

My name is Penelope Peterson, and I co-lead the Seattle Great Old Broads for Wilderness. I was a professor for more than 40 years, and a dean for the last twenty of those years at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. Five years ago, I moved to Seattle to be near my two sons and three grandchildren, but in the process I fell in love with the flora and fauna and wild places we have here in the Pacific Northwest, and I joined the Great Old Broads for Wilderness to help protect these. In the summer of 2019, I attended a three-day campout at Hells Gate State Park organized by the Broads, and I learned a lot about the Lower Snake River Dams and how the dams were adversely affecting the salmon. We also toured the inside and outside of one of the dams. I witnessed first-hand the dam's elaborate "Rube Goldberg" set up that attempts to mitigate the disastrous effects of the dams on the salmon. I saw first-hand how ineffective these attempts are. We also heard from the Nimiipuu people who expressed their desire to see the dams breached and the free flowing Snake River returned to its original state. I became convinced that the Lower Snake River dams need to be breached.

Since that time, the research I have done and the presentations I have attended have only served to enhance my conviction that the Lower Snake River Dams need to be breached now. The best available science, including the NOAA report released last fall, indicates that breaching the Lower Snake River dams is critical to restoring Columbia and Snake River Salmon and Steelhead as well as saving our endangered Southern Resident Orcas. We don't need the small amount of energy provided by the Lower Snake River dams. Other Tier 1 producers can provide this energy more cheaply than the Lower Snake River Dams. Barging of commodities like wheat can easily be replaced by rail and trucking. Breaching the dams will also help fight climate change by eliminating the voluminous methane emissions currently being produced by the stagnant reservoirs. And more carbon will be sequestered by the forests and vegetation as the riparian lands along the Lower Snake River are restored.

Last Fall, my son and I took my grandsons to see the Chum and Coho Salmon spawning in Piper's Creek at Carkeek Park in Seattle. My grandsons were studying the life cycle of the salmon in school so they regaled me with what they knew. It was a magical time for me and my grandchildren, and it was enhanced by the boys being able to see firsthand the salmon spawning and get so close to them that they could almost touch them. As a professor who spent more than four decades of her life in education, what better way to get a child interested in protecting our most treasured endangered species and the habitats in which they live? I want the Nimiipuu children as well as the children of farmers who live along the Snake River to have the same opportunity as my grandchildren to experience first-hand the miraculous life cycle of salmon. The children deserve to see salmon and steelhead restored to their River. For this to happen, we need to breach the Lower Snake River Dams not later, but now for our children living today. Breach the Lower Snake River Dams NOW!