



### New Era of Salmon Recovery At Hand

This week, Northwest RiverPartners asked members of the region's Congressional delegation to unite behind and actively support the new Biological Opinion. As stated in our letter: "Far from the 'status quo', fundamental modifications made to the federal hydro system over the years have yielded increased fish survivals. Together with the new Biological Opinion...these advancements demonstrate a model of collaboratively designed change attained after years of scientific review, negotiation and collaboration".

The Northwest is seeing the fruits of its ongoing investment in improving the hydro system for fish, and we wanted to share that story with Congress and other leaders. Northwest families and businesses have spent over \$9 billion on salmon recovery since the 1980s, and this latest salmon plan has them spending that much again over the next 10 years. ***This plan represents the largest investment in species recovery this country has ever seen.*** In tough economic times, we think this commitment is extraordinary.

The new [Biological Opinion](#) (BiOp), or salmon plan, offers the hope that we can put our time and energy where they belong – to repairing damaged streamside habitat, reforming or eliminating outmoded hatcheries, and revising harvest policies that cut too deeply into the numbers of salmon and steelhead listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

We ask members of Congress to support the BiOp publicly and to back its implementation together with the vast majority of federal, state, tribal sovereigns and river users in the Northwest that already support it. The new plan provides a collaborative, science-based alternative that will provide real on-the-ground benefits to the listed fish as opposed to the divisive legal wrangling and politicking that has gone on for decades over salmon recovery.

While the lion's share of the funding to carry out measures in the plan will come from Northwest electricity customers, there are elements that require Congressional appropriations. We will need our delegation's support to secure adequate funding.

The Biological Opinion must now pass muster with the federal court. The stakes that face the Northwest could not be higher.



As we now see it, on one side in this legal battle is a plan based on the best-available science shaped through regional collaboration, which will continue the forward momentum and successes. On the other side, looms ominous uncertainty about how the river will be run, along with more years of costly, corrosive legal wrangling – none of which benefits listed salmon and steelhead.

*Northwest RiverPartners is a partnership of farmers, electric utilities and large and small businesses in the Pacific Northwest, joined together to ensure that the Columbia and Snake rivers remain living, working rivers. It was founded on the belief that these rivers are the Northwest's greatest natural resource providing residents with clean, affordable and renewable electricity, flood control, irrigation for our farm lands, healthy fish and wildlife, maritime trade, and a multitude of recreational opportunities. For more information, please visit [www.nwrivernpartners.org](http://www.nwrivernpartners.org).*