



Summer 2004

Cultural Myths, Concrete Results, and Whoops Again

Peter M. Lavigne

Recommended Citation

Peter M. Lavigne, *Cultural Myths, Concrete Results, and Whoops Again*, 44 NAT. RES. J. 667 (2004).
Available at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nrj/vol44/iss3/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Journals at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Natural Resources Journal by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.

PETER M. LAVIGNE*

Cultural Myths, Concrete Results, and Whoops Again

I am going to do something that I normally do in my graduate classes at Portland State University and start with a poem. I will end with a story that might serve as a parable for our times. In between, we'll talk about the dominant metaphor of the dominant culture in the American West, and indeed in this time in the world, and examine a couple of other barriers (and parenthetically, opportunities) to a healthy quality of life for all the creatures of Nch'i Wana, the Great River we call the Columbia.

The poem is by an acquaintance of mine, a Cree elder from the other end of this continent, Margaret Sam-Cromarty. I first heard this poem when Margaret recited it in her house on the island of Fort George where the La Grande River empties into James Bay. The poem is titled, *The First Rapids of the La Grande (the way I knew them years ago)* (1990).¹

Part 1

To bring the past
I close my eyes
To remember things.
There is so much
to tell about the first rapids.
How I loved it—
I'd stand and watch
with my parents,
my mother holding my hand
tightly from danger,
from slippery rocks.

On and on floats this dream:
this great mass of water,
its beauty and power
more dazzling

* Senior Fellow, Watershed Management Professional Program of the Executive Leadership Institute, Mark O. Hatfield School of Government, Portland State University, and President of the Rivers Foundation of the Americas. Based upon a presentation at the Sustainable Fisheries Foundation conference "Towards Ecosystem Management: Breaking Down the Barriers in the Columbia River Basin and Beyond," Spokane, Washington, April 28, 2002.

1. *The First Rapids of the La Grande*, in MARGARET SAM-CROMARTY, JAMES BAY MEMOIRS: A CREE WOMAN'S ODE TO HER HOMELAND 54 (1992).

than rich lace,
its magic threatening
and amazing
I'd press closer,
feel spray on my face,
watch my father fishing,
throwing his net
into waters swirling
so fast,
the images so fresh,
so daring and exciting.
The food the first rapids
provided
was wholesome and good.
Early in my young life
I learned about the first rapids,
its importance and value.
Once again I step back in time,
my father coming home,
a small dot among the rocks,
in the background
the furious rapids.
He disappears into the thickets,
there willows everywhere.
He comes out
a rabbit in his hands.

Part II

It's dusk now,
our teepee standing among
the jack pines,
the roar of the rapids
putting me to sleep.
"Let's go to the first rapids"
I told my children one day,
"I'll show you where I played
as a child."
Puzzled, they hesitated.
Eager to see the first rapids,
I talked and talked
of its beauty and all
my children silent and still.

When we reached the first rapids
I stared, shocked.
There were no first rapids
which I had known.

I broke,
Sobs shaking my body.
When I felt a hand on my shoulders
I looked up at my children
unable to speak.

One of them spoke,
"Mother
are you all right?"
I nod my head,
shaken and hurt.
I wave my hand
towards the mass of grey cement.
Huge buildings stood
where once the beautiful rapids
flowed for ever and ever.

The roar was silent,
not to be heard.
Tears choking me,
I wave my hand again,
"Your grandfather hunted here —
nothing left now."

Margaret's poem alludes, in part, to what could be called the dominant cultural value in our modern society. It is the reality and the metaphor of *Concrete Results*.

Try this experiment: When you read a newspaper or magazine, listen to politicians and business people, and especially when you listen to conference presentations, note how many times you hear or see the term "concrete results." It is a cultural value and metaphor permeating even the language of environmental restoration. I first noticed this in a cell phone-to-cell phone conversation with a colleague as I was driving from Portland, Oregon, to Petaluma, California, four years ago.

Peter Donaldson is an educational trainer, a profound poet, and, in his forties, a budding ecologist. In our conversation, Peter was explaining the life and career-changing effect of the death of his father, Jack Donaldson, a fisheries biologist who was a giant of conservation and restoration in the Columbia River watershed. As Peter talked with me about the "Watershed Legacy" project he had started with his father, and how he, Peter, was quitting his work as an educational consultant to

work on Watershed Legacy full-time, he described his efforts as a search for "CONCRETE RESULTS" in restoring the Columbia. In my shock at the juxtaposition of the term, I suggested that we ban it from future conversation. "Tangible results" works just fine, thank you.

Even in the Sustainable Fisheries Conference opening plenary session, one speaker referred to working to identify "Concrete Initiatives" for environmental restoration. Concrete Initiatives! Is that the perfect metaphor for how we got into the ecological and quality of life mess we have in the Columbia watershed and indeed in many other watersheds in the United States and Canada? The perfect metaphor for our way of life and business in this newly globalized, multinational world?

When we examine barriers and opportunities to healthy ecosystems in the river basins of the West, think of what the metaphor Concrete Results encompasses. Dams, especially on the Columbia and Colorado, have a special place in our culture and imagination. They represent man's (and I use the possessive of "man" here in the strictest sense of gender) triumph over the combined manmade evils of the dust bowl and the Great Depression of the 1930s. A hold so powerful that a U.S. postage stamp issued with the caption "Conservation" during the Great Depression had a dam as the illustration of conservation. When it comes to dams, the narrator in Pare Lorentz's classic propaganda film of 1937, *The River*, captured the American idea of progress saying, "There's no such thing as an ideal river in Nature."

That classic film, which won several major awards, should be viewed by everyone concerned with rivers along with its companion 1936 effort, *The Plow That Broke the Plains*,² which not so incidentally was sponsored by the Works Progress Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).³

The assumption that progress requires dramatically altering and "improving" natural processes and structures accompanied immigrants to North America in the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, most of whom, with the exception of slaves and others from Africa, had long

2. *The River, The Plow that Broke the Plains*, and two other Depression era documentary films are available on one video published by the Kino Video company in New York City.

3. The first administrator of the TVA, Dr. Arthur Morgan, philosopher, engineer, teacher, and administrator, had a late life change of heart when it came to damming rivers. He perhaps had the best last word on this topic when he published his final book entitled *DAMS AND OTHER DISASTERS: A CENTURY OF THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS*, in 1971. Dr. Morgan was then in his early nineties and died soon thereafter. He passed on some of his river genes however. David Bolling, former executive director of the statewide California organization Friends of the River, and the author of River Network's book *HOW TO SAVE A RIVER* (1994), is Dr. Morgan's grandson.

before lost the opportunity to know anything resembling truly natural river systems.

Progress was proclaimed in the American Midwest in the latter half of the nineteenth century, only 130 years ago, when the plains were cleared of buffalo, and local tribes and other tribes were transplanted from the East to make way for the generic pastoral substitutes of sheep, cattle, and "plowmen." Unfortunately for those of us now living in the twenty-first century, the vanquished natural systems of prairie dogs, pothole wetlands, scarce rivers, sky-darkening flocks of migrating birds, diverse native grasses, buffalo, beaver, wolves, bears, and myriads of flowers and insects were far more productive and resilient than the relative biological deserts that followed and exist in most areas today.

Progress, in the minds of most people, truly came to be, however, with the passage of the Reclamation Act of 1902 and what the late Marc Reisner called the "Age of Dams."

The Age of Dams

According to Reisner, what we accomplished in the reorganization of water systems in the West is unparalleled in human history and is truly astonishing. Reisner puts it this way, "Simply put, the twentieth century has been the Hydraulic Century, the Age of Dams. At least 95 percent of the world's mentionable dams—usually defined as those more than fifteen meters high—were built in the past hundred years."⁴

Think about that for a second, 95 percent of all the world's large dams were built in the last hundred years. In the midst of the Great Depression, in the United States alone we built the world's five largest structures simultaneously, and they all were dams. More than 68,000 large dams (more than two stories high) and nearly 75,000 small dams choke the rivers of America.⁵ Of large rivers in the United States (greater than 200 km long), only the Yellowstone remains entirely free flowing and it is now highly endangered by "McMansion" development with its lawns and riprapped riverbanks. On the entire Colorado River, only the short stretch of Cataract Canyon remains free flowing. Former Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt likes to have us think about these issues in this way: "On average, we have constructed one dam every day since the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776."

4. Marc Reisner, *Western Water and the Limits to Consensus*, 3 CHRONICLE OF COMMUNITY, Spring 1999, at 28.

5. Large dam estimates from River Network. Estimates for small dams range from tens of thousands to two million depending on the source of the estimate and the definition of the dams.

Faith in Technology⁶

The desire to control nature combined with faith in technology has disguised policy in technological terms. Theodore Lyman III, a wealthy mill owner who resided over Massachusetts' first Commission of Inland Fisheries and later the Smithsonian Institution's U.S. Fish Commission, "assumed that where there was a conflict between public interest and private interest of development, technology could overcome that conflict."⁷ Lyman's view was of an unlimited world—though a fish lover, he had the view of a dam builder. In that world, there was always another river to tap, another forest to cut, or another canal or dam location. Fish ladders, artificial propagation, and science could solve the problem of fish declines.⁸

For the self-proclaimed "Messiah" of western water, former Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation Floyd Dominy, rivers were merely an energy commodity; he viewed energy as their greatest yield. Early New Englanders' certainty that fish could be artificially propagated was symptomatic of their "basic faith that science and technology could counteract the less desirable ecological costs of industrial change."⁹ Unfortunately, the myth of omnipotent science and technology had failed to inform them that anadromous fish had more requirements than they could comprehend.

Nearly two centuries later, we are just beginning to question the logic of our technological flood control systems comprising dams, reservoirs, and levees. The forests of the Northwest, for instance, could store more water or transmit it to aquifers at cooler temperatures, through snow pack and tree litter, and at much lower cost.¹⁰ Even (or especially) along the Mississippi River we would not need to "control" flooding if we simply moved our structures out of the flood plains and allowed the river to deposit its sediment load there to enrich topsoil. It is ironic that rivers spread over wide deltas better provide fish passage through a moving, though defined channel, than do our controlled canals and reservoirs.

To be sure, all dams are not unmitigated disasters. A strong case can be made for the role that Bonneville, Shasta, and Grand Coulee dams

6. SAM-CROMARTY, *supra* note 1.

7. MICHAEL BLACK, CALIFORNIA'S LAST SALMON: THE UNNATURAL POLICIES OF NATURAL RESOURCE AGENCIES (forthcoming from the University of California Press 2005).

8. For a contrasting view, see Michael Black, *Can We Design Ecosystems*, INT'L J. ENG'G EDUC., Summer 2002, at 29.

9. THEODORE STEINBERG, NATURE INCORPORATED: INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE WATERS OF NEW ENGLAND 186 (1991).

10. Black, *supra* note 8.

played in providing energy that powered shipyards and aircraft factories that played a large role in the Allied victory over Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan in World War II.¹¹ Many small and relatively innocuous dams fueled the industrial revolution of mills and machinery and provided power and irrigation for the now nearly extinct family farms of earlier centuries. And, for better or worse, the post Great Depression dams, dikes, and diversions of the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers enabled the rise of the water-intensive, modern corporate industrial agriculture of the late twentieth century in the desert lands of the West.

For nearly 70 years the concrete results of dams and their impacts have defined the North American environmental, can-do attitude, provided cheap power sources, and perhaps even represented the final conquest of the doctrine of Manifest Destiny in the United States by turning the deserts of the West into glitzy electric cities, water wanton agriculture, and high desert grazing ranges. We even exported our technology all over the world. Most large dams around the world have been designed with engineering expertise and training cheerfully exported by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers.¹²

As China, India, and a number of countries in South America are even now pursuing our models of huge dams, canals, and irrigation systems in their river basins, the public debate in the United States mournfully, reluctantly, and belatedly faces the ecological devastation, the long ignored sedimentation and maintenance costs, and the sad truth that our two centuries of dams and flood plain development have only worsened the flood crests and resulting damage to humans and their enterprises in many river valleys.

Opportunities exist here as well. The beginning decades of the twenty-first century promise an unprecedented series of removals, modifications, and reassessments of dams, large and small, with resulting river watershed ecosystem restoration. Debates over dam

11. Of course, these same dams also provided energy to the Manhattan Project works at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in the state of Washington; leaving a toxic legacy that haunts the Columbia region now and will for thousands of years into the future.

12. One minor example of the international impact of Floyd Dominy and the Bureau of Reclamation came directly to me while I was co-leading a seminar, held in Izmir, Turkey, in 2001, on watershed management and alternatives to more large dams on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers for a group of 60 dam engineers and river basin planners from half a dozen countries. When I flashed a photo of former Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Floyd Dominy on the screen, two senior engineers, one from Turkey and the other from the Republic of Georgia, related stories of visits by Commissioner Dominy to the region to train them and other engineers.

removals in the context of continuing population growth, dramatic changes in the technology of electricity, and tribal demands for enforcement of treaty rights will dominate river issues in the United States, and eventually in Canada, for the first half of the twenty-first century.¹³

Often we need to focus on the obvious because the obvious sometimes blends so into the landscape that we forget to examine its "oh, so obvious effects." With that in mind, let us examine another of the cultural and policy myths that act as barriers to healthy ecosystem management on the Columbia. This second myth is that the water law of prior appropriation makes sense for current conditions in the Columbia.

Prior Appropriation is the law of the two-year old. "It's mine, I'm not going to share it, and you can't have it." This deadly serious legal doctrine originally arose out of gun battles in the 1849 gold mines in California. Like the age of dams, the law of Prior Appropriation is also part of what University of Colorado Law Professor Charles Wilkinson called, in his prescient book *Crossing the Next Meridian*, the "Lords of Yesterday." The Lords of Yesterday are a series of five laws and policies put in place in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to govern the use of the natural resources of the West—and that are still setting our policy priorities in the twenty-first century under vastly different circumstances. Wilkinson characterized the attitudes of these laws and policies toward the environment as "covering the entire gamut of attention from indifference to disdain to contempt."

Myth and deception, at least self-deception, have shaped water policy in the United States far more than has the rational examination of ecosystems, the conscious setting of political boundaries, or the rational pursuit of better living.¹⁴ Water policy and development of resettled areas has often been a result of muddled thinking, intentional deception, or political distortion beginning with Congress's blithe dismissal of Major John Wesley Powell's recommendations to form the borders of

13. This debate and trend is reflected in a series of recent books discussing dam removals and river restoration. A quick sampling includes *DAM POLITICS: RESTORING AMERICA'S RIVERS* (2003) by Professor William Lowry of Washington University in St. Louis; *WATERSHED: THE UNDAMMING OF AMERICA* (2002) by Elizabeth Grossman; *DAM REMOVAL; SCIENCE AND DECISION MAKING* (2002) by the Heinz Center for Science, Economics and the Environment; *SILENCED RIVERS: THE ECOLOGY AND POLITICS OF LARGE DAMS* (enlarged and updated edition 2001) by Patrick McCully; *POWER POLITICS* (2001) by Arundhati Roy; and perhaps the first in the quickly expanding series, *LIFELINES: THE CASE FOR RIVER RESTORATION* (1996) by Tim Palmer.

14. Thanks to Beth Woodward for her contributions to this section from her paper "A Mirage: Rational Foundations for Water Policy" written in 1999 in my graduate course *Watershed Futures: The Past and Present of U.S. Water Policy and Administration*.

western states according to the boundaries of major river watersheds, followed by the deliberate slaughter and relocation of Indians to enable the development of first the Mid-Atlantic region, then the South, and eventually the campaign to eradicate the buffalo and thereby the Indians of the Great Plains and the West.¹⁵ Irrational and inequitable foundations of water policy can be seen in the language it is constructed of (notice the decidedly political naming of the impoundments behind dams throughout the West, otherwise known as reservoirs, as "Lakes"), in the uses for which water has been employed, and in the technology used to implement policy.¹⁶

We have not yet lost faith in technology, although technology has not prevented degradation of water quality through discharges of harmful waste products or from water absorbing pollutants as rain hits and "runs off" land. Modern technology pollutes our drinking water, our bloodstreams, and our breast tissues and milk ducts, yet municipal authorities in Portland (and in nearly every city in the United States and Canada) have faith that engineers can design systems to remove pollutants from river water to make it drinkable—even as scientists work to discern exactly what harmful chemicals and chemical combinations it carries—a nearly impossible task given the mind boggling rate at which tens of thousands of new chemical combinations are still legally introduced into the environment.

One wonders how technology, which by definition is the application of science, can possibly present solutions to problems that are not yet even understood or identified by science? Well it can and has, of course.

One need only look, for one instance, at the implementation of the first sewage treatment systems in the cities of the Merrimack Valley in the late 1800s to see the elimination of typhus and cholera epidemics caused by removing sewage from the street gutters at a time when the bacterial mode of disease transmission was not understood. The question is still worth pondering, and the answers offered by science and technology often will lag behind the need for policy implementation.

As the sewage treatment example tells, technology does offer us much. Engineers are great problem solvers in the mathematical sense—

15. GLORIA JAHODA, *THE TRAIL OF TEARS: THE STORY OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN REMOVALS 1813-1855* (1975); *see also* DONALD A. GRINDE & BRUCE E. JOHANSEN, *ECOCIDE OF NATIVE AMERICA: ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION OF INDIAN LANDS AND PEOPLE* (1995); DEE BROWN, *CREEK MARY'S BLOOD* (1980).

16. Literally hundreds of books have been written about various aspects of water policy in the United States. Three of the best are MARC REISNER, *CADILLAC DESERT* (rev. ed. 1993); CHARLES WILKINSON, *CROSSING THE NEXT MERIDIAN* (1992); and ALICE OUTWATER, *WATER: A NATURAL HISTORY* (1996).

they can build dams with fishways—but the structures they build are designed to meet narrow policy objectives. Engineers are rarely educated or paid to take the broad view. They do not often have the opportunity to frame the questions they are asked to answer. Perhaps most significantly for salmon and other aquatic species, few engineers are also conservation biologists or ecologists. The overwhelming majority of engineers do not have the perspective of the needs of interdependent species and the perspective of different needs at different times in a salmon's life cycle. Our technological society has created numerous divisions of technical and scientific knowledge with far too few links between them to overcome ignorance.¹⁷

The Myth of Hydropower

The third related myth is the Myth of Hydropower. In his book *Lifelines: The Case for River Conservation*,¹⁸ Tim Palmer explains, in a chapter called *The Myth of Hydropower*, that in the arena of power generation it is *belief* that threatens river systems, not true need. The government-driven hydroelectric industry bought and produced a slew of great marketing messages, beginning with Pare Lorentz's movies, and on through Woody Guthrie and his Bonneville Power Administration songs and tours, to the early 1990s television commercials of Hydro-Quebec bragging about Quebec's hydroelectric potential and showing the all-hydroelectric powered houses with electric stoves, lights, heating systems, etc., to current commercials of gushing rapids, happy families,

17. See, e.g., DAVID ORR, *ECOLOGICAL LITERACY: EDUCATION AND TRANSITION TO THE POST MODERN WORLD* (1991); John Cairns, Jr., *Developing a Strategy for Protecting and Repairing Self-Maintaining Ecosystems*, 1 J. CLEAN TECH. & ENVTL. SCI. 1 (1991); COMM'N ON GEOSCIENCES, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES RESTORATION OF AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS (1992).

18. See the Tim Palmer trilogy on American rivers: *ENDANGERED RIVERS AND THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT* (1986), *THE WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS OF AMERICA* (1993), *LIFELINES: THE CASE FOR RIVER CONSERVATION* (1994).

Tim is the premier historian of the river conservation movement in the United States. To date he has written about 14 books about rivers, river protection campaigns, river conservation, and other issues. Tim writes from 30 years of experience traveling the rivers of North America by foot, canoe, raft, bicycle, and his conversion van "house." *ENDANGERED RIVERS* relates the history of river conservation up through the early Carter administration. *THE WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS OF AMERICA* covers the history, management, and unfinished agenda of the National Wild and Scenic River System. According to Tim, *LIFELINES* fills the gap between the two previous volumes by presenting the fundamental case for preservation and intelligent management of rivers in today's perplexing world. *LIFELINES* is my favorite book of the three, mostly because of the heartfelt and compelling arguments for changing the way we view and manage rivers. My favorite sections include *Breaking the Concrete Fix* and *The Myth of Hydropower*.

and voiceovers touting the benefits of “clean” hydroelectricity.¹⁹ Hydropower is believed to be a cheap, clean, and an irreplaceable power source—especially when it is promised from large remote projects like Hydro-Quebec’s James Bay developments or those in the once remote provinces of the Bonneville Power Administration.

Most incredibly, this marketing has led a majority of Americans to believe hydro supplies the bulk of the U.S. energy supplies.²⁰ In reality, hydroelectric generation amounted to about 13 percent of U.S. power generation in 1995.²¹ The relative unimportance of hydropower as an energy source in the United States (except in the near term in the Pacific Northwest and for Las Vegas) is easy to discern, particularly compared to the undeveloped potential for demand-side management,²² the undeveloped utility-threatening potential for decentralized solar and wind power, and hydrogen fuel cells—and in the Pacific Northwest, by observing the formerly large proportion of hydropower used for aluminum smelting. Perhaps the biggest myth of hydropower in the Northwest is that leaving in place *all* of the large dams of the Columbia Basin is the moral, equitable, and just thing to do.

WPPS AGAIN

When I mention “Whoops Again,” we look briefly at the current backward directions of both energy and agricultural policy just implemented by the wisdom of the U.S. Congress. In the agriculture bill passed in 2002, Congress re-institutionalized the agricultural welfare subsidy system that continues to drive family farmers out of business at the same time that it enriches industrial agriculture companies, including Archer Daniels Midland, and massive insurance companies, including the American Farm Bureau.²³

In the recent energy bill, despite the temporary defeat of oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, we are paying lip service to conservation while ignoring the fiction of using light truck air quality

19. Note, no dams are being shown in current commercials.

20. Nat’l Env’tl. Educ. & Training Found., Annual Survey of Adult Environmental Knowledge, Behavior and Attitudes (1997), at www.neetf.org.

21. Rich Bowers & Margaret Bowman, *Hydroelectric Relicensing: How Relicensing Can Affect Dam Removals*, 5 RIVER VOICES (1995).

22. See, for instance, the projections of energy savings from Amory Lovins and the Rocky Mountain Institute, at www.rmi.org.

23. The policy and technological resources of the environmental community pale in comparison with the resources of just the 3.5 billion-dollar insurance company called the American Farm Bureau. See *60 Minutes* (CBS television broadcast, July 16, 2000) (presenting details about the Farm Bureau’s structure and resources).

and mileage standards for vehicles that have replaced the function of land-whale station wagons of the 60s and 70s, and we are swiftly subsidizing the reopening of public lands throughout the country to oil, coal, gas, and mineral development. It is the boom and bust with corruption cycle of the Northwest's WPPS (Washington Public Power Supply) system, (or the West Slope of the Rockies oil shale boom of the 1970s) all over again—only with wider national and international consequences.

Given those sobering looks at the obvious, I will tell you the story I promised and then end with a short poem by Margaret Sam-Cromarty. I work part-time in the Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University. When the plans arose a few years ago to create the Hatfield School of Government through a merger of several departments, it caused me to think about the cosmic consequences of my working in a School of Government named after a Senator whose long and distinguished career was bookmarked at the end by a blank check for the liquidation of the last remnants of the Northwest's old growth forests. That blank check to the timber companies is infamously known as the "Salvage Rider." (Doesn't that term bring visions of the Headless Horseman and other ghoulish images to mind?)

I came to think more recently that it was appropriate that the Hatfield School of Government is now located in Portland State University's new Urban Center complex—a series of two spanking new buildings that ignore most principles of ecological and sustainable architecture—and which are surrounded by a plaza filled with waterfall sculptures that artfully simulate the water richness of the Northwest by swaddling it in stone and concrete and sterilizing it with chlorine injected circulating pumps. The sculptures keep the water from contact or sight of any tree, shrub, fish or other moving organism except humans. How like the approach we have taken to the Columbia as we entombed it with dams, stripped its banks of trees and other vegetation, polluted it with chemicals and radiation, built railroads and highways in its floodways, created a series of ocean ports ranging hundreds of miles inland, and then wondered why our expensive but scattered efforts to restore salmon and other missing or endangered species have continued to fail.

Siting the Mark Hatfield School of Government in this atmosphere is oddly appropriate for those of us who work in natural resources protection and restoration, as it is the ultimate daily reminder of what our society has tried with great, and thankfully only partial success, to do to the Columbia River, the Colorado River, and the other great rivers of the West over the last 150 years.

As we pause to think about the barriers of Cultural Myths and Concrete Results so briefly presented in this article, let us listen once again to the wisdom of Margaret Sam-Cromarty's poetry.

The Green Earth (1991)²⁴

Some say
this modern century
is the best.
Some have doubts.

One day
My mother told me a story.
Clearly interested
I listened.

She spoke of another time
So out of date.
Impressed
I sat in silence.

A nameless joy stirred.
She talked of my inheritance;
the woods, the wilderness,
the future of my children.

Suddenly uncomfortable
I felt fear
my inheritance threatened,
my children cheated.

24. SAM-CROMARTY, *supra* note 1, at 2. Margaret's book, now out of print, is dedicated "to the Cree and to those who are not Cree."