

## ***Rivers Resurrected: The Stories Behind the Condit and Elwha Dams***



Photo: Kate Benkert (USFWS)

### **Elwha Dam Removal:**



Photo: Doug Zimmer (USFWS)

Two large dams, Glines Canyon and Elwha, are finally coming down after nearly 100 years of blocking salmon access to approximately 70 miles of pristine habitat and bull trout migratory corridors in the Elwha River. It took over 35 years of hard work, dedication, and scientific excellence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, Olympic National Park, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Forest Service and many other cooperating agencies and non-profits to remove these dams in 2011. The staff of the Washington Fish and Wildlife Office, Western Washington Fishery Resource Office and Olympia Fish Health Center is proud of the part they played - since the

late 1970s - in accomplishing this monumental task - the largest dam removal project in American history!

Beginning in the 1980s, Ecological Service biologists promoted fish passage through their work with the regulatory processes. In the 1990s fisheries biologists tested the feasibility of restoring multiple salmon runs and developed the restoration plans, as Fish Health Center biologists assessed and monitored disease risks in to fish returning to the watershed in the future.

Initial dam removal implementation activities, conducted with partners and staff from nearly every division within the WFWO, included the capture and relocation of 92 bull trout from areas that were expected to have lethal turbidity levels during dam removal. To date all but one of those fish has remained in the pristine habitat into which they were relocated. FWS also helped plan and participated in the week long outreach activities associated with dam removal, including the Elwha Science Symposium and dam removal ceremony.

Untold generations of fish, wildlife, and people will benefit from our efforts with our partner agencies and the Lower Elwha Tribe as the native fish and waters of the Elwha River run free again.

**For more information on the Elwha Dam removal, please visit:**

[Elwha Watershed Information Resource](#)

**Photos of the Elwha Dam ceremony:**

[Elwha Dam Celebration Ceremony](#)

**Live webcam:**

[Elwha River Restoration Project](#)

## Condit Dam Removal:



Photo: Steven Lane (The Columbian)

After many delays lasting more than a decade, the removal of Condit Dam--and the reconnection of the White Salmon River--happened. Many doubted that it ever would, much less in *their* careers! Numerous people, offices, and programs in Region 1 USFWS worked on making this project possible. The Washington Fish and Wildlife Office negotiated the settlement agreement back in 1999, planned studies, provided technical assistance, wrote biological opinions, and participated in quarterly planning since the 1980s. The Pacific Region found sources of grants, ways to leverage funding and contributed In-kind services to reduce a cost overage of \$3.5 million. The Columbia River Fisheries Program Office led the fish salvage effort, were outreach stars, and will conduct post removal surveys to verify effects on fish of dam removal. In 2011, we streamlined

our own decision-making by obtaining a delegation of signature authority for our Regional Director from the Secretary of Interior. We coordinated a region-wide outreach effort to awaken appreciation of what it means, and what it takes, to “reconnect a river”. The FWS Spring Creek Hatchery joined with the Yakama Tribe to do outreach in local schools and hosted a “reconnecting the river” celebration the day of the breach.

**For more information on the Condit Dam removal, please visit:**

[Condit Dam Removal](#)