

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMPLIANCE

Energy and Utilities Case Study

THE CLIENT CHALLENGE

For fish and wildlife living in and around the Columbia River, the value of agencies and legal requirements aimed at protecting their habitat and keeping them safe can't be underestimated. **The effort is so important that there are numerous legal requirements which ensure compliance with the Environmental Species Act (ESA), aimed at various aspects of fish and wildlife habitat preservation.**

For a federal utility generating hydroelectricity off the Columbia River, two legal requirements in particular were in play. One, the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) Biological Opinion, laid out a set of key actions that the utility, along with the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, needed to take to optimize ESA-listed fish. Another, the Columbia Basin Fish Accords, is a historic 10-year agreement with multiple tribes in the Pacific Northwest to engage in work that benefits ESA-listed fish.

While these legal requirements are unquestionably valuable, they were complicated and often overlapping in requirements. And they were costing the utility approximately \$250 million per year to execute.

So, the utility turned to North Highland to help them develop a holistic plan for managing their fish and wildlife program in a way that didn't duplicate efforts or spend.

WHILE THE PROTECTIVE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS ARE UNQUESTIONABLY VALUABLE, THEY WERE COMPLICATED AND OFTEN OVERLAPPING IN REQUIREMENTS. AND THEY WERE COSTING THE UTILITY APPROXIMATELY \$250 MILLION PER YEAR TO EXECUTE.

THE SOLUTION

North Highland's first task was to develop a dashboard, fed by an underlying work plan, for the utility's Fish and Wildlife executive team.

Through detailed interviews with the internal team, process charting sessions and weekly team status meetings, North Highland learned that to properly determine the status of the entire program, the utility would need more than a dashboard: they needed a methodology that would provide insights into the status of a project.

Without a methodology, the only way to determine the progress of a project was through a complicated mash-up of budget approvals, contract funding decisions and completion of on-the-ground work. With North Highland's new methodology, the utility's Fish and Wildlife management team had a simplified way to gain a holistic view of these far-reaching programs. It provided a quantified peek into what was previously exclusively qualitative.

THE VALUE

Backed by a solid methodology, North Highland created a detailed work plan to chart every task associated with the FCRPS Biological Opinion and the Columbia Basin Fish Accords, funneling them cohesively into the executive dashboard.

The project status methodology, which created a work flow as efficient and symbiotic as the Columbia River itself, is now being applied to all of the utility's Fish and Wildlife projects.

**NORTH HIGHLAND
CREATED A DETAILED
WORK PLAN TO
CHART EVERY TASK
ASSOCIATED WITH
THE FCRPS BIOLOGICAL
OPINION AND THE
COLUMBIA BASIN FISH
ACCORDS, FUNNELING
THEM COHESIVELY
INTO THE EXECUTIVE
DASHBOARD.**

ABOUT NORTH HIGHLAND

North Highland is a global management consulting firm that delivers unique value, relevant big ideas and strategic business capabilities to clients around the world. The firm solves complex business problems for clients in multiple industries through an integrated approach and offers specialty services via its Data and Analytics, Managed Services, and Sparks Grove divisions. North Highland is an employee-owned firm that has been named as a "Best Firm to Work For" every year since 2007 by Consulting Magazine. The firm is a member of Cordence Worldwide (www.cordenceworldwide.com), a global management consulting alliance. For more information, visit northhighland.com and connect with us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).