



April 2023 | Washington • Idaho

# Connections

## Make everyday Earth Day with easy energy-saving solutions

**Saving energy is good for all of us.** Simple adjustments at home can reduce your energy use, increase your comfort and benefit our planet. Save on hot water heating by installing low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators. Plug air leaks around windows and doors with caulk or weatherstrip, and seal duct leaks to maximize your HVAC system's efficiency.

Sign up for our Furnace Filter reminder program at [myavista.com/furnacefilter](https://myavista.com/furnacefilter) to improve indoor air quality and circulation. We even offer cash rebates or discounts on smart thermostats, which can help you control your home's comfort and minimize energy waste at [myavista.com/getrebates](https://myavista.com/getrebates).

For more energy-saving tips, visit us at [myavista.com/energytips](https://myavista.com/energytips).



## Helping fish thrive

### Avista's latest efforts to improve the bull trout population

Bull Trout now have an easier way to return to their spawning tributaries in Montana thanks to the recently completed fishway at Avista's Cabinet Gorge Dam on the lower Clark Fork River.

Construction of the fishway is the result of over 20 years of research and testing to determine how best to move upstream migrating Bull Trout over the 208-foot-tall Cabinet Gorge Dam.

Cabinet Gorge Dam was completed in 1952. Avista (then Washington Water Power) applied to the Federal Power Commission in the fall of 1950 and received permission to build Cabinet Gorge Dam in January of 1951. On Sept. 29, 1952, the first power was generated.

In 1999, after convening a multi-party stakeholder process for several years, Avista signed the Clark Fork Settlement Agreement along with five Native American Tribes, multiple state and federal agencies, Sanders County, environmental groups and a host of other stakeholders. Avista began implementing environmental measures immediately, and the following year, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued Avista a 45-year license, including the formation of the Clark Fork Settlement Agreement Management Committee. The License and Settlement Agreement prioritized conservation of native salmonids, like the threatened Bull Trout. The license helps ensure a source of clean and affordable energy for our customers for the future.

Avista began using various fish passage methods at Cabinet Gorge Dam in 2001, including electrofishing, angling and utilizing a small fish ladder trap located a mile downstream of the dam. While those methods have been somewhat successful,

**Continued on back**



## Continued from front Helping fish thrive

they weren't capturing all the Bull Trout approaching Cabinet Gorge Dam each year. Avista worked with lead agencies and Tribes to evaluate approaches to improve fish passage and connectivity in the lower Clark Fork basin. The design and construction of the fishway was done in collaboration with the Management Committee.

"By having dams in the river, we impact a range of natural resources, and we have a regulatory requirement to address those impacts," said Monica Ott, Avista's Clark Fork River License Manager. "But we have always had a philosophy of environmental stewardship. It's not about just meeting our requirements but also taking care of the resources that benefit us all."

The new fishway is designed to capture adult Bull Trout and Westslope Cutthroat Trout migrating upstream from Lake Pend Oreille to their spawning tributaries in Montana. Once captured, these fish are moved to a handling facility where data is collected, including genetic testing for Bull Trout, prior to transporting and releasing the fish upstream, so they can return to their tributary of origin to spawn. Most other fish captured in the fishway are returned to the river. We also promote successful downstream migration of juvenile bull trout from the tributaries in which they are born to Lake Pend Oreille, where they grow to adulthood.

The fishway is far from Avista's only effort to improve fish health and habitat. We have purchased or protected over 90,000 acres of habitat, and implement a wide range of fisheries-related programs as part of the Clark Fork and Spokane River licenses, including habitat restoration, genetic studies, water quality improvements, population assessments and many others. Construction and operation of the new permanent fishway at Cabinet Gorge is an important milestone in bull trout restoration—one that is shared among many entities working together for more than 20 years.

**CALL BEFORE YOU DIG:  
GAS PIPELINE SAFETY**



## April is National Safe Digging month

**To keep our natural gas system safe and reliable, Avista completes regular maintenance.**

We perform several safety procedures including, but not limited to, leak surveys, pipeline excavation monitoring, meter inspections and gas meter replacements.

Please know that, from time to time, you may see one of our workers in your yard performing these maintenance actions. And remember, for home projects, state law requires you to call 811 at least two business days before you start digging.

Calling 811 will initiate a request for someone to visit your work site to mark the ground above utility lines. Customers can also request private locates for non-utility underground work (this will entail a fee) by calling 811. This way, you won't accidentally hit a line while you're digging. Thanks for being our partner in safety. Visit [myavista.com/safety](https://myavista.com/safety) to learn more.

## Looking for energy bill assistance?

**Avista partners with community agencies to provide financial assistance, plus we offer other services to help you manage and pay your bill.**

**Energy Assistance grants** are available for income-qualified residential customers. Funds are distributed to qualifying customers through local community agencies — please call us at (800) 227-9187 to find your local community agency or visit us at [myavista.com/assistance](https://myavista.com/assistance).

**Comfort Level Billing** divides yearly energy costs into 12 equal and predictable monthly payments. **Preferred Due Date** helps align your bill's due date with your payday. **Payment Arrangements** can be made on an individual basis for those in need.

We're here to help. Please also call us at (800) 227-9187 to discuss your options with a Customer Service Representative.

**We have  
options.**

## Connect with us

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