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## Hydro Power: Nisqually River Project

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### Nisqually River Project Nisqually River Project Certified Green!

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Tacoma Power began generating electricity on the Nisqually River over 90 years ago. The original LaGrande Dam, completed in 1912, was replaced in 1945 with Alder Dam and the new LaGrande Dam. The Nisqually River Project is now Tacoma Power's second-largest hydroelectric resource, generating nearly 600 million kilowatt-hours of electricity each year, enough to serve nearly 43,000 Northwest homes.



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Alder Dam forms the 3,000-acre Alder Lake. The [Alder Lake Recreation Area](#) is ideal for boating, fishing, swimming and camping. Tacoma Power provides several top-quality recreational facilities at Alder Lake.

The Tacoma Power [Natural Resources Program](#) is busy implementing a variety of fisheries and wildlife habitat improvements while providing recreational opportunities. [Kokanee planting](#), nesting boxes for wood ducks and bluebirds, and improving elk forage are just a few of the programs in and around Alder Lake and the surrounding 3,500 acres of wildlife land. A



A new federal license issued in 1997 is the impetus for these exciting and challenging endeavors. The new license was developed in consultation with the Nisqually Tribe and Nisqually River Council along with various agencies, including the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. For these efforts, Tacoma Power was awarded the [Outstanding Stewardship of America's Rivers](#) award from the National Hydropower Association. The association recognized six utilities that have demonstrated diligent stewardship and extraordinary environmental achievement at seven hydroelectric projects in the United States and Canada.

## Take a Tour

A popular community service at the Nisqually Hydroelectric Project is free group tours. Tours are available for school, civic, business and recreational groups during regular working hours by appointment. To make arrangements for a tour, call Tacoma Power at 253-502-8759.



## Reservoirs



Alder Lake is the reservoir formed by Alder Dam. The beautiful lake, with striking views of Mt. Rainier, attracts more than 100,000 people yearly for boating, camping, fishing, swimming, picnicking and other outdoor fun.

Tacoma Power's federal license describes the priorities for managing the elevation of Alder Lake.

The highest priority is maintaining downstream river flows at or above a specified minimum. When natural river flow is less than the required minimum - mostly during summer and early fall - additional water must be taken from Alder Lake to achieve the minimum downstream flow. The added flows improve rearing habitat for salmon and steelhead, and are greater than what would naturally occur without the dams.

The next highest priority is keeping the lake's elevation high during the prime recreation months.

Alder Lake is too small to provide downstream flood control. Even so, Tacoma Power lowers the elevation of the lake when possible during winter months to enable some capture of high water inflows from rainstorms and snow melt. It is not a flood control project.

The 45-acre reservoir behind LaGrande Dam is not publicly accessible because of the steep, rugged terrain.