



PACIFIC NORTHWEST WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION COLUMBIA SNAKE RIVER SYSTEM

Infosheet

IT'S OUR RIVER SYSTEM — LET'S KEEP IT STRONG

The Columbia Snake River System is the federal system of locks and dams that powers our homes, feeds our families, and shapes our lives. From Bellingham to Bandon and Astoria to Boise, it's what makes the Pacific Northwest strong and balanced—and we all must protect it.

Some in our region declare that breaching our hydroelectric dams is the only solution to save salmon and orcas. However, this approach does not acknowledge the complexity of environmental challenges facing our region today, nor the real impacts of dam removal on electricity generation, farming, air quality, economies, cultural resources, habitat, and more.

The people of our region rely on this system. We are committed to working together to balance all needs on our rivers, which includes supporting the communities and other critical systems that rely directly on the rivers.

It will take all of us, working together, to forge this path—and that's where you come in.

Join your voice with others who want a strong, working river system for strong, healthy communities.

- Learn more and share your perspective. Find us @PNWaterways on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).
- [Write your U.S. Congressperson](#) to encourage them to advocate for a strong, balanced system to support our communities and states
- **Write letters to the editor in your local newspaper** and share your perspective with others who may be less informed
- [Become a PNWA member](#) and be directly involved in advocacy efforts

Join the thousands of people and organizations in our region who believe we can have a working river system that allows all uses to thrive. Necessities like Tribal culture and fish survival can coexist with farmers who need water and businesses that need electricity. **Environmental and economic needs are not mutually exclusive—they walk side by side.**

KNOW THE FACTS

The Columbia Snake River System provides **90% of renewable power** in the Pacific Northwest.

The river system reduces traffic congestion and pollution. In 2019, it would have taken **150,784 semi-trucks** or **39,204 rail cars** to move the cargo that was barged on the Snake River.

Juvenile **fish survival rates** past each of the eight federal dams on the system are **between 95% and 98%**.

The four Lower Snake River dams alone provide enough **clean energy to power 1.87 million homes**.

Eliminating the clean power and efficient transportation provided by the Lower Snake River dams **would add to climate change** by increasing cumulative carbon emissions equivalent to **building a coal-fired power plant** like the one in Boardman, Oregon, every five or six years.

Breaching the dams would disproportionately affect communities that can least afford it. The 10 counties most affected by this scenario are primarily rural areas in which **1 in 5 people are already at or below the federal poverty level.**

Visit [RiverValues.com](https://www.rivervalues.com) for more river system facts and information.



WE BUILT OUR COMMUNITIES ON THE BEAUTY AND POWER OF OUR WATERWAYS

Water is at the heart of Pacific Northwest life, and our waterways tie together our diverse region. From Boise to Spokane, Wenatchee to Seattle, Olympia to Vancouver, and Portland to Bend, Northwest communities prosper because of the clean energy, abundant irrigation, efficient shipping, and unmatched recreational opportunities provided by the Columbia Snake River System.

Our region has invested extensive resources to create a world-class system of locks, dams, jetties, and other federal infrastructure. These investments:

- Keep the rivers safe for barges, cruise vessels, and recreational boaters
- Move goods more efficiently than ground transportation
- Improve fish passage and habitat
- Keep the system in good repair



Others may tell you about how the system, particularly the hydroelectric dams, is damaging our ecosystem. You might hear that breaching dams is the only way to save it. This is also untrue. **Our region continues to show the world that we can have a healthy economy and environment through good management practices and reinvestment in our natural resources.**

We can always improve, and we'll keep working for the system to be better, cleaner, more efficient, and more accommodating for all our communities.

The system works and we need it. **Day after day, it provides jobs, grows our food, moves our goods, supports hundreds of communities, and makes our economy strong.**

To learn more and get involved, visit [RiverValues.com](https://www.rivervalues.com)