

The Economics of Dam Building: Nez Perce Tribe and Global-Scale Development [Abstract]

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This paper considers the economics of dam building and global-scale development in the Nez Perce watersheds of the Snake and the Columbia rivers. First, I link the expansion of global capitalism to the rise of industrial agricultural and dam building on Nez Perce territorial lands and traditional use areas. Dam building has contributed to the growth of a global economy in dramatic and unexpected ways, and dam building has presented enormous challenges to Nez Perce culture and history tied to salmon. Second, I examine powerful forces, including the role of China, with ties to Nez Perce land and natural resources. My argument in doing so is to make a call for new and innovate scholarship in the American Indian and Indigenous studies literature that “unbinds” local realities and shows the connectedness of dam building and other development projects from an historical global environmental approach.

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