

We need to restore the Columbia River for future generations. That is why UCUT and our partners are planning and advocating for the future of the Columbia River Basin—both in restoring its ecosystem and reintroducing salmon into the Upper Columbia.

We work for the benefit of all.

RESTORING
SALMON
— to the —
UPPER
COLUMBIA
RIVER BASIN

HOW FISH PASSAGE
WILL AFFECT DAMS
AND YOU:

- Our intent is to not use Endangered Species Act-listed fish for reintroduction. We will be using non-listed populations for pilot studies, to avoid regulatory burden to landowners and managers.
- Stream standards and timber practices and regulations won't change with salmon reintroduction and fish passage. In fact, if we focus on the health of the river and its ecosystem, economic opportunities and land values are likely to increase.
- We will work with existing dams and infrastructure to find solutions that support the health of salmon, as well as meet the needs of our communities. Adult and juvenile fish passage can function within existing operations of dams and reservoirs without changing the water used for irrigation and power generation.



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THE SITUATION

The Columbia River once produced some of the largest salmon runs on earth, estimated to be 10 to 16 million fish per year. Today, only a fraction return to spawn. None reach waters upstream of Chief Joseph Dam.

Since time immemorial, indigenous people in the Columbia Basin sustained a way of life dependent on a healthy ecosystem. Fish were a mainstay of diet—physically and spiritually. Over the course of the 20th century multiple dams were built in the Upper Columbia, all without fish passage. The development of these dams is responsible for the loss of over 1,100 miles of salmon and steelhead habitat above Chief Joseph Dam.

The Columbia River once produced the largest salmon runs on earth, estimated to be 10 to 16 million. Today, only a fraction return to spawn. None return to Rufus Woods Reservoir. None return to Lake Roosevelt. None return to the Sanpoil or Spokane Rivers. None return to Canada. Salmon and their benefits have been confined to downstream reaches of the Columbia River, depriving our region of cultural, ecological, and economic opportunities.

1. Salmon are a keystone species.

They are an essential food source for many animals, including bears, otters, eagles, orcas and humans. Because they migrate up rivers from the ocean, they carry important nutrients from marine to terrestrial ecosystems. Their bodies don't just feed animals but provide nourishment for forests as well. When their numbers decline, so do the benefits they provide, impairing the ecosystems that depend on them.

THE IMPACT

Our whole Basin has suffered from this loss of salmon. For thousands of years, the Columbia River Basin relied on salmon as a keystone species¹ that affected the health of humans, wildlife, other fish, habitat and water quality.

Salmon are sacred to tribes and First Nations. The loss of salmon impacted our diets and health, lifestyles and culture. We weren't consulted or considered when salmon were blocked from our waters, and we didn't receive restitution. Four hatcheries were built to mitigate the loss of fish when the dams were constructed. But those are downstream and were built for others, not our region. More needs to be done.

The health of the Columbia River and its tributaries affects everyone. These rivers provide water for our cities, power, irrigation, transportation, and flood control. In total, Columbia River Basin annually provides \$198 billion in services and natural capital.

It is estimated that a modest 10 percent increase in ecosystem-based function² would add \$19 billion per year to the basin's value.

THE SOLUTION

It is time to right historic wrongs. The rights of native peoples were not honored at the time the U.S. and Canadian governments built the dams that have so fundamentally altered the ecosystems of the Columbia River Basin—and altered our way of life and culture.

Technologies exist to effectively pass salmon over these dams. Floating surface collectors gather large numbers of juvenile fish in highly fluctuating reservoirs, passing them downstream of high head dams. Whooshh technology uses a pressurized tube to gently move adults over dams. These technologies have been tested at other dams and require little power and water to function.

Opening our region to salmon may be crucial for their long-term survival as they face climate change.³ Rivers at higher latitudes

and elevations are expected to have the conditions necessary as water temperatures increase downstream.

Now is a crucial time for action as there are significant policies being revised or drafted: Columbia River Treaty, Columbia River Basin Fish & Wildlife Program Amendment process, and the Columbia River System Operations Environmental Impact Statement.

In addition to reducing flood risk and generating power, we believe the health of the river and its ecosystem should be included in its planning and management. We propose that restoring fish passage and reintroducing anadromous fish be investigated and implemented through all relevant domestic and international processes.

2. Ecosystem-based function.

Columbia Basin tribes view ecosystem-based function of the Columbia Basin watershed as its ability to provide, protect and nurture cultural resources, traditions, values and landscapes throughout its length and breadth. Clean and abundant water that is sufficient to sustain healthy populations of fish, wildlife, and plants is vital to holistic ecosystem-based function and life itself.

3. With predicted climate change,

it's important to provide additional habitat for salmon at higher elevations. Many current salmon habitats in the U.S. may be lost to intolerable temperature conditions. We need to restore fish access to historical habitats where water temperatures should remain cool—another reason to provide access into the Upper Columbia River Basin.

We all need to work together

Help us restore salmon to the Upper Columbia River.

- Vocalize your support of the health of the river and salmon.
- Contact city, county, state and federal officials.
- Support our feasibility evaluations.
- Advocate for policies and legislation supporting reintroduction.
- Spread the word with your friends, family and neighbors.
- Learn more at UCUT.org.

