

# Reflections on the Columbia River Experience and “Governance”

CALFED Bay-Delta Program  
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John Shurts  
Northwest Power and Conservation Council

# Columbia River Basin



- Columbia Basin has fragmented government between *and* within the different levels of government with different but overlapping mandates and authorities.
- Governance proposals aimed at ending fragmented government and looking for a single decisionmaker have been a waste of time.

- Still, things get decided and implemented. We are not paralyzed.
- The most useful governance arrangements have arisen organically, opportunistically, even accidentally.
- Trying to reform or reshape “governance” as a general, abstract, distinct topic in and of itself has failed.

- Whether the region succeeds in achieving sustainable salmon recovery will *not* depend on whether we get the governance structure just right.
- Focus effort on substantive authority - on the kinds of decisions and information and standards and funding arrangements needed to address the substantive problems.