



NEWS RELEASE

25 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. · Suite 450 · Washington, D.C., 20001 · 202/682-1700 · www.hydro.org

Media Contact: Kristen Nelson
301/654-2003 · kristen@hydro.org

For Immediate Release

NHA Honors Four Hydropower Projects for Outstanding Stewardship *OSAW Awards Highlight Exceptional Achievements in Hydro Industry*

Washington, D.C. (May 11, 2009) -- The National Hydropower Association today honored the exceptional programs and practices of four hydropower companies today through its annual Outstanding Stewards of America's Waters (OSAW) Awards. The winners -- New York Power Authority, Puget Sound Energy, TransCanada, and Yuba County (CA) Water Agency -- all have developed groundbreaking, collaborative projects that expand the U.S. hydropower industry's work in providing clean, affordable, domestic energy.

"The OSAW awards highlight some of the industry's boldest approaches to fulfilling its obligations as stewards of our rivers and natural resources every year," said NHA Executive Director Linda Church Ciocci. "The winners deserve this recognition, because, not only have they fulfilled their legal and regulatory commitments in their operations, they've created innovative solutions, developed new technologies, and tested approaches that will raise the entire industry's performance. "

NHA conferred three awards in the category of Recreational, Environmental, and Historical Enhancement this year:

- **New York Power Authority** won for its Lake Sturgeon Spawning Beds initiative, which is a part of its relicensing program for the St. Lawrence/FDR hydroelectric project in New York State. NYPA identified the sturgeon spawning beds program as part of a portfolio of habitat improvements outlined in its relicensing process. Eager to improve the population of lake sturgeon -- a New York threatened species -- NYPA took an innovative, collaborative approach to encourage natural reproduction of the species. In consultation with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and representatives from state and federal resource agencies, NYPA embarked on a multi-phase effort to site, test, and analyze spawning beds in Lake St. Lawrence. The approach -- far different from the traditional practice of qualitatively assessing sites -- yielded exceptional results in the first year of operation. Visit <http://www.nypa.gov/> for more details.
- **Puget Sound Energy** won for the design and implementation of a floating surface-collector fish-passage system at the Baker River Hydroelectric Project in Washington. In relicensing its Baker River dams, PSE had the opportunity to redesign its unique floating "gulper" and guide-net complex, which captures migrating juvenile salmon for release into the Skagit River. Working with late Indian tribes, state and federal resource agencies, and other local stakeholders, PSE developed a new, more advanced floating surface collector that includes submerged screens, water pumps, fish-holding chambers, a fish-evaluation station, control rooms, and a fish-loading facility to prepare the salmon for downstream trucking around the utility's two high-reservoir dams. The system uses a series of pumps to simulate river current and attract the fish into the facility. Inside the facility, screens slow the water down to project the fish from injury. PSE has seen fish collection rates skyrocket since installing the facility, and it hopes to reach a 95 percent capture rate on Baker Lake, improving the existing rate by 50 percent. Visit <http://www.pse.com> for more details.

- **Yuba County (CA) Water Agency** won for completing the lower Yuba River Accord, an unprecedented set of agreements among local irrigation districts, state and federal resource agencies, and conservation groups to meet the simultaneous, sometimes competing demands for fisheries protection, water supply, power supply, and other services on California's Yuba River watershed. Looking at the seemingly impassible, expensive controversies surrounding the watershed that had been playing out in regulatory and legal forums since 1988, Yuba County Water Agency championed a collaborative approach to address all stakeholder concerns. YCWA and 16 other entities launched a four-year process that led to a three-agreement accord that addresses key economic and environmental priorities. Since completing the accord, YCWA has reported several important outcomes, including significantly increased fisheries flows for the lower Yuba River's salmon and steelhead, full utilization of hydropower generation in the Yuba River Development Project, and commitment of a \$6 million dollar fisheries monitoring and evaluation program to address operational and flow-change decisions in an ongoing, collaborative manner. Visit <http://www.ycwa.com/> for more details.

NHA also conferred one award in the Public Education category this year:

- **TransCanada** won for the high-definition documentary it produced to document the repowering project it undertook at its 100-year-old Vernon Station hydroelectric plant in Vermont. From 2006-2008, TransCanada replaced Vernon Station's four original three-wheel turbines with advanced, axial-flow Kaplan runners that could double the plant's capacity. But, installing 21st-century technologies in a facility subject to National Historic Preservation Act requirements posed daunting technical challenges, as well as important efforts to maintain and document the facility's historic character. TransCanada decided to document this work by producing a high-definition video about the facility's past as seen through archival photos and its future, as captured in footage showing the repowering project. The company kept a local production team "on call" throughout the project, so it could keep the repowering project progressing, while also capturing all significant milestones. Schools, historical societies, and other local organizations are now using *Vernon Station -- Honoring the Past, Powering the Future* as an educational resource and historic reference. Visit <http://www.transcanada.com/> for more details.

NHA's selection panel, which includes representatives from industry, environmental, and media interests, determined the OSAW Award winners based on their project or program's initial challenge, innovation, collaboration with stakeholders, and results. The panel judges every project by its own merits.

NHA presented the awards today at the association's annual conference in Washington, D.C.

For more details on the 2008 OSAW winners, see www.outstandingwaters.org.

###