



PRESS RELEASE

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Teton named one of America's Most Endangered Rivers for 2010

New dam would waste taxpayer dollars, threatens river health

Boise— Citing its top-notch recreational and fishery attributes, American Rivers this morning named the Teton River in eastern Idaho as one of the nation's 10 most endangered waterways.

The Teton is threatened, the group says, because of the seemingly improbable notion that a dam could be re-erected there. One of the nation's biggest boondoggles occurred on the Teton River in 1976, when the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Teton Dam failed as it was first filling. The resulting flood killed 11 people, 13,000 cattle and caused nearly \$1 billion in damage.

In 2008 the Idaho Legislature appropriated \$400,000 to fund a study on rebuilding the failed dam. The study is supported by Idaho Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter and the Idaho Water Resource Board.

"Rebuilding this federal catastrophe would waste taxpayer dollars and destroy vital habitat for Yellowstone cutthroat trout," said Idaho Rivers United Conservation Policy Director Kevin Lewis. "We need to manage our limited water supplies wisely, and building an expensive new dam that would rarely fill is not wise management."

Every year American Rivers releases its list of the nation's 10 Most Endangered Rivers. American Rivers President Rebecca Wodder said the Teton ranked number eight this year because of the dam proposal.

"Rebuilding an unsafe and unnecessary dam on the Teton River would be irresponsible, especially when more cost-effective and reliable water supply solutions exist," Wodder said.

American Rivers and its partners called on the state of Idaho and the Bureau of Reclamation to promote more cost-effective water supply solutions that focus on conservation and smarter water management.

"My business and dozens of other businesses in the area depend on a free-flowing Teton River and its healthy native trout fishery," said Randy Berry, owner of Teton Valley Lodge in Driggs, an Idaho community near the Teton River's headwaters. "To destroy the river by damming it would be criminal."

"We need wild places like the Teton Canyon," said Peter Anderson, program attorney for Trout Unlimited's Idaho Water Project. "Rebuilding Teton Dam would be a huge, expensive boondoggle and a catastrophe for the canyon's spectacular and irreplaceable natural resources. In this time of budget constraints, Idaho's leaders should work together to find more practical, commonsense solutions to our water supply needs."

Rebuilding Teton Dam would destroy vital habitat for Yellowstone cutthroat trout and other fish and wildlife. The dam would also create a barrier to higher elevation tributary streams, preventing fish from reaching the cool habitat they will need as the climate warms. Moreover, it would destroy a tremendous wild river recreational resource.

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