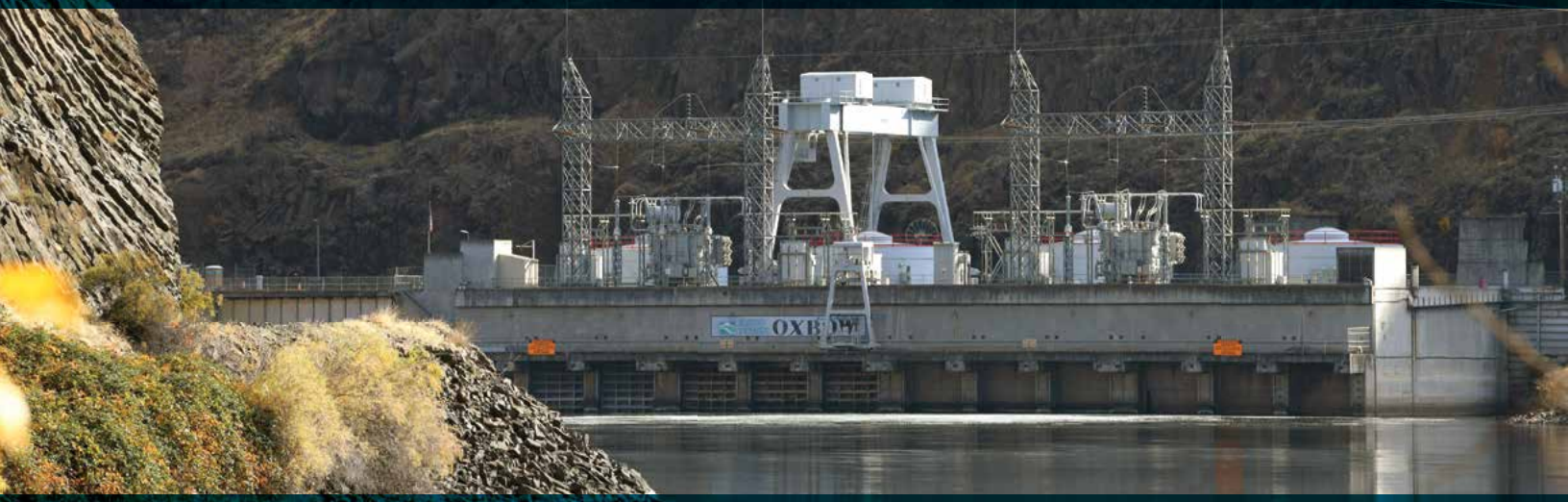
CONNECTIONS

IDAHO POWER

APRIL • 2024



Hells Canyon Hydropower: Looking Ahead to a Bright Future

Next year will mark 70 years since the Federal Power Commission granted Idaho Power permission to build the Hells Canyon Complex — Brownlee, Oxbow and Hells Canyon hydropower plants. Now, our company is poised to receive a new 50-year license to keep those turbines generating clean, reliable, low-cost energy for our customers.

"Significant steps remain before a new license is issued, but we have several projects completed, in progress, or in the planning phases that will positively impact the Snake River and our customers," said Brett Dumas, Idaho Power's Environmental Affairs Director.

More than a third of Idaho Power's energy came from hydropower last year, and the Hells Canyon Complex makes up about 70% of that hydro capacity.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is preparing a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which will analyze Oregon and Idaho certifications showing the project meets state water quality standards. Those certifications and the final EIS will guide the company's obligations under a new license. Once the EIS is complete, FERC can move ahead with issuing a new license, which the company hopes will come early next year.

"This has been a long process — we filed our draft license application 20 years ago, but we started environmental studies in Hells Canyon nearly 30 years ago. It has involved a tremendous amount of collaboration with state and local governments, Tribes, federal agencies, and the public," Dumas said.

The public can review and comment on the supplemental EIS. For a timeline and more information, visit idahopower.com/relicensing.

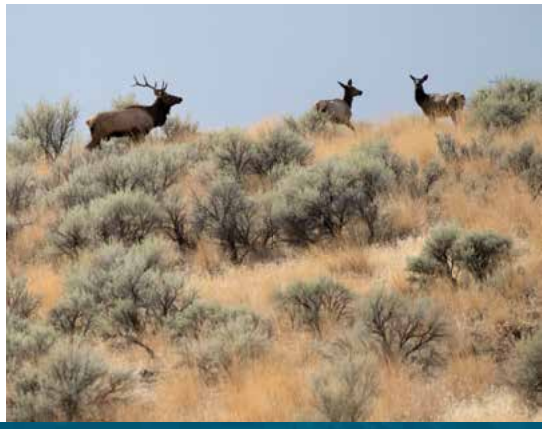
Here's a look at projects in place or in progress.

Recreation: We built the Moonshine Mine Recreation Area under an agreement with Baker County, in support of getting a new license. After the license is granted, our popular Hells Canyon and McCormick campgrounds will get major overhauls, and we will take over and renovate Spring Recreation and other federal sites.

Fish: Idaho Power releases more than six million juvenile steelhead and salmon into the Snake River annually. We will upgrade our Hells Canyon fish trap, begin collecting native bull trout, and collaborate with the state of Oregon on studies of anadromous fish in Pine Creek. The Oxbow Hatchery is currently being rebuilt; plans for renovating the Rapid River hatchery are nearly complete.

Wildlife: Idaho Power will add to the 22,000 acres of wildlife habitat it manages in Hells Canyon, where company biologists plant food plots, control invasive weeds, and improve water sources for native wildlife.

Snake River Stewardship: Two projects that narrow and deepen the channel in the middle Snake River to improve downstream water quality have been completed, and more are on the drawing board. We've also worked with willing landowners to plant native trees and shrubs along key tributaries of the Snake to shade and cool the water.



Lee esta edición de *Connections* en español a idahopower.com/connections.

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Nick Gastelecutto, speaking at the Idaho Water Quality Workshop

10-year Study on Mercury in Hells Canyon is Complete

As part of its commitment to the long-term health of the Snake River, Idaho Power partnered with the U.S. Geological Survey on a 10-year study of mercury in Hells Canyon.

Speaking to water quality experts earlier this year, Idaho Power Senior Resource Professional Nick Gastelecutto described how mercury in the water becomes methylmercury, where it can accumulate in fish like bass and sturgeon.

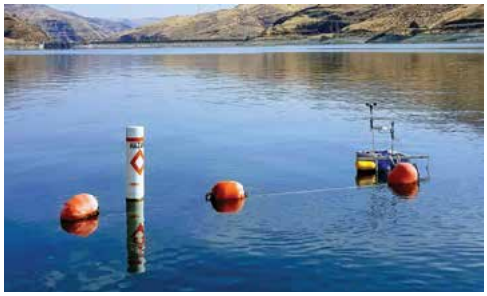
Mercury enters the atmosphere from volcanoes, mining, burning coal, and other sources. It settles in water bodies all over the world, where it is relatively harmless in trace amounts. The problem begins when mercury reaches the bottom of a river, lake, or reservoir where oxygen levels are depleted.

Bacteria in oxygen-free environments convert that mercury into methylmercury, which is absorbed by tiny plants and plankton. As those things are eaten by larger creatures, methylmercury increases as it moves up the food chain and builds up in the flesh of the largest predators. That's why Idaho and Oregon post warnings about excessive fish consumption in many areas.

The study began in 2013 as part of Idaho Power's work toward a new long-term license to operate three hydroelectric dams in Hells Canyon. One key finding is that reducing the amount of nutrients and decaying vegetation coming into Brownlee from upstream will improve reservoir oxygen conditions and slow methylmercury creation.

The good news? The volume of pollutants flowing into Hells Canyon has been trending down over the past 20 years.

"Programs like Idaho Power's Snake River Stewardship Program, Riverside Irrigation Program, Grand View Irrigation Upgrade Program, and other water quality efforts are making a difference," Gastelecutto said.



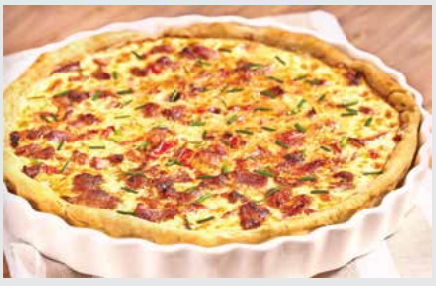
From the Electric Kitchen

April 2024

Breakfast

Powerhouse Quiche

6 slices of bacon, chopped
3 eggs, beaten
1 pie pastry crust
1 cup Swiss cheese, shredded
1 cup cream
¼ cup sliced green onions
½ tsp dry mustard
¼ tsp salt
Dash of ground nutmeg



Line an 8-inch pan with pastry crust. Flute edges and bake at 350° for 10 minutes. While pastry is baking, cook bacon until crisp and cook onions in bacon drippings until tender. Remove crust from the oven and layer cheese on the bottom. Add bacon and onion. Combine eggs, cream, and seasonings in small bowl. Pour into pastry shell and bake at 350° until set (30–40 minutes). Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

Recipe selected from Idaho Power's Centennial Celebration Cookbook.

Recreation Opportunities for All

The Snake River belongs to all of us, and Idaho Power is committed to providing recreational access for everyone. Whether you're boating, camping, fishing, or just enjoying a picnic in the sun, you'll find the right spot at one of our parks, campgrounds, and recreation access points.

Increasing accessibility will be a priority in the coming years, according to Fred Noland, the Environmental Manager who oversees Idaho Power's recreation group.

Some upgrades will be driven by the company's new federal license to operate the Hells Canyon Complex, which is expected in 2025. Two campgrounds in Hells Canyon will receive major overhauls.

"We'll also be upgrading boating infrastructure on all three reservoirs, which provides an opportunity to focus on accessibility," Noland said. A boating access committee will help guide the projects, which could include boarding structures, ramp and dock upgrades, and other improvements.

"We will be working with various government agencies and nonprofits, like Idaho For All, to help us maximize accessibility at our parks, and other recreation sites," Noland said.

To learn more about Idaho Power's parks and recreational opportunities, visit **idahopower.com/recreation**.