

Hydropower

The Corps has played a significant role in meeting the nation's electric power generation needs by building and operating hydropower plants in connection with its large multiple-purpose dams. The Corps' involvement in hydropower generation began with the River and Harbors acts of 1890 and 1899, which required the Secretary of War and the Corps of Engineers to approve the sites and plans for all dams, and to issue permits for their construction. The Rivers and Harbors Act of 1909 directed the Corps to consider various water uses, including water power, when submitting preliminary reports on potential projects.

The Corps continues to consider the potential for hydroelectric power development during the planning process for all water resources projects involving dams and reservoirs. In most instances today, it is non-federal interests that develop hydropower facilities at Corps projects without federal assistance. The Corps, however, can plan, build and operate hydropower projects when it is impractical for non-federal interests to do so. Today, the more than 20,000 megawatts of capacity at Corps-operated power plants provide approximately 30 percent of the nation's hydroelectric power, or three percent of its total electric energy supply.

The Seattle District operates three hydroelectric dams. They are:

- [Chief Joseph Dam](#)
- [Libby Dam](#)
- [Albeni Falls Dam](#)

Point of Contact: Charyl Francois Phone: 206-764-5522 Email: Charyl.L.Francois@usace.army.mil