



The Enterprise

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Condit Dam has two major problems

Condit Dam has two problems, in my opinion. First, it hampers the river ecosystem around it, such as fish migration and movement, and, second, it has a buildup of sediments and debris behind it.

The two options I consider viable are: putting in a fish ladder and dredging behind the dam, or removing the dam by initially blowing a hole in it and allowing sediments and debris to move downstream. The first option is less viable because it is not economical – with a cost of \$37 million – to add the fish ladder. Dam removal and restoring the area behind it is only \$17 million.

In the long term, the second option is also better. It will have some negative drawbacks, such as initially fouling the river below the dam, killing fish, and other aquatic species. However, eventually the sediments will move downstream, and anadromous fish will again migrate up the White Salmon River. The White Salmon River will be enhanced as a wild and scenic river. Sadly, the river will never return to the state it was in before the dam, but it can come close.

To recover Endangered Species Act-listed fish, anything less than a fish ladder is unacceptable if the dam remains.

Bergen Vocke
BZ Corner