

River Transportation Supports Billions in Commerce

Maritime trade has defined the Northwest for more than 150 years. Since the first load of wheat left the Columbia River in 1869 on an ocean-going vessel bound for Liverpool, England, the role of the river in commerce has grown exponentially. Today, the Columbia and Snake rivers provide a transportation corridor that moves over \$23 billion in waterborne cargo annually. Locks at the dams provide a route for goods 465 miles inland to Lewiston, Idaho. River transportation and activity at 36 deepwater ports, located on the lower Columbia River, and inland ports, located on the lower Snake River, are the source of thousands of jobs and millions of dollars for local economies in the Northwest.

International Trade

The Columbia and Snake River system is a vital link between inland producers and international export markets.

- Every year, over 42 million tons of commercial cargo is sent overseas from the ports on the Lower Columbia River.
- Every year, more than 50 million tons of commercial cargo moves up and down the Columbia and Snake Rivers between Astoria, Oregon and Lewiston, Idaho.
- The Northwest is ranked as the nation's #1 U.S. export gateway for wheat and barley and #1 on the West Coast for wood exports and #2 on the West Coast for automobile imports.
- The Northwest is the third largest grain export gateway in the world, with over ten million tons of wheat exported annually through Columbia River ports.
- The Columbia and Snake River system is also the first and most successful container-on-barge system in the country with nearly 10 percent of the river's container exports arriving by barge.



Economic Value

The commerce provided by the Columbia and Snake Rivers fuels the Northwest's economy.

- A study by the Columbia River ports identified 40,000 port-related Northwest jobs. Firms that ship cargo via the Columbia River employ an additional 59,000 workers annually.

- Barging is the least-costly mode of inland transportation and significantly reduces costs over other modes of transportation.
- Cruise ships carry 15,000 passengers a year on five to seven-day tours on the river, bringing an estimated \$15 million to \$20 million in revenue to local economies.
- A total volume of waterborne trade is expected to expand at an average annual rate of 1.7 percent per year through 2030.

The Cleanest Mode of Transport

River transportation keeps our air clean and saves fossil fuel.

- Every year, barging keeps 700,000 trucks off highways that run through the sensitive airshed of the scenic Columbia River Gorge.
- A four-barge tow can move 14,000 tons of cargo at a time. By comparison, a rail car can handle 100 tons and a truck can carry 29 tons.
- Fuel efficiency by barge is also impressive at 576 ton-miles per gallon. By comparison, a truck gets 155 ton-miles per gallon and rail gets 413.

Northwest RiverPartners is a partnership of farmers, electric utilities, ports, and large and small businesses in the Pacific Northwest. We are dedicated to ensuring the Columbia and Snake remain living, working rivers to benefit families and businesses in the region.

www.nwriverpartners.org

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