

FOREWORD

“That removal of the Project dams is necessary for the full restoration of the Elwha River ecosystem and native anadromous fisheries...”

These words in Public Law 102-495 laid the foundation for an entirely different approach to restore rivers impacted by dams. They insisted that dam removal be considered as one of the options for river restoration.

My name is Robert Elofson and I have the privilege of being the Elwha River Restoration Director for my Tribe, the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. We have worked for many years for the restoration of the Elwha River. Klallam translates as “the strong people,” and I feel we have lived up to our name with our efforts to restore our river.

The project requires the largest dam removal ever in the United States. The Elwha Dam is 105 ft tall and the Glines Canyon Dam is 210 ft tall. The average flow of the River is 1500 cfs. The Elwha Dam is located at river mile 4.9 and the Glines Canyon Dam is located at river mile 13.4. Neither dam has fish passage, which has dramatically reduced salmon populations in the Elwha River. Over 80% of the watershed is located in the Olympic National Park. This union of good protection and full restoration is an excellent chance to accomplish a wide ranging, thorough combination of research and monitoring on dam removal and river restoration processes.

The articles in this publication are the results of research by Tribal Staff and some of our strong allies working with us on the restoration. The scientists working for federal agencies, state agencies and universities that contributed to the papers in this publication have sought to provide a wealth of information on the Elwha River Restoration effort. This is a good beginning for establishing a baseline to compare with future work and recognizes many of the questions we want and need to answer during the process. By no means do they cover all or even a large segment of the knowledge that the project could provide. I cannot emphasize enough my hopes that there will be many, many more studies completed during the restoration.

A recurrent problem that continues to plague research efforts is the shortfall of funds and personnel. We will not be taking full advantage of this wonderful opportunity if we do not provide adequate funding and personnel for research and monitoring.

I have worked with many of the scientists who contributed to these articles. They have shown the same commitment and dedication to the Elwha Restoration Project as they have to the work represented in their papers. I am honored to have been asked to provide a forward to the contents of this publication. I hope these articles will expand your overall understanding of the Elwha River Restoration Project as they did mine.