



## **Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group Annual Report Fiscal Year 06: July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006**

### **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. 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,
- All of the waterways in seven of Washington's Water Resource Inventory Areas, which includes all of Klickitat, Benton, Yakima, and Kittitas Counties and a portion of Skamania and Franklin Counties.

Along with the large geographic size of this region, 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. Sea lion predation at the fish ladder at Bonneville Dam has also become a major issue of concern for stocks in the Mid-Columbia region.

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

1. We sponsor and implement high-quality habitat restoration and protection projects throughout our region.
2. We help support the work of our partners by providing financial support for restoration and protection projects.



3. 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 and the Yakama Nation continue to be our strongest partners. Both of the co-managers provide technical assistance with individual projects. Additionally, Mid-Columbia Fisheries partners with conservation districts, private landowners, land trusts, local governments, federal agencies, schools and community groups.

## Project Highlights

### Klickitat Riparian Restoration

During the spring of 2006, Mid-Columbia Fisheries sponsored the following riparian plantings in the Klickitat basin:

- Four sites along the Klickitat River (between river mile 8 and river mile 18) were planted with a hydraulic stinger,
- Two sites along the Klickitat River were planted by hand,
- Three sites along the lower portions of tributary streams (Snyder, Logging Camp, and Swale Creeks) were planted with a hydraulic stinger.



*Removing an old car body from the banks of the Klickitat River. Another vehicle and an additional two tons of garbage were hauled off the riverbanks and floodplain.*

In late spring, the Northwest Service Academy provided an Americorps crew to repair and maintain riparian exclosure fencing along Simmons Creek, another Klickitat River tributary.

All sites were planted with a mix of native trees and shrubs. The goals of these projects are to increase floodplain roughness, improve riparian cover, and increase the recruitment of large woody debris. The Yakama Nation provided project management assistance with the stinger planting projects.



*Hydraulic stinger planting the river bank on the Lower Klickitat River.*

### Taneum Creek Restoration

In the fall of 2005, restoration activities were completed along approximately 900 feet of Taneum Creek, a tributary to the Yakima River near Thorp. The goal of the project was to improve fish habitat by increasing hydraulic roughness, stabilizing a head cut, and improving floodplain connectivity. The restoration activities were also designed to restore the ability of the channel to capture and store spawning-sized gravels. Restoration activities included the construction of four small riffles to create a pool-riffle sequence through what was formerly an armored plane-bed channel. Large anchored rootwads were incorporated, with root masses extending into the pools. The uppermost constructed riffle was placed to stabilize an active headcut.

The riffles improve stream access to a high flow channel. The capacity of this high flow channel was increased and its profile lowered to provide greater access to the floodplain. Large woody debris, including rootwad barbs were added to the channel to protect banks and improve channel complexity and habitat.

In the lower project area, two bank-protecting rootwad barbs were installed and a bedload plug was removed from a high flow channel to reduce the erosive forces on a high eroding, vertical bank. Disturbed and lightly vegetated banks throughout the site were replanted with black cottonwood and willow cuttings gathered on-site. This project was a partnership between a private landowner, Mid-Columbia Fisheries, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and was funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Private Stewardship Grant program.

### Cowiche Creek Restoration

This large project involved a number of restoration and protection activities on Cowiche Creek about six miles west of Yakima. This project was led by the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy and involved a number of partners, including a private landowner, the WA Department of Fish & Wildlife, the North Yakima Conservation District, the Washington Water Trust, and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. An irrigation diversion (concrete dam) which created a full passage barrier to juvenile and adult fish was removed resulting in restored access to up to twenty miles of quality, upstream stream habitat for spawning and rearing for Coho, Chinook, and Mid-Columbia steelhead. As part of the project, the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy purchased 1,700 acres of riparian and upland habitat and a senior water right, which is being placed in trust for instream flow. The remaining water right diversion was moved downstream to a new pump diversion with a compliant fish screen. The area around the old diversion site was replanted and a weed abatement program was implemented to control noxious weeds within the riparian areas of the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy's property (100 plus acres).

This project compliments other barrier removal and fish screening projects along Cowiche Creek that have funded through the Yakima Tributaries Access and Habitat Program.

### Holmes Restoration

In the fall of 2005, Mid-Columbia Fisheries helped support the purchase of a fifty acre parcel along the Yakima River by the Yakama Nation. The parcel is located near Ellensburg and will be managed in perpetuity 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). Fifty volunteers helped plant native trees and shrubs along the side channel.



Prior to restoration activities, the instream habitat complexity of the side channel was poor. Flow through the reach was generally slow moving, and channel width to depth ratio was higher than optimal for juvenile rearing habitat function. The area had been heavily grazed by livestock for many years and had received little or no rest. The goal of the project is to improve instream and rearing habitat function, leading to increased salmonid survival. The Holmes site is part of the Yakama Nation's juvenile Coho salmon supplementation program and Coho are reared and released in the side channel annually.

More than Coho fifty redds were counted in the Holmes side channel in 2006.



### Little Klickitat Restoration

More than five hundred feet of the Little Klickitat River was restored on private property in the City of Goldendale. This was a cooperative project with two private landowners, the Central Klickitat Conservation District, and Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group. The project objectives were to address sedimentation and water temperature issues and to improve fish habitat. Rusty barrels, concrete pieces, a dilapidated shed and other garbage were removed from the north bank. The banks were re-shaped. Erosion control matting was installed on the banks. Logs were installed along the toe of some of the banks. Rootwads were secured to the banks and two spanning structures were installed. A “log crib” was constructed in one area to stabilize a steep bank. Volunteers, including the local chapter of Trout Unlimited planted the site with native trees and shrubs. The goals of the project were to limit sediment supply, increase riparian cover, increase the recruitment of large, woody debris, and increase in-stream complexity.

### Whiskey Creek Revegetation

Volunteers planted native trees and shrubs along two hundred feet of Whiskey Creek, a tributary to the Wind River.

### Education

Community volunteers assisted with several restoration projects in the Mid-Columbia region. Adult volunteers and middle school students from Klickitat School helped collect willow cuttings for riparian revegetation projects on the Klickitat River. Volunteers also helped with planting projects at the Holmes Restoration project, on the Little Klickitat River, and on Whiskey Creek.



*Kids help plant trees along a tributary to the Wind River.*

Mid-Columbia Fisheries is involved in a number of education projects in our region. This year, Mid-Columbia Fisheries helped fund transportation for students from the Ellensburg school district to the Holmes Restoration Project to attend an educational event and assist with restoration activities. Mid-Columbia Fisheries helped staff the Salmon Summit organized by the Benton Conservation District and attended by 1,000 local students who learned about watershed and fisheries issues and released classroom-reared salmon into the Lower Yakima. Mid-Columbia Fisheries staff also helped provide support to Whitson Elementary School’s watershed monitoring and education project on lower Jewett Creek.

## 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

## Staff

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