



## Competing Uses Vie for Constrained River System

BPA recently held a well-attended public meeting to discuss the Columbia River high-water operations in June. From June 1-14, extremely high and unexpected precipitation, rain induced snow pack runoff, and abnormally low temperatures combined to create a near crisis for hydro system operations. The agency faced multiple challenges: having too much hydropower and wind generation for the amount of load, maintaining system reliability and not increasing gas levels in the river from spill operations that could harm migrating fish. The [June Current Reflections](#) provides more details about the event.

We commend BPA for its handling of the June event, but it turns out this might not be an isolated incident. **BPA says there is a one-in-three chance of it repeating every year.**

System flexibility becomes more constrained as BPA provides balancing reserves for the roughly 3,000 MW of wind generation currently interconnected to the federal system. And that amount will likely grow rapidly in the near term. During the high-water/high-wind incident in June, BPA did what it could to shut down regional thermal generation and replace it with *free* federal power. For the future, BPA is also examining how it should address curtailments of wind resources, and the amount and type of compensation that should be provided.



RiverPartners has a large stake in this and other issues related to the overall operation of the federal hydroelectric system. Some parties may advocate short-sighted solutions to high-water operations that are inimical to our interests. We would be wary of remedies that could lead to the further degradation of our low-cost and carbon-free power supply.

Our mission is to ensure that these increasingly constrained hydroelectric resources are operating in a manner that applies the best available science for fish, while securing the best value for BPA's customers and other river users. There are solutions to the high-water operations problems, but we can't sit on the fence and assume our interests will be addressed by others. There were a lot of folks at BPA's recent meeting, including public power utilities, investor-owned utilities, wind developers and operators, fish and wildlife advocates, and a smattering of other groups. And everyone has a stake.

This is one of many challenges facing RiverPartners. Executive Director Terry Flores will need all of our support in the months and years ahead. Problems related to river operations are often complex, and the solutions can be difficult to explain in easy terms. We need to stay focused and pursue answers that reflect our commonly-held beliefs.



John Saven, Chairman

*Northwest River Partners is an alliance of farmers, utilities, ports and businesses that promote the economic and environmental benefits of the Columbia and Snake Rivers and salmon recovery policies based on sound science.*

For more information, please visit [www.nwriverpartners.org](http://www.nwriverpartners.org).