

Salmon Recovery News – August 2017



This summer Mid-Columbia Fisheries is lucky to have the help of fourteen interns from Central Washington University who have been busy monitoring streams, habitat, and projects, removing rock dams and educating river users, collecting eDNA and other data, and helping with outdoor camp. The interns are also learning field skills, making professional contacts, and gaining credits toward graduation.

Restoring Habitat in Oak Creek

Our restoration crew is back at work in Oak Creek this summer. Last summer, our crew used hand tools to place nearly 300 trees in South Fork Oak Creek. This year, Thayer Excavating will be thinning forest stands and working with the crew to place 400 more trees in the stream. The contractor will also re-slope and decompact decommissioned roads in the floodplain to restore hydrologic processes. The project will improve habitat in South Fork and mainstem Oak Creek by increasing pool frequency, fish cover, and floodplain connectivity. The thinning work will also increase forest resiliency to disturbance such as wildfire and insect infestation.

Oak Creek is an unregulated tributary flowing into the highly-regulated Tieton River, and provides critical refuge for juvenile steelhead when unnaturally high summer flows in the Tieton create undesirable rearing conditions. This project was identified and prioritized by the Tapash Forest Collaborative and funded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the Nature Conservancy, the Yakama Nation, National Forest Foundation, the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, and the Arbor Day Foundation. Special thanks to the land managing agencies: Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, the Nature Conservancy, and the Forest Service.

Bull Trout Recovery and Environmental DNA



Mid-Columbia Fisheries is partnering with federal, state, tribal and non-profits on a number of Bull Trout Recovery efforts. This summer we are leading work to collect Environmental DNA to help better understand the occupancy and distribution of Bull Trout in key tributaries in the upper Yakima. This is the first study of its kind in the Yakima Basin and the results will help managers protect this sensitive species. Environmental DNA is a potentially powerful new technology that detects small amounts of DNA in the environment from species who live there. Funding for the project is being provided by the Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, with technical support from the Yakima Basin Bull Trout Working Group.

Information on eDNA is here: <https://www.fs.fed.us/research/genomics-center/edna/>

Let 'Em Pass! Maintaining Passage for Fall Spawners

Our Bull Trout Task Force has already removed more than 70 recreational rock dams this summer to keep passage open in bull trout spawning streams. Bull Trout populations are critically threatened in the upper Yakima and upper Naches tributaries and elsewhere in our region. The Task Force's work is part of a strategy to protect these struggling populations. Please help us spread the word – enjoy our amazing rivers without blocking fish migration through recreational rock dam building!

Learn more about bull trout recovery here: <http://midcolumbiafisheries.org/restoration/bull-trout-recovery/>



Thanks to the Bull Trout Task Force for removing this rock dam on middle fork Ahtanum Creek.

Monitoring Salmon Returning to the White Salmon River

Mid-Columbia Fisheries is partnering with the US Geological Survey to support research on fish returning to the White Salmon River after the historic removal of Condit Dam in 2012. This was the second Spring that the USGS operated a rotary screw trap on the lower White Salmon River. Later in August, the USGS will be electrofishing tributaries and portions of the mainstem to learn more about the distribution and abundance of the various species that are recolonizing this watershed.

A huge THANK YOU is owed to the Clark-Skamania Flyfishers for supporting the 2017 electrofishing when other grant funds were not available.

Information about the study is here <http://midcolumbiafisheries.org/restoration/white-salmon-river/monitoring-salmon-populations/>