



The Dalles Dam

The Columbia River Basin is the most hydroelectrically developed river system in the world. More than 400 dams - 11 run-of-the-river mainstem dams - generate more than 21 million kilowatts.



All images courtesy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Dalles Dam is one of eleven mainstem Columbia River dams that the federal government built between the 1930s and the 1970s. The dams operate as a system with no single dam standing on its own. In fewer than 100 years, development has transformed the Columbia from a free-running river to a series of lakes that are managed for hydroelectric generation, transportation, flood control, and irrigation.

1863, completion of an Oregon Short Line portage railroad around the nine-mile stretch of rapids on the mid-Columbia River, which included Celilo Falls.

1915, completion of U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's The Dalles-Celilo Canal, an 8.5 mile canal with five locks that eliminated the need for the portage railroad. By 1919, this canal would no longer be in use.



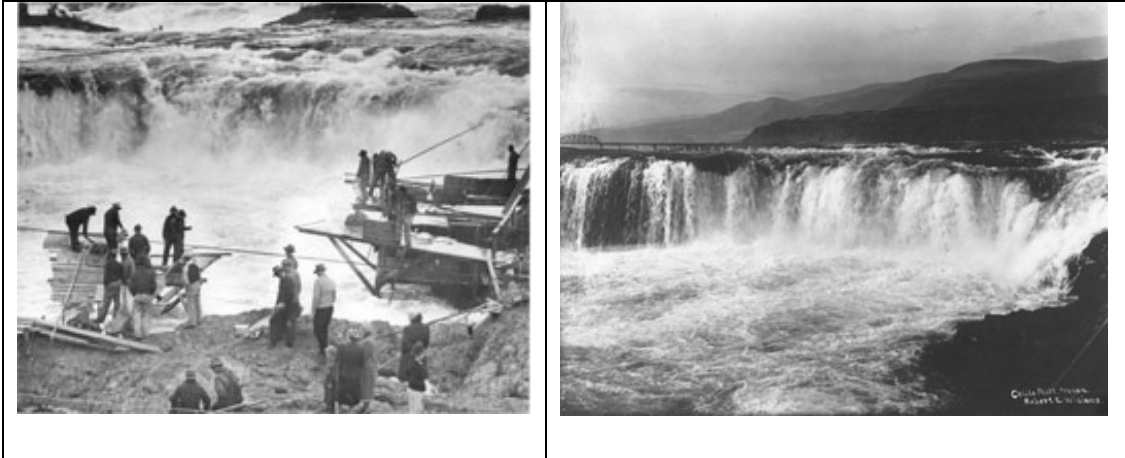
The Dalles Dam, mile marker 191.5, two miles east of the city of The Dalles, Oregon. Operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Construction began in 1952 and the dam was officially completed on **March 10, 1957**.

The 1.5 mile-long hydroelectric dam includes a fish ladder, a 1380 feet spillway, 23 gates, navigation lock and powerhouse. The powerhouse generates 1.8 million kilowatts of power per year, enough to electrify a city twice the size of Portland. Because of its design, most of the dam is located in Washington State's Klickitat County.

The Dalles Dam created Lake Celilo, a 23.6 mile-long reservoir that extends to John Day Dam. In 1981, the Army Corps opened The Dalles Dam Visitors Center at Seufert Park.

Center for Columbia River History

Celilo Falls



Our religious leaders told us that if we don't take care of the land, the water, the fish, the game, the roots and the berries we will not be around here long. We must have our salmon forever!

-- Delbert Frank, Sr., Warm Springs

The Dalles Dam flooded the spectacular Celilo falls area and forever buried much of the ancient history of the Columbia Basin in 1957. The Dalles Dam inundated Celilo Falls, Tenmile Rapids, Fivemile Rapids, and other nearby falls.

For 11,000 years Indians had fished the falls, building scaffolds out over the rushing water and plying the river with long-handled dipnets. Prior to white contact, Celilo and the area now known as The Dalles linked a trade network that extended from the coast to the Great Plains, from what is now Alaska to the present state of California. Indians from all over the Northwest came to trade, socialize, and fish with local residents.

The treaties negotiated in 1855 removed many Indian nations from the river but Indian people reserved for themselves the following:

The exclusive right of taking fish in all the streams, where running through or bordering said reservation, is further secured to said confederated tribes and bands of Indians, as also the right of taking fish at all usual and accustomed places, in common with the citizens of the Territory, and of erecting temporary buildings for curing them; together with the privilege of hunting, gathering roots and berries, and pasturing their horses and cattle upon open and unclaimed land.

In the 1950s, the federal government negotiated a cash settlement with the Indians enrolled with the Warm Springs, Yakama, Umatilla, and Nez Perce tribes to compensate them for their inundated fishing sites (the tribes retained their rights to fish). In total, the government paid the tribes \$26.8 million dollars or about \$3,700 for each enrolled member.

Celilo Falls is one of many Columbia Basin native fishing sites inundated by dams. Between the 1930s and the 1970s, federal dam development removed Indians from thousands of river miles as traditional sites drowned beneath vast reservoirs. Celilo Falls represents the significant economic and cultural disruptions that are the legacy of dam building among the Indians of the Pacific Northwest.

For further information, please see ccrh.org

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