

Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group

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 (MCF) 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 promote the long-term commitment our society needs to protect fisheries resources.

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 eight salmonid species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act, as well as a number of sensitive and culturally significant stocks.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Hemlock Dam Removal & Trout Creek Restoration

The Hemlock Dam Removal and Trout Creek Restoration project removed an obsolete dam, improved fish passage, and restored natural channel and sediment transport conditions on Trout Creek. The project site is on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and the project has been a priority for the USDA Forest Service for many years. The 2.1 million dollar project received support from many sources, including four grants sponsored by MCF totaling nearly \$500,000. The Forest Service managed the project. During the summer and fall of 2009, Trout Creek was re-routed around the project area, the dam (which measured 26 feet high by 112 feet long at the spillway) was removed along with the accumulated sediments, a natural channel was re-constructed, and wood was installed in the channel and floodplain. Riparian planting was completed in the fall of 2009. Monitoring and rehabilitation of the site continued through 2010.

Salmon in our Backyards

With the support of a Community Salmon Fund grant, Mid-Columbia Fisheries developed backyard riparian buffer templates for three eco-types in the Yakima Basin: Northern Kittitas County, Ellensburg, and the Yakima/Tri-Cities areas. These templates will be incorporated into a Backyard Buffer brochure to be mailed to streamside landowners and posted on our website. Demonstration projects in each ecotype are planned for 2010 and 2011.

Cowiche Creek

This project removed approximately 500 feet of dikes to improve the floodplain access of Cowiche Creek. A house and orchard were removed, and native trees and shrubs were planted along 700 feet of streambank. More than 40,000 cubic yards of garbage and debris were removed from the channel, banks, and floodplain. Cowiche Creek has been the focus of a multi-agency effort to improve watershed conditions for the benefit of salmonids. Currently, Mid-Columbia Fisheries is planning a second dike removal project approximately one mile downstream. Key partners include the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy, the City of Yakima, US Fish & Wildlife Service, WDFW, North Yakima Conservation District, and National Fish & Wildlife Foundation.



Hemlock Dam



Trout Creek, after dam removal

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Naches River Off-channel Habitat Restoration

In the fall of 2009, irrigation return flow water was re-routed from a steep, narrow ditch, to restore a wetlands area and improve off-channel rearing immediately adjacent to the Naches River. The project created a new 900 ft. long channel. The floodplain was planted in the fall of 2009 and initial survival at the site is high. Funding for the project was provided by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Landowner Incentive Program.

Riparian Planting Projects

In the last year, Mid-Columbia Fisheries planted streambanks and floodplains on the Yakima River, Wilson Creek, Swauk Creek, Coleman Creek, Cowiche Creek, and Simmons Creek. The Wilson Creek planting project, done in cooperation with the Cascade Land Conservancy and other local partners, will evaluate the use of flash grazing to manage weeds in riparian areas. We also continue to maintain and irrigate sites in their first few growing seasons to ensure establishment of woody riparian vegetation.



Riparian planting on Wilson Creek, a tributary to the Yakima River in Kittitas County

Reecer Creek Floodplain Restoration Project

This project will relocate 2,300 feet of Ellensburg's Reecer Creek to its historic floodplain, and increase the length of available fish habitat in the reach to 3,300 feet. Suver levee, which currently constrains the creek, will be set back to allow for 58 acres of floodplain and upland habitat. The project began in the fall of 2010 with funding from the City of Ellensburg, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Department of Ecology, Yakama Nation, and the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Key partners include the South Central Washington RC&D, the Kittitas County Water Purveyors, Kittitas Reclamation District, WDFW, the Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program, and the Kittitas County Conservation District.

Large Wood Replenishment

In the last two years, we have worked on a demonstration project with the Yakama Nation along Taneum Creek. The project goal is to replenish large wood to streams by thinning overly dense forest stands adjacent to target creeks. Crews have manually moved thinned trees into the creek with the use of a grip hoist. The project has resulted in more than 350 trees being placed into Taneum Creek for less than \$18,000. High flows have sorted the wood into natural jams, providing increased in-channel habitat diversity.

We are now working with the USDA Forest Service to expand the project onto a number of streams identified as suitable for this work. Suitable streams are those that will benefit from wood placement, have overly dense riparian forests (generally due to fire suppression), lack infrastructure, have low gradient and a suitable channel and valley morphology so that wood can be readily moved into a position where high flows can safely sort and distribute the woody material.

PROJECT PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Jack Creek

Planning is underway for a project to restore the lowest two miles of Jack Creek, a tributary to the North Fork Teanaway River. The creek and its floodplain are degraded from historic logging, road building, and agriculture. In 2011, the first phase of the project will re-locate portions of a Forest Service road away from the creek and restore the upper part of the project area. Funding for this project has been provided by the USDA Forest Service, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Department of Ecology, and US Fish & Wildlife Service.

Swauk and Iron Creeks

Mid-Columbia Fisheries hired Inter-fluve, Inc. to develop a feasibility analysis of restoration work in Swauk and Iron Creeks, near their confluence. The construction of Highway 97 forced Swauk Creek into a simplified, uniform channel above its confluence with Iron Creek, and disconnected the floodplain from the creek. The feasibility analysis evaluates potential ways of increasing groundwater storage and hyporheic connectivity in this reach of Swauk Creek, and of enhancing groundwater storage potential along Iron Creek. The analysis suggests a range of options to improve fish habitat and groundwater connectivity. MCF plans to implement the suggestion of large wood supplementation in Iron Creek in the near future. Our hope is to coordinate future restoration of Swauk Creek with Washington Department of Transportation's potential mitigation needs related to future work on Highway 97.

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EDUCATION & OUTREACH

This year, Mid-Columbia Fisheries organized two major educational events in our region and helped plan and staff three additional education events. In combination, these events reached approximately 1,700 students and adults with hands-on educational activities on watershed health, restoration, salmon life cycle, conservation themes.

- Water Jam – 350 students from Klickitat & Skamania Counties
- Salmon Education Days at the Holmes property – 200 students from Ellensburg
- Salmon Summit at Horn Rapids State Park, attended by 1,000 local students from Benton and surrounding counties.
- Public salmon viewing field trip with biologist Bob Tuck of the Yakima Basin Environmental Education Program – 40 people in Ronald
- E3 Winter Fair – 240 people in Ellensburg



Students sample macroinvertebrates during Salmon Education Days, Holmes Side Channel, near Ellensburg

PROJECT EXPENDITURES

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>RFEF Funds</u>	<u>Vol. Hours</u>	<u>Volunteer Value @ \$15/hr.</u>	<u>Other in-kind Donations</u>	<u>Grant Funds</u>	<u>Total Value</u>
Hemlock Dam Removal /Trout Cr. Restoration		6	\$90		\$195,865	\$195,955
Cowiche Creek Restoration – Lamas		142	\$2,130		\$49,074	\$51,204
Yakima Riparian - Multiple sites	\$316	170	\$2,550		\$35,180	\$38,046
Wilson Cr. Restoration	\$195	4	\$60	\$11,700	\$11,972	\$23,927
Naches Off-Channel Restoration	\$2,767			\$21,000	\$36,259	\$60,026
Reecer Cr. Restoration	\$670	61	\$915	\$60,000	\$91,438	\$153,023
Jack Creek Restoration					\$34,926	\$34,926
Swauk & Iron Creeks Restoration Feasibility					\$36,911	\$36,911
Urban Salmon		300	\$4,500	\$1,871	\$4,596	\$10,967
Klickitat R. Acquisition					\$5,600	\$5,600
LWD Replenishment Yakima Basin				\$1,200	\$2,177	\$3,377
Cle Elum River Restoration					\$1,586	\$1,586
Taneum Creek Restoration	\$6,640					\$6,640
Simmons Cr. Rest. Rest.	\$4,075					\$4,075
Education & Outreach	\$1,379	42	\$630	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$4,509
Mileage, grant writing, bookkeeping, administration, and management	\$92,955	181	\$2,715		\$150	\$95,820
Total	\$108,997	906	\$13,590	\$97,271	\$506,734	\$726,592

Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Watershed</u>
Glenn Miller	President	Construction Manager, Yakima County Road Department	Yakima Basin
Doug Miller	Secretary	Regional Fisheries Enhancement Advisory Board; Retired - Klickitat Public Utility District	Klickitat Basin
Marc Harvey	Board Member	Environmental compliance & management	Klickitat Basin
Tom Crawford	Board Member	Commercial Fisherman	Yakima Basin
Glen Rose	Board Member	Kittitas Field and Stream	Yakima Basin

STAFF

Margaret Neuman, Executive Director

Rebecca Wassell, Yakima Basin Program Manager

Tim Jeffris, Restoration Intern

CONTACT INFORMATION

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