Nor'wester newsletter

Issue #676 April 24, 2019

Snake River Dams - Setting the Record Straight

The Snake River dams have been in the news again this week. At an event hosted by Boise State University to examine efforts to balance hydropower, salmon, farming and the environment, the topic of dam breaching became the focus of the event. Some speakers called for forums to be created to look at the impacts of potential dam breaching. Others wanted to just remove the dams immediately without additional discussion or study. As our *Nor'wester* readers know, federal agencies are already studying the river system - including dam breaching - and will have a draft report for the region to review in February. This effort is based in science, complies with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and includes opportunities for citizen review as well as significant collaboration with cooperating agencies like Northwest states and tribes. Calls for additional processes and forums that undermine the existing study are counterproductive, not based in science, and divert resources from the creation of a credible plan that is best for salmon and the Northwest.

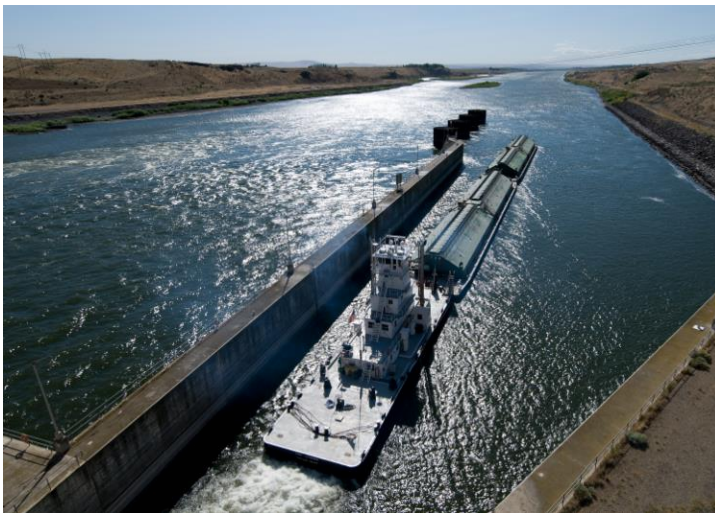
Each Snake River dam has a navigation lock that allows inland farmers access to international markets. The Snake River has had remarkably stable tonnage levels in the past 10 years. In 2017 alone, over 3.5 million tons of cargo were barged on the Snake River. It would have taken over 35,140 rail cars to carry this cargo, or over 135,000 semi-trucks. The Snake River is particularly important to our Northwest

In This Issue

PNWA Fact sheets

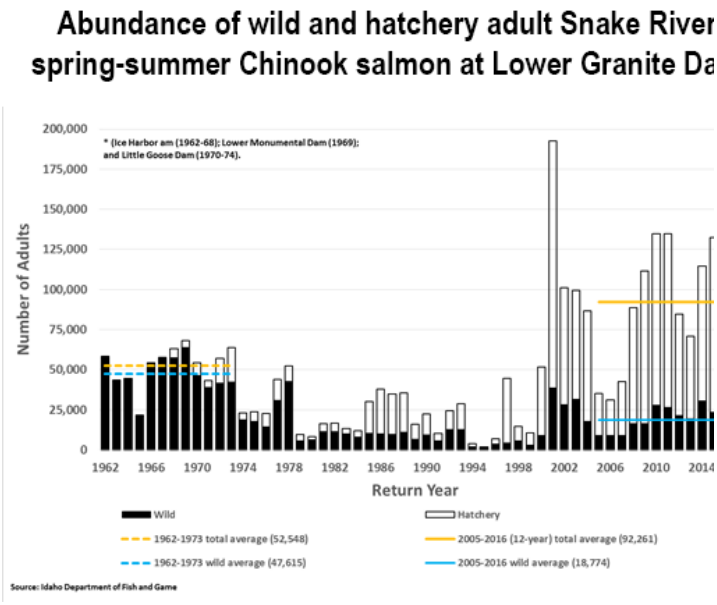
Upcoming Events

wheat farmers. The Snake River dams make it possibly for nearly 10% of all U.S. wheat exports to move in the most fuel-efficient, safest, lowest emission type of cargo transportation - barging.



Hydropower is a reliable, renewable domestic power source that produces no greenhouse gas emissions. Dams in the Northwest generate nearly 60% of our region's electricity. The Snake River dams are key contributors to the Pacific Northwest energy profile, and as a firm power source, they make it possible for intermittent renewables like wind and solar to integrate into our system. Plus, the lower Snake River dams are some of the most reliable and lowest-cost electricity sources of the 31 federal dams from which BPA markets power.

Salmon recovery in the Pacific Northwest is a collaborative effort by federal and state agencies, tribes, utilities, and countless other entities. Together we all work to address the many ways a salmon's life cycle can be affected by humans: hydropower, hatcheries, habitat, and harvest. Ocean conditions also play a major role in salmon health, in addition to significant impact from predators like birds, sea lions, and other fish. Major improvements have been made in fish ladders, dam design, optimized river flow and habitat restoration, resulting in steady improvements to salmon runs. Juvenile fish survival rates past each of the eight federal dams are now between 95% and 98%.



As conversations continue in the region and the federal study process moves forward, PNWA's members will continue to support clean renewable hydropower, efficient barge transportation, and science-based salmon recovery. For more information, please don't hesitate to contact a member of the PNWA team.

Follow us on Facebook

Pacific Northwest Waterways
Association, 4224 NE Halsey Street,Suite 325, Portland, OR 97213