

Update on Salmon Habitat Recovery and Watershed Planning Processes in the Klickitat and White Salmon Basins

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Abstract:

In 1999 the Klickitat Lead Entity Organization was established pursuant to chapter 77.85 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) for a geographic area that includes the Klickitat River and White Salmon River basins. The Organization's primary function is to provide a citizen-based evaluation and prioritization of salmon habitat restoration and protection projects that are proposed for grant funding through Washington State's Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) program. To date, the SRFB has awarded a total of \$5,815,661.00 in grants to fund 34 projects in the Klickitat Lead Entity area. The Lead Entity Organization's other important functions include developing and maintaining an adaptive management strategy and maintaining a habitat work schedule. The adaptive management strategy, which is updated annually, includes a prioritization of salmonid stocks, geographic areas, limiting habitat factors and habitat forming processes, and habitat restoration and protection actions. Historically, the habitat work schedule consisted of the adaptive management strategy and a list of habitat projects that have been completed in the Klickitat Lead Entity area. A significant effort is now underway across the state to enhance the lead entities' habitat work schedules and upload them to a public portal that is internet-accessible by project sponsors and the general public.

In 1999 watershed planning was initiated pursuant to chapter 90.82 RCW for Water Resource Inventory Area 30 (WRIA 30), which includes the Klickitat Basin. The *Klickitat River Watershed Management Plan* was approved in August 2006. It was developed by a committee representing a broad range of water resource interests and addresses the priority water quantity, water quality, and habitat issues identified by the committee for the portion of WRIA 30 that is outside of the Yakama Reservation. We are now in the implementation phase of the watershed planning process. The Detailed Implementation Plan was completed and approved in November 2008. It identifies the entities which have accepted responsibility for implementing the watershed management strategies and actions, as well as provides schedules and identifies potential funding sources. On-going plan implementation activities include stream flow and temperature monitoring, groundwater assessments, and implementation of the Little Klickitat River Temperature TMDL. Work scheduled for 2008-2009 includes installation of a SnoTel (snowpack telemetry) monitoring station in the Simcoe Mountains, two additional flow gauges in the Little Klickitat River and three flow gauges and a ground water monitoring well in Swale Creek basin, and conducting stream shade assessments and riparian area mapping and assessments in the Little Klickitat River and Swale Creek basins.

A watershed management plan for WRIA 29 was approved in 2006, but it addresses the area of WRIA 29 east of the White Salmon Basin only. In 2007 the legislature split WRIA 29 into WRIs 29a and 29b for purposes of watershed planning under chapter 90.82 RCW. We are in the process of securing the concurrence of local governments needed to initiate watershed planning in WRIA 29b, the White Salmon River basin, however state funding cuts may limit any future progress for this biennium.