

## “RIVER WAYS” PRESS KIT



**Vital Statistics:**

*River Ways (2007)*  
Documentary Feature / 85 minutes / 4:3 / NTSC  
Directed by Colin Stryker  
Produced by Sawgrass Productions, LLC  
[www.sawgrassproductions.com](http://www.sawgrassproductions.com)

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A video trailer of *River Ways* is available for download at [www.sawgrassproductions.com/trailer](http://www.sawgrassproductions.com/trailer).

To obtain a preview copy of *River Ways*, please contact [info@sawgrassproductions.com](mailto:info@sawgrassproductions.com)

Producer/director Colin Stryker is available for interviews.

# SELECTED STILLS

These and many others are available in 300 dpi.

Contact: [info@sawgrassproductions.com](mailto:info@sawgrassproductions.com)



Ben Barstow, wheat farmer  
(photo by Colin Stryker)



Lower Granite Dam  
(photo by Colin Stryker)



Salmon  
(photo by Colin Stryker)



Lower Granite Dam  
(photo by Colin Stryker)



Frank Sutterlict, Yakama tribal fisherman  
(photo by Colin Stryker)



Ice Harbor Dam  
(photo by Colin Stryker)



Director Colin Stryker with Frank Sutterlict, Yakama tribal fisherman  
(photo by Courtney Krake)



Lower Monumental Dam  
(photo by Colin Stryker)



Director Colin Stryker  
(photo by Courtney Krake)

# FILM FRAMES

For full size at 72 dpi, contact: [info@sawgrassproductions.com](mailto:info@sawgrassproductions.com)



Aaron Miles,  
Resource Manager,  
Nez Perce tribe



Little Goose Dam



Wheat barge



Ben Barstow,  
wheat farmer



Ben Barstow,  
wheat farmer



Chris Crain, sport  
fisherman



Irrigation circle



Wheat combine



Ben Barstow,  
wheat farmer



Frank Sutterlict,  
tribal fisherman



Mark Ihander,  
commercial  
fisherman



Columbia River



Powerlines



Protesters



Reed Burkholder,  
salmon advocate



Rexann  
Zimmerman, tackle  
shop owner



Spawning salmon



Wheat chaff



Les Wigen,  
Whitman County  
Commissioner



Lower Granite  
Dam



Mark Ihander,  
commercial  
fisherman



The Palouse



Mark Ihander,  
commercial  
fisherman



Ralph Thomsen,  
irrigator



Wheat



Tom Stuart, Idaho  
Rivers United  
board member



Tom Anderson,  
motel owner



Frank Sutterlict,  
tribal fisherman



"Save Our Dams"  
bumper sticker



Reed Burkholder,  
salmon advocate



Frank Sutterlict,  
tribal fisherman



Frank Sutterlict,  
tribal fisherman



Wheat combine



Wheat



Ice Harbor Dam



Idaho Rivers  
United, rafting trip

# SYNOPSIS

## *Single sentence*

“River Ways” explores the lives of regular working people affected by the issue of whether to remove four dams on the Snake River in Eastern Washington to restore endangered salmon runs.

## *Brief (52 words)*

“River Ways” explores the lives of regular working people affected by the issue of whether to remove four dams on the Snake River in Eastern Washington to restore endangered salmon runs. Combining interviews with careful everyday observation, “River Ways” takes us into the world of wheat farmers, fishermen, salmon advocates and more.

## *Medium (100 words)*

“River Ways” explores the lives of regular working people affected by the issue of whether to remove four dams on the Snake River in Eastern Washington. Environmental groups and fishing interests criticize the dams for their negative impact on salmon populations, but agricultural communities dependent on the dams oppose efforts to remove them. Combining interviews with careful everyday observation, “River Ways” takes us into the world of wheat farmers, fishermen, salmon advocates and more. What emerges is a complex portrait of an issue that reaches to the heart of the ideological differences that characterize and divide the Pacific Northwest.

## *Long (188 words)*

“River Ways” explores the lives of regular working people affected by the issue of whether to remove four dams on the Snake River in Eastern Washington. Environmental groups and fishing interests criticize the dams for their negative impact on salmon populations, but agricultural communities dependent on the dams oppose efforts to remove them. Combining interviews with careful everyday observation, and set against the scenic backdrop of the Pacific Northwest, “River Ways” introduces us to a set of characters with a surprisingly complex mix of perspectives. Frank Sutterlic, a Native American fisherman living in an encampment on the Columbia River, struggles to make ends meet in the face of dwindling salmon numbers. Ben Barstow, a family farmer in Washington, fears the effect of dam removal on his already marginal business. And Mark Ihander, a commercial fisherman, hangs on to an industry in economic decline. Other subjects include environmental activists, irrigators, sport fishermen, and salmon biologists. What emerges is a complex portrait of an issue that reaches to the heart of the ideological differences that characterize and divide the Pacific Northwest, and indeed many environmental issues throughout the world.

## AWARDS TO-DATE

Best International Documentary	Everglades International Film Festival, September 2007
Best Feature by a Northwest Filmmaker	Eugene International Film Festival, October 2007
Conservation Award	BendFilm Festival, October 2007
Best Environmental Film	Astoria International Film Festival, October 2007
Runner-up, Audience Favorite	Tallgrass Film Festival, October 2007
Nominated, Best Documentary	Treasure Coast International Film Festival, February, 2008
Nominated, Best Editing	Treasure Coast International Film Festival, February, 2008
Nominated, Big Sky Award	Big Sky Documentary Film Festival, February, 2008
Nominated, Best Documentary	Mid-Valley Video Festival, February, 2008
Best Endangered Species and Habitat	EarthVision Environmental Film Festival, March, 2008
Honorable Mention for Best Documentary	Bare Bones International Film Festival, April, 2008
Winner, Silver Award for Documentary	Tenerife International Film Festival, April, 2008
Best of Fest	Hazel Wolf Environmental Film Festival, May, 2008
Honorable Mention for Compelling Issue	International Wildlife Film Festival, May, 2008
Nominated, Best Documentary Feature	Southern Winds Film Festival, September, 2008
Nominated, A Seriously Good Movie	Southern Winds Film Festival, September, 2008

## SCREENINGS TO-DATE

Independents' Film Festival	September 14, 2007	Tampa, FL
Towy Valley Film Festival	September 27, 2007	Carmarthen, Wales
Wildwood by the Sea Film Festival	September 28 2007	Wildwood, NJ
Everglades International Film Festival	September 28, 2007	Dargle, South Africa
<i>(winner, Best International Documentary)</i>		
International Film Festival: Montana CINE	October 2&7 2007	Missoula, MT
Eugene International Film Festival	October 5, 2007	Eugene, OR
<i>(winner, Best Feature by a Northwest Filmmaker)</i>		
Tacoma Film Festival	October 7, 2007	Tacoma, WA
BendFilm Festival	October 13, 2007	Bend, OR
<i>(winner, Conservation Award)</i>		
Tallgrass Film Festival	October 20, 2007	Wichita, KS
<i>(runner-up, Audience Favorite)</i>		
Astoria International Film Festival	October 26, 2007	Astoria, OR
<i>(winner, Best Environmental Film)</i>		
Olympia Film Festival	November 8, 2007	Olympia, WA
Myrtle Beach International Film Festival	December 5, 2007	Myrtle Beach, SC
Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival	January 12, 2008	Nevada City, CA
Beloit International Film Festival	January 18&20, 2008	Beloit, WI
Sonoma Environmental Film Festival	January 26, 2008	Sonoma, CA
Treasure Coast International Film Festival	February 2, 2008	Fort Pierce, FL
<i>(nominated, Best Documentary, Best Editing)</i>		
Big Sky Documentary Film Festival	February 19, 2008	Missoula, MT
<i>(nominated, Big Sky Award)</i>		
Mid-Valley Video Festival	February 23, 2008	Salem, OR
<i>(nominated, Best Documentary)</i>		
Lake County Film Festival	March 1, 2008	Grayslake, IL
EarthVision Environmental Film Festival	March 4, 2008	Santa Cruz, CA
<i>(winner, Endangered Species and Habitat)</i>		
Beaufort Film Festival	March 7, 2008	Beaufort, SC
<i>(nominated, Best Documentary)</i>		
Buffalo-Niagara Film Festival	March 29, 2008	Buffalo, NY
<i>(nominated, Best Documentary)</i>		
Film Action Oregon Documentary Series	April 4-6,12&13, 2008	Portland, OR
Bare Bones International Film Festival	April 17, 2008	Tulsa, OK
<i>(honorable mention for Best Documentary)</i>		
Tenerife International Film Festival	April 21-25, 2008	Tenerife, Canary Islands
<i>(winner, Silver Award for Best Documentary)</i>		
Athens International Film&Video Festival	April 29, 2008	Athens, OH
Trenton Film Festival	May 3, 2008	Trenton, NJ
Hazel Wolf Environmental Film Festival	May 3, 2008	Seattle, WA
<i>(winner, Best of Fest)</i>		
Tallahassee Film Festival	May 17, 2008	Tallahassee, FL
Swansea Life Film Festival	May 31-June 7, 2008	Swansea Bay, Wales
SINY Film Festival	June 6&7, 2008	Staten Island, NY

*(continued on next page)*

## SCREENINGS TO-DATE (continued)

Columbian Theater	June 7, 2008	Astoria, OR
Tower Theater	June 10, 2008	Bend, OR
Philadelphia Independent Film Festival	June 28, 2008	Philadelphia, PA
Forecastle Film Festival	July 27, 2008	Louisville, KY
Washougal International Film Festival	August 21, 2008	Washougal, WA
Rome International Film Festival	September 5, 2008	Rome, GA
Southern Winds Film Festival	September 13, 2008	Shawnee, OK
<i>(nominated, Best Feature Documentary, A Seriously Good Movie)</i>		
Temecula Valley International Film Festival	September 18&19, 2008	Temecula, CA
Liberty Theater	October 2, 2008	Dayton, WA
The Other Venice Film Festival	October 12, 2008	Venice, CA
Tallahassee Film Society	October 17-18, 2008	Tallahassee, FL

## REVIEWS

“Stryker’s approach remains measured and even-handed, allowing us to know and appreciate voices from both points of view.”

– The Portland Tribune

“...gives a fair shake to every party involved ...an honest, concerned and judicious film.”

– Lance Kramer, Willamette Week

“[Colin Stryker’s] thoughtful, fair approach frames the dam conflict as an environmental issue with inescapable, potentially damaging economic consequences.”

– Stan Hall, The Oregonian

## VIEWER TESTIMONIALS

“A quality film ... important, thorough, impartial.”

– Binda Singh (director, Everglades International Film Festival)

“River Ways delivers a poignant take on a local hot button issue ... puts a very human face on a complex dispute.”

– Kimberly Tibbert (writer, [www.exit133.com](http://www.exit133.com))

“[Colin Stryker] has a way of letting you forget momentarily that you're even watching a documentary ... his attention to detail and character are so rich and illuminating, so wholly unintrusive, that you find yourself lulled into something you weren't quite expecting.

– Michael Bartlett (director, “The Little Girl Who Fell From A Tree”)

“[Colin Stryker has] a gift for finding the right people, getting them to say the right things, then drawing attention to what was said.”

– Jeff Miholer (entertainment attorney)

“The ultimate environmental film.”

– Dawn Smallman (documentary filmmaker)

# ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

(in order of appearance)

**Frank Sutterlict** is a tribal fisherman and member of The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. Frank is one of the few Native Americans in the Northwest that still make their living fishing year-round. Many years ago Frank moved in to a tribal fishing site along the Columbia River, where he lives in a trailer and sells fish to the general public passing by on a nearby highway. The site he lives in is not technically meant for permanent residence, so the Bureau of Indian Affairs hassles him from time to time to move his operation. But Frank has resisted these efforts and continues to fish using traditional hoops with nets as well as hook-and-line and gillnetting from a boat.

**Ben Barstow** is a wheat farmer in Palouse, Washington. He farms about 600 acres, on land he rents at a discount from his wife's parents. His wife's family farming operation stretches back to the late 1800s, when the land was originally homesteaded. The region Ben farms in is called The Palouse, and contains some of the most fertile soil in all of the United States. After harvest, Ben trucks his grain to a co-operative in Palouse, from whence it is then trucked down to Almoda Grain Elevator on the Snake River for transport via barge to Portland.

**Mark Ihander** is a commercial fisherman in Astoria, Oregon. The type of fishing he engages in is called gillnetting, and involves catching the fish by the gills in nets extended out into the river. There are only about 500 gillnetters on the Columbia River. Mark's family history of fishing in the U.S. goes back for four generations, to settlers who originally arrived from Scandinavia.

**Reed Burkholder** is a piano teacher in Boise, Idaho, who, in the early 90s, pioneered the idea of removing the Snake River dams to restore salmon runs. Without the benefit of a salaried position in an environmental organization, his efforts since that time have been tireless.

**Les Wigen** was, at the time of filming, one of three county commissioners for Whitman County in Washington. He has since retired and lives with his wife Kathy in Colfax, Washington. Les is the primary promulgator of the "Save Our Dams" campaign, a grassroots effort by farmers to keep the dams in place.

**Ralph Thomsen** co-owns T&R Farms, near Pasco, Washington with his brother-in-law, and draws irrigation from the Snake River to water his crops. Also affectionately known as "Porky", Ralph is a great believer in the power of technology to bring ever-increasing efficiency to modern agriculture.

**Idaho Rivers United**, based in Boise, Idaho, is one of the leading conservation organizations in the effort to restore salmon and steelhead populations to Idaho rivers. Executive Director Bill Sedivy and a statewide board of fisherman, business owners, and raft guides continue to champion removal of the Snake River dams with the message that

all communities in Idaho will benefit from the increased business from recreational fishing.

**Gary Lane** owns Wapiti Raft Guides in Riggins, Idaho, with his wife, Barbara. Gary believes we need to look not just at the economy of dollars and cents but at the natural economy. He has made strong connections with leaders of Native American tribes in the region and draws upon their view of the natural world for inspiration.

**Tom Anderson** owns the Salmon River Motel in Riggins, Idaho with his wife, Vicki. Their livelihood depends on the continued presence of fish in the Salmon River, which attracts fishermen from all over the world for the renowned salmon fishery.

**Rexann Zimmerman** owns a tackle shop in Riggins, Idaho. A native of Idaho, Rexann grew up watching the salmon runs in her town dwindle. Apart from her own economic interest, Rexann believes that dam removal is vital for future generations to enjoy Idaho's legacy of plentiful salmon.

**Aaron Miles** is the Natural Resource Manager for the Nez Perce tribe, headquartered in Lapwai, Idaho. The Nez Perce tribe is not only a powerful voice for dam removal, but a leading innovator in hatchery techniques aimed at restoring salmon runs to Idaho rivers.

**Terry Holubetz** is a salmon biologist who retired after 30 years with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. A frequent recreational fisherman, he continues to consult on salmon issues.

**John McKern** is a salmon biologist who retired after 30 years with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. John was one of the principal architects of the juvenile transportation program, which barges juvenile salmon around the dams in an effort to eliminate their lethal effects.

**James Buchal** is an attorney in Portland, Oregon, with a long history of taking on clients *pro bono* to defend against lawsuits filed by environmental activists. His book, *The Great Salmon Hoax*, attempts to unveil the hoax he claims has distorted the truth about the salmon issue in the Pacific Northwest.

**Tom Stuart** is a board member for Idaho Rivers United and the former owner of a motel in Stanley, Idaho, which claims the headwaters of the Salmon River, the largest salmon-bearing tributary of the Snake. Tom lives in Boise but travels frequently to Stanley to fish and enjoy the great outdoors.

**Nicola Johnson**, at the time of filming, was the Assistant Hatchery Manager at the Rapid River Hatchery in Riggins, Idaho. Since filming, Nicola has left this job to become a full-time raft guide.

# **DIRECTOR COLIN STRYKER**

(available at 300 dpi, contact [info@sawgrassproductions.com](mailto:info@sawgrassproductions.com))



(photos by Courtney Krake)

# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I first came across the issue of the Snake River dams in an environmental magazine in October of 2000. At the time, I was saving up some money for my first independent feature, kicking around some ideas, working on a few screenplays. When I read the article, I was immediately struck by the complexity of the issue, the variety of interest groups affected, and the depth of the emotions at stake. Within this seemingly simple question of whether or not to remove several remote dams, lurked some powerful ideas about our use of natural resources in modern society, the relationship between our rural and urban sector, and our treatment of and obligations to Native Americans. I knew almost instantly that this was the topic about which I wanted to make my first feature film.

I decided right away that the film had to be personal. What interested me about the topic was the way it lay at the intersection of a complex environmental issue - with all the corresponding political, economic, and social factors - and the very fundamental concept of ordinary people going about their lives and livelihoods. This would not be a film that used a purely analytical approach - with lots of graphics, talking heads, and narration - but rather would pry into the nuanced, organic perspectives of those who had the most at stake in the issue. By getting to know the people affected by the issue, we would come to know the issue at its most sublime and visceral level.

I also knew that the film had to be neutral with regard to the removal of the dams. Regardless of my own feelings on the issue, what interested about it was the variety of perspectives the issue represented, and how this reflected on society's approach to environmental issues to begin with. The true understanding of the issue that I sought would only be arrived at by presenting each of these perspectives with proper respect and sensitivity.

In November of 2000, while living in Los Angeles, I began a series of self-funded trips to the Pacific Northwest, to gather information about the issue, meet some of the characters involved, and develop a visual sense of the region, which I had never before visited. My goal ultimately was to find particular individuals who would represent the various interest groups involved. I would follow these individuals for a year, seeking not just to elicit their opinions about the Snake River dams, but to get a glimpse into their lives and the stake they had in the issue. It took a great deal of perseverance, calling in favors, and many miles on my car to find folks who would allow me to document their lives for a year. But by the end of 2002, I had my subjects chosen. I packed up everything and moved to Portland, which would be my home base from which to make the film.

## DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

“River Ways” represents the culmination of a diverse array of interests for producer/director Colin Stryker. A graduate of Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts with a combined degree in Drama and Computer Science, Colin seemed pre-destined to one day combine his interests in the theatrical and the technical. After a brief stint as a computer programmer for a large software firm in Massachusetts, Colin returned to school to earn a Master of Fine Arts in Film Production from the University of Miami in 1997. There he wrote, produced, directed, and edited a number of short films in and out of the classroom, ranging from hazy experiments in existential apathy to affectionate documentary profiles of some of Miami's local eccentrics and their parrots. The culmination of his grad school endeavors was his thesis film, the haunting black comedy, *Motospeaking*, which went on to enjoy a successful run in a number of art-film festivals, including the Cucalorus Film Festival in Wilmington, North Carolina, the Seattle Underground Film Festival, and the New York Lower East Side Film Festival.

Colin moved to Los Angeles in 1999, where he immediately set about preparing for his ultimate goal of producing an independent film. Having become increasingly drawn to environmental issues, Colin came across the very controversial issue of the Snake River dams in Eastern Washington State. Instantly recognizing the far-reaching human and cultural implications of the topic, Colin began, in 2000, a series of self-funded trips to the Pacific Northwest: researching the issue, meeting with representatives of the various interest groups involved, and developing a keen visual sense of the place and its people. A year later, in 2001, Colin made his final decision to move to Portland and pursue the production of a documentary about this topic.

# PRODUCTION CREDITS

Colin Stryker	Director, producer, editor, production sound
Matt Reynolds	Director of photography, camera operator
David Bryant	Additional camera, animations
Mike Chappell	Additional camera
Selena Chang	Additional sound
Samantha Chappell	Additional sound
Garrett Gfeller	Additional sound
Original Music	Barry Brusseau, Colin Stryker, Richard Temple
Featuring Music by	Town and Country