IDAHO POWER®
An IDACORP Company

Swan Falls Power Plant

The “grandfather” of Idaho Power’s hydroelectric plants.

Recreation

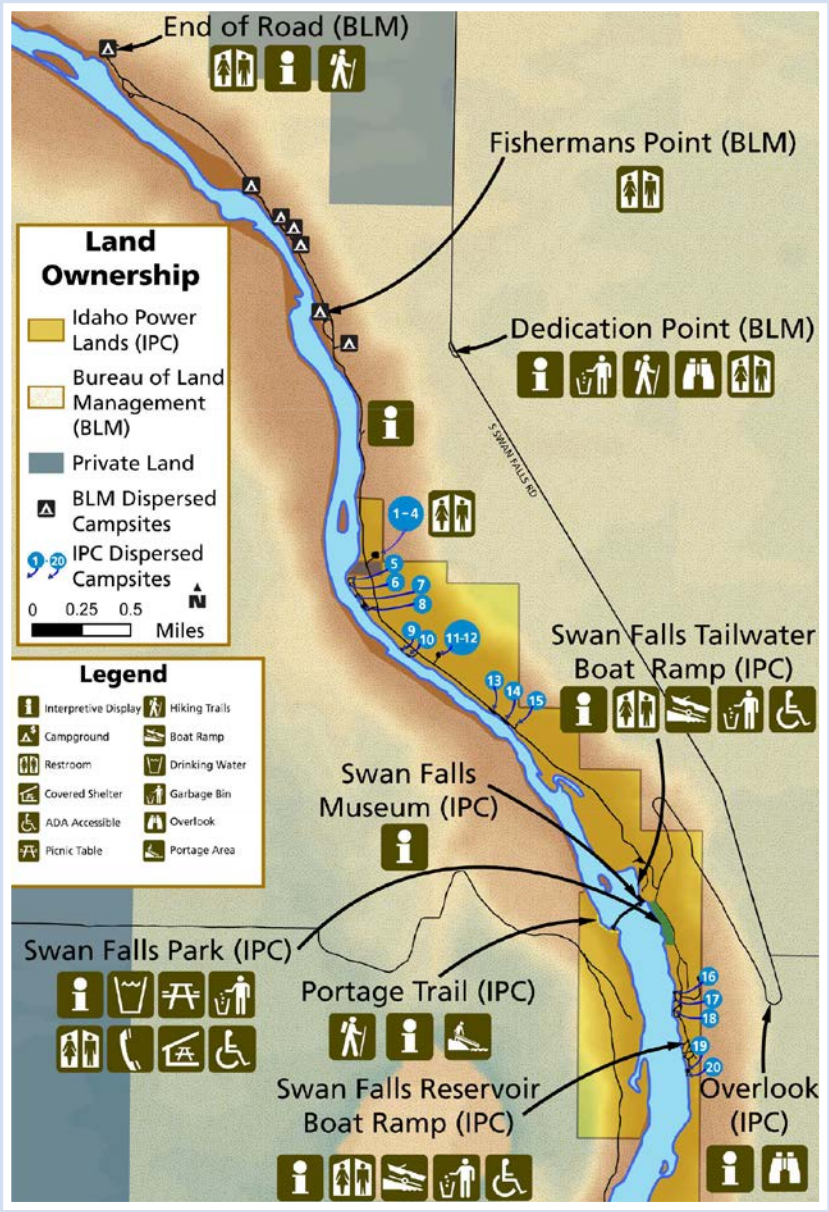
The area around Swan Falls provides a variety of recreational opportunities including fishing, boating, and waterfowl and upland game bird hunting.

Park Facilities

- Day use area
- ADA accessible restrooms
- Picnic area with tables
- Fishing access
- Interpretive information

Recreation Sites Above and Below the Dam

- Camping sites – no potable water
- Portable and vault toilets
- Fishing access
- Portage trail around the dam
- Reservoir boat ramp and docks
- Whitewater boating access below dam
- Hiking and biking trails
- Bird watching



HISTORY

In the late 1800s, a major mining boom was underway in the Owyhee Mountains south of the Snake River. In frontier mining towns, wood was used for nearly everything – constructing buildings, bracing mining tunnels and shafts, and as fuel to heat homes and operate the steam boilers that provided power at the mines. After three-and-a-half decades of mining and construction, the mountains surrounding the Owyhee Mining District were stripped of timber, leaving mine operators in an energy crisis and desperate to develop new sources of power.

It was this crisis that led some people to look to the Snake River as a potential source for generating electricity. As early as 1894, a local engineer, Arthur D. Foote, approached the Trade Dollar Mining Company with the idea of developing a hydroelectric plant on the Snake River at Swan Falls. The site was only 28 miles from the Silver City mines and Foote was confident that he could use hydroelectric power to end the mining company's quest to find adequate wood resources. It would take several years before the mine owners fully realized the potential of the project and turned to Boise Engineer Andrew J. Wiley to make Foote's vision a reality. Wiley designed and directed construction of the first dam and power plant from 1900 to 1901. This accomplishment is impressive considering how remote and inaccessible the location was at that time.

The plant was built at a cost of $250,000, and when completed included four vertical turbines which turned a shaft connected by a belt to three generators.

The plant first began generating electricity in 1901, producing 900 kilowatts of 500-volt two-phase alternating current. While that may not seem like much today, it was enough to provide power to the Trade Dollar Mine, as well as lighting the towns of Murphy, Silver City and Dewey. Output from the plant also was used for some of the first electrically-heated buildings.

The Swan Falls hydroelectric plant has had a long history of useful service that continues today. Changing technology and increasing demands for electricity led to three major expansions of the historic power plant prior to its eventual replacement by a new powerhouse constructed by Idaho Power in 1994.

Tours of the Swan Falls Historic Powerhouse are available by appointment which must be made at least one week prior to arrival. Please email Perry Dobey at **pdobey@idahopower.com** to schedule a tour.

MILESTONES

1901: The Trade Dollar Mining Company completed construction of the Swan Falls hydroelectric plant and began generating electricity.

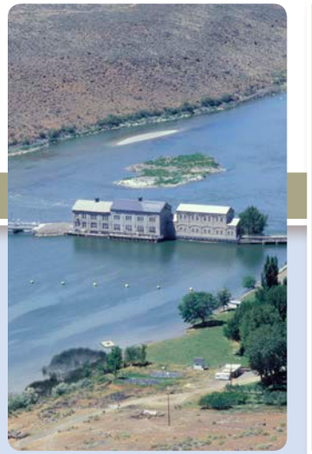
1907: Increasing demand for electricity resulted in a major addition to the east side of the original powerhouse, including the installation of four vertical turbines. New transmission lines were constructed to carry more power to the Owyhee Mining District, and the owners of Swan Falls began selling power to Nampa, Caldwell and Boise residents.

1910: The Swan Falls Power Company was formed and took over operation of the project. An addition to the west side of the original powerhouse and installation of two new three-phase generators increased generation by 1,700 kilowatts.

1911: The Southern Idaho Light, Heat and Power Company was formed by the consolidation of Swan Falls Power Company and two other companies. The name was changed to Idaho Railway, Light and Power Company, which also included three electric railway companies operating in the Boise valley. The newly formed company began a major redevelopment of the Swan Falls project by removing the three original 900 kilowatt generators and demolishing the superstructure of the earliest powerhouse. A new, reinforced concrete powerhouse was built over the foundation of the old power-house and four new turbines with a rated capacity of 5,000 kilowatts were installed.

1916: The newly formed Idaho Power Company assumed ownership of the project. Six new units were installed replacing some of the historic generators and upgrading the plant's rated total capacity to 10,400 kilowatts.

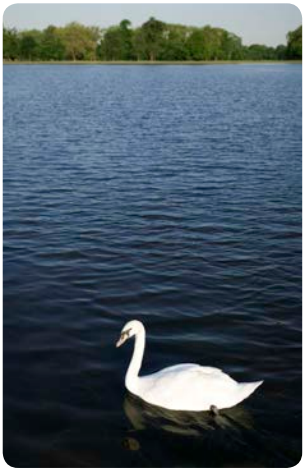
1994: After 93 years of service, the historic powerhouse and all the generating equipment were taken out of service and retired. The company finished construction of a new powerhouse with two state-of-the-art Kaplan-style horizontal pit turbines, giving the new plant a capacity of 25,000 kilowatts.



Today: Idaho Power operates 17 hydroelectric plants on the Snake River and its tributaries. Swan Falls is one of the smallest plants in terms of generating capacity. However, over the years it has been a steady producer of electricity and remains the "grandfather" of the company's hydroelectric plants.

Interesting Facts

- Swan Falls Dam is made of reinforced concrete with steel spill gates.
- The historic power plant when fully developed had 10 generators that produced 10,400 kilowatts.
- The new 1994 power plant has two generators that produce 25,000 kilowatts.
- Swan Falls may have taken its name from a man named Swan who operated a placer mine near the site in the late 1800s. Other sources suggest the area was named after white trumpeter swans stopping along this portion of the river during their annual migration.
- Both the Swan Falls Power Plant and the Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District surrounding the power plant are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



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