



DAILY GRIST

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Less Salmon, More Dammin'

**Northwest salmon to lose critical habitat;
Bush admin to keep dams**

A double dose of salmon news today: The Bush administration yesterday announced its intention to cut by more than 80 percent the miles of rivers and streams designated as critical habitat for threatened and endangered Northwest runs of salmon and steelhead.

The plan, which is subject to a 60-day public comment period, was drafted with assistance from Mark Rutzick, a former lawyer for the timber industry who sued the government over salmon protections for years before being appointed to the National Marine Fisheries Service last spring.

"As cynical as I am, I'm actually surprised at how bad this [plan] is," said David Hogan of the Center for Biological Diversity, an environmental group.

Also yesterday, the administration asserted that big hydroelectric dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers in the Northwest don't threaten the survival of wild fish runs (why? because they said so!) and declared that it would no longer consider dam removal as an option for restoring fish populations.