

Cushman Hydroelectric Project

Timeline

The Cushman Project is a hydroelectric generating facility on the Olympic Peninsula consisting of two dams on the north fork of the Skokomish River, two reservoirs, two powerhouses and transmission lines. It supplies about 5 percent of the electrical needs of Tacoma Power's 160,000 customers.

Milestones leading us to today

1924 – The Federal Power Commission issues a 50-year license to Tacoma Power for the Cushman Project. Construction starts on Cushman No. 1 Dam.

February 1926 – *The Tacoma Sunday Ledger* reports: "Here was a bold engineering feat which even some engineers said was impossible and which had so much of the element of daring and chance in it as to seize upon the popular imagination."

March 1926 – The first generator of the Cushman No. 1 powerhouse begins power generation.

May 1926 – The Narrows Crossing transmission line is formally energized by President Calvin Coolidge. The 6,244-foot long span is the longest electrical span in the world at the time. The crossing is part of the 44-mile long transmission line from the Cushman Project to Tacoma.

1929 – Construction starts on Cushman No. 2 Dam and powerhouse.

December 1930 – Cushman No. 2 begins power generation.

August 1974 – The original license expires, and Tacoma Power applies for a new license. The license is among the first in the county to expire, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) does not have a process in place for issuing relicenses. FERC issues the first of many annual licenses.

During a 24-year period, many studies are performed, questions are asked and answered and documents are filed generating paperwork several feet thick. Several attempts were made at settlement.

July 1998 – FERC issues a relicense order for the project.

1998-1999 – All parties appeal the new license.

May 1999 – Tacoma Power receives a stay order during the appeal process allowing continued operation of the Cushman project under existing conditions.

November 1999 – The Skokomish Tribe files a lawsuit (the Treaty Damages case) in Federal District Court in Tacoma against the U.S. government and Tacoma seeking damages of \$5.8 billion.

March 2003 – Tribe requests FERC to partially lift stay and establish interim operating conditions.

Recent milestones

2007-2008 – The Tribe and Tacoma use mediation to begin settlement discussions. In August 2007, state and federal agencies join the negotiations. All parties successfully complete negotiations on a historic set of agreements governing the continued operation of the Cushman.

December 10, 2008 – Tacoma Public Utilities Board authorizes the Director of Public Utilities to enter into a licensing settlement based on the agreements reached concerning license conditions. Soon after, the Tacoma City Council authorizes execution of a proposed damages settlement between the Skokomish Tribe and the City.

The City and Tribe believe that the proposed settlement package finally resolves all outstanding issues between them, effects restoration of the Skokomish River, protects the wider public interests involved and protects affected natural resources while preserving the project's hydroelectric generation capabilities.

January 12, 2009 – The official signing agreement date has finally come. The ceremonial signing includes Tacoma Power, Skokomish Tribal Nation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Marine Fisheries Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Forest Service, Washington Department of Ecology and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

By the numbers

Completed in 1926, Cushman No. 1 Dam is 1,111 feet long, 8 feet wide at the top and 50 feet wide at the base. There are 90,000 cubic yards of concrete in the dam. Its reservoir, Lake Cushman, is 9.6 miles long and has 23 miles of shoreline. It generates 127 million kilowatt-hours a year, serving about 9,000 homes.

Cushman No. 2 was completed in 1930. It's 575 feet long, 8 feet wide at the top and 40 feet wide at the base. There are 38,000 cubic yards in concrete in the dam. Its reservoir, Lake Kokanee, is two miles long and has 4.5 miles of shoreline. It generates 233 million kilowatt-hours a year, serving about 16,500 homes.