



BUILDING A FUTURE FOR WATER, WILDLIFE AND WORKING LANDS

YAKIMA RIVER BASIN INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Yakima River Delta Enhancement Project

Restoring Salmon and Enhancing Recreation

What's Happening

For the past several years, collaborative work has been done to improve fisheries, habitat and water quality in the Yakima Basin. Continuation of this work relies on getting salmon and steelhead past Bateman Island, which sits at the mouth of the Yakima Delta at the confluence of the Yakima and Columbia rivers. A man-made causeway on the south side of the island completely blocks flows, leading to very warm water temperatures west of the island. The warm water provides ideal conditions for exotic species that prey on juvenile salmon in the spring, and makes it difficult for adult salmon to swim upstream in the summer. Elevated water temperatures also encourage algal blooms, pathogen growth, and mosquito issues, degrading water quality. In 2016, the current stakeholder partners joined forces to further develop a workable plan to address these issues and maintain and improve recreational opportunities.



Bateman Island Causeway

By the Numbers

- **1939-1940:** Construction of the 550-ft long causeway between Bateman Island and what is now the City of Richland.
- **0:** Number of current openings in the causeway to allow waterflow and fish passage.
- **2014:** Public meetings held by Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group to engage the public and develop possible preferred restoration alternatives.
- **2016:** Partners conducted 13 community presentations to share research results and develop a common vision for fisheries improvements, recreational opportunities, and continued marina operations. At the end of the year, a group of diverse stakeholders, including State and Federal natural resource agencies, Tribes, the City of Richland, Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, and private recreational interests, met and agreed to work together to achieve Delta improvements.
- **2017-2019:** The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, representing Stakeholders, requests U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) funding under its Section 1135 authority for (ecological or environmental) restoration of the Yakima delta. The Corps accepts the project in April 2019, and planning for the restoration of the Yakima delta begins in October of 2019.

"The passage barrier at Bateman Island limits salmon and steelhead restoration in the Yakima Basin, negatively affects treaty-protected tribal fishing rights, and reduces recreational fishing not just in the Tri-Cities, but the entire Yakima River."

***- Phil Rigdon, Deputy Director
Yakama Nation DNR***



- **Today:** Thanks to the efforts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and regional stakeholders, the now Corps led CAP Section 1135 Restoration Project is in the final stages of the feasibility study anticipated to be complete in the coming months with a community vetted plan for delta restoration. If selected for the next phase of the CAP Section 1135 process, design could begin later this year.



An aerial view of the complete barrier created by the causeway

- **Billions:** The estimated economic value of restored Yakima Basin salmon and steelhead fisheries.

The Corps Purpose and Goals:

Partnerships: To improve aquatic and riparian habitat within the Yakima River Delta, degraded by as a result of construction and continued operation of McNary Lock and Dam, Lake Wallula, and the Tri-Cities Levees to ensure the survival of salmon, steelhead, and other native wildlife species throughout their life cycles; and, where possible, to provide ancillary recreational and educational opportunities; improve water quality conditions; and promote the stewardship of traditional and customary uses within the region.



The causeway contributes to water quality and temperature issues at the confluence of the Yakima and Columbia rivers.