peer-reviewed Plan for Analyzing and Testing Hypotheses, and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act report on the Corps of Engineers Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Feasibility Study Environmental Impact Statement have all indicated that restoration of natural river conditions where the lower four Snake River dams occur has the highest likelihood of preserving and recovering listed salmon and steelhead and poses the least risk to survival;

Whereas: Failure to restore Snake River salmonids to sustainable, fishable levels threatens to put the federal government in a position of failing to meet its Treaty Trust responsibilities;

Whereas: At least two important decision points should be reached by federal agencies in the very near future regarding management of the lower four Snake River dams and recovering Snake River salmon and steelhead: one by the Army Corps of Engineers for managing federal dams on the lower Snake River, and one by the National Marine Fisheries Service on whether the operation of those dams jeopardizes the continued existence of Snake River salmon and steelhead;

Whereas: Restrictions associated with failed recovery of the upriver stocks directly affect Oregon's fisheries management, conservation, and economic options (both present and future);

Therefore be it resolved that, based on the best scientific information available, it is the position of the Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society that:

1. The four lower Snake River dams are a significant threat to the continued existence of remaining Snake River salmon and steelhead stocks;

2. If society-at-large wishes to restore these salmonids to sustainable, fishable levels, a significant portion of the lower Snake River must be returned to a free-flowing condition by breaching the four lower Snake River dams, and that this action must happen soon;

3. Substantive actions to address detrimental impacts associated with harvest management, hatchery practices, and habitat alteration will be required of all concerned people, including us as responsible professionals, to further increase the likelihood of recovering Snake River salmon and steelhead stocks; and

4. The Oregon Chapter of the AFS will continue to assist agencies and the public in the review and analysis of Snake River fisheries science and management.