

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Record numbers of salmon migrate through Priest Rapids Project

Favorable conditions and recent improvements boost numbers

EPHRATA, Wash. – A record number of sockeye salmon have passed through the Priest Rapids Project this year. According to recent numbers, Priest Rapids Dam has seen over 345,000 sockeye since fish counts began on April 15.

The average number of sockeye to pass through Grant PUD fish ladders has been 65,000 annually since the dam went into operation in 1959. Grant PUD biologists expect those numbers to climb by several thousand each day for the next week when the sockeye run ends, leaving the anticipated final count peaking at nearly 350,000.

Grant PUD Biologist, Chris Carlson, attributes the record-breaking numbers to a broad range of factors including: spawning habitat improvements, juvenile fish rearing conditions, hydroelectric project passage improvements, hatchery production and favorable ocean conditions. “The mid-Columbia PUDs (including Grant PUD) and many federal, state and tribal agencies in the United States and Canada have dedicated significant effort and expense to ensure sockeye continue to be successful in the Columbia Basin,” said Carlson.

Grant PUD has made a number of improvements over the past years to reinforce fish passage efficiency through the Priest Rapids Project. The installation of a state-of-the-art top spill fish bypass at Wanapum Dam in 2008 to aid downstream migration of juvenile salmon and steelhead and the creation of the Priest Rapids Off-Ladder Adult Fish Trap in 2007 to manage fish underscore Grant PUD’s commitment to fish protection and mitigation efforts.

According to Carlson, 2011 is likely to reach above average numbers once again. “Fish managers have estimated that eight million juvenile sockeye migrated to the ocean in the spring of 2010. With

the favorable ocean conditions that we have observed the past few years, the potential for above average returns continues to be promising.”

For more information on Grant PUD’s fish protection efforts, please visit: www.gcpud.org

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Grant County Public Utility District is a Washington state municipal corporation that began electric service in 1942. Owned by the people it serves, Grant PUD generates and sells electricity to Grant County residents and millions of customers throughout Central Washington and the Pacific Northwest. The Priest Rapids Project, comprised of Priest Rapids and Wanapum dams, produces nearly 2,000 megawatts of clean, renewable and reliable electricity – enough to supply a city the size of Seattle. A leader in science based technology; Grant PUD is committed to finding effective measures for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of salmon, steelhead and other natural and cultural resources.

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