

FCRPS BiOp Implementation

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December 2010

Location

The Dalles Dam, Columbia River

Biological Objective

Improve downstream passage survival for listed and non-listed fish

Species

ESA Listed Salmon & Steelhead

Partner

US Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District

References

Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) 2008 Biological Opinion

FCRPS RPA #19

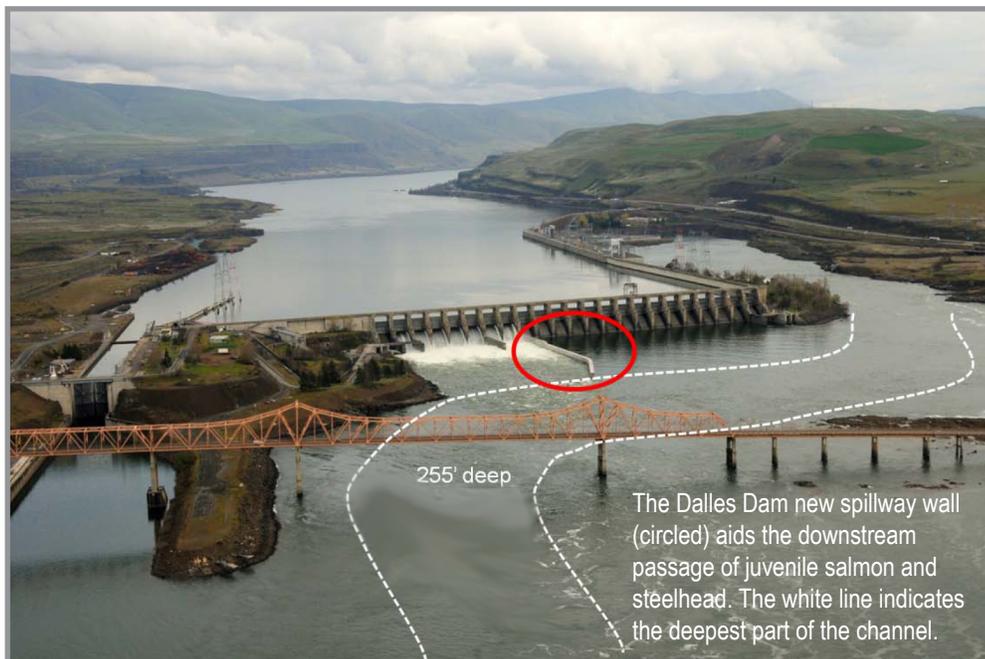
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New wall boosts salmon survival at The Dalles Dam

A new \$51 million wall constructed in the Columbia River below The Dalles Dam significantly boosted survival of juvenile salmon and steelhead migrating downstream past the dam this year, according to research presented Tuesday at a major gathering of fish scientists in Portland.

Studies showed that 96 percent of yearling Chinook salmon passed the dam safely this year, up by 4 percent over similar tests in 2004 and 2005. The studies also found that 94 percent of sub-yearling Chinook passed downstream safely, up by 7 percent. Also, 95 percent of steelhead survived past the dam, although past steelhead survival is not available for comparison. The data was presented at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Anadromous Fish Evaluation Program Annual Review conference in Portland in December 2010.



Survival targets established by the National Marine Fisheries Service's 2008 biological opinion on the operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System for salmon and steelhead listed under the Endangered Species Act are 96 percent for both yearling Chinook salmon and steelhead smolts, and 93 percent for sub-yearling Chinook salmon.

Fish biologists with the Corps' Portland District, which operates The Dalles Dam, credit the construction of the wall between spillway bays eight and nine for much of

the increase in survival. The wall is 10 feet wide and 850 feet long and helps guide young fish passing through the dam's spillways into the safest part of the river, away from predators.

About 80 percent of juvenile fish pass over The Dalles Dam's spillway. The new wall directs the flow of water from the spillway to the deepest part of the river's channel, moving young fish away from low flow and shallow areas where they are at risk of predation from other fish and birds. Northwest power consumers will repay the costs of the wall over the coming years.

"The Dalles spillway wall is the latest example of how the improvements we're making in the hydro system are helping ensure that more young fish reach the ocean safely and meeting the terms of the 2008 biological opinion," said Langeslay. "Although we have not yet fully achieved our goals, we've achieved the largest increase in survival of any of the hydro system improvements outlined in the BiOp, and expect even better results in the future as we add additional predation deterrents."

Abstracts of the 2010 Lower Columbia River Survival Studies and other presentations at the 2010 Anadromous Fish Evaluation Program Annual Review are available on Portland District's website at www.nwp.usace.army.mil/environment.

For more information about the Corps' Columbia River Fish Mitigation program, visit the Northwestern Division website at www.nwd.usace.army.mil/ps.

The Corps is a member of the Federal Caucus, a group of ten federal agencies that work together to protect and recover Endangered Species Act listed fish in the Columbia River Basin.