

Salmon Fishing To Shut Down Along 700-mile Stretch of Pacific Coast

By Brad Knickerbocker
The Christian Science Monitor
ASHLAND, ORE. - It's looking like a bleak, belt-tightening year for thousands of commercial fishermen along the Pacific Coast. From Point Sur in California to Cape Falcon in Oregon - 700 miles in all - the skippers and crew of some 2,000 boats are likely to have to forgo salmon, their main money fish.

That's because of plummeting fish runs in the Klamath River and what's expected to be an order by federal officials that commercial and sport salmon fishing be closed. Some boats will continue to bring in dungeness crab, herring, albacore tuna, and other seafood. But they count on succulent chinook salmon for 70 percent of their income.

"Year in, year out, salmon is the one that they depend upon," says Zeke Grader, executive director of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations in San Francisco, which represents organizations from San Diego to Alaska. "It's their anchor fishery."

Salmon fishing off the coast of California and Oregon is a \$150 million a year industry, on average. And while coastal towns like Newport, Ore., have seen fish canneries replaced by tourist attractions (Keiko the killer whale lived at the aquarium there for several years), sport-fishing charter boats, restaurants, and motels could be impacted as well.

If approved, this would be one of the most extensive fishery shut-downs on the Pacific Coast.

From its headwaters in southern Oregon, the Klamath River flows southwest to the sea in northern California. It once was one of the most productive rivers in North America. But in recent decades, its annual salmon runs have fallen to a small fraction of their historic numbers.

As with the Columbia River Basin to the north, many culprits are involved, most recognized only in hindsight. And like many natural-resource issues in the West, the Klamath River situation reflects the

longstanding political and scientific challenges of balancing environmental, economic, and political interests.

Those challenges began a century ago with Teddy Roosevelt's decision to "reclaim" the vast wetlands of the Klamath River Basin by building irrigation systems that would attract homesteading farmers and ranchers. This was followed by construction of four power-generating dams, as well as increasing concern about endangered species. Another complicating factor has been the treaty rights of Indian tribes near the mouth of the Klamath and at the river's headwaters.

Throw in a couple of recent drought years, and the result has been too much demand on too little water. Over the years, salmon runs plummeted to 4 percent of their historic numbers, largely due to reduced river flows, which cause warmer waters and fish-killing diseases. During this period, when the commercial fishing season periodi-

cally was cut short, 80 percent of the salmon fleet went out of business.

In Seattle this week, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the federal agency that monitors the well-being of oceangoing species, predicted that this year's Klamath River salmon run would fall below the minimum for conservation (35,000 fish returning from the Pacific to the river to spawn). NMFS recommended that the fishery be closed this season, a decision expected to be followed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council, one of eight regional councils established by Congress to manage fisheries up to 200 miles offshore.

Coincidentally, the controversy over closing the salmon fishery this year comes just as government regulators are deciding whether to renew federal licenses for the four hydropower dams on the lower Klamath River, the first built in 1917, the last in 1962. The dams are operated by PacifiCorp, a subsidiary of energy giant Scottish Power in Glasgow.

None of these dams has fish passage devices, which means that 350 miles of historic salmon-spawning habitat in the river and its tributary streams were cut off. The dams also create reservoirs, which warm the water. Adding to the problem are the pollution and turbidity caused by runoff from farming, ranching, and logging - mainstays of the region's economy.

Irrigators are eager to keep the dams operating - not because they bring water to farmers' fields (which they don't) but because they charge low power rates to pump the water from canals and wells. Compared to modern gas-fired generators, the dams on the Klamath provide a relatively small amount of power for the electrical grid. But county governments in the largely rural area fear the loss of an important part of their tax base if the dams are removed.

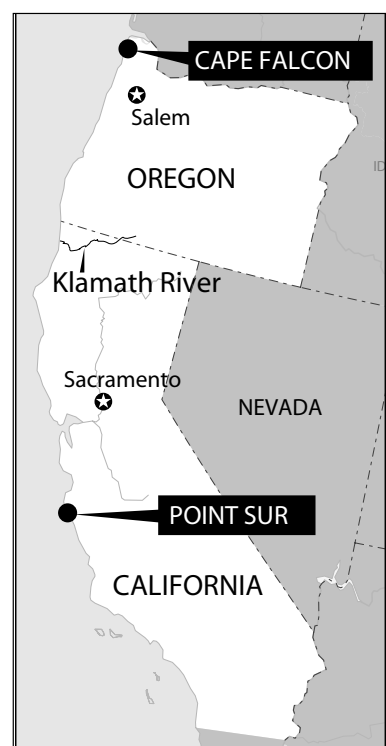
As old dams around the country come up for license renewal, many have been taken out because new restrictions on their design and operation have made them uneconomical. That's what dam opponents here would like to see happen.

"If we don't remove dams now, there won't be any salmon left the next time the dams are relicensed," says Michael Belchik, fisheries biologist with the Yurok Tribe in Weitchpec, Calif.

Salmon like cool, clear water and gravel beds in which to spawn. The manipulated environment resulting from the dams has made the migrating fish (both adults returning to spawn and juveniles headed out to sea) more vulnerable to disease and parasites.

In 2002 and 2003, more than 80 percent of juvenile chinook died before reaching the end of the river and open ocean waters.

"If we're going to save this river, we're going to have to do two things, and we have to do them



Rich Clabaugh, *The Christian Science Monitor*

soon," says Glen Spain, northwest regional director for the fishermen's federation. "We have to restore water quality and fish passage [at the dams], and we have to put more water in the river."

If they aren't able to troll for salmon this year, officials in Seattle said this week, fishermen are likely to be eligible for federal disaster relief.

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Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



'The Sno Mo Vote' - Legislators Make Efforts To Attract Snowmobile- Riding Voters

Will northern Michigan end up with two judges on the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati?

More specifically, will Michigan Supreme Court Justice Betty Weaver of Glen Arbor - after 33 years on benches as a probate judge, Michigan Court of Appeals judge, and chief justice of the state's highest court - join ex-Michigan Appeals Judge Rick Griffin of Traverse City on the federal appeals court?

I raise the questions after learning that Weaver is among several Michiganians who have applied for the vacancy created by the death of ex-Wayne County Circuit Judge Bieke Neilson, who, along with Griffin, was confirmed last year for the federal bench after a long and bitter partisan stalemate.

Weaver declines comment. But Michigan Republican National Committeeman Chuck Yob, long a Weaver fan, told me she is among at least four who have submitted their names to the White House, with copies to Republican members of the Michigan congressional delegation. He said there "might be a lot more" applicants.

As of this writing, Yob and other leaders of the Michigan GOP had not conveyed their top three choices, which the White House typically seeks.

The independent-minded Weaver has been out of sorts with the other four Republicans on the seven-member state high court.

An advocate of term limits for Supreme Court justices, she said early in 2005 she would resign in October even though her current term does not expire until 2011.

Under pressure from GOP leaders to hang in there so as to not give Democratic Governor Jennifer Granholm an appointment to the court, she agreed to delay her resignation and made it clear she expected the GOP-ruled Legislature to consider her term limits ideas being advanced by Senator Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau).

So now Weaver is in the mix for the federal bench. On one hand, the other Republican state justices would welcome departure of a colleague who rocks their boat. On the other, they don't want a Democratic appointee who would erode the GOP majority.

Not to worry, Republicans. If President Bush wants Weaver, he'd likely wait to see if Granholm is ousted. Meanwhile, he also might nominate another applicant such as Court of Appeals Judge Kurt Wilder of Wayne County, an African-American plucked out of private practice in 1992 by Governor John Engler for appointment to circuit and the later to the appeals bench.

DeVos Northern Base

Three weeks of early and extremely well-placed TV ads by wealthy Republican businessman Dick DeVos have helped him narrow the gap in statewide polling matchups with Granholm. His ads were to continue this week.

In a March 5 to March 8 poll of 600 likely voters by Lansing-based EPIC/MRA released last week, DeVos trailed Granholm 51-41. That was a slight improvement from December, when Granholm had a 14-point lead.

DeVos had a huge gain in the Traverse City media market, which includes the northern Lower Peninsula and the most eastern Upper Peninsula and has long been fertile Republican ground. But in the U.P.-wide sampling, Granholm had a 67-24 lead in the latest EPIC/MRA survey.

These media market and regional sub-samples have a much larger margin of error than the plus-or-minus 4 percentage points of the entire 600-voter survey. But it is interesting to note that the latest 60-35 DeVos lead in the Traverse City market is by far his best among the five major markets (he trailed 40-54 in his homeland Grand Rapids market) and is quite a boost from the 4-point lead he had in December.

The DeVos "I'm a job maker" TV ads are well done. General Manager Julie Brinks of WPBN-TV in Traverse City called the buy "moderate but strategically placed." Placements included news programs, NBC's Meet the Press, and the network's broadcast of the Winter Olympics.

The number of placements may be moderate compared to the heavy buys that DeVos and Granholm will have later this year. But the ads helped improve DeVos' name ID by 7 percent (30 percent of voters still don't recognize the name) and his first TV blitz is but a sample of what his deep pockets will produce. (His father, Amway co-founder Rich DeVos, was just dubbed by *Forbes* magazine as the second richest Michiganian - net worth \$3.4 billion.)

The Sno Mo Vote

Wise are politicians who identify the Upper Peninsula with snowmobilers, who statewide number about 500,000.

DeVos had to cancel a January 5 and January 6 U.P. snowmobile outing because of lack of snow, but still hit some scheduled spots by more conventional transportation.

As of this writing, conditions were better for Granholm's scheduled ride last Saturday with about 100 participants in the annual veterans' snowmobile run out of Seney.

Senator Debbie Stabenow periodically dons helmet and suitable clothing for Upper Peninsula snowmobiling.

Jerry Zandstra, one of three Republicans seeking the nomination to oppose her, last week found unfavorable conditions around Escanaba and Munising but was able to ride around Marquette and Houghton.

Why all the attention? According to Noel LaPort with the Michigan Snowmobile Association, owners of the sleds are organized, vote, "and pay attention" to where politicians stand on their issues, including opening of trails.

George Weeks recently retired after 22 years as political columnist for *The Detroit News*. His weekly *Michigan Politics* column is syndicated by *Superior Features*.

St. Ignace Population Up Slightly From 1990

The population of St. Ignace in the 2000 census was 2,678, up slightly from the 1990 census of 2,568. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that population in the city would fall in 2004, to 2,486.

Of the city population age 25 and older in 2000, 83.5 percent of respondents had earned a high school diploma or higher (compared to 80.4 percent of respondents nationally), and 17.7 percent had earned a bachelor's degree or higher (compared to 24.4 percent of respondents across the country).

Of the city's population, 71.8 percent listed their race as white, 19.4 percent listed their race as American Indian or Alaska native, and 7.7 percent listed two or more races. Black or African American, Asian, or "other races" garnered less than 1 percent of respondents each.

Nationally, 75.1 percent of the population listed their race as

white, and 0.9 percent as American Indian or Alaska native.

In economic factors, residents of the city came in slightly below their national counterparts. Per-capita income for each city resident was \$17,340, while it was

\$21,587 nationally. These figures, compiled in 2000, used 1999 income data. Forty families and 226 individuals had income below the poverty level in the city in 2000, the most recent year for which census data is available.

State's New Weight Restrictions Enforced for Commercial Trucks

As of Tuesday, March 14, weight restrictions for commercial truck traffic will be imposed and enforced on state trunklines for the entire state, including the Upper Peninsula and the Mackinac Bridge.

Weight restrictions for commercial truck traffic will be imposed Monday, March 13, for the entire Lower Peninsula and the Mackinac Bridge, reported Michigan Department of Transportation.

There are no restrictions for

legal axle weight loads on trunklines designated as all-season routes. All extended permits will be valid for oversized loads in the weight-restricted area on the restricted routes. Single trip permits will not be issued for any overweight load or loads exceeding 14 feet in width on the restricted routes.

Weight restrictions are now lifted from south of and including US-12, from New Buffalo to the city of Detroit. Weight restrictions remain in effect north of US-12.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Position Mentioned in Last Week's Letter Not Advertised, Did Not Fit Into Wage, Class Schedule

To the Editor:

Richard Oliver brought several issues to our attention last week (Letter to the Editor, March 9 edition). In 2004, the State of Michigan cut \$197,000 from County revenue sharing, and as a result, the county commissioners had to make some difficult decisions. The decision was made to eliminate the County Administrator's office, which would save the County approximately \$150,000 without terminating anyone (the County Administrator's contract had expired), and without having to buy out a contract. The deputy county administrator was kept on as secretary to the Commission for a six-month trial period. During

this six months, we, the five commissioners, discovered we were not using the secretary's office enough to warrant the \$45,000 it was costing the County, and, therefore, eliminated the position.

The second issue was a part-time position in the treasurer's office. The concern here is that Mackinac County is an Equal Opportunity Employer, which means we have to advertise all jobs and the pay would be determined by the wage and classification schedule. The position mentioned was neither advertised nor did it fit into the wage and classification schedule. To give an example of this problem, a deputy sheriff, with many years experience, is making less than \$15 per

hour. If you search on "Google," the average hourly pay for Mackinac County is \$8.15 per hour. Last year we hired a part-time employee for the treasurer's office, and I believe that person was paid less than \$8 per hour. That was the issue.

The County Commissioners' main focus is to be responsible for the expenditure and allocation of Mackinac County taxes.

There are times when this involves tough decisions, especially when people's jobs are affected. This calls for understanding and being fully informed.

Joe Durm
Mackinac County
Commissioner
St. Ignace

Benefit of Keeping Full-Time Pediatrician at Straits Hospital Would Outweigh Cost

To the Editor:

The recent article regarding the layoff of Dr. Dyer was upsetting to many parents in this community. Straits Hospital CEO Rod Nelson was quoted as saying Dr. Dyer was brought here "to increase pediatric patients," which she did, however, since she's being let go, all those patients will have to find alternate means of care, be that utilizing the general medical staff currently accepting new patients or by going to another facility.

This situation is causing stress of finding a pediatrician who has the same high medical standards and enthusiasm for her work as Dr. Dyer has. Many children have developed a rapport with Dr. Dyer

that has taken years to form, and will be very upsetting to make the transition to a new doctor.

Going to see a doctor is a frightening adventure for a child. As a parent, it is comforting to know your child feels safe and secure with a doctor such as Dr. Dyer. It also doesn't seem logical to lay off a full-time pediatrician with so many patients when there is a part-time pediatrician currently staffed who is not going to accept more work at the facility. The part-time doctor's patients could be transferred to Dr. Dyer, thereby keeping the amount of pediatric patients treated at the facility.

It seems the benefit would outweigh the cost of keeping the one

full-time pediatrician regardless of that doctor's Medicare/Medicaid quota.

The loss of revenue from pediatric patients leaving the facility would far exceed any money saved.

Words from the hospital's Web site, www.mshosp.org, read, "Mackinac Straits Hospital and Health Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to meeting the health care needs of those individuals visiting or residing in and around the Mackinac Straits area."

Children reside and visit the area. How much of the dedication is going to meet their needs?

Tracey McClusky
St. Ignace

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and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

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USPS Periodical Publication Number - 462-380

ESTABLISHED 1878

Published each Thursday at Saint Ignace, Mackinac County, Michigan

Entered in Saint Ignace, Michigan Post Office as Periodical Mail Matter, Act of March 3, 1879

Periodical Postage Paid at Saint Ignace, MI • Additional Postage Paid at Gaylord, MI

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to St. Ignace News, PO Box 277, St. Ignace, MI 49781

Volume 126, Number 49, Thursday, March 16, 2006

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Publisher 1975-1995

Wesley H. Maurer, Sr. (1897-1995)



Subscriptions:

\$33 in Mackinac, Chippewa, Emmet, Luce, and Cheboygan counties.

\$39 elsewhere in the United States and military post offices.

\$30 for the Web edition at www.saintignaceneews.com

We take Visa, MasterCard, and Discover

The quotation under the flag of *The St. Ignace News* on Page 1 is from the 10 triads written by Dr. Fred Newton Scott, creator and teacher of the first continuous course in journalism in the United States at the University of Michigan in 1890. The 10 triads are chiseled on the parapet of the Detroit News Building at 615 Lafayette Boulevard, Detroit. They were headed "Ideals of the Press" or "The Newspaper in a Free Society," and serve as a reminder of what a free press means to us.