

Email:

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Subject:

Breach the Lower Snake River Dams

Message:

The 2002 Corps of Engineers' \$31 million Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Feasibility Study, aimed at recovering threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead, left lower Snake River dam breaching as the "best choice." But the Corps merely modified the dams to enhance fish passage.

Seventeen years and a billion dollars later, juvenile survival through the Snake-Columbia's eight dams and reservoirs has little improved.

Concurrently, barge shipments declined—no paper, pulp, lumber, logs, soybeans, lentils, chickpeas, or petroleum travel by barge today—transport is mostly grain, which has also declined by 45%. Growers increasingly use rail and taxpayer subsidies to buoy the river system.

Additionally, Northwest energy sourcing expanded, creating a 17% surplus, much generated by thirty-one dams. In 2008, surplus energy sold for \$60 per Mwh; today it is closer to \$20. Bonneville Power Administration, which markets power from those dams to Oregon, Washington, and Idaho Public Utility Districts is facing a fiscal cliff. The four lower Snake River dams produce less than 4% of the Northwest's power. The loss of that power could easily be absorbed. These dams are aged, their turbines in need of \$1 billion in rehabilitation, and they're driving salmon and steelhead to extinction.

It is time to breach the lower Snake River dams.