



Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2007: July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007

Mission Statement

The mission of the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group is to restore self-sustaining salmon and steelhead populations through habitat preservation and restoration projects which assist landowners and promote community partnerships throughout our region.

Overview

Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group is a non-profit (501c3) organization dedicated to restoring and protecting fish habitat. Mid-Columbia Fisheries is managed by a volunteer board of directors. The group does not advocate, regulate, or take political positions. Mid-Columbia Fisheries is solely dedicated to protecting and restoring salmonid habitat.

Mid-Columbia Fisheries takes a three-pronged approach to protecting and restoring fish habitat.

- We sponsor and implement high-quality habitat restoration and protection projects throughout our region.
- We help support the work of our partners by providing financial support for restoration and protection projects.
- We help support educational and community outreach programs that will promote the long-term commitment our society needs to protect fisheries resources.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Yakama Nation, and the USDA Forest Service continue to be our strongest partners. Both of the fisheries co-managers provide technical assistance with individual projects. Additional partners include conservation districts, private landowners, local governments, federal agencies, schools and community groups.

Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group's Region

The Mid-Columbia region includes several important steelhead and salmon rivers, notably the Wind River, the White Salmon River, the Klickitat River, the Yakima River, and numerous tributaries to the Columbia River. Our region includes all of the waterways in seven of Washington's Water Resource Inventory Areas, fully encompassing all of Klickitat, Benton, Yakima, and Kittitas Counties, as well as portions of Skamania and Franklin counties.

Along with its large geographic size, this region has a diversity of watershed and fisheries issues unique to each of the individual rivers and watersheds. These watersheds provide habitat for seven salmonid species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act, as well as a number of sensitive and culturally significant stocks. Population growth in the Yakima Basin is likely the biggest threat to salmonid resources in the tri-county (Kittitas, Yakima & Benton Counties) area. Water quantity and instream flows are critical issues on nearly all of the tributary streams in the arid portions of the region.

Project Highlights

Cle Elum River – Restoration and Protection

The Cle Elum River Restoration and Protection project is aimed at protecting high priority fish habitat along the river and in a side channel where ground water upwelling creates cold water refugia, particularly for Threatened bull trout. The upper Cle Elum River had been degraded by dispersed, unmanaged recreation. In cooperation with the Wenatchee and Okanogan National Forests, Mid-Columbia Fisheries hired a contractor to implement a protection and restoration project that was in the planning stages for a number of years. Completed restoration and protection actions include:

- Elimination of vehicle access to the active floodplain and river banks;
- Abandonment of unneeded roads and removal of associated culverts;
- Decompaction of soils and planting native vegetation along riverbanks;
- Improvement of floodplain roughness by placement of large wood; and
- Relocation of access, parking, and camping areas outside of the active floodplain.

This project was funded by a variety of sources including the USDA Forest Service, the National Forest Foundation, the Mountaineers, Plum Creek Foundation, RIDGE, and Regional Fisheries Enhancement program funding. Additional work at other priority sites in the upper Cle Elum River is planned.

Fogarty Ditch Fish Passage



Contractor replacing inlet culvert to Fogarty Ditch, February 2007.

Mid-Columbia Fisheries funded the replacement of an undersized, collapsed and failing culvert at the upstream end of Fogarty Ditch. The culvert replacement at the head of Fogarty Ditch was one component of a multi-faceted project designed to convert four-mile long Fogarty Ditch from an irrigation canal into a fish-bearing side-channel of the Yakima River. The larger project involves installing fish screens for individual water users and removing passage barriers. By screening individual users (rather than the ditch itself), Fogarty Ditch will provide safe side channel habitat that is connected to the mainstem Yakima River at both the top and bottom ends. Various components of the project were led by the Bureau of Reclamation, the Kittitas Conservation District, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, with coordination,

funding, and technical assistance from the Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program.

Yakama Nation staff assisted with coordinating the replacement of the upstream culvert, and the water users provided a large match. The water users supported the fish passage goals of this project, but also benefit from improved function at the inlet, which increased the users' ability to flexibly manage irrigation water. Because this project was a "win-win" for fish and farmers, it serves as an example of fish interests working with the agricultural community to accomplish goals that are mutually beneficial. With assistance from the water users and Yakama Nation, we were able to complete this project for less than one third the originally estimated budget.

Holmes Restoration

This year Mid-Columbia Fisheries continued our multiple year commitment to restoration at the Yakima River side channel - Holmes site. In early summer, Mid-Columbia Fisheries helped fund improvements to the irrigation system needed for the success of the riparian plantings along the side channel. We are also helping to fund improvements to fish passage at the outlet of the rearing pond.



Coho salmon returning to the Holmes side channel.

The Holmes parcel was purchased by the Yakama Nation in 2005 and is being managed as fish and wildlife habitat. The property includes a 1,300 foot long side channel and wetlands associated with the Yakima River. Habitat restoration along the side channel began in the spring of 2006. Restoration activities include decommissioning and decompacting farm roads along the side channel, riparian planting, weed control, and placement of instream habitat features (woody debris and gravel). The Holmes site is part of the Yakama Nation's highly successful Coho re-introduction program.

Klickitat River Restoration

This year Mid-Columbia Fisheries was able to sponsor a number of projects in the Klickitat Basin. We re-constructed and maintained nine miles of livestock exclosure fencing on tributaries to the Klickitat River (Swale Creek, Simmons Creek, and Chapman Creeks).

We planted 600 feet of the Little Klickitat River with native trees and shrubs. The landowner at this site committed over fifty hours of maintenance and watering at this project.

Volunteers and Americorps members removed



Crew members constructing a livestock exclosure fence on Swale Creek, a tributary to the Klickitat River. April, 2007.

debris from the Klickitat River in October. A five foot diameter culvert was removed from the river by hand. The culvert had blown out of an upstream tributary a number of years ago and was temporarily lodged in branches that were overhanging the active river channel.



Mid-Columbia Fisheries continued our commitment to riparian restoration at the two properties at the River Mile 12 site, where crew members added additional plants and maintained plants installed in 2006.

Improvements were made to the drip irrigation system, and first year survival of many species was good.

Six sites along the Klickitat River were planted with a hydraulic stinger in 2006 in a cooperative project with the Yakama Nation. First year

survival data was collected and survival rates are high. We are planning additional stinger plantings in 2008. With assistance from the Yakama Nation and volunteers, this spring we began a small nursery that will provide rooted plants for the upcoming stinger sites and other restoration projects.

Little Wind River Sediment Reduction

Volunteers and Americorps crew members planted trees on three landslides above the Little Wind River. Graduate students from Portland State University studied the landslides and prepared recommendations for reducing sediment from the landslides to the Little Wind River, an important lower watershed tributary to the Wind River. Road stormproofing is planned for forest roads associated with the landslides.



Community volunteers and local students assisted with potting plants for use on next year's restoration projects.

Education

Community volunteers assisted with a number of planting projects, including projects in the Wind River, Klickitat River, and Yakima Basin.

This year, Mid-Columbia Fisheries helped staff the Benton Conservation District's Salmon Summit, an event attended by 1,000 local students who learn about watershed and fisheries issues and release classroom-reared salmon into the Lower Yakima. Based on the success of this event, Mid-Columbia Fisheries is helping lead the planning for a similar (but smaller) event in the Columbia Gorge for the spring of 2008.

Mid-Columbia Fisheries staff also helped provide support to Whitson Elementary School's watershed monitoring and education project on lower Jewett Creek.



Other

This year our board revisited and reaffirmed our mission statement. We adopted a project evaluation checklist and a conflict of interest policy. We also formalized our policy regarding projects that have mitigation components.

AmeriCorps team leader installing a mesh plant protection tube around a newly planted tree on Spring Creek, Klickitat County. April, 2007.

Board of Directors

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Watershed</u>
Glenn Miller	<i>President</i>	Construction Manager, Yakima County Road Department	Yakima Basin
Doug Miller	<i>Secretary</i>	Klickitat PUD	Klickitat Basin
Mark Harvey	<i>Board Member</i>	Environmental compliance & management	Klickitat Basin
Blake Murphy	<i>Treasurer</i>	Washington Dept. of Natural Resources, White Salmon Watershed Management Committee	White Salmon Basin

Financial Summary

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>RFEG Funds</u>	<u>Volunteer Hours</u>	<u>Volunteer Value @ \$15/hr.</u>	<u>Other in-kind Donations</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Value</u>
Little Wind River Sediment Reduction	\$190	33	\$495	\$16,570	\$648	\$17,936
Klickitat Tributaries Restoration	\$735	34	\$510	\$2,489	\$28,961	\$32,729
Cle Elum River Restoration & Protection	\$9,000	0	\$0	\$10,000	\$11,117	\$30,117
Klickitat River Mile 12 Riparian Restoration	\$0	0	\$0	\$0	\$5,335	\$5,335
Klickitat River Riparian Restoration	\$0	60	\$900	\$1,100	\$1,036	\$3,096
Holmes Side Channel, Yakima River	\$8,472	0	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$23,472
Fogerty Ditch, Yakima River	\$9,412	40	\$600	\$5,000	\$3,000	\$18,052
Administration / Project Mgmt / Travel / Insurance	\$33,993	144	\$2,160	\$0	\$4,125	\$40,422
Outreach	\$440	3	\$45	\$0	\$0	\$488
Totals	\$62,242	\$314	\$4,710	\$35,159	\$69,222	\$171,647

Contact Information

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