

Partners in Preservation

The Columbia River and its tributaries cut through the landscape of the Pacific Northwest, exposing deep layers of history and heritage. Traces of this history are evident at pre-contact and historic archaeological sites and culturally significant places for Native American tribes and communities throughout the region. Pre-contact sites are those that are generally attributed as Native American and are older than written record. Historic sites are older than 50 years and are Euro-American. A federal partnership helps ensure that these irreplaceable and invaluable sites are preserved for future generations.

The Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) harvests the energy of 31 dams on the Columbia River and its tributaries, offering valuable benefits to the Northwest economy — namely clean, cost-effective and reliable electricity.

The FCRPS Cultural Resource Program manages cultural sites that can be impacted by the operations and maintenance of 14 of the dam and reservoir "projects." Fluctuating water levels in reservoirs can cause erosion or otherwise destroy or expose irreplaceable cultural resources.

The program has been in place since 1997 and is jointly managed and funded through a partnership between the Bonneville Power Administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. To ensure compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act — and to ensure historic and cultural sites are managed for the benefit of all — these three federal agencies collaborate with 10 Native American tribes, four state historic preservation offices and several other federal land managers in eight separate cooperating groups.

Fiscal Year 2021 accomplishments

The FCRPS Cultural Resource Program and its implementers carry out the important work of identifying cultural sites, evaluating their historical significance, assessing the effects of FCRPS operations and maintenance on these sites, and determining how sites can best be preserved or managed. This fact sheet summarizes the results of program work from Oct. 1, 2020 through Sept. 30, 2021.

Inventory — Archaeologists and people with specialized knowledge of Native American traditional cultural places and practices identify cultural sites by doing research, surveying landscapes and interviewing Native American tribal elders. At present, inventory of accessible lands within the FCRPS projects is largely complete. In FY 2021, the FCRPS Cultural Resources Program accomplished the following inventory work:

- Completed field surveys of 2,174 acres to identify archaeological and historic sites.
- Documented 31 new archaeological sites, bringing the total number of recorded sites in the system to 4,733.
- Produced 15 reports and at least 17 individual forms documenting important cultural places known as traditional cultural properties (TCPs) or historic properties of religious and cultural significance to Indian tribes (HPRCSITs).

Evaluation — When sites are located, they are assessed for the information they convey about important historic events and figures or for specific architectural, engineering or artistic forms they exemplify.

If a cultural site conveys this type of information, it may be considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic property.

The agencies completed 21 National Register eligibility determinations in FY 2021, all of which are newly eligible for listing in the National Register. In addition, a majority of TCP or HPRCSIT forms produced provide statements on potential eligibility.

Assessment of effects — Federal agencies must evaluate the effects of their actions, in this case operations and maintenance of the FCRPS dams and reservoirs, on cultural sites that are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The agencies accomplish this through monitoring or visiting sites to document changes in their condition, physical or otherwise. Of the 312 sites monitored, 256 sites had physical changes in FY 2021.



Libby Dam spans the Kootenai River 17 miles upstream from the town of Libby, Montana. The Kootenai River is the third largest tributary to the Columbia River, contributing almost 20% of the total water in the lower Columbia River. The dam began operating in 1975, forming Lake Koocanusa, and is owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District. Acting partially as a storage reservoir, Lake Koocanusa extends 90 miles upriver from the dam and has a maximum depth of about 370 feet. Constructed under the Columbia River Treaty, 48 miles of the reservoir lie within the borders of the U.S.; the remaining 42 miles are in Canada. The reservoir name, Koocanusa, is the combination of letters from the Kootenai River, Canada, and the U.S. lands surrounding the reservoir. Cultural resources present there continue to provide physical connections to traditional practices and beliefs of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

Resolution of adverse effects — Federal agencies must resolve adverse effects on historic properties that result from their actions. Resolving adverse effects can take many forms, including stabilizing or rehabilitating existing sites, protecting culturally-sensitive areas, or creating interpretive signs, curricula, or presentations to educate the public or increase cultural perpetuation. Notable achievements in resolving adverse effects in FY 2021 are as follows:

Portland District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers accomplishments

- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation highlighted the importance of First Foods and treaty rights in multiple community outreach events.
- The Yakama Nation completed a National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form for properties associated with legends of Coyote's (*Speelyi's*) introduction of salmon to the Columbia River Basin.
- Relocated two large petroglyphs that had been removed prior to construction of The Dalles Dam to the *Temani Pesh-wa* trail in Columbia Hills Historical State Park (see image below).
- Awarded a contract to install fencing to protect several archaeological sites being trampled by cattle encroaching from properties adjacent to the John Day Project.
- A contractor documented data discrepancies for sites within the John Day Project, for use in an upcoming historic properties management plan.

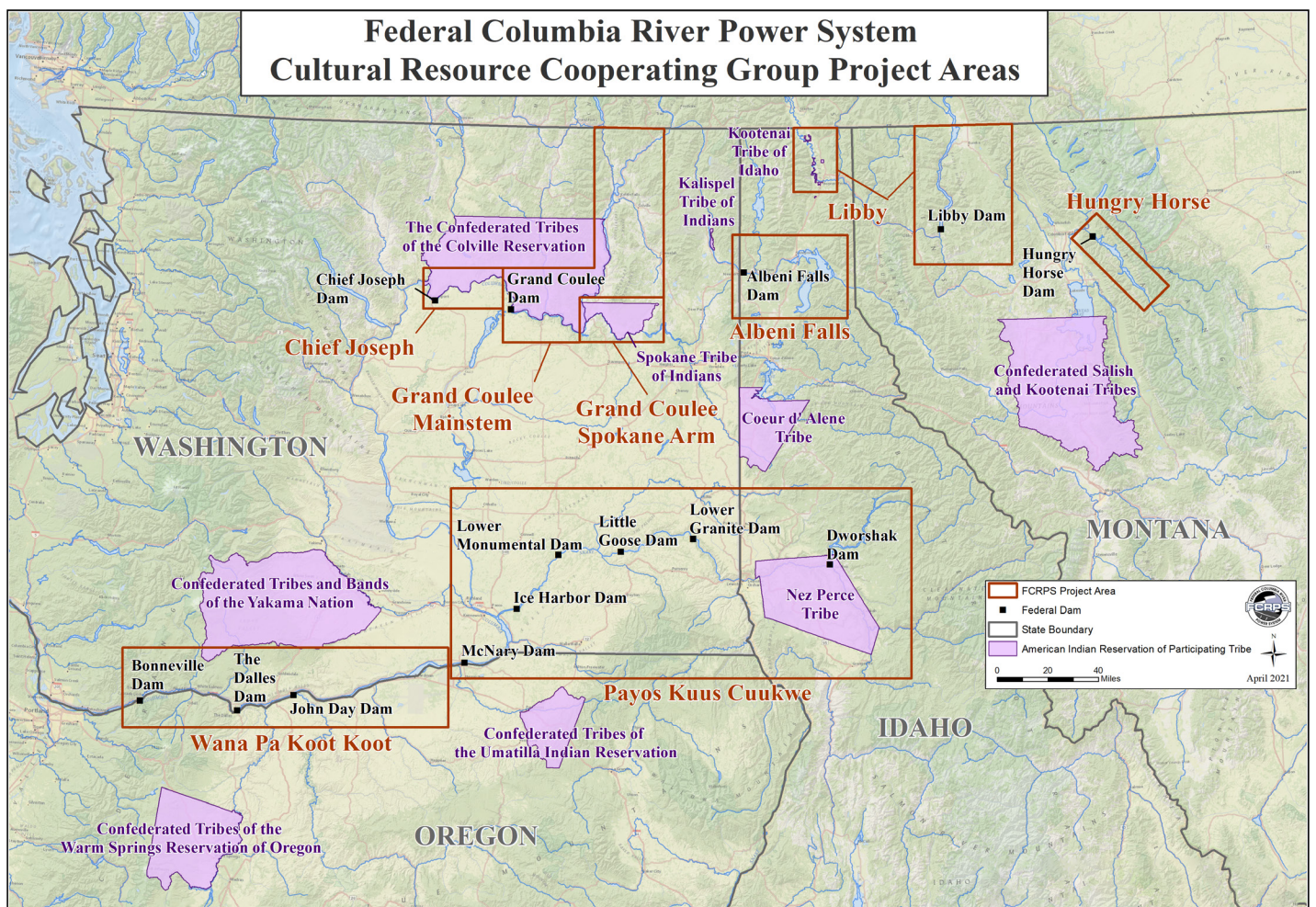
Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers accomplishments

- Finalized a report pertaining to establishing a method to monitor future site erosion and infer any immediate treatment needs at a pre-contact site within the McNary Project.
- Awarded a contract for artifact collections analysis and a report to inform a management plan and future mitigation for a precontact village site within the McNary Project.
- Based on oral interviews and ethnographic information, The Nez Perce Tribe developed and designed curriculum for five place-based educational activities pertaining to and as mitigation for the Palouse (*Palus*) Canyon TCP impacted by effects from within the Lower Monumental Project.



Petroglyph boulders returned to Columbia Hills Historical State Park in FY 2021. The boulders were removed from the area and placed near Fort Vancouver in 1957.

Federal Columbia River Power System Cultural Resource Cooperating Group Project Areas



This map shows the 14 hydroelectric dams and Cooperating Groups that make up the Federal Columbia River Power System Cultural Resource Program.

- Monitored plant survival and made recommendations for management and possible replanting at a previously stabilized precontact camp and burial site within the McNary Project.
- Awarded a contract for topographic survey at three high priority sites to help guide future stabilization designs concerning eroding areas within the McNary Project.

Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers accomplishments

- The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation resurveyed 406 acres of newly exposed land following a devastating wildfire and identified four new sites within the Chief Joseph Project.
- Stabilized a large historic homestead and precontact camp site affected by erosion within the Albeni Falls Project (see image below).
- The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes created a geodatabase of a system of historic trails within the Libby Project, integrating GIS with traditional cultural knowledge.
- Drafted a Historic Properties Management Plan, providing a framework for the management of cultural resources, including 467 sites within the Chief Joseph Project.
- Drafted designs of interpretive signs to deter looting at the historic Jennings townsite within the Libby Project.



In-progress bank stabilization of a historic homestead and precontact camp site affected by erosion within the Albeni Falls Project.



Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation archaeologists preparing stratigraphic profile of an eroding site containing a recently excavated pithouse feature within the Grand Coulee Project.



Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation archaeologist assessing eroding cutbank while conducting site condition monitoring within the Little Goose Project.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers archaeologist assessing condition of rock shelter site within the Ice Harbor Project.

Bureau of Reclamation accomplishments

- The Spokane Tribe of Indians completed analysis of shell collected within precontact sites along the Spokane Arm of Lake Roosevelt — created by Grand Coulee Dam — concluding that shell dates in this region are around 2,000 years older than the charcoal and bone found with them.
- The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation excavated a pithouse feature severely compromised by erosion atop a high bank within the Grand Coulee Project (see lower left image).
- The Spokane Tribe of Indians excavated a newly eroding thermal feature at a precontact fishing and camp site within the Grand Coulee Project.
- Completed the first phase of a multi-million dollar stabilization of a precontact site within the Grand Coulee Project.
- Consulted on a Final Project Specific Programmatic Agreement for management of historic properties at the Hungry Horse Project.

Next steps

Artifacts, significant cultural sites, historic properties and structures are non-renewable limited resources. Once destroyed, they are gone forever. To that end, the important work of the FCRPS Cultural Resource Program will continue preserving the rich history of people and traditional ways of life in the Pacific Northwest.

Cooperating groups, tribal participants, and state and federal agencies will build upon the inventory, evaluation and assessment, and important treatment and mitigation work accomplished in FY 2021. This collaborative work prioritization effort continues share management for the common goal of preserving the region's finite cultural resources for generations to come.