

State and Tribal Columbia Basin Fish Accords

Beginning in 2008, the federal agencies that own and operate the Federal Columbia River Power System – Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Bureau of Reclamation – entered into unprecedented fisheries agreements with Indian tribes and Northwest states. These agreements, known as the Columbia Basin Fish Accords, commit BPA to provide \$100 million a year for 10 years for habitat, hatchery, and lower Columbia estuary projects to benefit the basin's fish, particularly salmon and lamprey.

BPA has stated their overall fish and wildlife costs were \$644.1 million in 2012 and \$682.4 million in 2013, including capital investment and Accord projects, totaling over \$14 billion dollars since the 1970s. Since 2008, BPA has spent an average of \$100 million per year on Accord projects in habitat improvements; hatchery construction; and, research, monitoring, and evaluation projects. Currently, 10 to 20 percent of a typical family's electric bill goes toward fish and wildlife costs, depending on the utility that provides service.

RiverPartners supports the collaboration the Accords represent, but has pushed for transparency and accountability given the magnitude of the dollars being spent. Those paying the bills – Northwest families and businesses – need to be assured the Accords provide the benefits for protected salmon they promise.

RiverPartners is adamant that Accord projects undergo independent science review to help ensure that happens. The region's Independent Science Review Board currently assesses the scientific rigor of Accord project proposals before they are funded, and the Council ultimately approves projects as part of its regional fish and wildlife program.



The Accords are intended to assist the federal agencies in meeting their obligations under the law, in this case the Endangered Species Act, which requires them to protect salmon affected by operation of the federal hydroelectric system. The Accords are a part of the 2010 federal salmon plan – or Biological Opinion – developed to minimize hydro impacts on protected salmon, and those Accords have been incorporated into the 2014 Biological Opinion as well. The Accords acknowledge the Sovereign role of the tribes and they offer tribes and state fishery managers greater certainty in project funding.

Likewise, the Accords provide electric customers and businesses with greater certainty. Accord signatories agree not to pursue further litigation over federal hydro system operations or support removing Snake River hydro dams for the next 10 years. The Accords also promote a spirit of collaboration among formerly dueling stakeholders over salmon protection in the Northwest.

The Columbia Basin Fish Accords are between the three federal agencies that own and operate the Federal Columbia River Power System and the following tribes and states:

- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation
- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC)
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation
- Shoshone Bannock Tribes
- State of Idaho
- State of Washington
- State of Montana

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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