COLUMBIA SNAKE RIVER SYSTEM FACTS

Deep Draft Channel Facts:
- 105 miles, 43 feet deep
- Over 50 million tons of international trade in 2016
- At least $24 billion in cargo value
- 40,000 local jobs are dependent on this trade

Inland Navigation Facts:
- 360 miles, 14 feet deep, from Portland/Vancouver to Lewiston, Idaho
- Over 9 million tons of commercial cargo in 2014
- Important gateway for U.S. wheat and forest products
- Over 18,000 cruise passengers in 2017, with $15M in direct economic benefits to the region

River System Highlights
- #1 U.S. wheat exports
- #2 U.S. corn and soy exports
- #1 West Coast wood exports
- #1 West Coast bulk exports
- #1 West Coast auto exports

2016 U.S. Wheat Exports

Freight Comparison of Barges, Trains and Trucks

Barging is the safest method of moving cargo, with a lower number of injuries, fatalities and spill rates than both rail and trucks. It is also the most fuel efficient, has the least emissions and is the lowest cost way of moving cargo.
Wheat  The Columbia Snake River System is the nation’s single largest wheat export gateway, transporting over 50% of all U.S. wheat to markets overseas. Eleven states export through our rivers, which moved over 12 million tons of wheat in 2016. Barging plays a key role in this transportation system, and fed over 4 million tons of wheat to the deep draft Lower Columbia River last year. The Snake River dams alone accounted for 10% of all U.S. wheat exports.

Soy  The Columbia River is second in the nation for soy exports, with over 9 million tons transported in 2016. This represents 25% of all U.S. soybean exports. The majority of this product originates in Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, and Missouri and is moved to the Columbia River by rail. The beans are destined for ports in East Asia, with China as the top buyer at over 1 billion bushels of imported beans in 2015-2016. Soy exports in our region are expected to grow in the future.

Wood products  In 2016, 2.7 million tons of logs were exported, primarily out of Longview, WA and destined for China. 62% of Washington State’s log exports move from the Port of Longview and neighboring Weyerhaeuser and Kapstone facilities, helping to make this river system the top exporter of wood products on the West Coast. Wood products are also a major commodity on the inland bargeing system. Each year, around 250,000 tons of wood chips are barged from Lewiston, Idaho and turned into pulp for paper production at mills on the lower Columbia River.

Autos  The Columbia Snake River System is a national leader for auto imports and exports. In 2016, 87,600 Subarus were imported at the Port of Vancouver while at the Port of Portland, over 240,000 Hondas, Toyotas, and Hyundais were imported. After testing and final assembly at the ports, the vehicles are shipped throughout the country for final sale. The Port of Portland is also the top auto export gateway on the West Coast, with over 50,000 cars exported to Asia in 2016. Both car imports and exports are expected to grow significantly in the next decade.

Mineral bulks  The Columbia River is the top West Coast export gateway for mineral bulks with 3.6 million tons exported in 2016. This includes products like potash which is used in fertilizer, and soda ash which is used to manufacture glass. Potash arrives by train from Saskatchewan, Canada and is unloaded at the Canpotex facility at the Port of Portland. Other mineral bulks are handled by Kinder Morgan, which operates three facilities located at the Ports of Portland, Vancouver and Longview and exports soda ash, bentonite clay, agricultural chemicals and other minerals.

Corn  In 2016, 9.2 million tons of corn moved through the Columbia River, making it the second largest corn gateway in the U.S. with 23% of total exports. Corn arrives from farms in the Midwest via rail and is delivered to facilities on the lower Columbia River for export overseas.

Cruise  Cruise boat demand has steadily increased over the last ten years and represents a growing market in the region. Each summer, thousands of passengers are enjoying the Columbia and Snake Rivers via cruises that travel the 325 river miles between Vancouver, WA and Clarkston, WA. Over 18,000 passengers visited in 2017, contributing over $15 million to communities along the two rivers.