

Preparing for Anadromy in the White Salmon River Basin

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Abstract :

The White Salmon Fish Passage Inventory was initiated by Underwood Conservation District (UCD) in 2009 in order to coordinate and facilitate a thorough inventory of passage barriers, hazards and habitat restoration opportunities in the potentially anadromous fish streams of the Lower White Salmon River watershed. The impetus to gather this information stems from the 1996 US Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) decision that requires that fish passage be reinstated around or through the Condit Dam, located at River Mile 3.3 on the White Salmon River. UCD and partners determined that a fish passage inventory was an important step in preparing for anadromy in the White Salmon basin.

Over the past two years, UCD Technicians have worked with 51 landowners to gain support to access 13 potentially anadromous streams in the White Salmon watershed. A total of 44 miles of habitat was surveyed using the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife fish passage and screening assessment protocol. As a result, over 200 potential riparian and instream habitat restoration projects were identified and 33 instream barriers were assessed for fish passage. For streams where fish passage barriers are present, spawning and rearing habitat data was collected and used to help prioritize the barriers for removal. Due to access limitations, not all potentially anadromous habitat was surveyed. There is an estimated 20 miles of potentially anadromous habitat beyond the 44 miles surveyed.

All data and findings of the fish passage inventory have been organized into a GIS database that project partners can utilize in future project planning and development. The database includes general habitat information (slope, canopy cover, dominant vegetation) for each reach, as well as restoration project descriptions, location and passability of barriers and length of potential habitat upstream of barriers.