

# Washington

## Little Goose lock reopening delayed until April 11

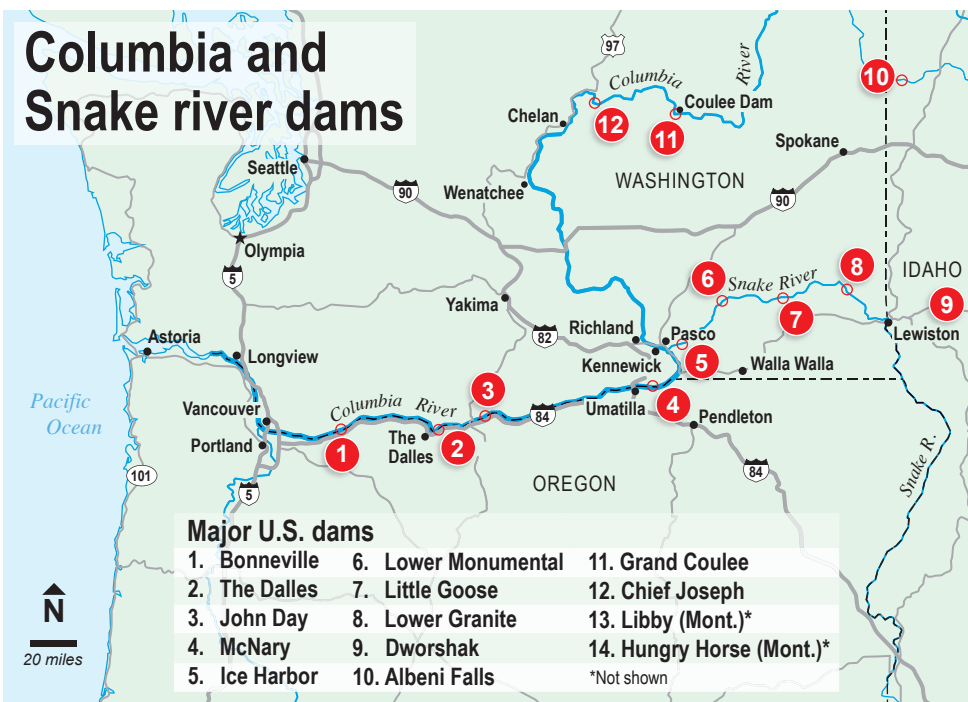
By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

Repairs at the Little Goose Dam navigation lock have delayed its reopening until April 11, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The dam was originally slated to reopen March 20 with the rest of the Columbia and Snake river system locks. Its reopening has been delayed twice.

Operational testing of the north gate revealed that the pintle heel was not replaced in the correct position under a previous contract, the corps said in a press release. The north gate's quoin blocks will need to be machined to correct the deficiency.

Surveying was performed on the south gate, confirming the south pintle heel was also installed out of position under the previous contract. Corrections were made, and the gate is being moved into place to verify the alignment, according to the corps.



to the corps. The pintle heel is a part of the bottom hinge, said Gina

Baltrusch, corps spokeswoman. Quoin blocks are the thick, vertical pieces of metal on the

outside of the gate that run from top to bottom, creating the water-tight seal between the gate and the wall.

The corps will shave roughly one-sixteenth of an inch off the quoin block so it will seal properly, Baltrusch said.

"We regret the impact to our navigation stakeholders caused by this additional delay in reopening the lock at Little Goose," project manager Jason Williams said in the press release. "We are doing all we can to restore safe, reliable lock service as quickly as possible."

Columbia Grain in Clarkston, Wash., is one of the companies that uses the river system to ship grain to Portland for sale to overseas customers.

Assistant vice president Randy Olstad said he supports and trusts the corps to make sure the repairs are

done right.

"It's frustrating at this point, but the river system is extremely important for our business," he said.

His company had time to prepare for the downtime, but is eager for the dam to be repaired, Olstad said.

Customers have been understanding so far, he said.

"We've done our job, I believe the corps is doing their job," he said. "This is just an unforeseen circumstance we wish they would have caught earlier, but did not. That's water under the bridge. We've just got to deal with it."

Olstad declined to estimate how much the delay will cost the company.

"It's more of our reputation, saying what we're going to do and doing what we're going to say," he said. "I think that's more on the line than anything."

## Funding for Washington wine research tops \$1 million

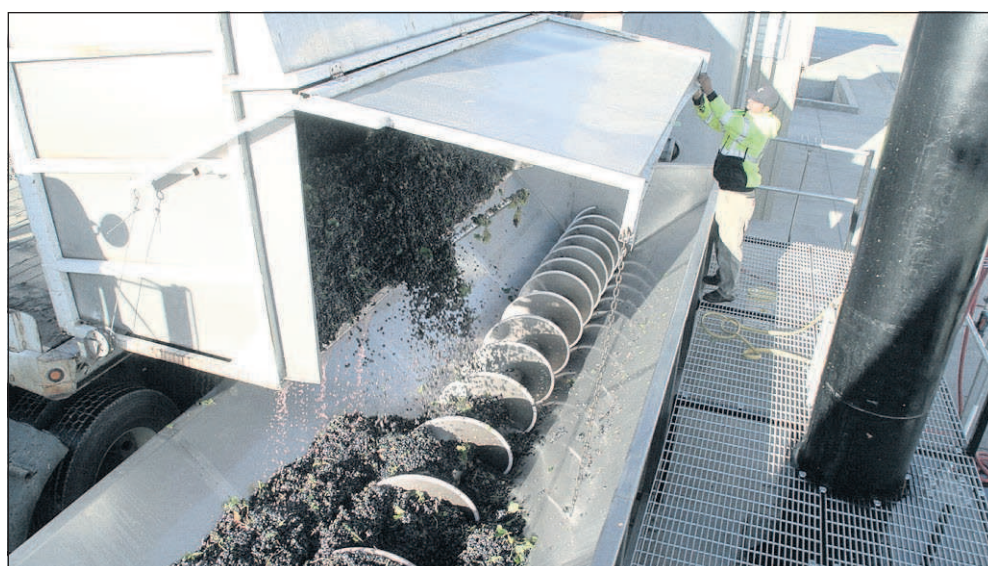
By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

SEATTLE — Funding for Washington wine research is taking a larger-than-usual upward jump and cracking the \$1 million mark for the first time.

The Washington State Wine Commission announced March 30 that it has recommended slightly more than \$1 million for the Washington State Grape and Wine Research Program for the fiscal year beginning July 1. It is administered by Washington State University.

That's up 20 percent from last year's \$869,500 and will allow for eight new research projects, said Rick Hamman, of Hogue Ranches in Prosser.

Hamman chairs the



Dan Wheat/Capital Press File

A load of winegrapes is dumped for crushing at Ancient Lake Wine Co. in George, Wash., last September. The state's wine industry has announced a big uptick in wine research money for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

Wine Commission's Wine Research Advisory Committee, which reviews re-

search proposals annually and recommends funding to the commission. The com-

mission then makes binding recommendations to WSU, said Melissa Hansen, re-

search program manager at the commission.

Research funding comes about evenly from four sources: the commission; WSU's Agriculture Research Center, a state liter tax collected on all wines sold in the state and from the nonprofit charitable organization, Auction of Washington Wines.

The auction had a very successful auction in August that led to the organization's contribution of \$278,000 for the coming year, up nearly \$80,000 from last year, Hansen said.

The added money will help fund new research on powdery mildew fungicide resistance and crown gall incidence, a new mite species in Eastern Washington, impact of pH on wine microbial ecology and sensory charac-

teristics of Washington wines and more, Hamman said.

"Previous research outcomes have made significant industry impact and benefit everyone connected to the Washington wine industry," he said.

There will be 18 research projects this year. There's usually not enough money to fund all the projects the committee would like to fund and it's unusual to be able to bring on eight new ones, Hansen said.

Projects typically last two or three years and several are replaced with new ones each year, Hansen said.

"Auction of Washington Wines has made a huge difference. They've been a solid supporter for more than 10 years and given more than \$1 million through the years," she said.

## Environmental bills pass Senate committee

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

A bill to protect 340,000 acres of Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest in the Methow Valley of Okanogan County from mining has passed the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

The Methow Headwaters Protection Act of 2017, S. 566, sponsored by Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, both Washington Democrats, was in a package of 56 bills that cleared the committee March 30 on a voice vote. Cantwell is the ranking minority member of the committee.

The bill protects the area from development into a large-scale copper mine and other mineral development and protects the headwaters of the Methow River, which provides clean water to downstream communities and supports local tourism, critical salmon restoration, ranching and farming, according to a Cantwell news release.

Two years ago, Kinross Gold Corp., a Canadian mining company closing Buckhorn Mine near Chesaw, withdrew an application to drill 950 holes to search for more gold on federal lands in Washington, saying U.S. Forest Service processes were too cumbersome and costly.

Cantwell sponsored or co-sponsored three other bills of the 56. One was reintroduction of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project, S. 714, which originally passed the last Congress to address water needs of the Yakima Basin.



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