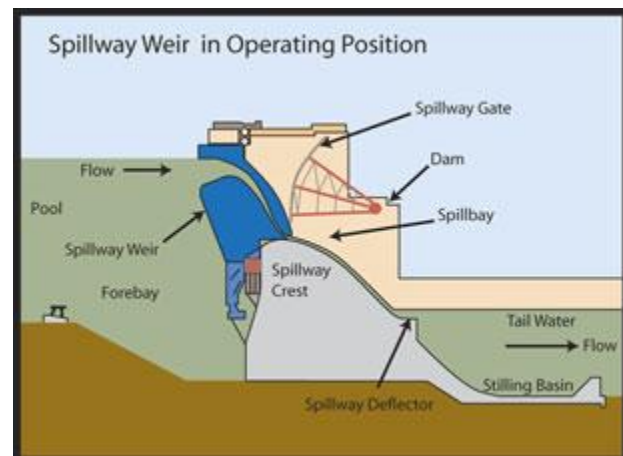


### Salmon Improvements in the River, the Untold Story

A revolution has taken place on the Columbia and Snake rivers. While we wait to see what happens in the courtroom, where the legal wrangling is still playing out, it's a good time to reflect on the past decade and our accomplishments for salmon and steelhead. We have achieved great results with a massive program to benefit fish protected under the Endangered Species Act. Yet, this story of immense investment and measurable progress is all but lost as attention instead focuses on courtroom antics and calls for dam removal.

The eight federal dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers have undergone major overhauls to successfully aid fish in their journey downstream to the ocean. Big changes have been made at every dam, including the installation of mammoth spillway weirs or "fish slides" at Lower Granite, Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose, McNary, and John Day. A highly effective "corner collector" has been constructed at Bonneville Dam, attracting and moving young fish past the dam unharmed. A new spill wall at The Dalles Dam and spill deflectors at the dams also make for safer travels for the young fish.



Northwest families and businesses have invested over a billion dollars in these massive modifications and young salmon and steelhead survival rates have improved markedly. Overall, in-river survival is three times higher than it was 30 years ago. The fish slides at the dams post survival rates of 97 to 100 percent at most projects, and the corner collector passes fish at a 100 percent survival rate.

In addition to structural modifications, significant changes have been made in the way the dams are operated with fish migration and survival taking precedent over power generation. Substantially more river flow is devoted to help fish move downstream during the spring and summer migration months, boosting survivals. Other successful programs have reduced predation by birds, sea lions, and other aquatic animals which take their toll on salmon.

Beyond the dams, habitat projects throughout the four Northwest states have restored productive areas for salmon to spawn and rear both in tributaries and the Columbia River estuary. In the tributaries, government agencies, watershed groups and landowners have teamed up to restore spawning and rearing grounds, open channels for fish passage, and provide more water in stream for fish. Estuary programs benefit multiple species by protecting and restoring riparian and off-channel zones, and reconnecting wetlands and floodplains. Where these improvements have been made, the fish have quickly responded.

Progress also has been made to reform hatcheries, and “safety-net” programs which artificially produce fish to prevent extinction and preserve genetic integrity are in place. Record-breaking runs of Snake River sockeye over the past two years are testimony to the success of one such safety-net effort in Idaho.

While attention has focused on the litigation churning away in the courtroom, there has been continued great progress in the river. Federal agencies and their partners in fish management have continued unabated, carrying out projects with demonstrable benefits for the fish. The fish don’t care about hearings and briefs, they want improved living conditions and that’s what the region is giving them.

Quick Links: [USACE PowerPoint on Salmon and Snake & Columbia River Dam Improvements](#)



*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.nwrivernpartners.org](http://www.nwrivernpartners.org).*