



The Importance of Hydropower: Providing Reliable, Affordable Energy

Once upon a time, all of Idaho Power's electricity was generated by hydropower. Today, we use a wide range of resources to ensure our customers have safe, reliable, affordable energy, but the power of falling water remains the cornerstone of our system. The 17 hydroelectric projects we operate on the Snake River and its tributaries are as important as ever, even in a dry year like this one. Hydropower is also our most affordable way to generate energy.

Employees across our large service area coordinate closely to make the most of this vital resource, coaxing every bit of clean energy from the river while managing for other important resources like native fish, recreation, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

Power plant operators and maintenance crews play an essential role, ensuring our generation equipment is ready to serve. For example, we recently completed major maintenance on a generator at American Falls. At Bliss Dam, crews are assembling a new generator that will go into service later this year. These upgrades help us maintain reliability while being as efficient as possible with the water that passes through our power plants.

Many of our projects are what's called "run of river," meaning the dams don't

have large reservoirs to store water but instead use what naturally flows downstream to generate electricity. Shoshone Falls is one of these.

Others, like Brownlee, Hells Canyon, and C.J. Strike, hold water that can be released through the dams to generate power when our customers need it most — almost like a giant battery. Our customers' highest demand for energy is on hot summer afternoons and evenings as irrigation pumps and air conditioners work overtime. You may sometimes see these periods referred to as "peak demand."

Drought conditions may reduce hydro production, requiring us to lean on other parts of our diverse resource portfolio, such as natural gas-fired generation and buying energy from a regional market, to ensure reliable, affordable service during the summer.

Wind and solar production, combined with battery storage, remain important parts of the system, but they can't be ramped up to accommodate increased energy use.

Buying lower-cost energy from other regional producers when renewable energy is abundant and prices are low enables us to save water to use for hydro generation when energy demand and market prices are higher.

"By conserving water during off-peak hours, we maintain flexibility to respond to customer needs when demand is highest or when other resources are limited. This strategy improves reliability and helps us keep costs down for our customers," said Ben Brandt, Idaho Power's Director of Load Serving Operations.

That careful water management comes from decades of experience adjusting to the year-to-year changes in snowpack, river flows, irrigation demand, and other factors that determine how much water is flowing downstream.

As new resources and new technology comes online, Idaho Power will continue managing our critical hydropower resources to ensure electricity is there when you need it.



New generator assembly at Bliss Dam



Wildlife Habitat: Managing for the Future

Providing food, water, and shelter for creatures great and small – from bumblebees to elk and most things in between – is an important part of Idaho Power’s commitment to environmental stewardship.

As part of our federal licenses to operate hydropower plants on the Snake River, Idaho Power manages over 25,000 acres of wildlife habitat. These management areas are intended to mitigate for habitat impacted by dams.

Sometimes, habitat management means planting small pollinator gardens in our campgrounds. Other times, it’s helping hundreds of acres recover after wildfire, like the Coyote Fire that burned most of our Daly Creek property near Richland, Oregon, in 2024. We have been actively working to re-establish native plants in key locations there.

For a closer look, visit youtube.com/idahopower and search for Daly Creek.

Working with other land managers, our biologists protect natural resources, cultivate wildlife-friendly plants, reduce shoreline erosion and control weeds on these lands. This improves habitat and wildlife diversity.

A wide range of birds inhabit our management areas, either year-round or temporarily while migrating. Whether you are an avid birder or a casual birdwatcher, you may want to download one of the bird checklists available on our website, idahopower.com/habitat.

That webpage is also a good first stop if you are interested in visiting one of these habitat management areas, which are mostly remote locations in Hells Canyon, near C.J. Strike Reservoir, and in the Hagerman Valley. While we strive to provide access to these lands, some areas may be closed seasonally or while work is taking place.

Hot Tips for Summer Fun



Idaho Power owns and operates dozens of parks, campgrounds, boat launches, and other recreation sites along the Snake River. We hope you’ll plan a visit this summer! Here are some reminders for getting the most out of your trip.

Safety First

Use a Coast Guard-approved life jacket when recreating in, on, or around the water. Many of our locations have loaner vests available for kids and adults.

Reserve Your Spot

If you are planning to visit one of our overnight camping sites in Hells Canyon or at C.J. Strike, book a spot online at idahopower.com/camping to ensure you have a place to stay. Camping at Swan Falls is free on a first-come, first-served basis.

Be Careful With Fire

Idaho declared a state-wide drought emergency earlier this year. Keep fires within designated fire rings or use propane stoves for outdoor cooking. Follow posted fire restrictions.



Check idahopower.com/whatsopen for updates on closures and other helpful info.

From the Electric Kitchen

June 2026
Dessert

Fresh Berry Bowl

- 2 cups orange juice
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 cup low-fat, vanilla yogurt, stirred until smooth
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1½ to 2 cups fresh berries — raspberries, blueberries, strawberries
- Cinnamon

Whisk together orange juice, yogurt, buttermilk, and lemon juice. Chill. Wash and drain berries. Slice the strawberries if they’re large. Divide berries among four serving bowls. Ladle the liquid on top. Garnish with a sprinkle of cinnamon

Makes 4, 1½ cup servings.



Did You Know?

Each year, Idaho Power releases more than 120,000 Idaho-grown rainbow trout into popular Snake River fishing spots to support local anglers.