

Letters to the editor

## **Fish and farms can coexist**

The Spokesman-Review correctly reported that the Army Corps of Engineers has admitted that mismanagement of Libby Dam was the cause of last spring's high water that resulted in crop loss in the Kootenai Valley and harm to the threatened bull trout ("Feds won't pay to fix flood damage," Dec. 22).

In this story, however, the Review neglected to report that the corps failed to follow water storage procedures designed to benefit the endangered Kootenai River white sturgeon, as well as listed salmon, and that it was this failure that forced them to release so much water. Rather than demonstrating an irreconcilable conflict between fish and farms, this highlights the fact that Libby Dam can be managed both to benefit fish and protect crops.

A key to such management will be repair of levees that protect farmland in the Kootenai Valley, thereby allowing the high spring flows so desperately needed by the sturgeon. For this reason, the Center for Biological Diversity, which is lead plaintiff in a lawsuit seeking greater protection for the sturgeon, supports Boundary County's request for disaster relief and for financial assistance from the corps for levee repair.

**Noah Greenwald**

Conservation biologist, Center for Biological Diversity