

WATERWAY SYSTEMS

COLUMBIA SNAKE SYSTEM

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- This system is different than the others discussed here today because the system improvements under consideration on the Snake River include the removal of the four dams as compared to making improvements to the existing infrastructure.
- Dam removal is desired to improve the system for the salmon.
- All economic evaluations revolve around what happens if the dams are removed. If there were no waterway for transportation because the dams were removed, how would the commodities move?
 - Could possibly rail the commodities to Puget Sound or truck them to a location that enables them to be placed back on the water.
- This system is also different because it deals with much smaller tows than on other inland systems. A tow on the Snake is typically composed of no more than 4 barges
- The dams provide \$20-30 M benefit to navigation. The real benefits of the dams come from hydropower. The evaluation is the trade off between saving salmon and giving up the electricity from hydropower.
- Commodities that move on the Columbia River include petroleum products, wheat, forestry products, and some unique container traffic, including refrigerated barges (frozen French fries). Corn and frozen French fries are shipped out via the Columbia to Asia.
- Technical challenges:
 - Are considering “Do we have navigation or not?” Whereas the rest of the country is considering how to improve navigation.
 - Cost models do not reasonably deal with the typical navigation costs in this system. The Tidewater Barge Lines that run most of the barges on the river system has not been too interested in helping us recreate their cost structure.
 - The analysis has to deal with the deep draft multi port issues- how does barge traffic get on river?
- What goes down the river makes up 35-40% of exports
- If river transportation is eliminated, the smaller shipments from further away will likely be eliminated entirely, not just an overall decrease in movements.