



## A “60 Minutes” Fish Tale

RiverPartners learned last week that CBS’ “60 Minutes” planned to reprise a story produced in 2000 about salmon recovery on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. The segment was misinformed and biased eight years ago. Today, the inaccuracies are even more glaring. So much has changed (the segment aired June 22<sup>nd</sup>) it was like watching an eight-year-old story on the workings of the Internet. The geriatric account couldn’t do justice to what is happening -- and working – on behalf of salmon in 2008:

- The Northwest has a new science-based, and collaboratively developed salmon plan that takes into account all aspects of the salmon’s lifecycle and acknowledges that changes to the hydro system alone cannot bring them back. The new plan, released this spring, uses the best science available and takes into account the role of ocean conditions and climate change.
- The region is working collaboratively in a way never seen before. The new plan has the support of a broad coalition, including Northwest Indian tribes, federal agencies, and the Northwest states (except for Oregon).
- Investments in salmon recovery are paying off, funded by the region’s families and businesses through electricity rates, not by the federal government as indicated by 60 Minutes. Results include millions more young salmon safely passing through the dams; adult salmon moving more quickly upstream, the re-opening of over 1,200 miles of habitat, and dramatic reductions in predation (over one-half of Caspian terns have been relocated), to mention a few of the successes.
- Real facts, not convenient rhetoric, are proving we can have healthy salmon runs and maintain a clean, renewable, climate-friendly hydro system. The Northwest enjoys carbon-free electricity, with the Snake River dams keeping 5.4 millions tons of CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere each year, while survival numbers are going up for Columbia River salmon and steelhead stocks listed under the Endangered Species Act.

In fact, in stark contrast to the fishery collapse off California and the lower portion of Oregon, the Columbia and Snake Rivers are a bright spot with over 152,000 Chinook adults returning to Bonneville Dam, near the 10-year average and the highest in the last three years. Over 30,000 sockeye have returned – the *highest in a half-century or more*. For folks like Northwest RiverPartners, who have followed the evolution of salmon recovery in the Columbia River Basin, the CBS decision to rehash the 60 Minutes story was confounding. We would rather celebrate a new era of cooperation and the strong Chinook returns past Bonneville Dam this year.

That’s the real story.

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.nwriverpartners.org](http://www.nwriverpartners.org).