

Fact Sheet

September 2018

Historic Columbia Basin Fish Accords: 10 years of accomplishments for fish and wildlife



Benefits that will last for generations

Ten years ago, the Bonneville Power Administration partnered with seven tribes, two federal agencies and three states to sign the historic Columbia Basin Fish Accords. The agreements committed hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding for fish operations, habitat and hatchery actions over a 10-year period. The Accords led to hundreds of critical, on-the-ground actions to benefit fish and strengthened partnerships in the region. The agreements also resulted in better projects and more efficient implementation through cost sharing and cost management.

Who partnered with Bonneville for the Accords?

- Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon



The Klickitat Watershed Enhancement Project with the Yakama Nation averaged a cost share of \$5.50 for every BPA dollar invested. This project removed 8 miles of asphalt road, reconnected 31 acres of floodplain, removed a railroad bridge and 34 culverts, and installed tens of thousands of native plants on 60 acres of habitat.

- Shoshone Bannock Tribes
- Kalispel Tribe of Indians
- Idaho
- Washington
- Montana
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Bureau of Reclamation



Why did the action agencies implement the Accords?

The Columbia Basin Fish Accords were an important element of the action agencies' mitigation strategy for endangered salmon and steelhead, and the agreements benefited other wildlife as well.

The action agencies are the three federal agencies — Bonneville, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation — responsible for addressing the adverse effects of the Columbia River System on fish and wildlife, consistent with federal laws such as the Endangered Species Act and Northwest Power Act. The action agencies work together to protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife. They also ensure the system is operated so fish and wildlife receive equitable treatment with other project purposes.

Fish and wildlife mitigation and environmental compliance are essential aspects of BPA's statutory mandates and business, and these actions reflect Bonneville's core values of trustworthy stewardship, operational excellence, and collaborative relationships.

Overhauling the Columbia River System and its operations for fish has been the

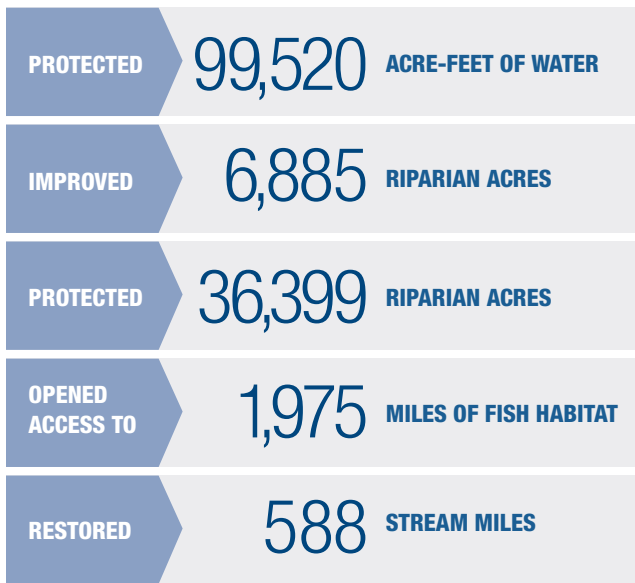
centerpiece of the federal agencies' mitigation strategy. BPA and its partners, including Accord partners, have made substantial progress and met the Northwest Power Act's mandates for anadromous fish: improving survival at the dams and providing flows to improve production, migration and survival. Approximately 96 percent of spring-migrating salmon and 93 percent of summer-migrating salmon now safely travel past each dam. Fish travel times and survival per mile are approaching those of an undammed river.



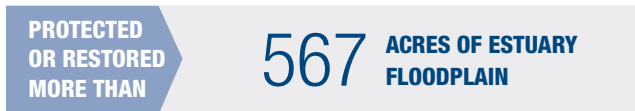
Partnerships through the Accords help to fund hatcheries such as the expansion of the Walla Walla Hatchery near Milton-Freewater, Oregon. Once construction is completed, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation will release hundreds of thousands of salmon and steelhead annually. Tribal hatchery programs increase fish abundance, preserve genetic diversity and reduce the extinction risk for endangered fish.

What did the Accords accomplish for habitat?

TRIBUTARY CONSERVATION (2008 TO 2018)



ESTUARY CONSERVATION (2008 TO 2018)



Pacific lamprey returns are also on the rise. Lamprey, a prehistoric fish native to the Columbia River Basin and treasured by Native American people, were functionally extinct until recently. Less than five years ago, only a few-hundred returned each year. In the spring of 2018, more than 2,600 of the ancient fish migrated up the Umatilla River to spawn.

Bonneville and other federal agencies also implement habitat and hatchery programs. The agencies strive to achieve biological objectives in the most cost-effective manner, using an ecosystem-based approach to benefit both fish and wildlife. Under the Accords, the agencies are restoring fish habitat in tributaries of the mainstem



Fish passing through Bonneville Dam are seen from the visitor center viewing window.



Chinook salmon appeared in the newly built Catherine Creek stream channel, a tributary to the Grande Ronde River in Oregon, within days after flows were introduced. Over a period of years, BPA and the Umatilla Tribe rehabilitated a 4-mile section of the creek, restoring its floodplain to the way it was decades ago. Since the new habitat was created, the number of young salmon has increased tenfold. This project received a Governor's Conservation Award in 2017.

Columbia River and estuary. Hatcheries add fish to the river while protecting the genetics of wild fish. We are reducing the number of salmonids eaten by birds, other fish and marine mammals.

What happens now?

The action agencies and their partners are proposing four-year extensions to the Accords and have begun a public comment period on their proposal.

The Accords are just one part of Bonneville's Fish and Wildlife Program. Our other ongoing efforts are providing benefits to fish and wildlife, and we have built many strong partnerships that will support collaborative efforts long after the Accords expire.

How to build on the success of the Accords and where to focus future conservation efforts are questions BPA is working to answer now. To that end, BPA continues to collaborate with regional implementation partners to help prioritize and manage its Fish and Wildlife Program costs.

