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Access restored to White Salmon River after PacifiCorp's safe, successful Condit Dam removal

Whitewater experts stress safety; remind river users to avoid sensitive plant areas, respect local cabin owners

WHITE SALMON, Wash. – A year after a dynamite blast punched a hole in the Condit Dam, the last remnants of the structure are gone and access restrictions on the White Salmon River are now lifted downstream of Northwestern Park. Caution is still advised as the rapids on the lower river are significant.

“This has been a long journey for PacifiCorp and the partners in the settlement agreement that led to the Condit Dam removal,” said Todd Olson, program manager for PacifiCorp. “Work still remains in restoring area vegetation and demobilizing equipment from the work area, but this has been a very successful project. No one from the public has been hurt, and there have been no lost-time injuries among our contractors during more than 64,000 hours worked on the project. We want to especially thank the local community for understanding that access restrictions have been necessary to assure safety, and for abiding by them.”

The last pieces of the dam came out in September. Just last week, PacifiCorp's Vancouver, Wash.-based contractor, J.R. Merit, completed removal of a large logjam that would have significantly blocked boats drifting the river. Experienced guides from the local rafting community have inspected the river from the Northwestern Lake Road Bridge to the White Salmon's confluence with the Columbia River and confirmed that major obstacles are gone, though some rapids in the area are for experts only.

“The restoration of a free-flowing river is an exciting event for the whitewater boating community,” said Thomas O'Keefe, Pacific Northwest stewardship director for American Whitewater. “Paddling the restored reach will be a treasured, yet challenging, experience for many. Downstream from the stretch of river near Northwestern Park, the river enters the White Salmon Narrows, a dramatic canyon guarded by a rapid with powerful hydraulics that only expert paddlers should attempt to navigate.”

Some access restrictions will remain along the river banks, where signs will identify areas recently planted with native vegetation. Also, O'Keefe reminded water enthusiasts to respect the

privacy and property of cabin owners in the area. Do not park on cabin access roads or traverse through cabin areas. River access should be only at the public access point at Northwestern Park.

Settlement parties to the Condit Dam removal agreement originally signed in 1999 include: American Rivers, American Whitewater, Columbia Gorge Audubon Society, Columbia Gorge Coalition, Columbia River United, Federation of Fly Fishers, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Friends of the Earth, Friends of the White Salmon, The Mountaineers, Rivers Council of Washington, The Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, Washington Trout, Washington Wilderness Coalition, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, the Yakama Nation, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Washington Department of Ecology, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and PacifiCorp.

Facts about the Condit Dam removal

- The project was located approximately 3.3 miles upstream from the confluence of the White Salmon and Columbia rivers. The dam was a **125-foot high, 471-foot long** concrete gravity diversion dam, with an intake structure that directed water into a 13.5-foot diameter by 5,100-foot long wood stave flow line. Approximately 30,000 cubic yards of material were removed in the decommissioning work.
- Removal opened approximately **33 miles of new spawning and rearing grounds for steelhead and 14 miles for salmon** in the White Salmon River basin. In the summer of 2011, fish biologists moved more than 500 salmon upstream of the dam, which spawned in their new habitat that fall and then descended the White Salmon River unimpeded by the dam.

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About PacifiCorp

PacifiCorp is one of the lowest-cost electricity producers in the United States, serving more than 1.7 million customers in the West. PacifiCorp operates as Pacific Power in Oregon, Washington and California, and as Rocky Mountain Power in Utah, Wyoming and Idaho. With a generating capability of more than 10,620 megawatts from coal, hydro, gas-fired combustion turbines and renewable wind and geothermal power, the company works to meet growing energy demand while protecting and enhancing the environment.