

A History of Dams on the South Fork Clearwater River, Idaho
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Introduction and Acknowledgements

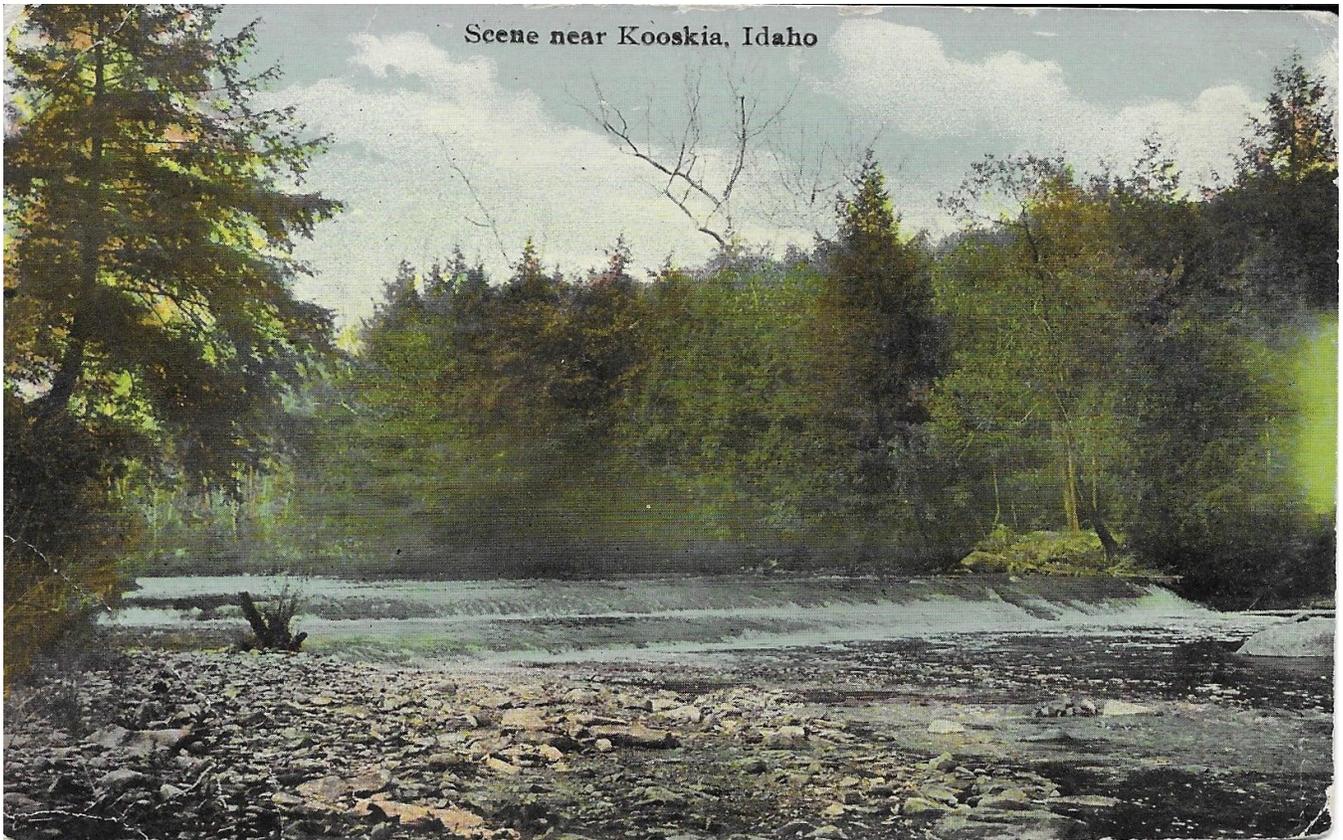
This history of dams on the South Fork Clearwater River was put together over a number of years. It would not have been possible without the help of Cindy Schacher, archeologist on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, and the late Pete Parsell. Additional assistance was provided by the Kooskia Chamber of Commerce, Dana Lohrey, the late Don Morrow and the late Cecil Boller. The author was the forest hydrologist on the Nez Perce National Forest from 1985 until his retirement in 2009.

Kooskia Milling Company Dam

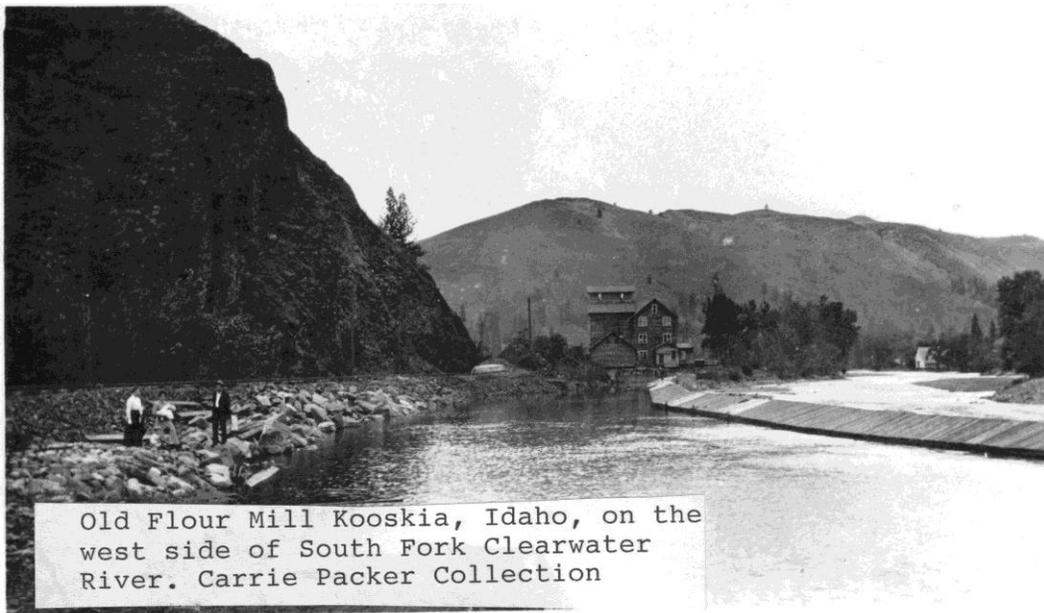
This dam was located at the upstream end of the town of Kooskia, within 1 mile of the mouth of the South Fork. It diverted water to serve the Kooskia Milling Company flower mill and may have been used for hydroelectric generation as well. The mill was completed late in 1908 (Lohrey, 2014). According to local historians Pete Parsell and Cecil Boller, it was in place into the 1930s. The dam is estimated to have been about 6 feet high. Fish passage conditions are unclear, but an undated photograph taken at high water suggests that upstream migration of anadromous salmonids was probably not impaired. I've lost track of that photo, but that assumption is supported by inspection of the low water photo below. Parsell reports that suckers were often seen in large numbers below the dam.



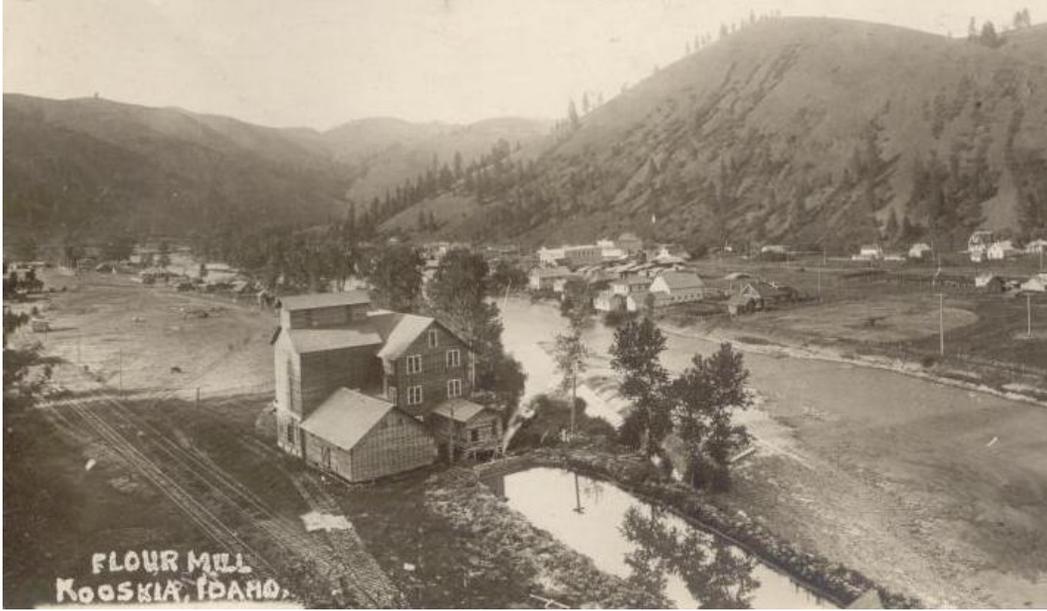
Kooskia Milling Company diversion dam – Undated photo from Lohrey (2014)



Kooskia Milling Company Dam – 1912 (Unknown source)



Kooskia Milling Company diversion channel – Undated photo, Kooskia Chamber of Commerce Collection



Kooskia Milling Company – Undated photo, Kooskia Chamber of Commerce Collection

Dewey Mine Dam

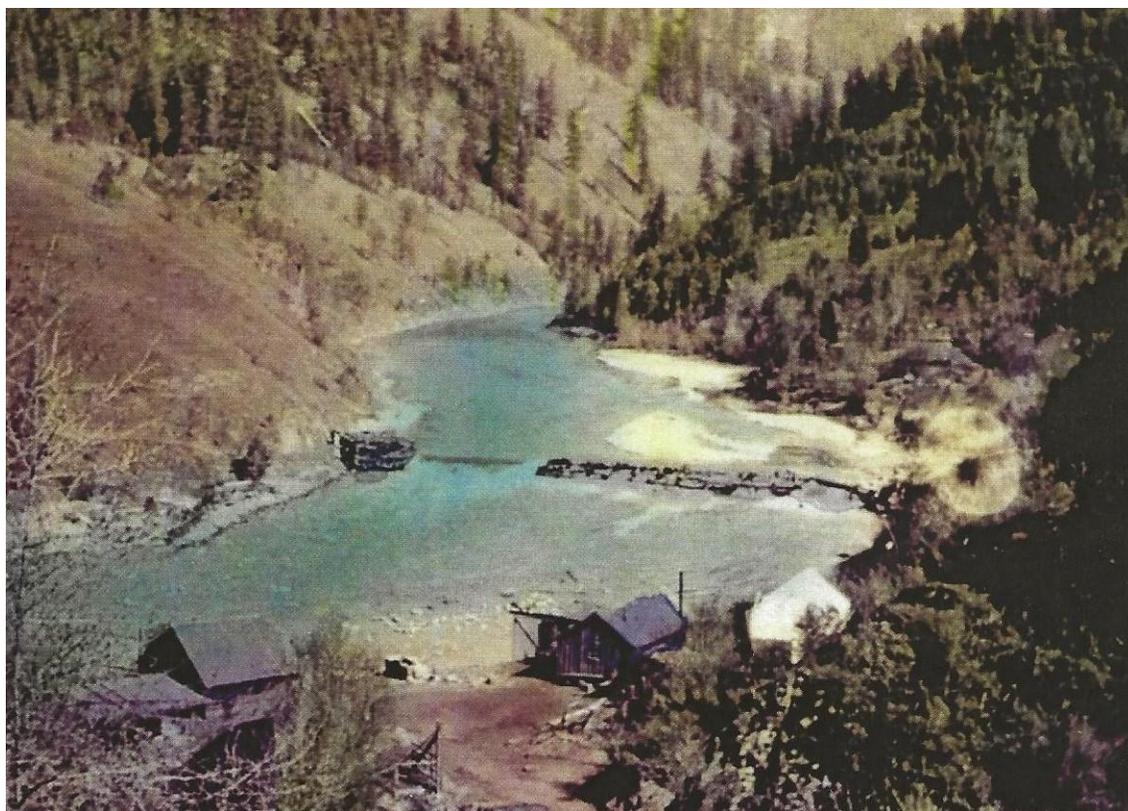
According to local historian Don Morrow, this dam was in place by about 1895. It was constructed to provide power to the Dewey Mine. The location was approximately at River Mile 18.4, about 3.3 miles above the Harpster Bridge, and 0.1 miles above the mouth of Mill Creek.

There is no known documentation of fish passage conditions. The photo below suggests that adult passage might have been possible. It was reported to have been in place for a few years, after which it partly washed out.

Remnants of the dam were at some point incorporated into a log stringer bridge that provided access to private land on the east side of the river. That bridge was washed out by high water in either 1995 or 1996.



Dewey Mine Dam – Undated photo, Harold Wasem Collection, Courtesy of Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs



Remnants of the Dewey Mine Dam – Undated photo, Courtesy of Grangeville Bicentennial Museum

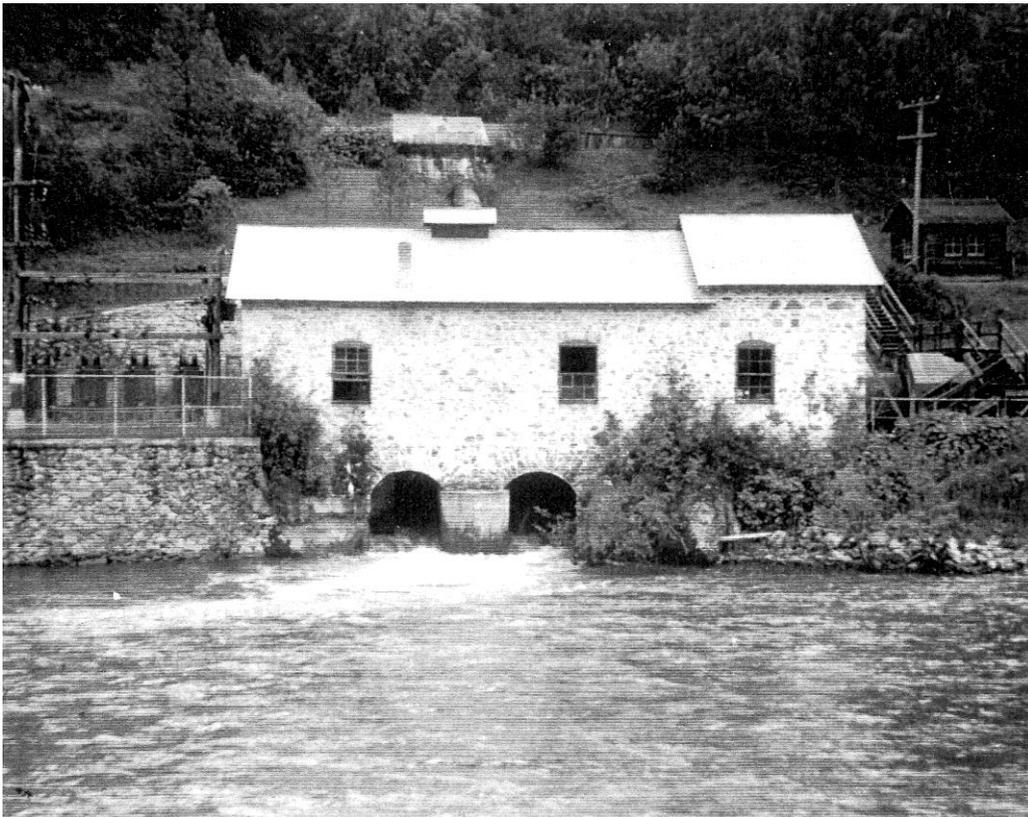
Washington Water Power Dam

This dam is reported to have been built in 1911 (Siddall, 1992). A fish ladder was constructed in 1935, but was washed out by high water in 1949 (Murphy and Metsker, 1962; The Spokesman Review, 1963; Siddall, 1992). Murphy and Metsker reported that steelhead were able to pass over the dam from 1935 to 1949, but Siddall reported that the dam failed to pass significant numbers of fish.

The dam was located at River Mile 20.3, about 0.4 miles above the mouth of Schwartz Creek. It was variously reported to have a height of 33 feet (Murphy and Metsker) to 56 feet (The Spokesman-Review). Some of the difference may have to do with the height of the dam itself, versus the hydraulic head to the downstream powerhouse. The dam was removed by dynamite on August 3, 1963 (The Spokesman Review).



WWP dam – Undated photo, Harold Wasem Collection, Courtesy of Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs



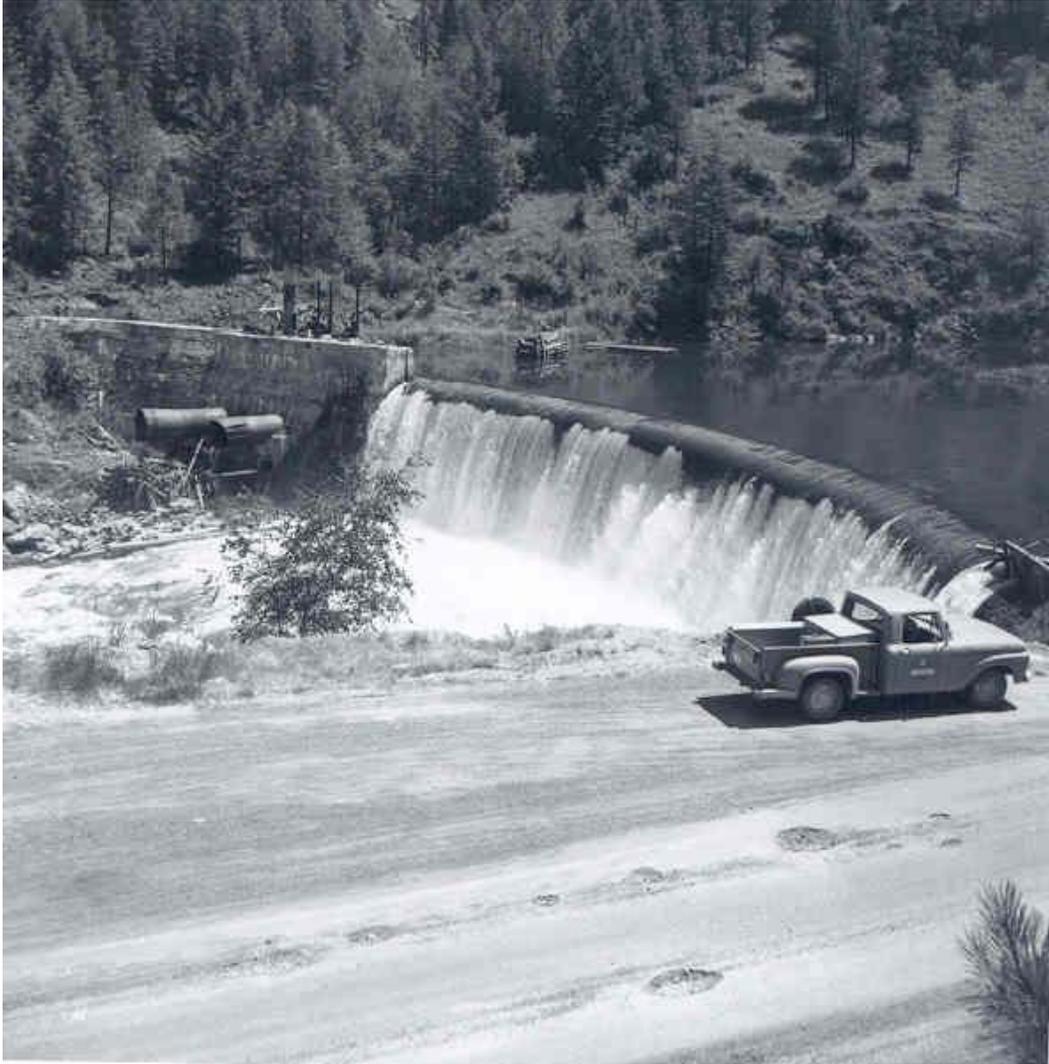
WWP dam – Undated photo, Harold Wasem Collection, Courtesy of Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs



Aerial view of WWP dam – May 23, 1956, US Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District



WWP dam shortly before removal in 1963 – Courtesy of Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs



WWP dam shortly before removal in 1963 – Courtesy of Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs



WWP dam shortly before removal in 1963 – Courtesy of Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs



Removal of WWP dam on August 3, 1963 – Courtesy of Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs



WWP damsite after removal in 1963 – Courtesy of Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs



WWP damsite after removal in 1963 – Courtesy of Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs



WWP damsite after removal in 1963 – Courtesy of Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs



Remnants of the WWP dam can still be seen today – August 23, 2005, Nick Gerhardt photo

References

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Murphy, Leon W. and Howard E. Metsker. 1962. Inventory of Idaho Streams Containing Anadromous Fish Including Recommendations for Improving Production of Salmon and Steelhead, Part II - Clearwater River Drainage.

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Siddall, Phoebe. 1992. South Fork Clearwater River Habitat Enhancement. Nez Perce National Forest report to Bonneville Power Administration. Project 84-5. Agreement No. DE-A179-84BP16475.

The Spokesman-Review. August 5, 1963. Dynamite Blasts Level Old Dam Near Grangeville.