



2025-2026

ANNUAL REPORT

STATUS AND TRENDS REPORTING PROJECT



Summary of 2025- to mid- 2026 project implementation, status ad trends. Released September 2026.

Honor. Protect. Restore.

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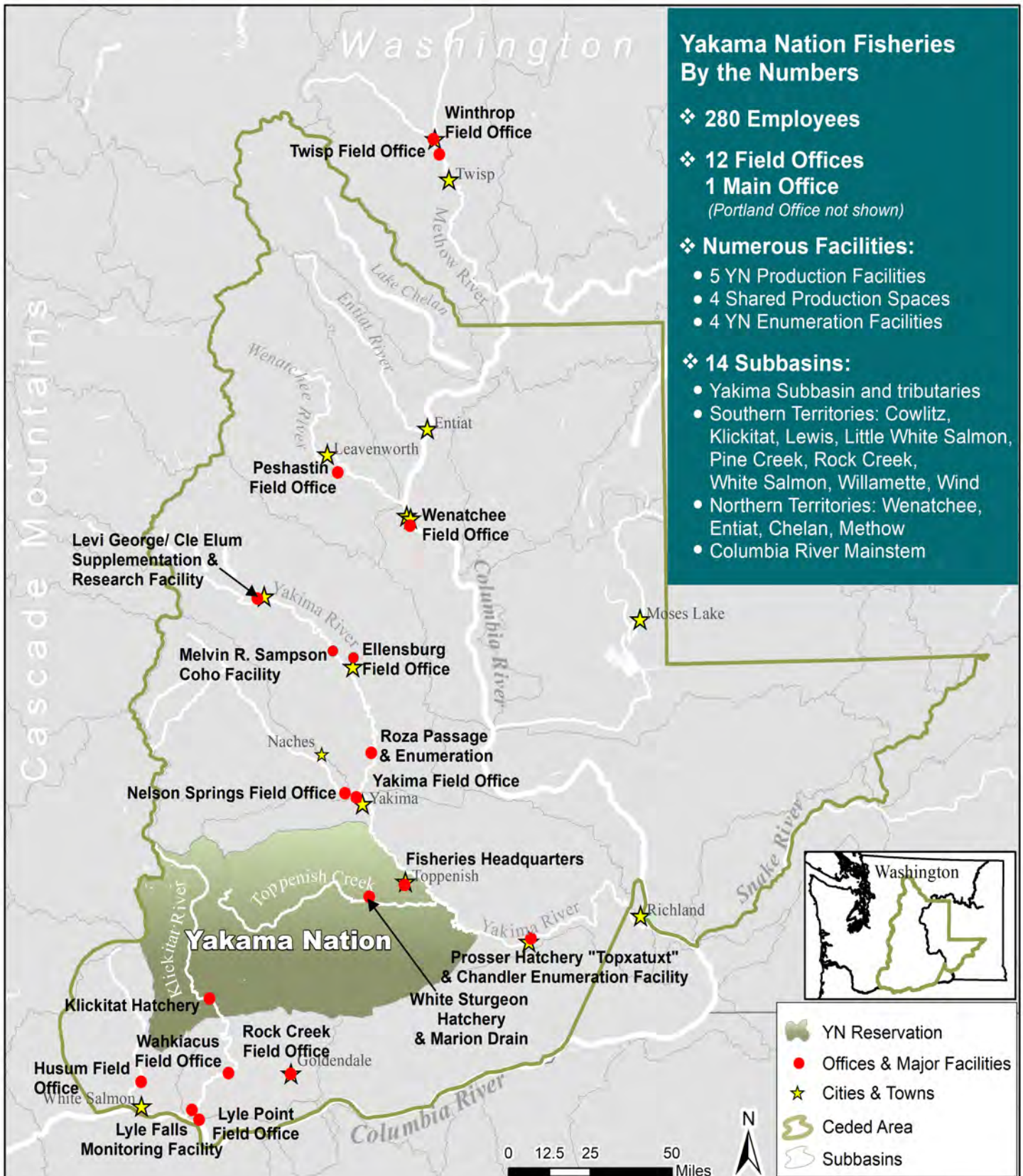
Cover Photo: Reconnection of lower Yakima river. February 2026.
Watch video here: yakamafish-nsn.gov/bateman_causeway



Where We Work



Yakama Nation Fisheries Facilities



Who We Are

Who We Are

Yakama Nation Fisheries. Honor. Protect. Restore.

Yakama Nation Fisheries (YNF) is dedicated to honoring, protecting, and restoring culturally important fish populations and the ecosystems that sustain them throughout the Treaty Territories of the Yakama Nation. Our work also protects the rights of Yakama Nation members to use these resources, as reserved in the Treaty of 1855.*

For generations, salmon, steelhead, lamprey, and other fish have been central to the culture, traditions, food systems, and identity of the Yakama people. Today, Yakama Nation Fisheries combines traditional knowledge, scientific research, monitoring, habitat restoration, fish production, and fisheries management to restore healthy and sustainable fish populations and the rivers and watersheds that support them.

Where We Work

Our work extends across the Yakama Nation's Treaty Territories and encompasses 14 subbasins, with offices and projects throughout the region. YNF currently includes approximately 280 employees, 13 offices, five production facilities, four enumeration facilities, and four shared production spaces.

From the Yakima Basin and the Klickitat and White Salmon watersheds to the Wenatchee, Entiat, and Methow subbasins, our staff work across the broad landscape of the Columbia River Basin to improve conditions for fish and their habitats. In the Yakima Basin alone, our work includes restoration of salmon, steelhead, trout, and Pacific lamprey, improvement of streamflows and water quality, habitat restoration, and efforts to restore and protect other historically occurring fish populations.

What We Do

Yakama Nation Fisheries works across the full life cycle of fishes and across the landscapes they depend on. Our programs include:

- **Fish population monitoring and research** — tracking abundance, survival, productivity, distribution, and trends.
- **Habitat restoration and protection** — improving passage, streamflow, water quality, riparian conditions, and instream habitat.
- **Fish production and supplementation** — supporting conservation, restoration, and sustainable fisheries.
- **Species reintroduction and restoration** — rebuilding populations of salmon, steelhead, Pacific lamprey, and other culturally important species.
- **Fisheries and harvest management** — monitoring fisheries and supporting opportunities for Yakama Nation members.
- **Education and outreach** — sharing knowledge about fishes, rivers, habitat, and the cultural importance of fisheries.
- **Policy and regional partnerships** — working with Tribal, federal, state, and local partners to address the complex challenges facing Columbia River Basin fish populations.

Connecting Science to Management

The Status and Trends Reporting (STAR) Project brings together information from across Yakama Nation Fisheries to tell the story of fish populations, habitat, restoration, production, harvest, and management throughout our region.

STAR connects project-level monitoring and research with a broader view of progress toward restoration goals. By bringing information together across programs and watersheds, STAR helps us understand **where we are, where we are making progress, where challenges remain, and where additional action is needed.**

The information presented in this report reflects the collective work of Yakama Nation Fisheries staff and our many partners. It is intended to support informed decision-making, strengthen accountability, and help guide future restoration and management efforts.

Our commitment is simple: Honor. Protect. Restore.



OUR MISSION

To **Honor**, **Protect**, and **Restore** culturally important fish populations and the ecosystems that produce them throughout the Treaty Territories of the Yakama Nation, and to protect the rights of Yakama Nation members to use these resources as reserved in the Treaty of 1855.*

*Yakama Nation Treaty of 1855 (12 stat. 951) with the United States of America

Photo: Tribal fishing at Celilo Falls on the Columbia River before inundation by hydroelectric dams, 1949.

Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative

The **Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative** (CBRI) represents the collaborative effort of the **Six Sovereigns** (the Yakama, Umatilla, Warm Springs, and Nez Perce Tribes and the states of Washington and Oregon) to develop a comprehensive solution for shared and complex challenges in the Columbia River Basin. It is informed by the Six Sovereigns' significant technical expertise as fisheries co-managers, and by their sovereign obligations to their constituents.

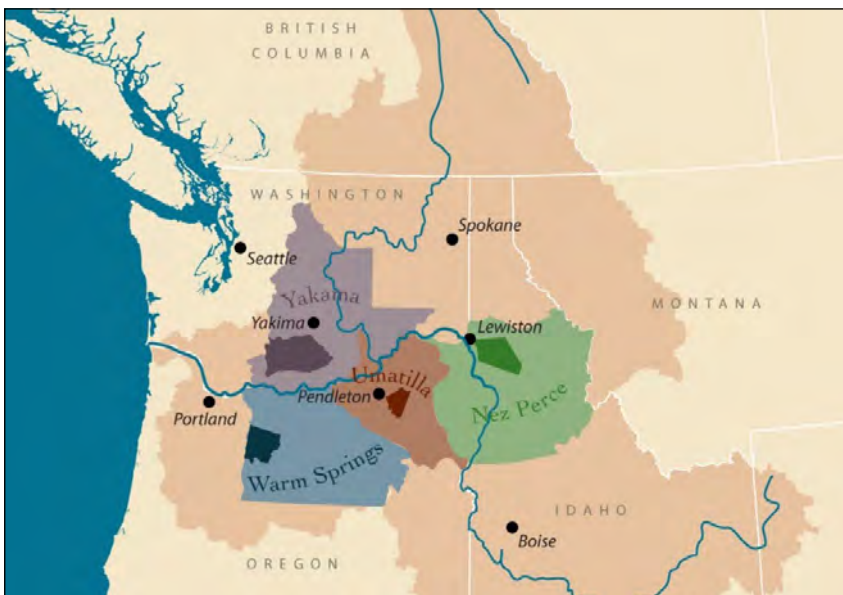
The CBRI is intended as a roadmap to help the US government work in partnership with the region to restore Columbia Basin fisheries to healthy and abundant levels, honor commitments to Tribal Nations, and deliver affordable and reliable clean power while meeting the many resilience needs of stakeholders in the Columbia River basin and the Pacific Northwest.

The proposed Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative (CBRI) strives for a true win-win outcome. The CBRI helps bring forward the Tribal People and fisheries left behind in the rush of development by restoring salmon and steelhead with other native species and their habitats and investing in fisheries infrastructure. In so doing, the CBRI also protects and enhances other key service sectors by modernizing and investing in clean energy, agriculture, and transportation, helping restore vital ecosystem functions and services essential for local and regional resilience and adaptation to climate change and extreme climatic events.

The CBRI provides a framework for a durable long-term strategy that restores salmon and other native fish populations to healthy and abundant levels, ensures a clean energy future, supports local and regional economic resilience, restores ecosystem function and honors longstanding unmet commitments to Tribal Nations.



Elaine Harvey (YN, CRITFC) and Chief Bronsco Jim, Jr. (YN) address the guests before entering the Rock Creek Longhouse at a celebration of the partnership on October 6, 2025 (CRITFC).



Six Sovereigns of the CBRI, including the States of Oregon and Washington (CRITFC).

To achieve this win-win scenario, the status quo is not an option, and inaction is simply unacceptable. Much like the determined steps necessary to decarbonize our energy system, decisive action is necessary to recover Columbia Basin salmon – incremental action will not be effective and will be more costly in the long run. The rapidly changing economic, energy and climate conditions – plus the depleted status of the fishery resources - require leaders to plan now for inevitable changes during the coming decades. We must act now with necessary federal investments across the whole of government to be successful.

CBRI Update



Today, the Yakama Nation (YN) continues to work closely with states of Washington and Oregon and the Nez Perce, Umatilla, and Warm Springs Tribes (Six Sovereigns) to advance the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative (CBRI) objectives and recommendations. We continue to work

with federal partners, and with regional sovereigns and stakeholders to restore healthy and abundant fisheries; provide reliable, affordable, clean and socially just energy; and ensure that treaty and trust obligations to tribes are fulfilled.



Fall Chinook, Lyle Falls, Klickitat Subbasin.

On June 12, 2025, the Trump Administration issued a Presidential Memorandum titled “Stopping Radical Environmentalism to Generate Power for the Columbia River Basin.” The Memorandum revoked the Biden Administration’s commitment to restoring healthy and abundant salmon in the Columbia River and reneged on the **Resilient Columbia Basin Agreement** (RCBA), calling for the cancellation of any commitments made under the agreement and recouping funds that were committed as part of that agreement. This decision was made unilaterally with no engagement or discussion with the YN.

In addition, Bonneville Power Administration decided to allow the **Columbia River Fish Accords** (Accords) to expire on September 30, 2025, without replacement. The Fish Accords represented a 17-year partnership between the YN and the Federal Government that supported significant habitat and hatchery projects across the Columbia River Basin and contained specific obligations to renegotiate a successor agreement.

In October 2025, following the expiration of the Accords and collapse of the RCBA, the YN made a principled decision to align with Plaintiffs in *NWF v. NMFS*. The National Wildlife Federation, et al. v. National Marine Fisheries Service, et al., Case No. 3:01-cv-0640SI (D. Or.) (“*NWF v. NMFS*”), is federal litigation that challenges the adequacy of federal biological opinions governing operations of the Columbia River hydropower system under the Endangered Species Act.

The YN continues its fight for the salmon. Working with Congress, there is a need to at least double available funding for Columbia Basin mitigation and restoration projects, without impacting regional electric ratepayers. We also need additional appropriations to fix, operate, and modernize fish infrastructure at Columbia Basin dams and hatcheries. The YN is working with regional stakeholders through the **Columbia Basin Collaborative** to advance the Columbia Basin Partnership goals and with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council to ensure their long-term planning balances achieving healthy and abundant fish returns with adequate, efficient, economic, and reliable energy development.



YN Chairman Gerald Lewis providing a signature during the Resilient Columbia Basin Agreement (RCBA) signing ceremony on February 23, 2024. It was rescinded by the federal government in 2025.

Hydrosystem Spotlights

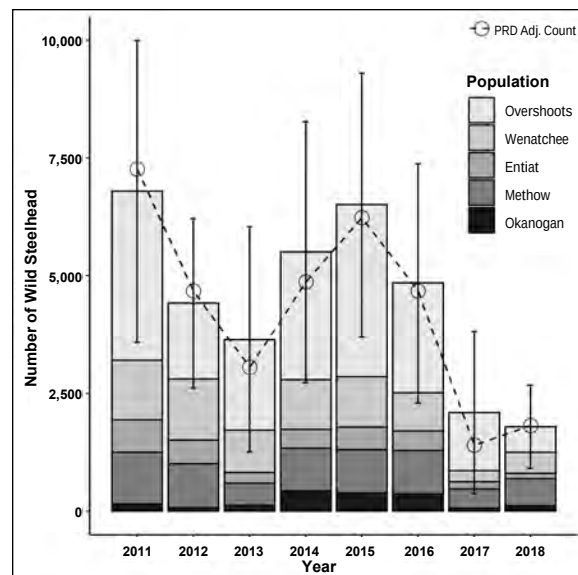
Steelhead Fallback and Survival Issue in Upper Columbia

What is an “Overshoot”?

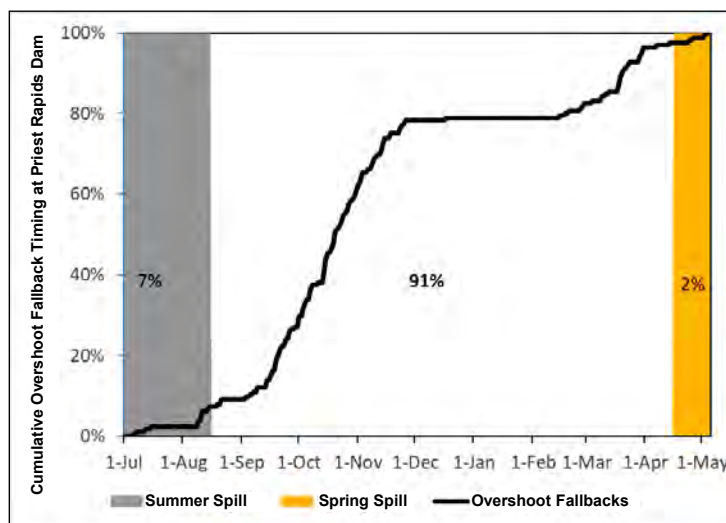
- Sometimes upon returning from the ocean, steelhead swim past their home river, crossing one or more hydropower dams. In order to spawn, they need to get back downriver.
- This phenomena happens both into and within the Upper Columbia (UC) and Snake River systems from July through September.
- Both wild and hatchery fish exhibit this behavior.

The Upper Columbia Issue

- At Priest Rapids wild overshoot abundance averaged 1,856 fish between 2011-2018 (see figure, right).
- Wild overshoots are more abundant in the UC than any single UC population (see bar chart, right).
- Rock Island, Rocky Reach and Wells Dams are the only projects in the Columbia and Snake that do not provide overshoot fallback spill.
- Most UC overshoots are from the Yakima River or Snake River.
- In 2024 genetic stock identification was added to sampling at Priest Rapids as an independent line of evidence. At Priest Rapids 37% of wild steelhead in 2024 were overshoots.
- Fallback success is the share of overshoot fish that make it home; the rest are lost. Return rates drop steeply with every dam crossed. Most steelhead try to return during time periods where spill is unavailable and must pass through the powerhouse (see graphic, right).



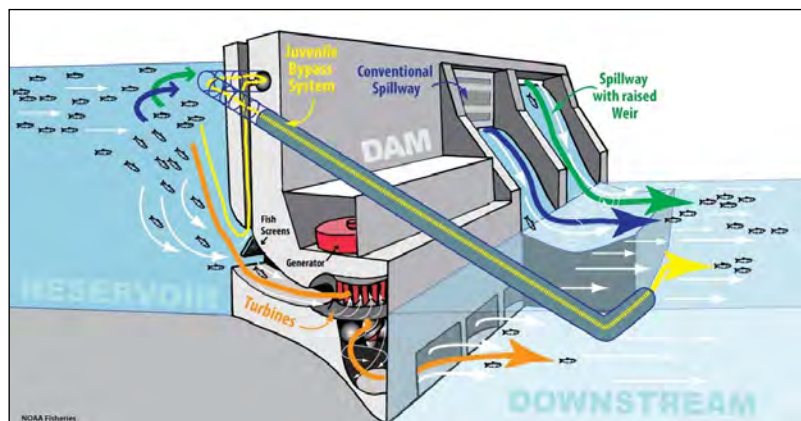
Number of steelhead by stock passing Priest Rapids Dam, 2011-2018 (Murdoch et al., 2022)



Cumulative overshoot fallback timing at Priest Rapids Dam (Fuchs et al., 2021)



Rock Island Dam (Chelan PUD)



Routes of downstream passage through and over a dam (NOAA)

Impacts to Yakima River Steelhead

- Annual losses to the entire Yakima Steelhead Major Population Group due to overshooting behavior coupled with the lack of a surface passage route at Mid-Columbia PUD dams ranges from 2%-16% per year.
- In 2024, as verified by genetics, fallback success collapses by the last dam crossed: Priest rapids 89.5%, Rock Island 60%, Rocky Reach 33% , Wells 0%, approximately a 30% loss per Project. In 2024 the loss equaled 11% (142 steelhead) of total Yakima River spawners based on Prosser Dam counts.



Migrating steelhead

Last Overshoot Dam	Overshoot Abundance	Fallback Success	Percent Successful
Priest Rapids	274	245	89.5%
Rock Island	106	64	60%
Rocky Reach	62	21	33%
Wells	32	0	0%
UC Total	476	329	69%

Yakima River genetic stock identification results

- The YN is actively advocating with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries (NMFS), Chelan County Public Utility District (PUD), and Douglas County PUD to establish a surface spill at Rock Island, Rocky Reach, and Wells Dams (Note: GPUD provides overshoot fallback spill 24/7 August – November 15). This is the fix that would raise overshoot fallback success and cut the loses. Currently, Chelan PUD has agreed to test an experimental operation of the Rocky Reach surface collector with significantly reduced attraction flow (from normal operations) three days per week.

More Yakama Nation Advocacy in Action

- At the end of 2025, the YN advocated for earlier spill at Rock Island Dam (long term) and Wells Dam, **obtaining earlier spill** for April 1, 2026. Under the Habitat Conservation Plan Framework this is the earliest that spill can be started without going through the more difficult process of changing the Framework. All of the current data indicates that wild migrations are occurring even earlier, however.
- The YN has been holding events advocating for the protection of tribal natural resources and sacred sites, like those in potential jeopardy from the proposed **Goldendale pump storage project**. For more information, see **Protect Pushpum event p. 21**, and short video here: yakamafish-nsn.gov/GoldendaleWaterPumpProject 
- We are making sure YN concerns regarding potential impacts to Tribal natural and cultural resources are taken into account when the state of Washington is negotiating how to handle the huge power needs of datacenters. YN is the first tribe to have a representative on the Washington State's **Data Center Workgroup**, helping to craft policy for H.B. 2515, the state's first attempt to create guardrails for data center development.
- **Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative (CBRI)**: after the federal government withdrew from the Resilient Columbia Basin Agreement (see p. 5-6), did not extend the Fish Accords, there remained no regional agreements to protect fish. The YN continues to work closely with Six Sovereigns to implement CBRI and focuses on Northwest Power and Conservation Council F&W program, Power Plan, and regional collaboration through **Columbia Basin Collaborative**.
- **Note:** This is an evolving story, and there may be updates to operations that occur after printing. Check our website for the latest news: yakamafish-nsn.gov/news

Hatchery & Production Spotlights

Adult Collection Facility at Cle Elum Dam

Issue:

- Cle Elum Dam was built in the 1930s, primarily for irrigation, with no upstream or downstream fish passage through or over the 100 foot spillway drop, and water fluctuations of over 100 feet annually.
- The unique “Helix” juvenile downstream passage structure is expected to be fully operational in 2026, but an upstream migratory passage solution is needed.
- Currently, if sockeye, Chinook salmon and steelhead want to migrate back to Lake Cle Elum, they have to be collected at Roza Dam and trucked 57 miles upstream.
- Extirpated by the lack of passage, sockeye were reintroduced to Lake Cle Elum by YN in 2009 and are now spawning naturally after transportation.



Above: Adult collector under construction below Cle Elum Dam



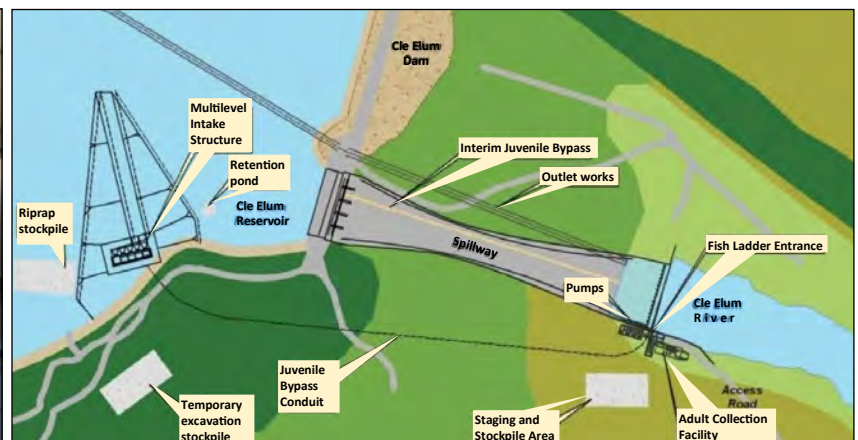
Sockeye trap and haul

Solution:

- An “Adult Collector” is currently being built below Cle Elum Dam so that returning spawners can swim right up to where they will be volitionally collected and transported about 1,000 feet over the dam. The facility and the fish transport will be run by YN.
- Cle Elum Dam fish passage restoration is the largest capital project of the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (YBIP) to date. Goals of the YBIP include finding innovative water management and storage solutions that meet the needs of all water users in the Basin and protect against future drought, including restoring fish passage where needed.
- Goals of the sockeye restoration project are to increase sockeye returns to the Yakima Basin from around 20,000 to 100,000 annually.
- A cooperative project between the Yakama Nation, the Bureau of Reclamation and Washington state, the adult collector completion goal is late 2026 or early 2027.
- The YBIP (2013) includes plans for fish passage to be installed at 6 BOR facilities within 30 years, including Tieton and Rimrock Lakes, as well as the Upper Yakima Basin.



Above: YN staff Arnold Barney transporting sockeye over Cle Elum Dam



Above: Innovative flexible helix downstream passage has been installed, but an upstream passage solution is still needed (BOR)

Major Upgrades at Prosser Hatchery “Topxatuxt”

A groundbreaking ceremony was held on October 3, 2025, for major expansions to the Prosser Hatchery. The area has been used by Tribal fishers since time immemorial. The hatchery is renamed “Topxatuxt.” Located 46 river miles from the mouth of the Yakima River, the name is a reference to Prosser Falls.

Background:

- Chinook, steelhead, coho and Pacific lamprey runs that were once abundant at the site have been devastated there due to development, in addition to other factors.
- The Yakima Basin historically supported a 800,000+ salmon and steelhead run.
- Returns have been less than 20,000 fish for the last 10-15 years; Spring and Fall Chinook, Pacific lamprey being drastically reduced.
- Coho, Sockeye and summer Chinook are being reestablished after extirpation, and Pacific lamprey is being supplemented, with natural production now increasing.



Above: Yakima River scaffold (Jeremy Fivecrows, CRITFC)



Above: Hatchery manager Michael Fiander

- Steelhead and bull trout in the Basin are ESA-listed Threatened species. There are efforts to restore them ongoing now as well, including habitat restoration and rescue.

Highlights:

- Upgrades and expansion are a joint venture of the YN, Bureau of Reclamation, and other contributors, with funding provided by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), YN, and Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC).
- The focus of the improvements are for fall Chinook production (which have been sustained by Topxatuxt hatchery in recent years).
- Upgrades include: replacing 4 rearing raceways with 12x20ft circular tanks, an improved more natural release raceway, and improved efficiency including 70% water reuse.



Above: Groundbreaking with YN TC and GC Chairs Gerald Lewis and Warren Clund, BOR acting director Ronald Springer, CRITFC Director Aja DeCoteau. October 3, 2025



Above: Existing Raceways at Topxatuxt Hatchery

Hatchery & Production Spotlight

Klickitat Hatchery Improvements

Timeline:

- **1938** Mitchell Act authorized by Congress to provide funds through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to mitigate for lost fisheries due to dam construction and other development throughout the Columbia River Basin.
- **1949-1950's:** Klickitat Hatchery built at River Mile 42; operated by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) with Mitchell Act funds.
- **2006:** YN takes over hatchery operation, raising and releasing spring Chinook, fall Chinook, and coho
- **December 13, 2024:** YN assumes full ownership of Klickitat Hatchery from WDFW.
- **2025-2026:** First major upgrades to the hatchery underway, funded by Bonneville Power Administration
- **October 2026:** Hatchery upgrades substantially complete, tours resume.
- **2026-2027:** Wrap up construction with finalization of the adult collector, staff housing, safety improvements (see below).



Chinook at the hatchery before it was closed for construction

These first Major Upgrades since 1950's support an increase in production and transition from segregated to an integrated spring Chinook program that incorporates natural-origin fish broodstock, supporting both harvest and conservation. Upgrades are BPA-funded, while operation remains under Mitchell Act funding. The new approach is expected to produce fish with greater fitness, production and survival.

Upgrades include:

- Rehabilitation of the hatchery's primary spring water supply and river pumps, with improved efficiency
- Rebuilding the pollution abatement system, a new degassing and aeration tower.
- 8 new 30-foot circular rearing tanks and a chemical storage building
- Updating the existing weir-and-pool fish ladder to collect adult broodstock at the facility, and updates to the adult spawning and holding infrastructure.

2026 Updates:

We have now received NOAA funding to take care of additional needed upgrades and modernization to the on-station coho rearing pond. We also received Bureau of Indian Affairs funding to address worker safety conditions, build longevity into the incubation building and shop, and add fire hydrants. In addition, we received funding from Washington State to build a modern on-site home suitable for a Tribal family.



Above: Hatchery under construction, October 2025

Species Restoration Spotlight

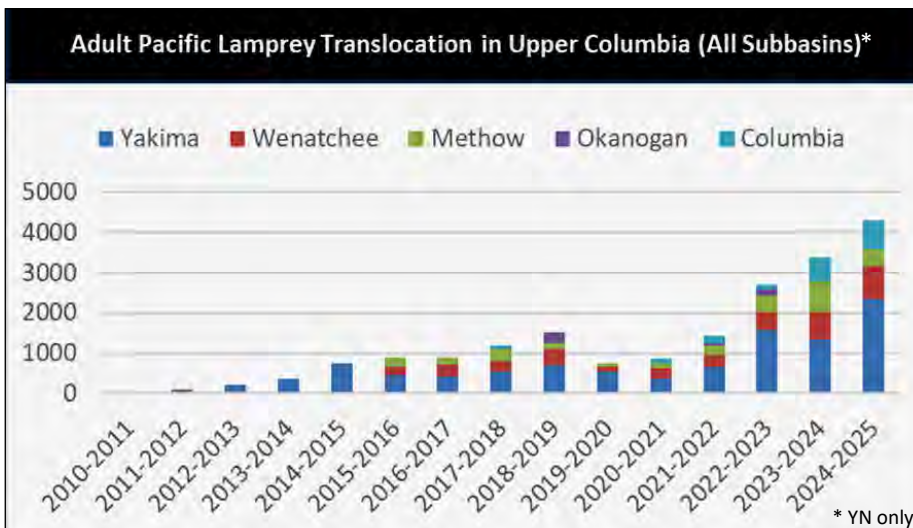
Pacific Lamprey Restoration Project

Restoring Pacific lamprey populations by:

- **Translocation** (adult) from lower Columbia River hydroelectric dams to historic habitats since 2011 into the Yakima, Wenatchee and Methow subbasins; re-establishment and natural production is occurring.
- **Early life-stage culture** techniques developed at Topxatuxt Hatchery. The project now produces and rears the largest number of propagated Pacific Lamprey in the world!
- **Addressing adult passage** issues, primarily focusing on the Yakima, Wenatchee, and Klickitat subbasins.
- **Identifying larval habitat needs** and larval/eyed juvenile passage/entrainment issues, as well as their solutions.
- **Outreach and Education**, inspiring growth in participation towards lamprey recovery. Documenting tribal traditional ecological knowledge.



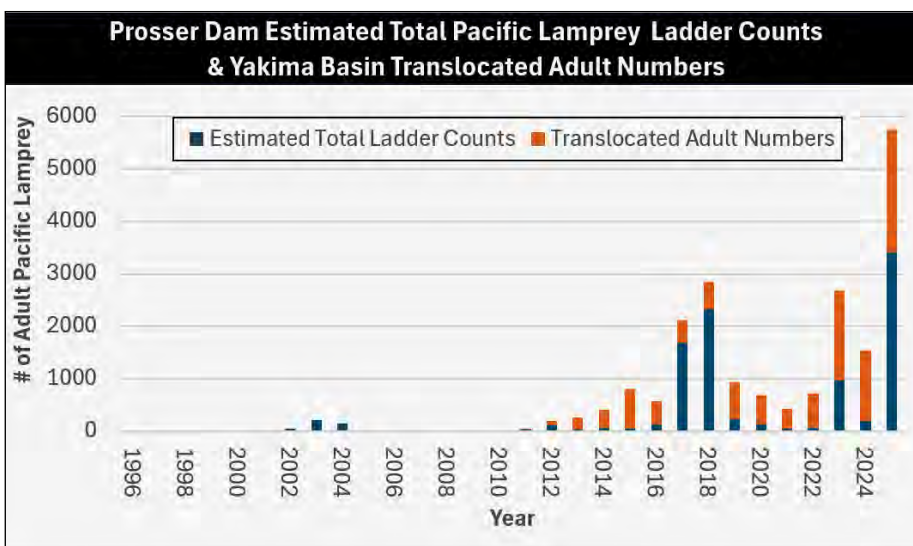
YN staff Dave'y Lumley shows a lamprey to youth at an outreach event, Clackamette Park, OR



Project Background:

Pacific lamprey are of cultural, spiritual, and subsistence significance to Tribal communities throughout the Pacific Northwest. In addition, they are an important component of the aquatic and riparian ecosystems.

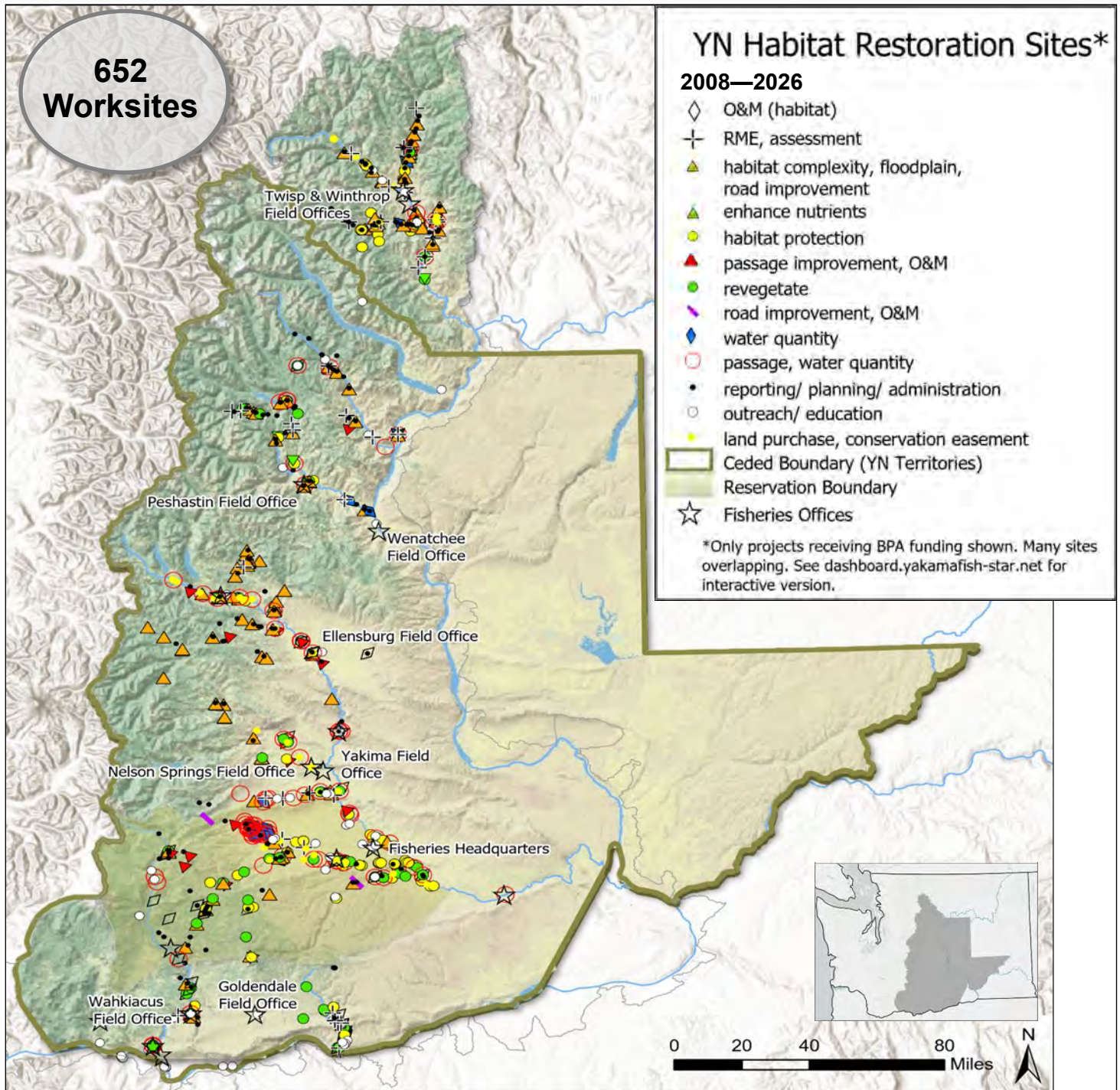
Pacific lamprey populations in the Pacific Northwest have declined significantly over the past 75 years due to passage barriers, habitat loss and degradation, predation by invasive species, climate change, and food scarcity. In some parts of the region, like the Upper Columbia, they are listed as “critically imperiled” or “locally extirpated” (as assessed by the Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative group). The YN is working to restore natural production of Pacific lamprey to a level that will provide robust species abundance, significant ecological contributions and meaningful harvest within the YN Treaty Territories and in Usual and Accustomed areas.



*Note: Starting in 2018, return estimates are based on PIT tag studies rather than window counts

Habitat Overview

Program Accomplishments (2008-2026)



**20,200 Acres
Wetland
Habitats
Improved/
Protected**

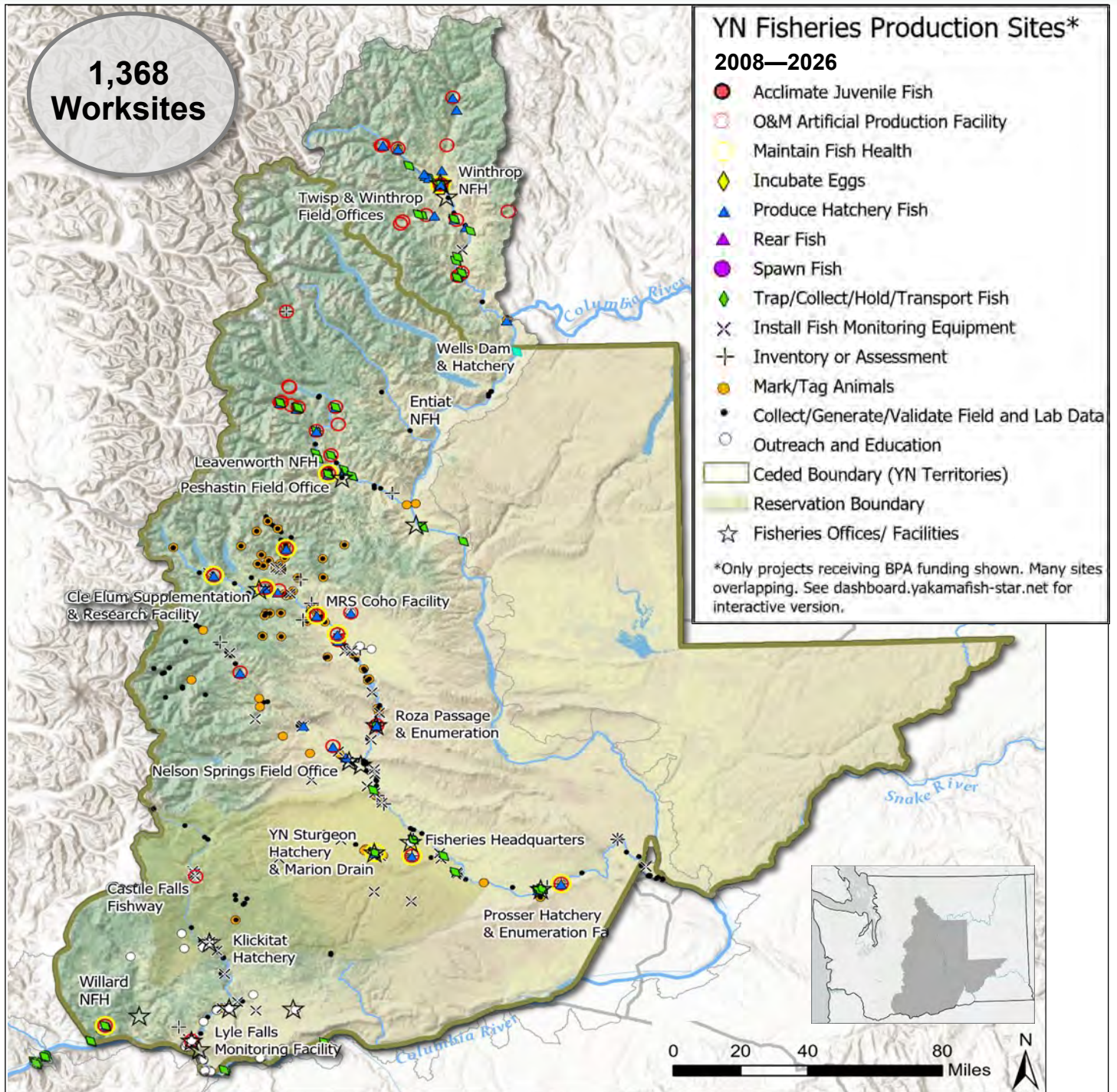
**4,450 Habitat
Structures Installed**
*Large woody structures
and pools*

**22,300 Habitat
Features Installed**
*Unanchored logs,
boulders, rootwads*

**2,500 Miles
Stream Habitat
Improved/
Protected**

Production Overview

Program Accomplishments (2008-2026)



**570 Miles
Stream Made
Accessible to Fish**

**1.4 Million People
Educated & Informed**

**41 Barriers
Addressed**

**7 Species
Being
Restored**

**33,100 Pounds
Trash Removed**

**YN metrics reported to cbfish.org (funded by BPA), 2008-2026. Includes work completed, or in-progress.*

Habitat Restoration Spotlights

Springwood Ranch Acquisition: *First Tribal-State Land Partnership in Washington*

- Located near Thorp, WA along the Yakima River, the Springwood Ranch area has long served as a traditional gathering location for the Yakama people.
- With 6.5 miles of riverfront and spanning 3,600 acres, it was identified in the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (YBIP) as high value for water conservation and storage, and for fish habitats.
- With a declining snowpack and recent droughts, the collaborative YBIP helps to identify solutions that support the needs of fish, wildlife, domestic and agricultural water demands into the future.
- Historically, the Yakima Basin was only second to the Snake River in supporting salmon and steelhead runs. It also supports a \$4.5 billion agriculture economy.
- Benefits of YBIP actions extend to Tribal and non-tribal fishers, as well as farms, forests and communities for generations to come
- The acquisition at Springwood Ranch represents a historic cooperation between the YN and regional stakeholders, and will be cooperatively owned and managed by the YN, WDFW, Kittitas County, and the Kittitas Reclamation District



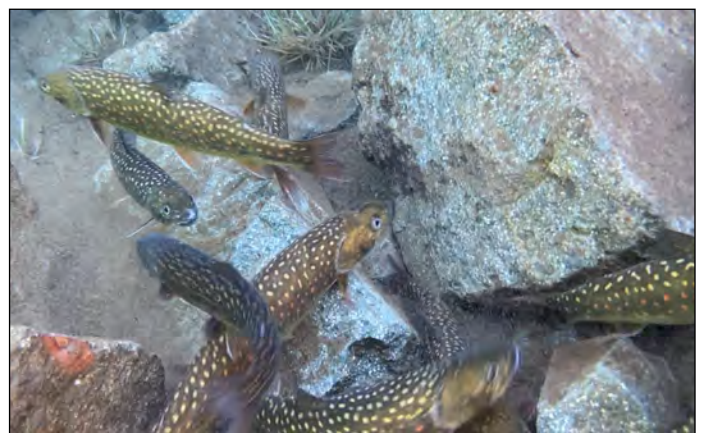
Dignitaries attended a Springwood Land Commemoration on May 2, 2025, including YN Tribal Chairman Gerald Lewis and WDFW Director Kelly Susewind, among others. Senator Patty Murray toured the site on May 28, 2025.



Taneum Creek flows through the property



Yakima riverfront along Springwood Ranch



YN relocates ESA-listed Yakima Basin bull trout who have become stranded due to low flow conditions in the basin

Restoration of Chamna: ***Healing the Yakima River Delta***

- The Bateman Island Causeway across the mouth of the Yakima River was illegally built 86 years ago
- It diverted the direct flow of the Yakima River to the Columbia River
- It contributed to high salmon mortality by creating adverse conditions such as slowed migration, high temperatures, the proliferation of weeds and warm water predators who consume many juvenile salmonids
- **On February 11, 2026, the causeway was removed and natural flow was returned.**
- Reopening natural flow through the Yakima Delta restores critical passage and improved conditions for salmon, steelhead, and other native species

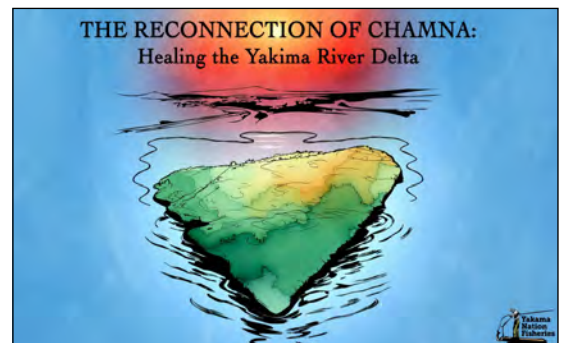


Once a village site, the Yakima Delta area has been used by Tribal communities since time immemorial as a focal area for fishing and trading. Above: Tribal fisher on the Yakima River



Adult sockeye mortality event in the Lower Yakima River, July 12, 2024 (USGS)

- YN and partners have been actively restoring sockeye salmon and other native fish species as well as implementing extensive habitat restoration projects throughout the Yakima Basin to address flow and habitat challenges.
- As the system recovers, we will continue to monitor salmon and invasive fish species, including vegetation, with the overarching goal of “making it like it was.”
- The partnership between the US Army Corps of Engineers, WDFW, YN, WA. Department of Ecology, and the MIDCFEG has been crucial in navigating the complexities of this project and ensuring its success.



Link to 5 minute breaching video:
yakamafish-nsn.gov/bateman_causeway



Breaching the Bateman Island Causeway (view towards river mouth) January 2026

Harvest Program Overview

Overview:

The **YN Harvest Monitoring Program** is responsible for monitoring the Zone 6 Treaty Fishery, which includes fishers from all 4 Treaty Tribes, including: The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (YN), the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and The Nez Perce Tribe. Zone 6 on the Columbia River is a 147-mile stretch between Bonneville Dam and McNary Dam that serves as an exclusive Treaty Tribe fishing area. Through the U.S. v Oregon Management Agreement, tribal fishers are legally entitled to half the harvestable surplus of fish in the river.



Traditional fishing at Lyle Falls, Klickitat River.

Tribal fishing is regulated under the ongoing U.S. District Court litigation known as U.S. v. Oregon, where all of the harvest quotas in Zone 6 Treaty and Non-Treaty fisheries are determined (Source: CRITFC, YN).



Sockeye returning to spawn, Cle Elum River; upstream transport above the dam is still necessary (BOR).

Surplus

The YN obtains table-quality surplus fish from federal hatcheries when more fish return to the hatchery than are required for their broodstock goals. The fish are processed by YN staff at our Marion Drain facility, filleted and frozen by YN for use at community events like Treaty Days, Elder's Dinners, and Longhouse ceremonies. Families can also request these freezer fish for their own ceremonies including funerals, name-givings and memorials. If YN receives surplus fish above the annual freezer program needs, direct handouts to the enrolled YN community are scheduled.

Sockeye

Addressing one of the major local thermal barriers to sockeye recovery and migration, YN and partners took significant action to advance the restoration and recovery of the Yakima River mouth this year. Read more on page 18. Yakama Nation has also been reintroducing sockeye into the Upper Yakima Basin and working with partners to restore passage at upper Yakima reservoirs. Although stocks are still rebuilding, we hope to have self-sustaining, harvestable populations in the future. Read more on page 30.



Grilled salmon served by Miss Yakama at the Cle Elum Hatchery open house event in 2025. YN military veterans are also honored at the event.

Icicle River Fishery

Through the multi-stakeholder Icicle Strategy Tribal Adaptive Management Group, the YN has been supporting projects such as enhancing fishing site amenities and improved fishing access, and developing sediment removal recommendations to increase spillway pool depth and enhance fishing opportunities. We are also working with USFWS on early designs modernizing aquaculture systems, with intention of re-establishing the 1988 Grand Coulee fisheries, including mitigation with 2.2 million spring Chinook juveniles released annually. YN sets fishing seasons on the Icicle River for spring Chinook as soon as the hatchery is assured their brood goal, and in the late fall for coho if sufficient fish are available. See harvest graph on page 20.



Tribal fishing below Leavenworth Hatchery (USFWS)



Students learning to fish for smelt on the Cowlitz River, above.

Smelt Fishery

In years where the Columbia River smelt run is deemed sufficient to support a dip-net fishery, YN sets seasons and allows fishing by Permit in the Cowlitz River in February - March. Smelt fishing is a way to teach young tribal members about traditional fishing practices, providing them with valuable experience and connecting them to their cultural heritage.

Why is the Columbia River smelt fishery so variable from one year to the next? Smelt were listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act in 2010, so harvest is tightly controlled to protect their recovery from the impacts of habitat changes, climate factors, and overharvesting. Returns

can vary dramatically from one year to the next, often influenced by ocean conditions, sometimes restricting harvest to just a day or two (WDFW).

Lamprey Fishery

YN sets a Pacific lamprey harvest season and allows harvest by permit at Willamette Falls in June - July. Our fisheries staff also participates in both smelt and lamprey fisheries and hand out smelt and Pacific lamprey to the general YN population or freezes the fish for distribution to the Longhouses or to YN members for ceremonies.



Photos above: Lamprey harvest and drying at Willamette Falls during the Lamprey Celebration, 2026 (More p. 21)

Harvest Zone 6 Updates

Columbia River Zone 6 Tribal Harvest in 2025

Chinook
149,934

Steelhead
10,606

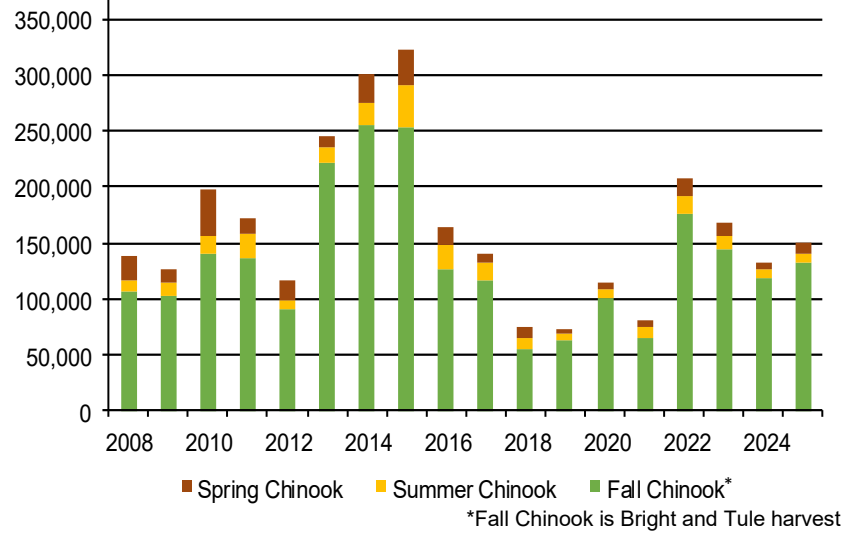
Coho
9,811

Sockeye
7,786

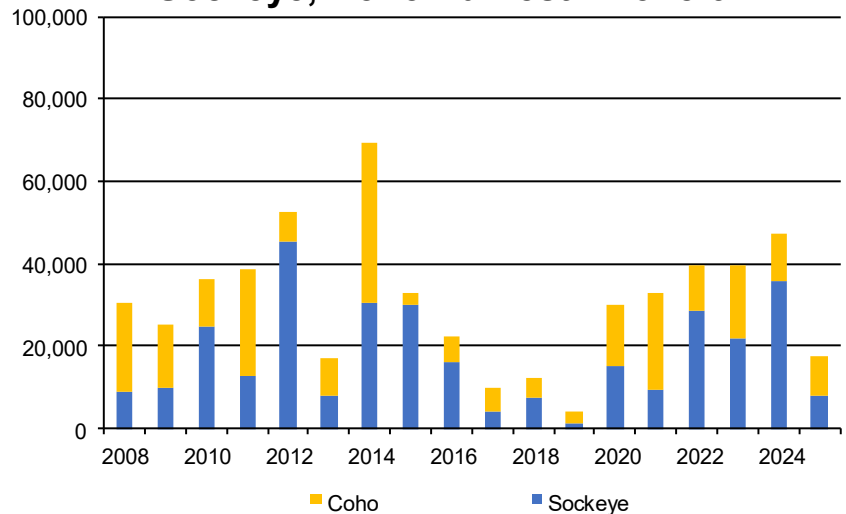
Sturgeon
2,052

*Source for all harvest numbers: YN

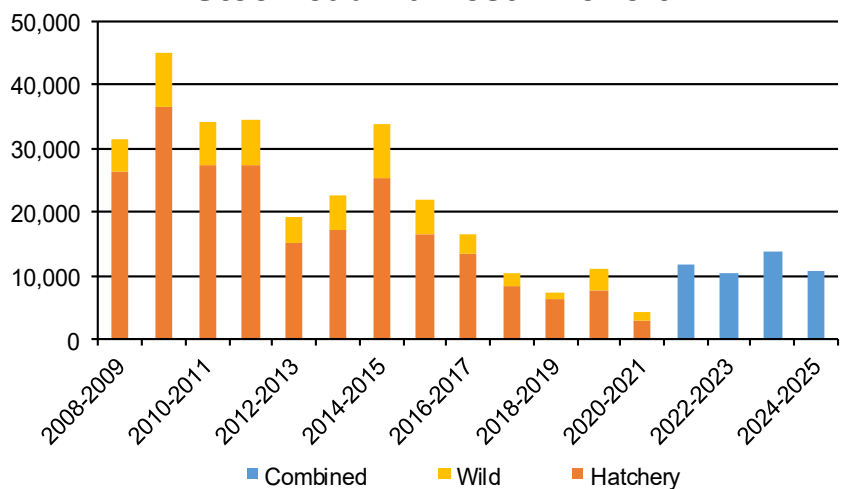
Chinook Harvest—Zone 6



Sockeye, Coho Harvest—Zone 6



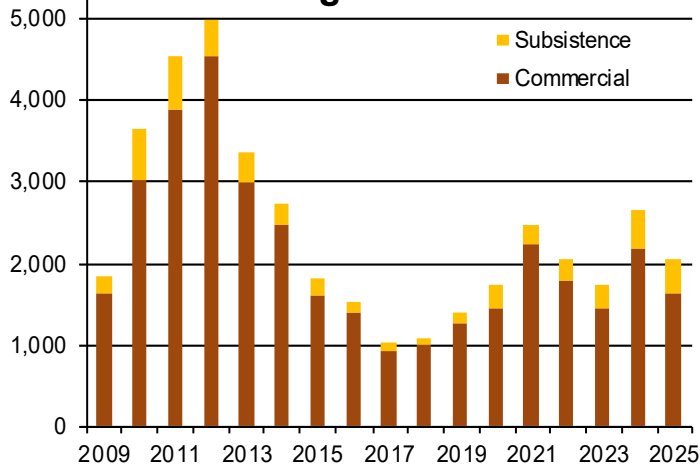
Steelhead Harvest—Zone 6*



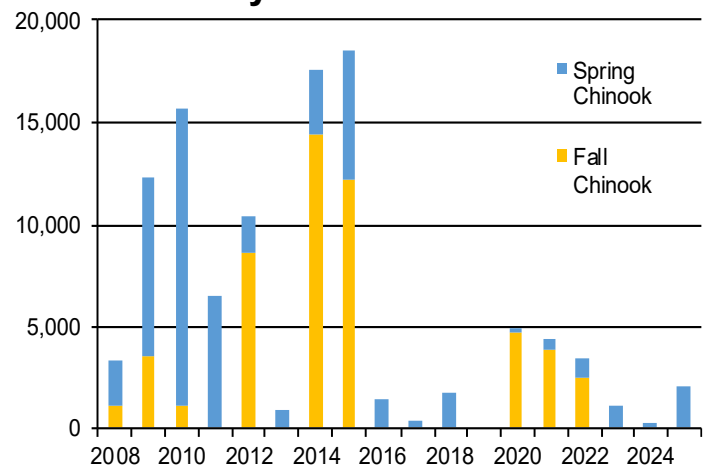
*Commercial, platform, hook and line

Tributaries & Sturgeon

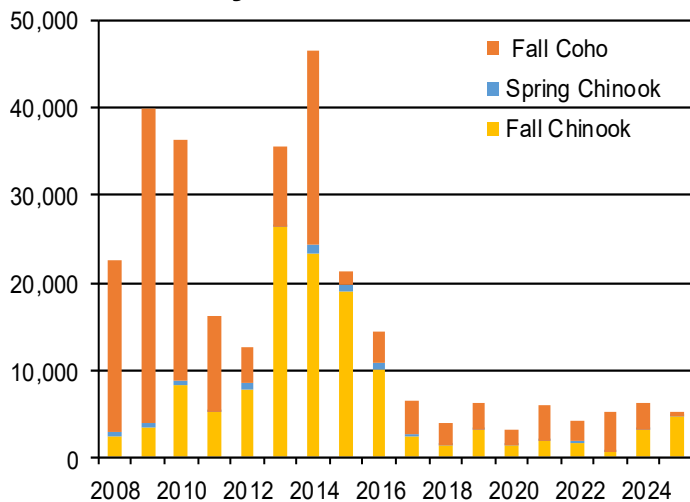
Zone 6 Sturgeon Harvest



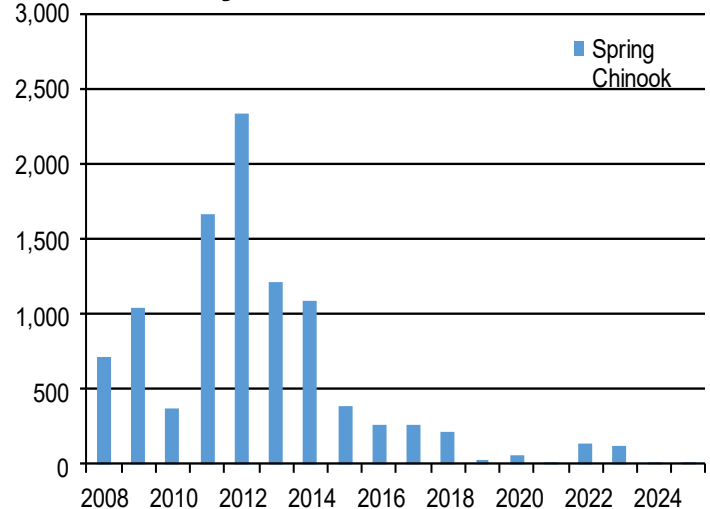
YN Treaty Harvest—Drano Lake



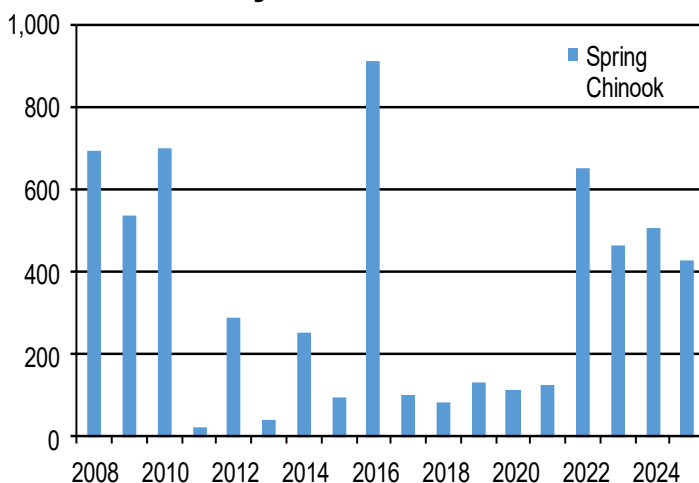
YN Treaty Harvest—Klickitat River



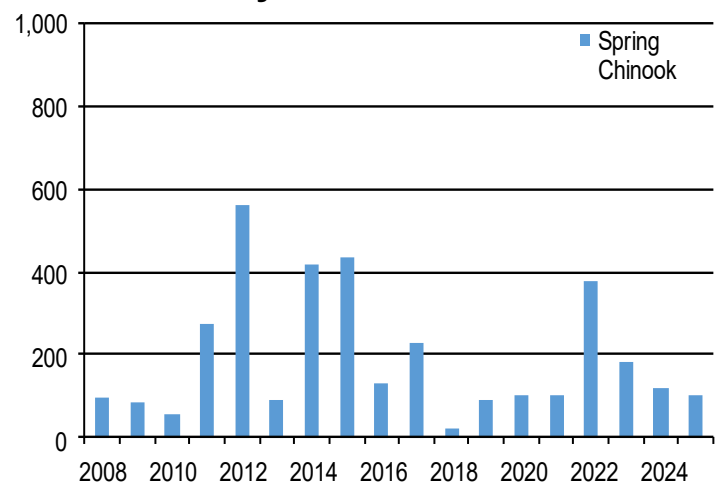
YN Treaty Harvest—Yakima River



YN Treaty Harvest—Icicle River



YN Treaty Harvest—Wind River



Education & Outreach Summary

Across the Region and at Home

Every year, YN Fisheries conducts public education and outreach events across the region and at home. Sometimes the purpose is advocacy and education, and sometimes it is also a celebration of our successes. On April 26, 2026 we held a special event to celebrate the **Reconnection of Chamna**, the Yakima River mouth. About 400 people gathered at Columbia Park West in Richland to recognize the importance of restoring passage and improving river conditions for salmon and other native species by removing the Bateman Island Causeway. Read more on p. 16.



YN leaders and partners at Reconnection of Chamna event, April 24, 2026



Elaine Harvey, speaking at Protect Pushpum event, May 8, 2026

On May 8, 2026, there was an advocacy event in Goldendale, WA, for the **Protection of Pushpum**, “mother of all roots”, near where a water pump-storage project is proposed that would impact an area that is central to YN ceremonies, legends, and for the gathering of traditional roots and medicines. The YN and its supporters, tribal and non-tribal, urged state leaders to oppose the development proposal and to find alternatives.

In late June, the YN hosted a **Pacific Lamprey Celebration** at Willamette Falls, Oregon, “Honoring Asúm,” an important

traditional tribal first food. In 2026, more than 1,200 people gathered at Clackamette Park for a day of cultural demonstrations, traditional foods and education about the significance of Pacific lamprey. The celebration highlighted the YN’s, and other tribe’s, connection to Wilumpt (Willamette Falls), a Treaty-protected fishing site central to the cultural identity and food sovereignty of the Columbia River Treaty Tribes. Read more on p. 12.



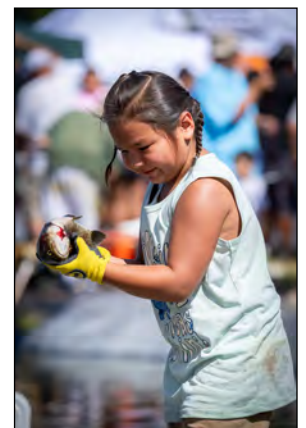
Willamette Falls Lamprey Celebration June 25, 2026



Cle Elum Hatchery open house July 17, 2026

In July, about 300 people attended the annual **Cle Elum Hatchery Salmon Bake & Open House** at the YN’s Levi George Supplementation and Research Facility. The public event featured facility tours where the public could learn about the research at the hatchery and view the fish, plus a grilled salmon lunch. Miss Indian Northwest helped serve the salmon, and YN Veterans were honored.

In July, we held **Family Fishing Day**, at the Marion Drain Facility outside of Toppenish. In 2026, in light of the recent wildfires, the event was opened up to the general public, and almost 700 guests showed up! We are grateful to the volunteers and sponsors who made this event possible, and hope that it provided a bit of peace and community connection and support to those who were affected by the recent wildfire.



Family fishing day, Toppenish, July 29, 2026

Southern Territories Habitat Program

In the 2025 and early 2026, Southern Territories Habitat Project (STHP) staff participated in **Salmon in the Classroom** (SitC) partnering with USFWS to provide fish tanks and salmon eggs to raise in schools, and providing salmon culture presentations covering local tribal cultural and natural history. Schools participating in SitC participate in **Water Jam**, a 2-



STHP staff lead a planting service project at Goldendale Middle School's Watershed Education Field Day at a STHP restoration site on Carrols Creek, Little Klickitat watershed, May 2026



Students get to see adult salmon and steelhead worked up by a YKFP biologist at Lyle Falls adult facility, March 2025

day fun, indoor/outdoor environmental learning event at the end of the school year. YKFP staff provided facility tours of Klickitat Hatchery and the Lyle Falls fish enumeration facility, coupled with fry releases for SitC-participating schools, and a service project, such as live stake willow plantings along the lower Klickitat River.

In spring 2025, Goldendale Middle School 7th graders took part in the annual **Watershed Education Field Day**, which features stations where they learn about watersheds, water quality, tribal culture and habitat, and can participate in a restoration service project.

The annual **Columbia Gorge Fisheries and Watershed Science Symposium** was held in April at the Gorge Discovery Center, which always features a packed house to hear about the latest environmental and fisheries research news from the region.

This past year YKFP staff helped the local cooperative weed management area organize an annual **Invasive Species and Exotic Pest workshop**, providing instruction covering fisheries, watersheds and cultural history as part of the OSU Extension-sponsored **Gorge Naturalists Field Course**. Other opportunities for outdoor education include watershed outings with scout troops, stream surveys with 4th grade classes, and tours of the former Condit Dam site. As a spearhead for the regional **Wishpush (beaver) Working Group**, STHP staff convene meetings, give presentations in schools and to the community and provide workshop opportunities to educate folks about the benefits of beavers and support for coexistence.



Beaver display at Tree Fest in White Salmon, March 2026



STHP staff and Gorge Naturalist cohort at BZ Falls on the White Salmon River during the "Rivers and Fisheries" field course, 2025

Northern Territories Coho Reintroduction Project

Methow YN Fisheries staff participated in 2025 Kids Fishing Day at Winthrop National Fish Hatchery by providing hands-on education about fish, habitat, and the importance of fisheries stewardship. Staff shared knowledge about salmon life cycles, cultural connections to fishing, and the role of conservation in protecting fish for future generations. The event offered kids and families a fun, engaging opportunity to learn while connecting with nature and fisheries education.



Kids Fishing Day, Winthrop NFH. June 2025

Yakima Subbasin Overview

The Yakima Basin lies at the heart of the ancestral homeland of the people of the YN, although traditional natural-resource use areas and homelands of all 14 tribes and bands that comprise the YN extend far beyond. Within this 6,100 square mile basin, major tributaries include the Naches River, Teanaway River, Cle Elum River, Toppenish Creek, Ahtanum Creek, and Satus Creek. Home to ESA-threatened Mid-Columbia steelhead, the YN is actively working to restore this species, along with all salmon, steelhead, trout and lamprey populations, and their habitats throughout the basin. We are working to restore healthy stream and river flows and water quality, in support of the entire ecosystem, to “Make it like it was” as a wise YN Elder once said.

One major restoration successes this past year for the YN was returning natural river flow at the mouth of the Yakima River, an area known as “Chamna” that has a long history with the Yakama people. Along with partners, we were able to make big strides in healing the area, known in recent years to have had a large environmental impact due to the altered flow. See Restoring Chamna on p. 16 for more details. See more habitat restoration spotlights on pages 25-26.

In addition to habitat restoration, the YN is working on restoring all historically occurring fish species to the Yakima Basin while invigorating thriving fisheries, which once was only rivaled by the Snake River Basin in salmonid abundance in the entire Columbia Basin. To that end, we own and operate several hatcheries in the basin, including: the Mel Sampson Coho Facility near Ellensburg, the Levi George Supplementation and Research Facility in Cle Elum, the Topxatuxt Hatchery near Prosser, the White Sturgeon Hatchery on Marion Drain, plus several enumeration facilities. See pages 9-12 and 29-30 for more information.

425

Miles

**Stream made
accessible to fish**

21,874

Structures

**Installed instream
or floodplain**

23

Barriers

**To fish passage
addressed**

Photo:: Constructed riffle, Tieton Restoration Project



Habitat improved for fish and wildlife (2008-2026)

31,415
Acres

**Improved riparian
areas**

210
Miles

**Streams protected
with purchase or
lease**

149
Miles

**Stream habitats
improved**

*YN metrics reported to cbfish.org (funded by BPA), 2006-2026. Includes work completed, or in-progress.

Yakima Subbasin

3-Way Levee Removal Toppenish Creek

Restoration Issue:

Constructed in the mid-1970s, the levee above the old 3-Way Diversion on Toppenish Creek, along with channel straightening and clearing, resulted in very poor spawning and rearing habitat for ESA listed mid-Columbia steelhead, Pacific lamprey, and resident fish species.

The levee did not help with its original purpose: alleviating flooding, and the channel was in danger of moving destructively on its own. Allowing the creek to meander and reconnect with its floodplain as a result of habitat restoration instead, reduces water velocities and erosive potential, and creates habitat for fish.

Restoration Strategy: The YN is actively removing multiple, aging flood control structures in the Columbia River Basin to restore natural river processes, as part of the broader Yakima Basin Integrated Plan to restore water resiliency to the basin for all users as well as for in-stream needs.

Floodplain Benefits: By lowering or removing these barriers, this project reduces downstream flood risk and increases groundwater recharge, which helps sustain baseflows in dry summer months.

Restoration Actions:

- Remove the levee, improve and increase spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead and other species, restore hydrologic function

Project Metrics:

- 0.4 miles of levee removal
- 89 engineered large wood structures installed
- 5,000 linear feet of floodplain roughness features
- Established inset floodplain
- 3 new constructed side channels and alcoves
- Revegetation on 18 acres of riparian and upland

Timeline:

- Began: 2021, Completed: October 2025

Link to 4 minute drone video:
<https://vimeo.com/1167249049>



Above: Aerial view of log placements and reconstructed channels



Above: 3-Way Levee Removal Project, Phase II, before and after construction

Habitat Spotlights

Tieton River Mile 4.3 Restoration

Tieton River habitats were significantly altered by the construction of the Tieton Dam in 1925, along with prior diversions, clearing of wood from the river and riparian forests, and from the 1950s construction of State Route 12. Although the Tieton watershed contains very important spawning and rearing habitats for the Naches population of ESA-listed Yakima steelhead, their ability to utilize the area has been severely impacted.

Priority areas that would be most beneficial for steelhead habitat restoration projects are identified and described in the Tieton River Site Assessment. Objectives include: reconnecting historic side channel habitat, installing large wood and rock structures, and restoring and enhancing riparian and floodplain vegetation. In February 2025, the YN's Yakima-Klickitat Fisheries Project completed a project including these elements between Tieton River Mile (RM) 4.2 and 4.8 in Yakima County, Washington.

Project accomplishments include: reconnecting a historic half-mile long side-channel, installing an engineered boulder riffle, an engineered log-jam, and a gravel-nourishment bar, reconnecting the floodplain, revegetating the riparian and floodplain area, and restoration of the Tieton River Nature Trail.

Funding for materials was provided by the Washington Department of Natural Resources, and construction was funded by the Bonneville Power Administration. Restoration materials for the project included boulders, logs, slash, spall, hog-fuel, and native plants.

Benefits from improved river function at the site include:

- Sediment nourishment bar provides much needed sand, gravel, and cobble bed material to the mainstem
- Boulder riffles locally improve instream aquatic habitat
- Engineered logjams (ELJ) create pool habitat
- Boulder riffles, ELJs, and side channels restore frequency and extent of riverine hydrology within the floodplain and wetlands
- Off-channel habitat areas connect to the river more regularly throughout the year, increasing habitat for native fish, aquatic-associated wildlife, and new riverine wetland habitats
- Restored riparian zone and floodplain wetlands improve water quality, including water temperature, as well as an increased food-base for the aquatic ecosystem.



Above: Site prior to restoration



Above: after restoration of historic side-channel

Yakima Subbasin

Cle Elum Pool Raise: Night Sky, Timber Cove and Domerie Bay Shoreline Protection Projects

Background: Cle Elum Reservoir is located in Upper Kittitas County in Washington State, about 10 miles northwest of the town of Cle Elum, Washington. The 165-foot-high earth fill Cle Elum dam was constructed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in 1933. The reservoir's existing water storage is allocated for irrigation in the Yakima Basin. Through 30 years of studies, it was determined that the current water supply for the Yakima Basin does not meet in-stream or out-of-stream demand, including the aquatic demands for fish and wildlife and the out-of-stream needs of irrigation and municipal supply. To address this issue, the reservoir's maximum pool elevation will be increased by 3 feet, adding 14,600 acre-feet of additional storage dedicated exclusively to instream flows that benefit ESA-listed Mid-Columbia steelhead, spring Chinook, coho, and Sockeye salmon. The Cle Elum Pool Raise (CEPR) is a component of the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (YBIP), a long-term ecosystem restoration plan to restore aquatic functions and provide increased reliability of water resources in the basin.



Timber Cove (during construction, summer 2025)

Habitat Benefits: The instream flow augmentation realized by raising the pool level of Cle Elum Reservoir will improve habitat conditions for salmonids for approximately 194 stream miles, which includes the Cle Elum River downstream of the Cle Elum Lake Dam, and the mainstem Yakima River from the confluence with the Cle Elum River downstream to its confluence with the Columbia River.

Shoreline Protection: Implementation of the CEPR is contingent upon completion of shoreline protection at several locations around Cle Elum Reservoir. These measures are necessary to stabilize newly inundated areas, prevent erosion, and protect infrastructure and adjacent properties associated with the expanded inundation zone. To support timely implementation of the pool raise, the YN partnered with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to help advance shoreline protection projects. Under a Public Law 93-638 Self Determination Contract with U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the YN has taken responsibility for managing shoreline protection design, permitting, and realty actions at the Domerie Bay, Timber Cove and Night Sky residential communities along the eastern side of the reservoir. Shoreline construction at Domerie Bay was complete on October 25, 2024, Night Sky was complete on November 15, 2024, and Timber Cove was complete on July 31, 2025.



Night Sky



Domerie Bay

Habitat Spotlights

Upper Cle Elum River Aquatic Restoration Project

Funding Sources: The aquatic restoration is funded through the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, with additional support from the Washington Department of Natural Resources to help cover supplies. A separate Salmon Recovery Funds grant supports riparian restoration associated with the project, including planting vegetation and placing additional large wood in the floodplain.

Site Selection: Four target reaches for addressing recreational impacts were identified, extending approximately three miles upstream from the Cle Elum Reservoir's north end. The Upper Reach, located between river miles 17.5-18.3, was selected for aquatic habitat enhancement. The Upper Reach provided opportunity to utilize salvaged trees removed as part of the pool raise projects, enabling timely use while the trees retained structural integrity. Implementing the work prior to decomposition occurs ensures the material remains suitable for constructing engineered logjams that enhance habitat complexity. Habitat enhancement within the Upper Reach, located in close proximity to the reservoir, provides meaningful ecological uplift to the CEPR Project.



Project reach with no side-channel (left) versus reference reach (right)

Species Benefit: This project supports YN's sockeye reintroduction program and all-stocks initiative. Once the adult collection facility for the upstream passage component at the base of Cle Elum Dam is complete, this location will provide essential habitat, particularly since interspecific competition for resources (e.g., spawning habitat) is likely to increase as additional species are reintroduced. For example, ESA-listed Mid-Columbia steelhead, coho salmon, spring Chinook, and Sockeye salmon have overlapping spawn times in the fall.

Construction complete in 2025:

- Create perennial side channels through the floodplain, reconnecting floodplain channels
- Placing gravel and cobble in the mainstem
- Adding large wood and engineered log structures to the side channel
- Planting along the right bank of the side channel

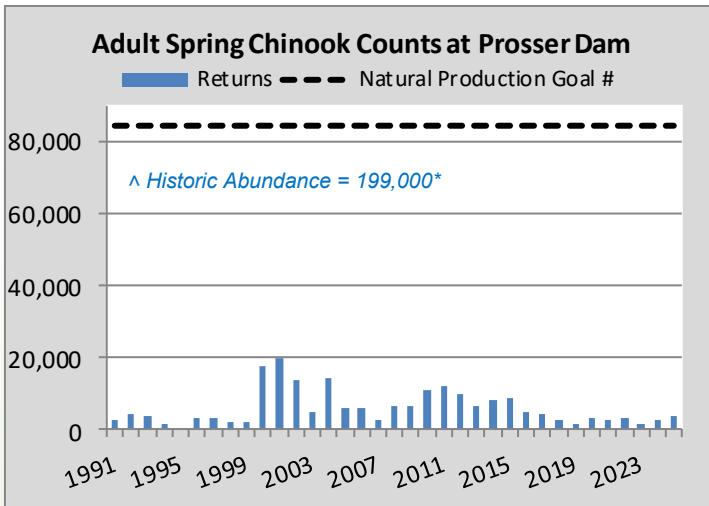
Construction planned for 2026:

- Adding engineered log structures in the mainstem
- Adding large wood to floodplain channels
- Planting along the left bank of the side channel and gravel bars creating vegetated islands

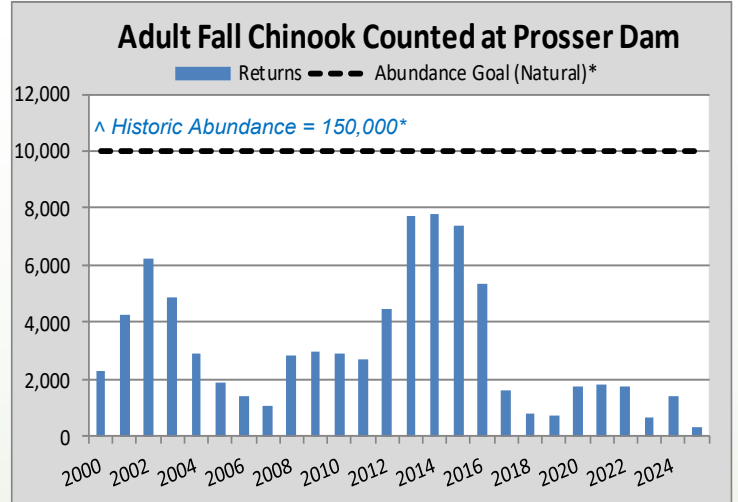


Side channel following creation, installation of habitat log complexes and engineered logjams, and planting. Photo taken following construction in fall 2025.

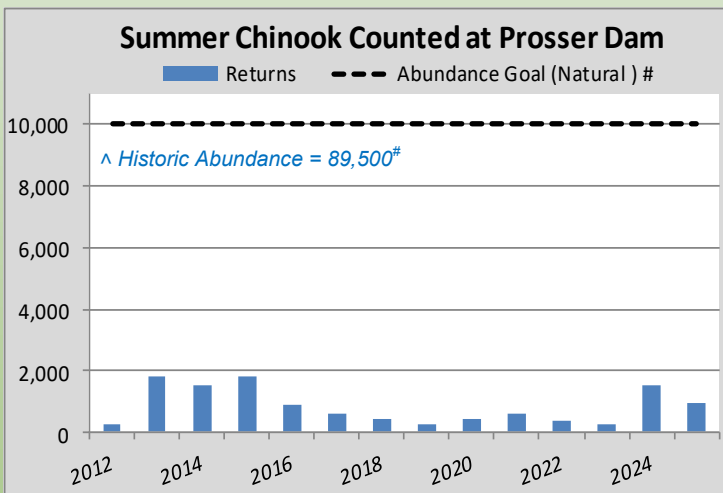
Yakima Subbasin



- From a historic return of nearly 200K returns, by the 1990s **spring Chinook** returns were down to 3,500
- 1997: YN's Levi George Supplementation and Research Facility opened at Cle Elum (CESRF)
- Work continues at CESRF to refine production techniques to increase harvest and natural production and maintain fitness



- Inundation of spawning habitat from dams is one reason behind the severe decline in **fall Chinook** in the Yakima Basin
- YN has been producing fall Chinook to augment harvest opportunities since 1983
- Originally utilizing out-of-basin fish, production at Topxatuxt Hatchery today incorporates Yakima origin fish.



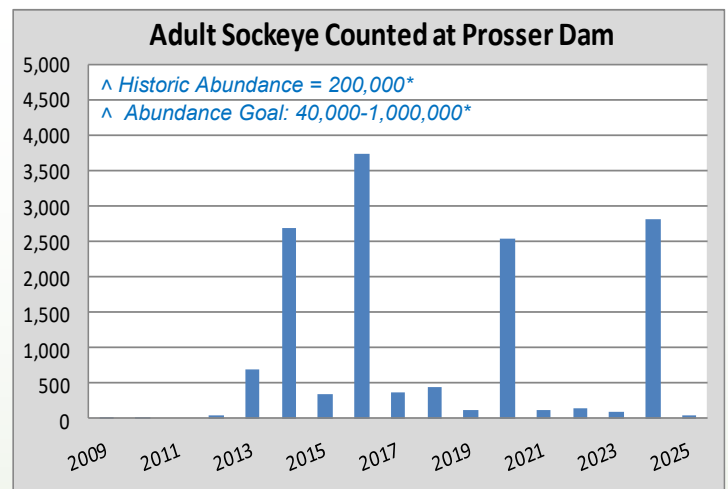
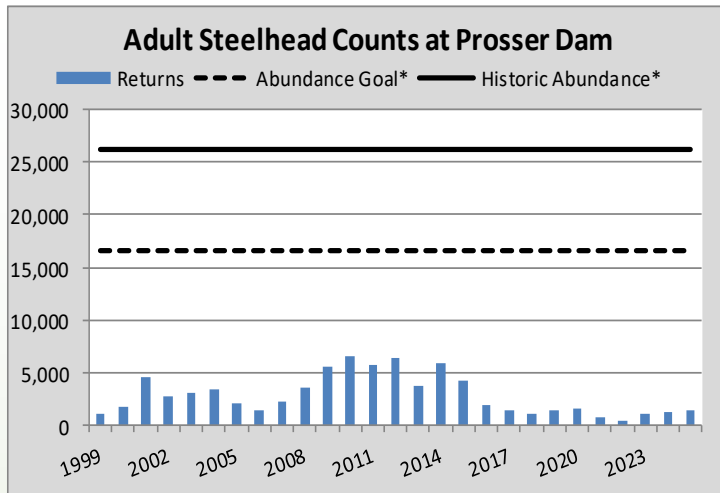
- **Summer Chinook** were extirpated from the Yakima basin by 1970, due to water development, dams and habitat loss
- YN has been reintroducing them since 2009, first using out-of-basin fish released above Prosser Dam to recolonize habitat
- In the second phase of the project, we will use natural-origin broodstock with the goal of a locally -adapted, self-sustaining population



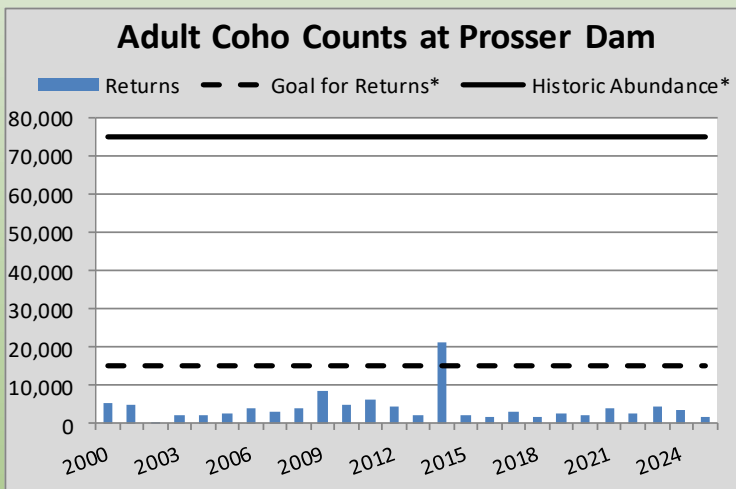
Above: Prosser Heights Elementary school kids visit our hatchery

Data Source: YN. # Goal Source: High goal, from Yakima Basin Chinook and Coho M&E Plan, January 2024, Columbia Basin Partnership * Source: MAFAC (see bottom of page 30 for full reference)

Species Status and Trends



- By 1990 **Steelhead** returns to the Yakima Basin dropped to around 1,000
- YN helps to restore steelhead through habitat and instream flow restoration
- YN also helps steelhead through “Kelt Reconditioning,” where spawned-out fish are reconditioned to be able to spawn again, with a net benefit to lifetime reproductive success and contribution to the population
- **Sockeye** were gone from the Yakima Basin in the early 1900’s, largely due to impassible dams
- 2009: YN began sockeye reintroduction (adult translocation) to the Basin
- 2013: Natural spawning of translocated fish occurs
- Present: passage issues at Cle Elum Dam are being addressed, with plans to expand efforts to other parts of the Upper Yakima Basin



- **Coho** were gone from the Yakima Basin in the early 1980’s, YN began its reintroduction program in 1986
- 1996-2003: YN researched and established the feasibility of self-sustaining runs
- 2021: first coho spawned at YN’s new, efficient, state-of-the-art Mel Sampson Coho Hatchery in Ellensburg, WA
- Our goal is to produce 700,000 juvenile coho for release annually in an integrated program with sustainable harvest and historical distribution



Above: MRS Coho facility, hatchery manager DJ Brownlee

Data Source: YN. *Goal Source: Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee [MFAC] Columbia Basin Partnership [CBP] “Vision for Salmon And Steelhead: Goals to Restore Thriving Salmon and Steelhead to the Columbia River Basin” Report, Phase 2, Oct. 2020. “High Goal” and abundance data).

Southern Territories Overview

The YN Southern Territories refers to a sub-region within the YN's vast ceded land area in Washington State where the Tribe holds legally protected, treaty-reserved natural resource rights. The area stretches from the Wind River in the west to Switzler Canyon in the east, and past Mount Adams into the headwaters of the Klickitat River in the north. The Yakima-Klickitat Fisheries Project works to restore the health of the watersheds and their fish populations throughout the Southern Territories, (as well as throughout the Yakima Basin) and monitor results. Major watersheds where we work in the region include: Wind River, Little White Salmon River, White Salmon River, Major Creek, Klickitat River, Rock Creek and other eastern tributaries, such as Pine Creek.

Focal species for restoration include spring Chinook and Middle-Columbia steelhead. To mitigate for lost harvest opportunities, hatchery-produced coho, spring Chinook, steelhead and fall Chinook support a thriving fishery in populations that are segregated from interactions with wild fish. In addition, the YN is working on restoring Pacific lamprey, an important tribal first food, to the region (See p. 12 for more information). The Klickitat Hatchery is currently undergoing a large renovation, with the goal of transitioning to an "integrated" spring Chinook program, which will better support both harvest and conservation (see p 11 for more information). Of significance in the region, the Klickitat River Canyon is one of the few remaining places where tribal members can still utilize traditional dip-net fishing methods.

142
Miles

950
Structures

194
Pools

**Habitat made
accessible to fish**

**Added for
instream habitat**

Created instream

Photo: Habitat restoration, Middle Tepee Creek LTPBR, Klickitat Basin



Habitat Improved for fish and wildlife (2006-2026)

104
Miles

**Riparian improved
or protected**

8
Barriers

**Removed or
improved**

16.4
Miles

**Stream with
improved
complexity**

*YN metrics reported to cbfish.org (funded by BPA), 2006-2026. Includes work completed, or in-progress.

Southern Territories

Brush Creek 175 Road Fish Passage, White Creek Watershed

Overview: Brush Creek is a major tributary to White Creek, which in turn flows to the Klickitat River. Located in the headwaters, the Brush Creek fish passage project is in the Closed Area of the Yakama Nation Reservation. White Creek provides important spawning and rearing habitat for ESA-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead. The White Creek watershed may be the most important spawning and rearing tributary watershed within the Klickitat subbasin. Recent studies by the YN Fisheries Program have indicated that, on average, the White Creek drainage accounts for approximately 41% of the observed spawning in the Klickitat subbasin. The White Creek watershed is in the top tier of priority geographic areas identified in the Klickitat Lead Entity Region Salmon Recovery Strategy.



Brush Creek culverts before passage improvement

Project Description: Implemented in 2025, the Brush Creek project improves fish passage at the 175-Road crossing of Brush Creek in the White Creek watershed, east of Mount Adams, which is used for Tribal member access to the Closed Area for hunting, fishing, gathering and timber harvest. It was one of the last major known impediments to fish passage in the greater White Creek watershed.

Project Goals & Objectives: This project's purpose is to improve conditions for ESA-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead by addressing a significant barrier to movement. As identified in Klickitat Lead Entity Salmon Recovery Plan, such improvements at this location address a fish barrier for summer steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) access to juvenile rearing and adult spawning areas, which are limiting life stages for the species.

This project provides access to 3.5 miles of habitat through the removal of a 3-culvert fish passage barrier. The culverts caused conditions of depth and velocity that the steelhead could not navigate.



Aerial view, after full-span bridge replacement, restoring natural creek flow

Habitat Spotlights

Middle Tepee Creek LTPBR*

***Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration of Riverscapes**

Funding provided by: BPA and Washington State's Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)

Partner: Anabran Solutions

Watershed Overview: Tepee Creek is a tributary to White Creek in the Klickitat River subbasin in south-central Washington. The Tepee Creek watershed encompasses 21.4 mi² with a maximum elevation of 3,980 feet near Simon Butte and a minimum elevation of 2,580 feet at its confluence with White Creek. Annual



Post-assisted log structure

precipitation averages 31 inches. Vegetation consists of ponderosa pine parkland and mixed conifer forests in the uplands and mixed deciduous and wetland species in riparian areas within valley bottoms. The entire watershed is part of the Yakama Reservation and managed by the YN.

Project Goals & Objectives: The overall goal of restoration on Tepee Creek is to promote natural fluvial processes that result in a healthy and resilient riverscape and increase habitat quantity, quality, and diversity for threatened steelhead. Within this broad management goal, specific goals include: increasing the frequency of overbank flows, enhancing in-channel habitat conditions, increasing the duration of low flows, reducing active channel hydraulic severity, improving shallow aquifer storage and recharge, increasing valley bottom suitability for culturally significant plants

Species of Interest: Tepee Creek is part of the White Creek Major Spawning Area (MaSA) for ESA-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) which is considered one of the most significant spawning areas in the subbasin. The distribution of steelhead extends approximately 10 miles upstream from the confluence with White Creek. There are no other ESA-listed species in Tepee Creek. On average, the White Creek drainage accounts for approximately 41% of the observed steelhead spawning in

the subbasin and Tepee Creek itself has accounted for up to 14% of the subbasins spawning in recent years (YN).

Accomplishments of Phase 2 (Implemented in 2025):

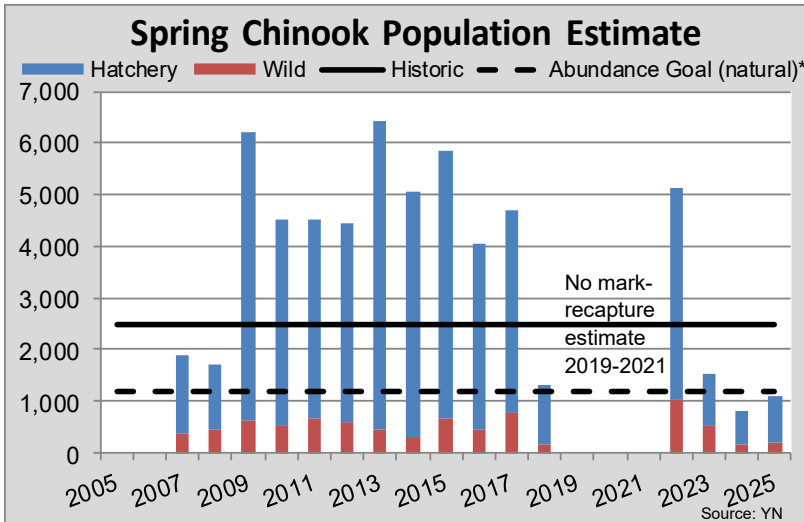
- 94 Structures installed
- 9 Beaver dam analogues
- 15 Post-assisted log structures
- 16 Wood jams installed
- 54 “assisted” log structures



Aerial view with wood jams

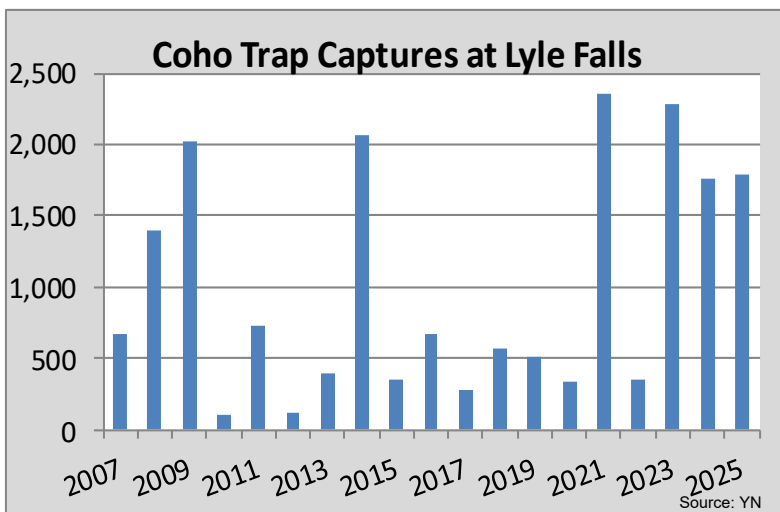
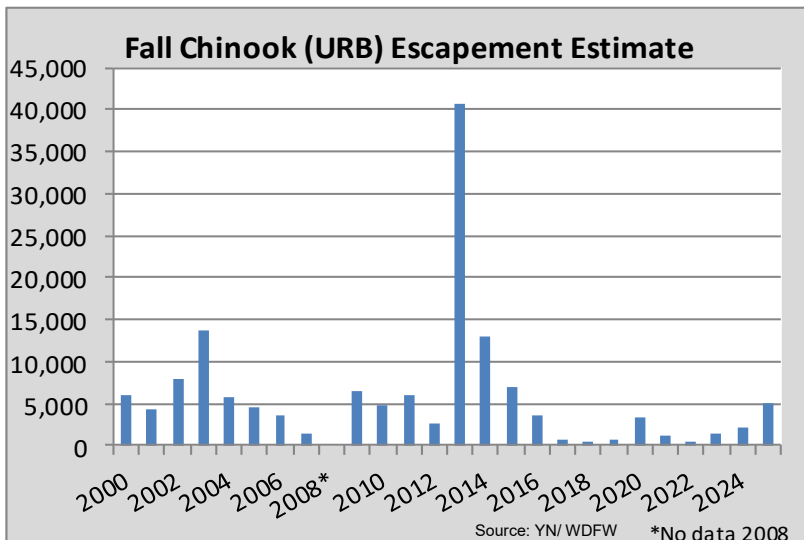
Southern Territories

Klickitat Subbasin



- The Klickitat River hosts native spring Chinook, summer and winter steelhead, Pacific lamprey and resident trout.
- The **Klickitat Hatchery** is now under YN ownership and is undergoing its first significant upgrade. It is also undergoing a transition from a segregated to an integrated spring Chinook program, integrating natural-origin fish, to support both conservation and harvest (**See p. 11 for more information.**)
- Hatchery fish reared and released at Klickitat Hatchery include spring Chinook, fall (Tule and Upriver Late Fall Bright) Chinook, and coho salmon.
- **Lyle Falls Adult Fish Trap and Enumeration Facility**, located at River Mile 2.4 on the Klickitat River, received major upgrades in 2011 with BPA funding, allowing for greater efficiency, operation at a wider range of flows, and the incorporation of PIT tag detectors, the adult trap, and lamprey passage structure
- Lyle Falls trap efficiencies have been reported at about 20-30%. Trap counts are reported on our website: yakamafish-nsn.gov/fish-data.
- Population estimates (as shown in this page) incorporate mark-recapture techniques for improved long-term accuracy.

- For harvest graphs, see page 22.

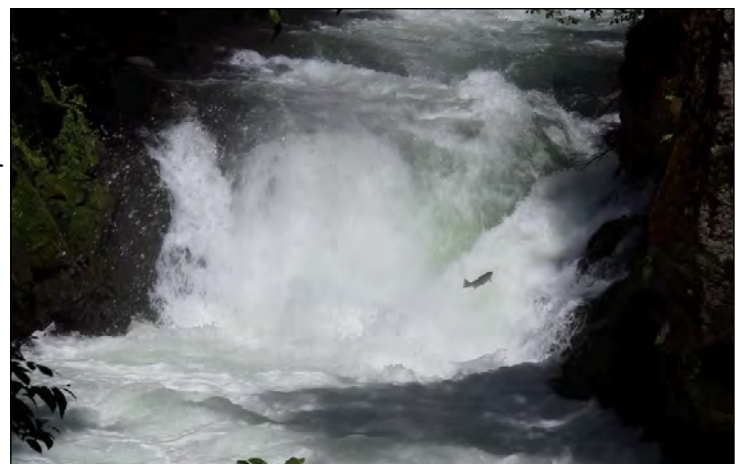
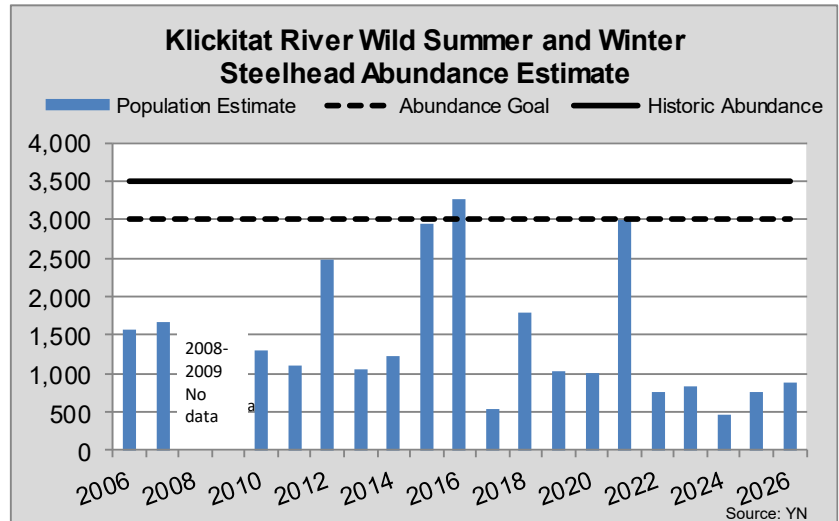


Dipnetting at Lyle Falls, one of the few places where Tribal traditional fishing practices can be employed.

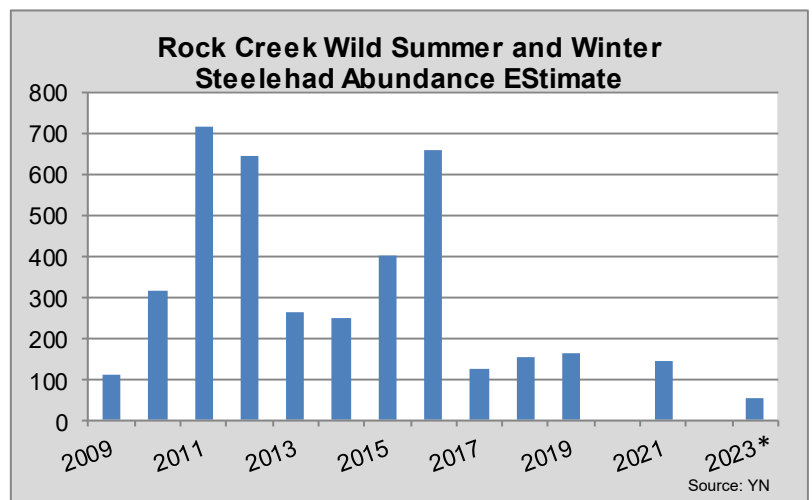
Species Status and Trends

Klickitat Middle Columbia River Steelhead

- Present throughout the Klickitat Basin, are a distinct population segment, with ESA threatened status.
- There are Skamania hatchery steelhead releases in the lower Basin.
- YN is supporting steelhead restoration through habitat and watershed health restoration
- Restoration of floodplain and side-channel connectivity that provide important juvenile rearing habitats
- Protection and restoration of wet meadows that help maintain base flows
- Restoration of stream function that helps to maintain spawning gravels
- The **White Salmon River** (right) is also located within the “Southern Territories” of the YN, near the Klickitat River.
- After a century of blockage, Middle Columbia River Steelhead and other native species naturally recolonized the area above Condit Dam after its removal in 2011.
- YN biologists documented the first steelhead and coho adult spawners after dam removal, and recent surveys (USGS, 2023) show that steelhead and coho smolts are now produced upstream of the former dam site, and spring Chinook fry are also being produced
- **Rock Creek**, located in Klickitat County, WA, east of Goldendale, is inundated in its lower mile by John Day Dam
- Native **Rock Creek Steelhead** belong to the Cascade Eastern Slope Tributaries Major Population Group of the ESA-Listed “Threatened” Middle Columbia River Distinct Population Segment
- Ecological concerns for the population include low summer flows and high summer water temperatures, among others, which YN is working on mitigating
- These ecological concerns occur naturally, but human development has likely exacerbated their impacts
- In recent years, lack of landowner access has impeded population surveys



Above: Steelhead jumping at BZ Falls, White Salmon River, soon after Condit Dam was removed. In 2011 (Jeanette Burkhardt, YN).



*Goals, Historic Source: MFAC, 2020 full source see p. 30

Wenatchee Subbasin Overview

As part of the Northern Territories within the usual and accustomed natural resource use area of the YN, YN Fisheries actively restores fish species and habitats throughout the Wenatchee, Entiat, and Methow subbasins. Although the Wenatchee Subbasin has some of the greatest fish species diversity in the Upper Columbia region, it still faces challenges, such as degraded and diminished habitats for salmon and steelhead, as well as bull trout, which once had abundant runs. Examples are the extirpation of coho from the subbasin in the 1930s, and the currently ESA-listed status of Upper Columbia River steelhead and spring Chinook.

To help restore these species and habitats, YN Fisheries is implementing significant habitat restoration projects (see examples on pages 39-40), with a focus on helping to increase and restore habitat types that have been determined in reach assessments to be currently lacking, such as off-channel spawning and rearing habitats. We are also working to restore river function so that these restoration efforts can continue to provide benefits for many years to come.

In addition to habitat restoration, YN Fisheries is actively helping to bring species back, such as via the reintroduction of Middle Columbia River coho, creating numerous multi-species acclimation sites that target high value habitat, restoration of Pacific lamprey and reconditioning of steelhead kelt.

**6.3
Miles**

**Instream habitat
improved, treated,
created**

**233
Structures**

**Added for habitat
instream or in
floodplain**

**62
Pools**

**Created for
instream habitat**



Habitat improved for fish and wildlife (2008-2026)*

1.2
Miles

**Riparian habitat
improved**

15.7
Acres

**Riparian habitats
improved**

1
Barrier

Removed

Photo: Icicle Creek (see Reach Assessment, p. 40)

*YN metrics reported to cbfish.org (funded by BPA), 2008-2026. Includes work completed, or in-progress.

Wenatchee Subbasin

Wenatchee River RM 2.2 Habitat Restoration Project

Project Duration: September 8-30, 2025

Funding Sources: BPA

Landowners: Private Landowner

Focal Species: Upper Columbia River spring Chinook, steelhead, resident species

Background: Bounded by a railroad line on river right and private property with infrastructure on river left, the site features an island in the center of the river which has been growing for the last 20 years, causing channel migration and erosion. In 2009, YN Fisheries Upper Columbia Habitat Project (UCHRP) excavated a side channel connecting a natural side channel to a new secondary outlet on the Wenatchee River, and placed large wood in the side channel. In 2011,



Enhancement of natural island Alcove. September 2025

UCHRP returned and constructed four large wood structures on the mainstem Wenatchee River. These were intended to halt channel migration of the mainstem Wenatchee, which threatened both side channel habitats.

The current project was designed as a continuation and addition to these previous projects. For this area in the Lower Wenatchee Reach Assessment, conducted in 2017, large wood pieces per mile, channel migration, vertical channel stability, riparian structure, and canopy cover were considered in unacceptable condition. Pool frequency and quality, off-channel habitat connectivity, floodplain connectivity, and riparian disturbance were rated as at-risk.

Accomplishments:

- Installation of 4 bank-buried mainstem large wood structures
- Installation of 2 side-channel outlet bank-buried large wood structures
- 6 island alcove habitat enhancement
- 54 side channel large wood enhancement logs, 650 willow plantings

Project Details: In September, 138 logs with rootwads of varying sizes and 144 straight logs without rootwads (primarily used as vertical piles) were delivered to the site. A temporary culvert was installed over the constructed side channel to access the project area. Six large wood structures on the island alcove were constructed as habitat enhancement. Two large wood structures were installed at the outlet of the natural side channel, both as habitat and to prevent channel migration from compromising more of the side channel. Individual large wood pieces were placed in the side channel that was constructed in 2009.

Four additional large wood structures with piles were installed on the river left bank of the mainstem Wenatchee River, downstream of the previous large wood structures from 2011. These structures have more root cover in pools, creating high-quality habitat for fish rearing and holding. They will also help to halt erosion downstream of the original structures, which was threatening the side channel habitat. Willow and dogwood cuttings were planted, and after construction, access routes and staging areas were planted and re-seeded.

Benefits: Riparian plantings and placement of large wood will improve geomorphic conditions in the lower Wenatchee River and its surrounding floodplain and directly create fish habitat, restoring natural habitat-forming processes and thereby addressing the at-risk and unacceptable reach-based ecosystem indicators identified in the reach assessment.



Aerial image of side-channel outlet with bank-buried large wood structures, with outlet dry at September 2025.

Habitat Spotlights

Wenatchee Subbasin Reach Assessments

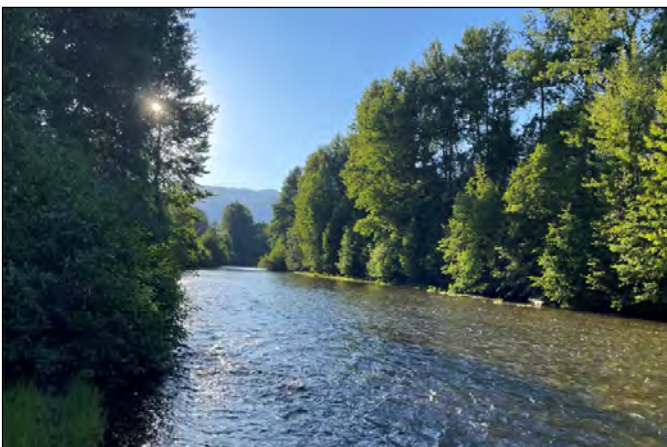
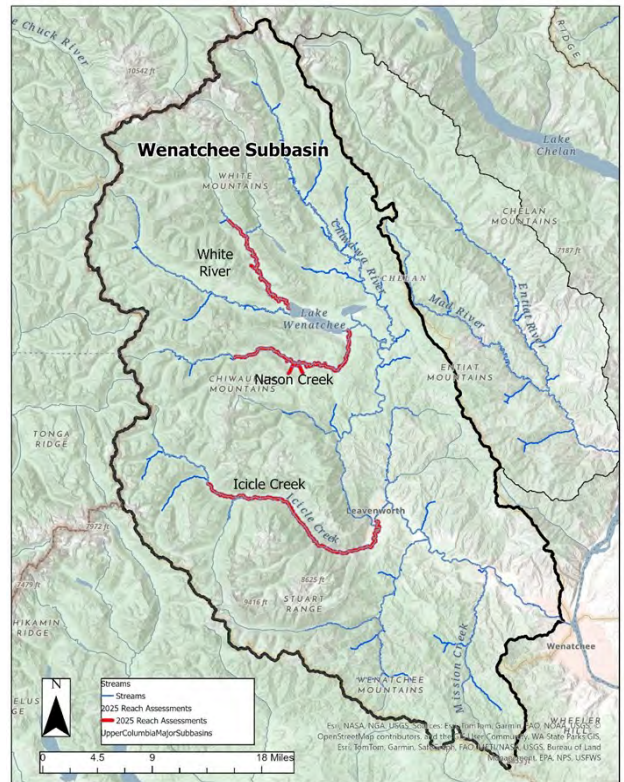
Summary

In 2025 the UCHRP completed two new and one updated Habitat Reach Assessments on three major spawning and rearing tributaries to the Wenatchee River. The tributaries assessed included Icicle Creek (new), White River (new), and Nason Creek (updated). The assessments have updated our understanding of habitat trends and conditions in critical spawning and rearing areas for all habitat restoration practitioners in the Upper Columbia Basin, including the Icicle Workgroup and the multi-agency scientific Regional Technical Team. Results from these completed Reach Assessments will be used by the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board to update the regional Biological Strategy for recovering Upper Columbia spring Chinook salmon and steelhead.

Icicle Creek: The Icicle Creek watershed drains approximately 214 square miles to the Wenatchee River, and has private, state, and federal land ownerships. There are four primary water users, including the Leavenworth Hatchery. The assessment area for this study includes the lower 22 miles of Icicle Creek. In the assessment, categories that received “unacceptable” ratings included large wood pieces per mile, pool frequency, size and quantity, off-channel habitat, riparian vegetation, floodplain connectivity and bank/channel stability.

White River: The White River watershed drains approximately 155 square miles into Lake Wenatchee, which is the source of the Wenatchee River. It has private, state, and federal land ownership surrounding the river. The assessment area includes the lower 16.2 miles of the White River, as well as the lower 0.8 miles of Panther Creek and lower 2.2 miles of the Napeequa River, two major tributaries. Categories flagged in the assessment for “unacceptable” conditions included large wood pieces per mile, pool frequency, size and quantity, off-channel habitat, floodplain connectivity, bank/channel stability, and vertical channel stability.

Nason Creek: The Nason Creek watershed drains approximately 109 square miles to the Wenatchee River, and has private, state, and federal land ownerships. The assessment area for this study includes the lower 13.5 miles of Nason Creek. All categories for desirable habitat conditions ranked in the reach assessment were deemed in “unacceptable” condition for some part of the survey, with the exception of physical barriers.



Nason Creek



White River

Methow Subbasin Overview

The Methow Subbasin has been described as still having a high proportion of pristine habitats in the upper part of major tributaries. The conditions that have been identified as limiting to salmon, steelhead, trout and Pacific lamprey in the basin generally occur in the mid-lower mainstem and lower portions of tributaries. These conditions are often a result of development that has impacted the function of the stream channels and floodplains (Biological Strategy, Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team, 2013). To improve the quality and quantity of vital spawning, rearing, and migration habitats, the YN has been restoring the areas identified in reach assessments as high-value to species and in need of restoration. We are also implementing restoration activities focused on improving stream flows and refuge habitats, which are of increasing need in an era of decreasing snowpacks. The target species for restoration projects are Upper Columbia spring Chinook and steelhead, but many other species benefit from such restoration actions as well. For highlights of recent habitat restoration activities, see pp. 43-44.

In addition to habitat restoration, the YN Fisheries is directly implementing species restoration through projects such as the Upper Columbia Spring Chinook and Steelhead Acclimation Project, (see p.51), the Upper Columbia Kelt Reconditioning Project (see p. 52), Middle-Columbia River Coho Reintroduction (see pp. 49-50), and Pacific Lamprey Restoration (see p.12).

2
Barriers

**Access to habitat
addressed**

380
Structures

**Added for
instream habitat**

126
Pools

Created instream



Habitat Improved for fish and wildlife (2008-2026)

632
Acres

**Riparian areas
improved**

34.3
Miles

**Stream treated or
improved**

2.1
Miles

**Stream accessed
through barrier removal**

Photo: Newby Narrows Habitat Project

*YN metrics reported to cbfish.org (funded by BPA), 2008-2026. Includes work completed, or in-progress.

Methow Subbasin

Newby Narrows Cut 3 Project

Date Completed: October 2025

Funding Source: Bonneville Power Administration

Land Ownership: YN

Focal Species: ESA-Listed Endangered Upper Columbia River spring Chinook and Threatened Upper Columbia River steelhead

The Newby Narrows Cut 3 Project is located on the Twisp River within the Lower Twisp Assessment Unit, which is a high priority for restoration actions that support recovery of ESA-listed spring Chinook salmon and steelhead. Since 2015, the YN has actively pursued land acquisition and restoration in priority areas like this in the Methow Subbasin.

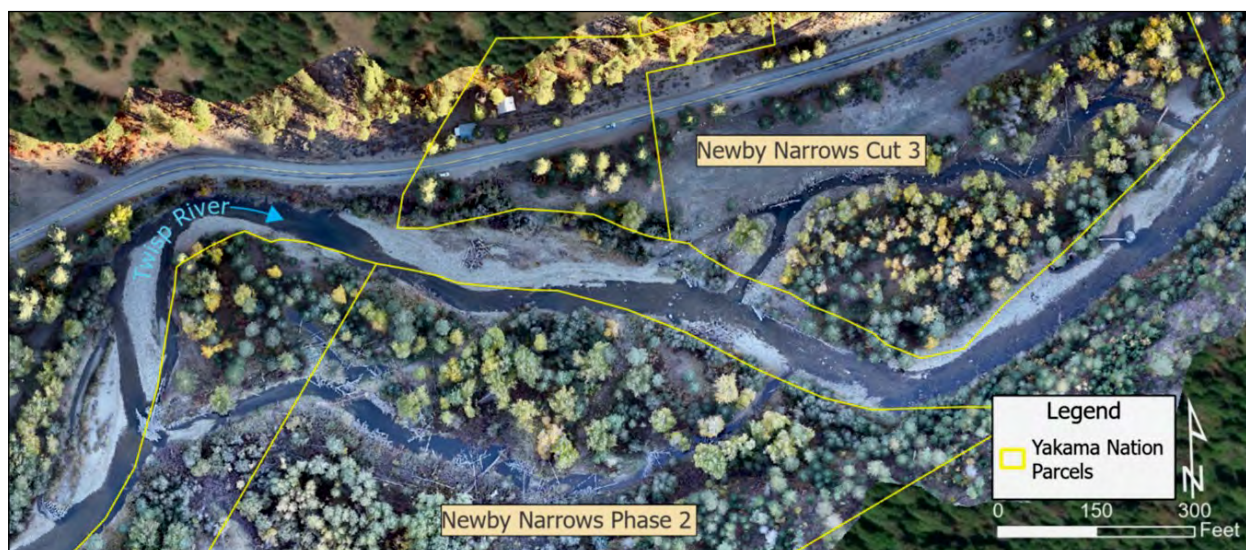


Side-channel with habitat complexity features

With financial support from the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee and the Bonneville Power Administration, the YN has secured four contiguous parcels totaling 46 acres of riverine and riparian habitat associated with this project area. These acquisitions created the opportunity to implement a phased reach-scale restoration habitat restoration strategy.

To date, the UCHRP has implemented three distinct restoration projects. The Newby Narrows Phase 1 Project (2016) installed engineered large wood structures in the mainstem Twisp River to increase channel complexity. Phase 2 (2017) expanded these benefits by constructing approximately 1,300 linear feet of highly complex side channel and floodplain habitats. Building on this success, in 2025 the Newby Narrows Cut 3 Project further enhances habitat complexity and connectivity. In this follow-up project, we excavated 900 linear feet of perennial side channel and 250 linear feet of seasonally connected side channel. Additionally, two engineered point-bar apex jams were constructed in the mainstem to direct flow and promote natural channel processes. Approximately 120 logs with rootwads and salvaged trees were strategically installed throughout the site to create hydraulic diversity, promote scour, and maintain high-quality pool habitat.

These Projects demonstrate the YN's successful approach to restoring natural river processes and expanding high-quality habitat in the watershed's highest-priority reaches for salmon and steelhead recovery.



Above: Newby Narrows, aerial view

Habitat Spotlights

Methow Subbasin Side Channel Adaptive Management Project

Date Completed: July 2025

Funding Source: Bonneville Power Administration

Land Ownership: YN and WDFW

Focal Species: ESA-Listed- Endangered spring Chinook, Threatened Columbia River Steelhead

In 2025, the YN conducted adaptive management actions at three previously restored side channel sites in the Methow Subbasin that had been impaired by wildfire debris, beaver activity, and sediment buildup. These conditions had resulted in reduced hydraulic connectivity, limited fish access, and diminished habitat benefits for ESA-listed spring Chinook salmon and steelhead. Ideally, we want restoration projects which maintain themselves by utilizing the hydraulic function of stream flows to maintain habitats, but sometimes special conditions warrant additional assistance with maintenance to help sustain optimal fish benefits long-term.

Working with landowners, geomorphologists, contractors, and regulatory agencies, the Upper Columbia Habitat Restoration Project deployed a low-ground-pressure spider excavator to remove small woody debris and fine sediment from side channel inlets. This highly sophisticated equipment minimized impacts to vegetation, banks and sensitive soils.

Actions at the Newby Narrows Phase 2, Chewuch River RM 4.2, and WDFW River Right side channel projects restored hydraulic connectivity to approximately 4,900 linear feet of perennial pool, side channel, and floodplain habitat. These areas provide critical summer and winter juvenile rearing, low-velocity refuge, complex pool cover, and thermal protection during seasonal extreme temperatures.

The proactive effort implemented with this follow-up work protected over \$1.5 million in prior restoration investments, extended project lifespan at a fraction of replacement cost, and ensured these habitats continue to support salmon and steelhead recovery.



Low ground-pressure spider excavator cleaning out channel inlet.

Entiat Subbasin Overview

The main restoration focus of the YN in the Entiat Subbasin, as it is throughout the Northern Territories, is the three ESA-listed species: Upper Columbia River spring Chinook, Upper Columbia River steelhead, and bull trout. The Entiat subbasin has been identified as containing critical habitat for the recovery of all three species (NOAA Final Rule, 2005). In addition to these three target species, however, many other species potentially benefit from our habitat restoration projects. Some examples include summer Chinook, sockeye, resident rainbow trout, westslope cutthroat trout, mountain whitefish, and Pacific lamprey, as well as the once-extirpated coho salmon.

Habitat loss and degradation from past land management practices and re-engineering of natural channels has led to the loss of vital migratory, spawning, rearing, and resting areas. Through our habitat restoration work, we are bringing back these vital structures to help restore healthy, functioning watersheds that species need to thrive. Through assessments like the recent Entiat River Reach Assessment Update (See p. 47), we are identifying the most important ecological conditions to restore for the most benefit to species.

570
Acres

**Riparian areas
improved**

708
Structures

**Added for
instream or
floodplain habitat**

143
Pools

Created instream



Habitat Improved for fish and wildlife (2008-2026)

**1
Mile**

**Stream accessed
by removing
barrier**

**13.5
Miles**

**Streams improved
or treated**

**2
Barriers**

**Access to habitat
addressed**

Photo:: Upper-Middle Entiat River

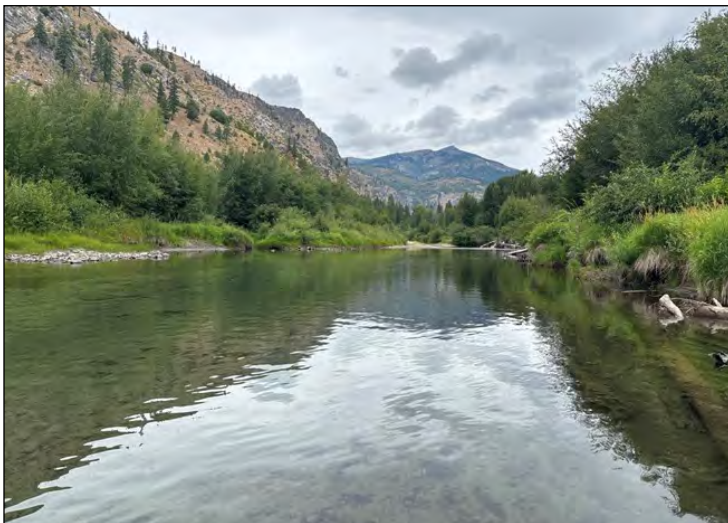
*YN metrics reported to cbfish.org (funded by BPA), 2008-2026. Includes work completed, or in-progress.

Entiat Subbasin

Middle Entiat River Reach Assessment

Summary

In 2025 the YN Fisheries Upper Columbia Habitat Project completed a Habitat Reach Assessment Update of an 11.1 mile segment of the mainstem Entiat River from river miles 15.6- 26.7. The intent of this Reach Assessment Update was to evaluate and standardize reporting on how habitat conditions have changed within this important spring Chinook salmon and steelhead spawning and rearing area. The 2025 Update consolidates and modernizes the habitat conditions metrics first reported on by three separate Reach Assessments compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation over ten years ago. The 2025 Update modernizes the habitat conditions metrics based on extensive habitat restoration treatments that have been performed in this stretch of the Entiat River during the intervening decade.



Results from this Reach Assessment will be used by the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board to update the regional Biological Strategy for recovering spring Chinook salmon and steelhead. Key habitat indicators that were identified in some reaches in this assessment as “unacceptable” include habitat quality (large woody materials, pools, off-channel habitats), and riparian vegetation (structure and canopy cover). See table below.

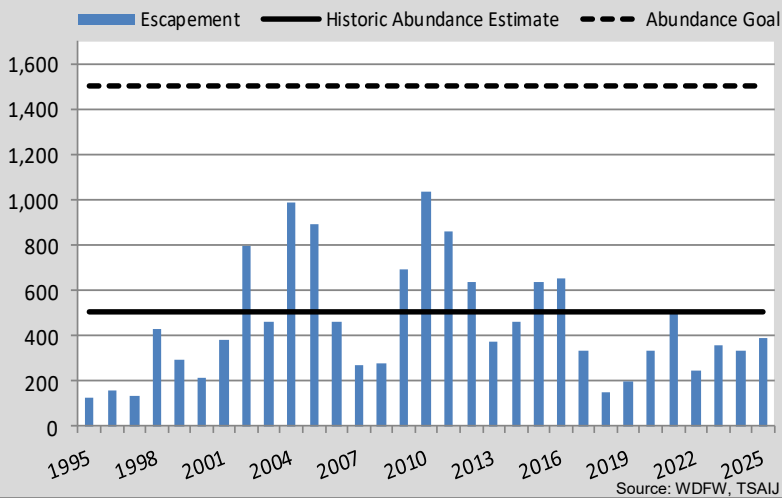
Left: Middle Entiat River

Below: Summary ratings for Entiat River reach assessment study area. Ratings are color-coded, with green shading for Adequate condition, yellow for At Risk condition, and red for Unacceptable condition

Pathway	General Indicators	Specific Indicators	Reach 1	Reach 2	Reach 3	Reach 4	Reach 5	Reach 6	Reach 7	Reach 8	Reach 9	Reach 10	Reach 11	Reach 12
Habitat Access	Physical Barriers	Main Channel Barriers	At Risk	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Habitat Quality	Substrate	Dominant Substrate/ Fine Sediment	At Risk	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	At Risk	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
	LWM	Pieces per Mile at Bankfull	Unacceptable	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	Adequate	Unacceptable	Adequate	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	At Risk
	Pools	Pool Frequency and Quality Presence of	Unacceptable	Adequate	At Risk	Adequate	At Risk	At Risk	Adequate	Unacceptable	At Risk	Unacceptable	At Risk	At Risk
	Off-Channel Habitat	Connectivity with Main Channel	Adequate	Unacceptable	At Risk	Unacceptable	Adequate	Unacceptable	Adequate	Adequate	At Risk	Adequate	At Risk	At Risk
Riparian Vegetation	Condition	Structure	Unacceptable	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk
		Disturbance (Human)	At Risk	Adequate	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	Adequate	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk
		Canopy Cover	Unacceptable	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	Adequate	At Risk	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	At Risk
Channel	Dynamics	Floodplain Connectivity	Adequate	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	Adequate	At Risk	Adequate	Adequate	At Risk	Adequate	At Risk	At Risk
		Bank Stability/ Channel Migration	Adequate	Adequate	At Risk	Adequate	Adequate	At Risk	At Risk	Adequate	At Risk	Adequate	At Risk	At Risk
		Vertical Channel Stability	Adequate	At Risk	At Risk	At Risk	Adequate	At Risk	At Risk	Adequate	At Risk	Adequate	At Risk	Adequate

Species Status and Trends

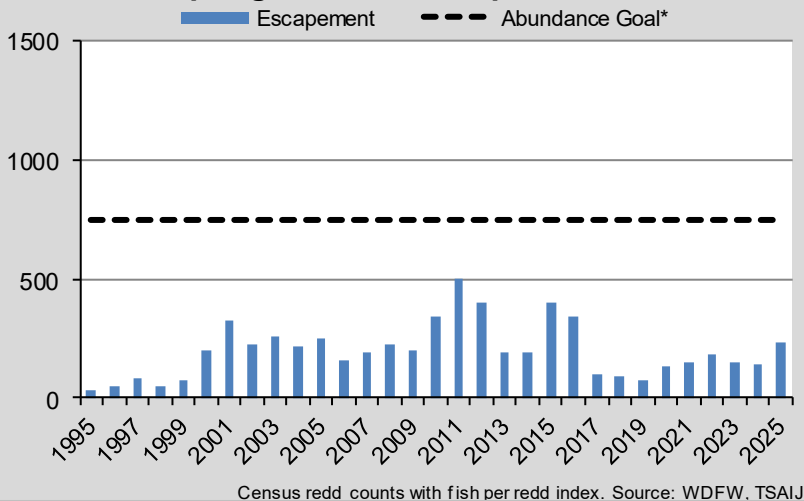
Summer Steelhead Escapement Estimate



“Escapement” is defined as the number of adult fish that avoided predation or harvest and reached their spawning grounds.

Entiat **summer steelhead** were identified as a unique stock based on their distinct spawning distribution, but no genetic analysis has been done. The proportion of hatchery-origin fish spawning in the Entiat increased from 1939 until 1987, at which point the proportion of wild fish has increased. Hatchery releases into the Entiat were discontinued in 1999 at the request of NOAA Fisheries who wanted a control stream with no hatchery releases to compare with upper Columbia tributaries that receive hatchery releases for supplementation-based recovery. The Entiat River is now known for its summer steelhead fishery, although the wild stock is considered depressed. (Source: WDFW)

Spring Chinook Escapement Estimate

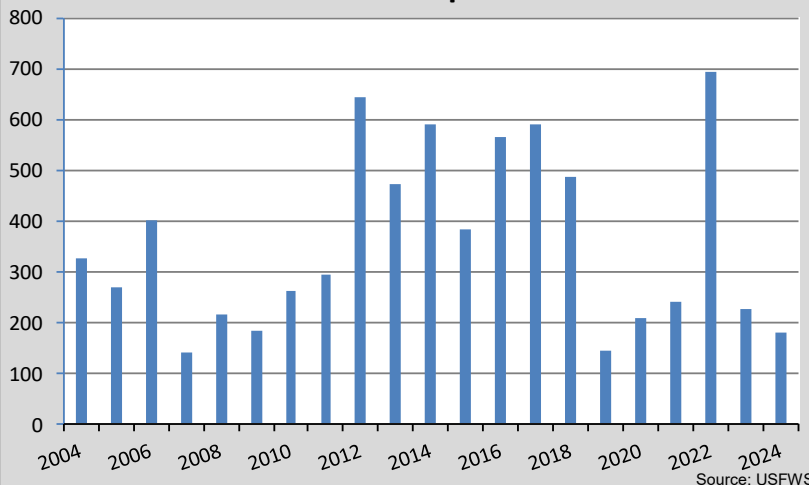


Native, naturally spawning **spring Chinook** in the Upper Columbia is an “Evolutionary Significant Unit” comprised of the Entiat, Methow and Wenatchee populations, all of which are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. According to NOAA’s 2022 5-year review, all populations have been on a downward trend for the most recent evaluation of 5-year abundance levels. Low ocean survival in recent years are considered a major factor in these numbers.

Please see p. 51 “Upper Columbia Spring Chinook and Steelhead Acclimation Project” to read about what steps YN is taking to help recover the species.

Habitat restoration efforts implemented by the YN are also designed to benefit juvenile and spawning Chinook and steelhead.

Summer Chinook Escapement Estimate



TSAIJ= Total spawner abundance including jacks.

*Goals, Historic Source: MFAC, 2020 full source see p. 30

Northern Territories—Production

Mid-Columbia River Coho Reintroduction Program

Since 2000 YN has been collaborating with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, and various local landowners to re-establish spawning coho populations to levels that can support harvest. Through guidance of our long-term Master Plan, we continue to expand project releases while initiating natural-origin production within historic spawning areas, ultimately creating sustainable spawning aggregates within target watersheds.

The program uses natural and semi-natural acclimation ponds to release juveniles in areas encompassing preferred habitat within the upper reaches of the target watersheds. Results to date include increased survival and localized adaptation, and increasing adult returns. Approximately 16,000 migrating over Rock Island Dam, downstream of Wenatchee, in 2025. Going forward, the program will focus on continuing project goals to initiate and support natural production in these key areas.

A combined total of 1,733,381 coho smolts were released into the Methow and Wenatchee watersheds in spring of 2025. In the fall, 434 female coho were spawned in the Wenatchee Basin and 333 in the Methow Basin, resulting in a program total of 2,026,463 green eggs. While much of the effort has focused on establishing local-adaption from the original lower-Columbia donor stocks, the program now looks ahead to increase natural production within target reaches of the watersheds where high quality spawning and rearing habitats exist.



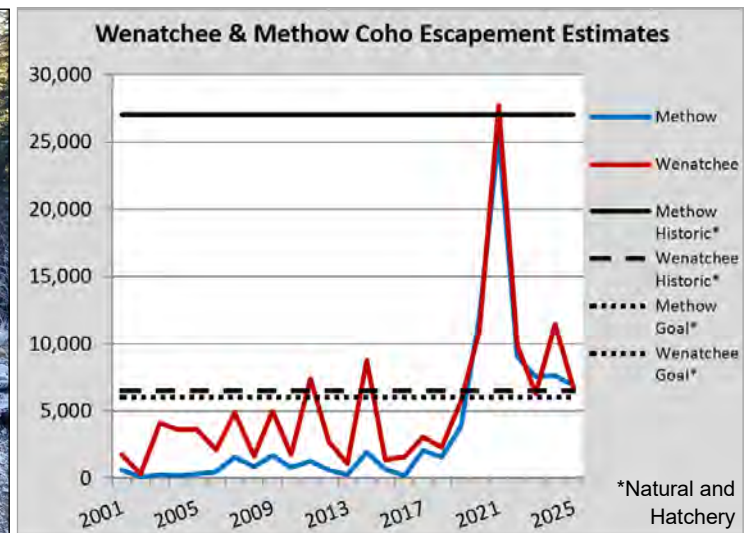
Photo: coho salmon



Photo: Stocking coho into 8-Mile Pond on the Chewuch River, Methow Subbasin.



Photo: Trinity Pond acclimation site, Wenatchee Subbasin.



Source: YN. *Goals, Historic Source: MFAC, 2020 full source see p. 30

Wenatchee and Methow Subbasins

Mid-Columbia River Coho Reintroduction Continued...

In May 2025, YN co-authored a journal article with the Columbia Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC), highlighting genetic adaption within the Wenatchee coho population and how it's being used to aid in reintroduction, titled **"Genomic insights into local adaptation and migration success in reintroduced Coho Salmon of the Wenatchee River basin."** Below is an excerpt:

*"Locally adapting to specific environmental conditions is critical for long-term population viability of reintroduced populations, particularly for species like Coho Salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), which face diverse selective pressures during their migration."*

"This study focused on the mid-Columbia River Coho Salmon reintroduction program managed by Yakama Nation Fisheries, which has successfully reintroduced coho salmon into the Wenatchee and Methow River basins, Washington. Notably, these populations have adapted to the longer migration route than those in the founding stock, with selection favoring individuals with an earlier arrival time and that can navigate a 15-km, high-gradient canyon to reach optimal spawning grounds."

Adult Coho Outplanting:

In 2025, YN Fisheries successfully outplanted 415 adult coho salmon throughout the Methow River Basin, including the Methow, Twisp, and Chewuch rivers. Outplanting occurred from late October through early December 2025. This effort was implemented to supplement smolt release shortfalls during the Natural Production Support Phase of the Coho Reintroduction Project and encourage use of high-quality tributary habitat. The effort directly supports long term coho reintroduction and local adaptation objectives in the Methow Basin.

After decades of effort, the Yakama Nation Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Program is now demonstrating the benefits predicted. Ancestral fishing rights are being supported, the ecological health of the watersheds is being improved, coho species fitness is being strengthened, and both tribal and non-tribal harvests are increasing.



Photos above: Adult coho outplanting workup and release

Northern Territories—Production

Upper Columbia Spring Chinook and Steelhead Acclimation Project

The YN's **Upper Columbia Spring Chinook and Steelhead Acclimation Project**, which began in 2009, continues to supplement restoration activities for ESA-listed spring Chinook and steelhead by increasing the efficacy of existing supplementation programs. By encouraging returning fish to seek available good quality habitat where they may successfully spawn, a critical benchmark for supplementation programs, we are helping to rebuild natural populations.

Juvenile salmon and steelhead are initially reared at local hatchery facilities and transported as pre-smolts to acclimation ponds in target areas within the respective basins in mid-March. They are reared in the ponds before being volitionally released in mid- to late April. Releases from remote acclimation sites support local adaptation and are intended to encourage returning adults to distribute and spawn in areas of preferred habitat. This effort is important since hatchery-produced Wenatchee spring Chinook have been shown to have reproductive success equal to natural-origin spawners when they spawn in areas of high quality habitat and low spawner densities.

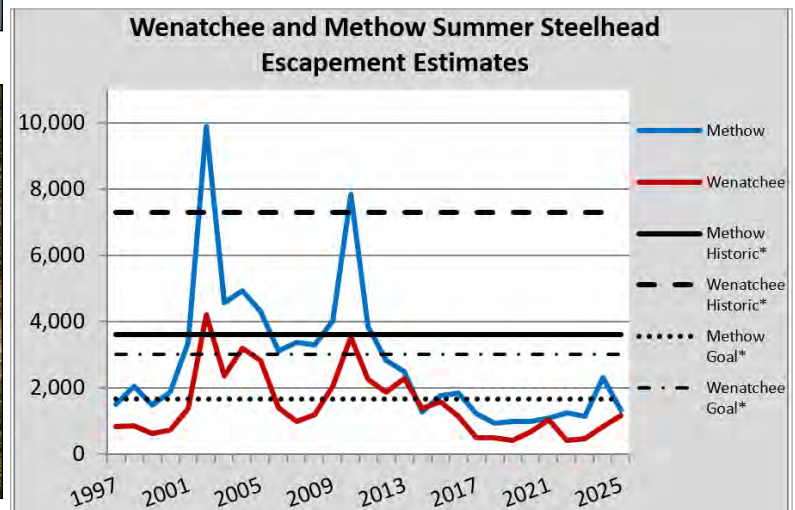
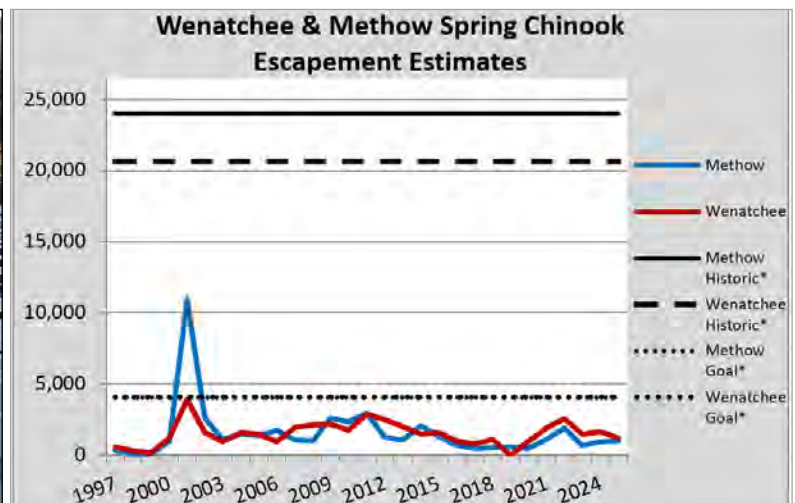
In 2025, YN Fisheries released 17,000 summer steelhead smolts from Early winters Ponds in the Methow River basin. The release is part of a 5-year, cooperative study with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to determine if short-term, spring acclimation will increase distribution of this ESA listed species into the upper Methow watershed.



Above: Smolts in the acclimation ponds



Above: Early Winters remote acclimation ponds, Methow Subbasin



Source: WDFW, Total Spawner Abundance Including Jacks (TSAIJ)

*Goals, Historic Source: MFAC, 2020 full source see p. 30

Wenatchee and Methow Subbasins

Upper Columbia Kelt Reconditioning Project

Project Background:

In support of the recovery of Upper Columbia River steelhead, our goal is to increase the number of natural origin spawners by reconditioning post-spawned steelhead, known as kelts. Repeat-spawning is unique to steelhead amongst anadromous Pacific salmonids, but the once-common life-history expression has become increasingly rare as their migratory path has become more difficult. Repeat-spawning translates to greater life-time reproductive success, which is important for a species to thrive.

Since 2013, the YN has been “reconditioning” kelts in the Methow Subbasin to improve their survival and increase the number of repeat spawning fish on the spawning grounds. We collect natural origin, post-spawn steelhead and apply aquaculture techniques to improve their condition and survival. Fish are collected in partnership with Chelan Public Utility District (dam collection) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (live-spawning).

Results

In-River Performance: We developed a method to evaluate performance of reconditioned fish after release. Comparing PIT-tagged reconditioned kelts with a reference group of known migratory steelhead spawners, we found that over a 10-year period (2013-2023) reconditioned kelts had a 52.8% likelihood of returning to the Upper Columbia region to spawn, while only 1% of the reference group returned in that time frame.

Relative Reproductive Success: Working in collaboration with the WDFW, 23 reconditioned kelts were included in a steelhead parentage genetic study conducted in the Twisp River. Based on tracking data from 2014-2025, we found that the reconditioned kelts in the study did produce offspring and that they were more productive than first-time, natural origin spawners.

Ongoing Work

Maximizing Survival:

Survival rates for kelts vary annually. Therefore, we are continuously looking for ways to improve survival and maximize the number of these important fish available to contribute to the wild spawning population. One option we are looking into is the potential administration of antibiotics to kelts immediately upon collection (post-spawn). The study will be completed in 2027.



YN Fisheries staff releasing reconditioned kelt



Measurements being taken on a reconditioned kelt



A steelhead kelt before reconditioning (left) and after reconditioning (right).

Wenatchee Basin Expansion:

We are planning on expanding kelt reconditioning efforts into the Wenatchee Subbasin within the next 5 to 6 years, with the design and construction of a kelt facility being the next step.

Northern Territories—Monitoring

Parr Assessment and Snorkel Surveys:

In 2025, YN Fisheries initiated snorkel survey efforts in the Methow Subbasin to assess natural origin coho parr abundance. These surveys were implemented to complement smolt trap data and improve estimates of freshwater production during the Natural Production Support Phases of the Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Program. Snorkel surveys were conducted during late summer low-flow conditions (August/September). This effort supports evaluation of natural production, overwinter survival, and local adaptation objectives by providing parr-level data needed to link egg deposition, parr, smolt, and adult survival.



Photos: Snorkeling survey (above), and view of juvenile salmon on a survey (left)

Upper Methow River Array (MRU)

In 2025, Methow YN Fisheries successfully installed the PIT-tag interrogation site MRU (Upper Methow River Array) on the Methow River, located between Winthrop and Mazama. The site became operational on August 20, 2025, and consists of two channel-spanning arrays of five antennas each in a “pass-over” configuration that detects PIT-tagged fish as they migrate past. Powered by a hybrid thermoelectric generator (TEG) / solar system, the array operates year-round and uploads fish detection data to the Columbia Basin PIT Tag Information System (PTAGIS, <https://www.ptagis.org/Sites/InterrogationSites?code=MRU>). This installation enhances regional monitoring by providing records of tagged fish movements in the Upper Methow River, supporting survival, movement, and life-history analyses across the basin.



Photos above: Array configuration and installation of the PIT-tag detection system.

Wenatchee and Methow Subbasins

Action Effectiveness Monitoring Project

The goal of YN Fisheries' Upper Columbia Action Effectiveness Monitoring (AEM) project is to implement a comprehensive, project-scale effectiveness monitoring program that provides direct feedback to managers and habitat biologists on the fish response to habitat restoration. Through AEM, we monitor juvenile salmon and steelhead at project sites and associated control sites for multiple years before and after habitat restoration. The data we collect with this project, once analyzed, is utilized by habitat biologists to help guide future habitat restoration work.

Recent Habitat Restoration Sites Surveyed:

Chewuch River Mile 4.5 was a habitat restoration project implemented by YN Fisheries in the Methow Subbasin that included creating off-channel habitat, augmenting in-stream habitat complexity and reconnecting the floodplain. In this 5-year pilot study, completed in 2025, we monitored juvenile salmon and steelhead responses following habitat restoration. Results from the data analysis suggest that the restoration project in the Chewuch River had a positive treatment effect on juvenile Chinook salmon and steelhead abundance and density.

Fender Mill Side Channel, a tributary to the Methow River, was surveyed from 2019 to 2023. Our goal was to detail how both target and non-target fish species used the restored site and to evaluate the effect of groundwater-fed infiltration gallery (where groundwater seepage creates off-channel aquatic habitat) on growth and survival of juvenile salmonids. The study demonstrated year-round fish use by target species. Growth and survival analysis could not be completed with any statistical rigor due to difficulty in obtaining sufficient sample sizes. Results further suggested target species response may have been hindered by the presence of Eastern Brook Trout.

1890s Side Channel, a Methow River tributary, was monitored from 2015 to 2021. Our goal was to describe in detail how juvenile salmon and steelhead used the restored side channel, and to evaluate the effect of groundwater-fed infiltration gallery on growth and survival of juvenile salmonids. The study demonstrated year-round fish use by target species. Growth and survival analysis yielded mixed results. While there was some evidence suggesting the cool groundwater-fed channel provided some benefit to growth and survival, results were often mixed or not statistically significant.

Nason Creek SR 207, a Wenatchee River tributary, has begun pre-treatment monitoring for an upcoming restoration project.

Full details of the monitoring methods and results can be found in the final report, when released.



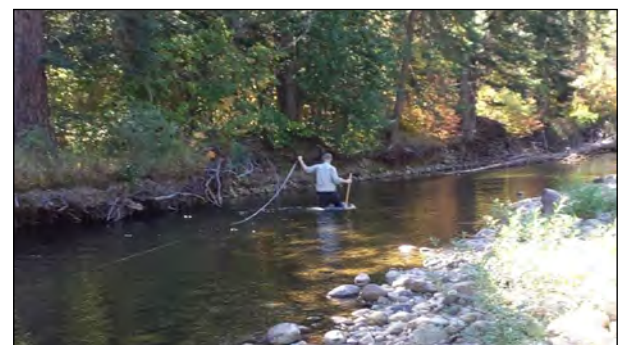
YN Fisheries staff conducting snorkel surveys.



Fender Mill Alcove complex cover habitat in created pool



1890s Side Channel aerial view



AEM survey work



Honor. Protect. Restore.

Find this report online here:
yakamafish-nsn.gov/restore/projects/star



B O N N E V I L L E
POWER ADMINISTRATION



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