



Nor'wester newsletter

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In Memoriam: Hal Douglas Hiemstra (1954-2023)

It is with heavy hearts that we mourn the [passing of Hal Hiemstra](#), a beloved member of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association family. Hal passed away unexpectedly on July 20, 2023. As we remember him, we are struck by the remarkable life he led and the profound impact he made on countless lives and communities here in the Northwest and beyond.



Born in Ontario, Oregon, Hal was the son of Petronella and Arthur Hiemstra. He embarked on a journey of learning that culminated in a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Oregon in 1979. His expertise in this field eventually brought him to Washington, DC, where he played a critical role in government affairs, representing diverse clients on issues ranging from transportation to environmental concerns.

He leaves behind his wife Dawn, daughters Kylie and Julia, siblings Ted, Glen, Art, and Petra, and numerous extended family members.

A celebration of Hal's life was held on August 13, 2023, at 12:30 p.m. at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in his honor to the [Mount St. Helens Institute](#), [Delaware Center for the Inland Bays](#), or [N Street Village](#).

Hal's legacy of kindness, service, and dedication will remain an inspiration to us all. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family and friends during this difficult time.

May he rest in peace.

PNWA Washington, D.C. Summer Advocacy Trip Recap

A few weeks ago, PNWA staff, along with some members, traveled back to the nation's capital to engage with members of our congressional delegation and their staff and federal agency officials.

We met with Steve Kopecky, USACE Deputy Chief of the Northwestern Division and Pacific Ocean Divisions, the White House's Office of Management and Budget, majority and minority staff from the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure and the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water, minority staff from the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, and staff from the Northwest Congressional delegation.

During this trip, we highlighted PNWA's 2024 appropriations requests, requests for policies and projects in WRDA 2024, potential solutions for regulatory problems, and provided updates on the Columbia River Treaty negotiations and the current mediation process for the Lower Snake River Dams.

For more information or to join a future PNWA member trip to DC, contact [Dena Horton](#).



Change of Command for Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District



Members and staff from the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association had the honor of attending the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District's change of command ceremony. This was truly a momentous occasion as COL Kathryn P. Sanborn assumed command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District. This ceremony, held in Seattle on August 1st, marks a significant leadership transition as COL Sanborn takes the helm as the district's 53rd commander, succeeding COL Alexander "Xander" Bullock.

COL Sanborn, with her distinguished career and diverse expertise, is set to lead a team of 845 dedicated professionals responsible for vital military construction efforts across Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Oregon. She steps into this command after serving as the South Pacific Division's deputy commander in San Francisco, California.

COL Sanborn is a graduate of the Engineer Officer Basic and Captain's Career Courses, Joint Engineer Operations Course, the Command and General Staff College, and the U.S. Army War College. A licensed Professional Engineer in Vermont and a certified Project Management Professional, Col. Sanborn holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from West Point, a Master of Science in Civil & Environmental Engineering from the University of Vermont, a Master of Science in Engineering Management and certificate in Construction Management with the University of Missouri-Rolla, a Master of Strategic Studies degree from the U.S. Army War College., and a doctorate in Civil Engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology.

COL Sanborn's emphasis on collaboration and her exceptional academic background, including a doctorate in Civil Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology, align with PNWA's mission to foster partnerships and address the unique challenges facing the Pacific Northwest's waterways community.

On behalf of PNWA, thank you to retired Colonel Xander Bullock for your service and partnership with our organization and its membership. We look forward to continuing the fantastic work of the Seattle District under Commander Kathryn Sanborn.

Columbia River Treaty Negotiation & Upcoming Listening Session

The 18th round of negotiations for the modernization of the Columbia River Treaty regime took place on August 10-11 in Seattle, Washington. The U.S. negotiation team, led by the Department of State, has been working towards an agreement that addresses the needs of the Columbia Basin with a focus on managing flood risks,

hydropower operations, flexibility, tribal perspectives, and ecosystem provisions.

Currently, the flood control arrangement between the U.S. and Canada under the current treaty is set to expire in September 2024. PNWA has been persistently advocating and expressing our concerns to the State Department and the Northwestern Delegation for the U.S. Government to negotiate a compromise before the flood control arrangement expires. We have long stated that any changes to the current river operations and flows will have severe consequences on navigation within the system.

The U.S. government will host a virtual listening session on August 22 from 5 to 6:30 PM PT. This session offers an opportunity for individuals to participate in discussions about the modernization of the treaty regime. Register for the session [here](#), and for inquiries about the event, contact columbiarivertreaty@state.gov.

PNWA staff will be attending this session, and we also encourage our members to join and participate by registering and attending this virtual listening session.

Environmental Groups Send Letter of Intent to Sue U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Seeking Lower Snake River Dam Removal

Several environmental organizations have recently expressed their intent to sue the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), alleging that hot water conditions caused by the Lower Snake River dams are leading to the death and injury of endangered Snake River sockeye salmon. The groups involved (which included Columbia Riverkeeper, Idaho Conservation League, Idaho Rivers United, and the Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association) argue that the Corps' actions are in violation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), putting the survival of the at-risk sockeye salmon at risk.

The letter of intent raises the possibility of seeking court-ordered removal of the Lower Snake River dams as a potential solution to prevent further harm to the sockeye salmon population. However, this proposal has sparked debates about the potential economic repercussions, as the dams play a crucial role in energy production, irrigation, and navigation in the region, and their removal would have significant consequences. There are also questions about the constitutionality of seeking court-ordered removal of the dams, given that they are authorized by Congress and can only be de-authorized through congressional approval.

This notice of intent to sue has been announced just as the mediation regarding Columbia River System Operations comes to a close on August 31, 2023. As part of the mediation, the federal government had committed to exploring Snake River dam removal in more detail, despite the significant economic and environmental impacts of dam breaching. The Inland Ports and Navigation Group (IPNG), a subset of the PNWA membership, represents the voice of navigation, agriculture, irrigation, and utilities in these discussions and will provide information to PNWA members and colleagues as circumstances evolve over the next several weeks.

**Join us for the 2023 PNWA
Annual Convention in
Vancouver!**

Make plans today to join us for our



highly anticipated Annual Convention, taking place at the Hilton Hotel in Vancouver, Washington, from October 11-13th.

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