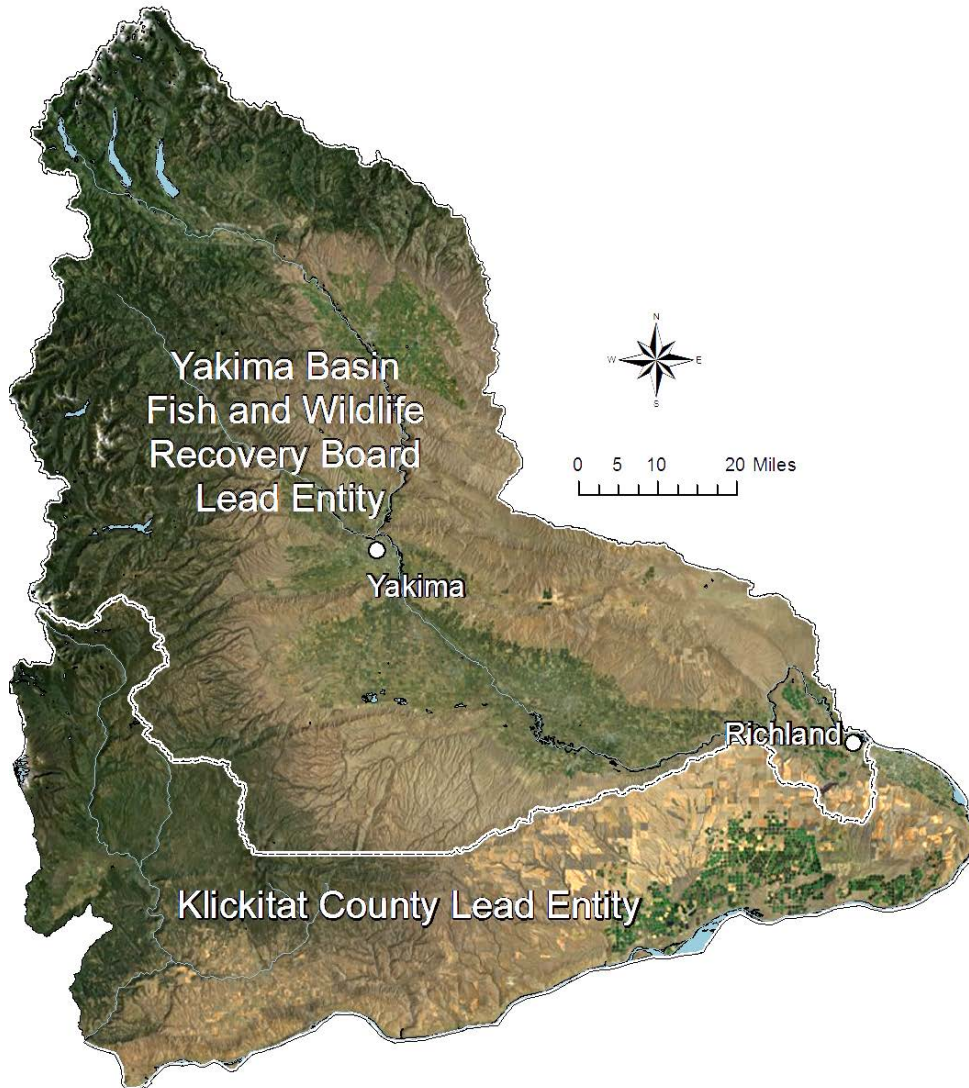


Middle Columbia River Salmon Recovery Region



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Regional Area Summary

1. Funded projects eligibility:

- **Explain if the projects list(s) submitted in the region funds the highest priority projects.**

Our project list submitted for the 2022 SRFB Large Salmon Habitat Projects Track 2 grant round funds the highest priority projects and actions that are eligible for funding by the SRFB that have been proposed by sponsors in the lead entity area in the current grant year, and address the strategies in our Salmon Recovery Plan. For more information on how projects are prioritized see the [Yakima Lead Entity Manual](#).

2. Regional Technical Review Process

A. Background

This year, RCO established a two-track process for soliciting, evaluating, and ranking grant proposals. One project with a budget greater than \$5 million, Gap to Gap Ecosystem Restoration, Construction Implementation, was reviewed during the regular grant round and included in the ranked project list under Track 1.

Gap to Gap Ecosystem Restoration, Construction Implementation was partially funded by the Targeted Investment program due to its benefits to southern resident Orca prey stocks. Therefore, funds became available to fund additional, alternate large habitat projects. The Yakima Basin Lead Entity held a supplemental Track 2 grant round to identify alternates to this project for the remainder of the supplemental funding. The Klickitat County Lead Entity did not have any projects eligible for this funding source in the 2022 grant round.

We received two proposals in response to the Request for Proposals circulated among partners in the Yakima Basin. The Yakama Nation submitted the Toppenish Creek at Pom Pom Road Floodplain Reconnection proposal to remove a fish passage barrier and reconnect the creek to 100 acres of historic floodplains. Kittitas County and the Western Rivers Conservancy submitted the Yakima River Corridor Plan Implementation Phase II proposal to acquire an RV park situated on a floodplain in the Kittitas Reach, south of Ellensburg near the Yakima Canyon. This would secure the missing piece of 650 acres of protected floodplain habitat acquired publicly.

B. Explain how the regional technical review was conducted.

These Track 2 grant proposals were reviewed by a combined Local Review Committee composed of members of our Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and Citizen Committee to ensure they were biologically and technically sound and are supported by the community. The TAG is a group of local subject-matter experts and the Citizen Committee (CC) is composed of representatives of diverse community interests.

The Local Review Committee evaluated the projects based on benefits to salmon, steelhead, and/or bull trout, certainty that the benefits will occur, and community support. Based on this evaluation, it generated the ranked project list. The YBFWRB's Board of Directors approved the final ranked project list and submitted it to the SRFB as a funding recommendation.

C. What criteria were used for the regional technical review?

The Yakima Local Review Committee evaluated all Track 2 proposals using the list of criteria below. Each of the criteria were scored as high, medium, or low for each project, with the basis for the committee's determination recorded in writing. These qualitative scorings were used to inform relative rankings of the proposals for each of the three high level criteria (Biological Benefits, Project Readiness and Community Benefit and Support). The results of this qualitative evaluation formed the basis of the Local Review Committee's ranking; ranking decisions were made by consensus, or if consensus could not be reached, a vote of support by 65% or greater of participating members. The committee ranked projects in the preferred funding order and could also choose to identify a project as Do Not Fund if there were significant concerns that would make funding inappropriate even if funds were available. The ranked list was used both to allocate available funding and to identify alternate projects that would receive future funding if previously awarded funds are not used as planned or the SRFB allocated additional monies to the large project grant program.

Biological Benefits

- 1) The project significantly increases habitat quality through planning and implementation or prevents habitat degradation through protection.

- 2) The project significantly increases habitat quantity through planning and implementation or prevents significant loss of habitat (opens up access to blocked habitat, increases channel/side channel length, etc., prevents future blockages).

- 3) The project reduces significant sources of mortality (installation of fish screens, reductions in predation, etc.).

- 4) The project significantly benefits ESA-listed steelhead.
- 5) The project significantly benefits ESA-listed bull trout.
- 6) The Project significantly benefits other anadromous species.
- 7) The project fits within one of the identified [2022 TAG Focused Projects](#).

Project Readiness

- 8) Project designs are well-developed and realistic.
- 9) The project budget is well-developed and realistic.
- 10) The right partners, including landowners, are engaged and supportive of the project.
- 11) The project has a high certainty of successful implementation (Is it correctly sequenced? Does the organization have the needed capacity?).
- 12) Long-term stewardship needs of the project are identified and provided for.

Community Benefit and Support

- 13) There is likely to be strong support for the project from specific interest groups and the community at-large (Consider Yakama Nation, agricultural interests, recreationalists, those with potential ESA liabilities, etc.).
- 14) There is not likely to be significant opposition to the project by specific groups in the community (Consider Yakama Nation, agricultural interests, recreationalists, those with potential ESA liabilities, etc.).
- 15) The project provides significant non-fisheries benefits for the community (wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, economic opportunities, reduced flood hazard, etc.).

The matrices and evaluation forms from the 2022 Local Review Committee evaluation meeting are included as a separate document with this appendix.

D. Who completed the regional review (name, affiliation and expertise) and are they part of the regional organization or independent?

Participants in the 2022 Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board Local Review Committee are listed below. Participants were chosen to assure 1) a broad range of knowledge about fisheries and habitat restoration in the Yakima basin, 2) inclusion of participants from all parts of the basin (upper, mid and lower), 3) representation of the full range of organizations active in fisheries and watershed management in the basin, and 4) a lack of primary conflicts of interest as defined by the [2022 Lead Entity Manual](#). All of the voting members are independent of the regional organization in that they work with the lead entity as representatives of their individual organizations and are not otherwise directly affiliated with the regional organization.

Table 1: Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board Local Review Committee

Name	Affiliation	Expertise
Ryan Anderson	Bonneville Environmental Foundation	Senior Program Manager, Watersheds
Max Linden	Retired from the City of Yakima	Wastewater Utility Engineer
Rachel Little	Benton Conservation District	Fish Biologist
Jennifer Nelson	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Katy Pfannenstien	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Fish Biologist
Danielle Squeochs	Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation	Hydrologist

3. Criteria the SRFB considers in funding regional project lists:

How did the regional review consider whether a project met the following criteria?

- A. Provides benefit to high priority stocks for the purpose of salmon recovery or sustainability. In addition to limiting factors analysis, SaSI, and SSHIAP¹, provide stock assessment work completed to date to characterize the status of salmonid species in the region. Briefly describe.**

Steelhead and bull trout are the Endangered Species Act listed species in the Yakima basin, and all stocks are high priority for recovery actions. The [Yakima Steelhead Recovery Plan](#) contains the most current data and local knowledge of the status of steelhead populations. The plan incorporates the Internal Columbia Technical Review Team population designations and stock status reports, assesses limiting factors, sets specific recovery goals and identifies the actions needed to meet them. The [Yakima Bull Trout Action Plan](#) was completed in 2012 in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as an update to the board’s 2005 *Salmon*

¹ SaSI = Salmon and Steelhead Stock Inventory; SSHIAP=Salmon and Steelhead Habitat Inventory and Assessment Program

Recovery Plan. An update was finalized in 2017. The Local Review Committee assessed the fit of proposed projects to the priority actions identified in these plans. They also evaluated projects for parallel benefits to non-listed focal species.

B. Addresses cost-effectiveness. Provide a description of cost-effectiveness considered.

The Local Review Committee evaluated project budgets as a part of the ranking process. They assigned each project a high, medium, or low qualitative score based on:

- o The completeness of project budgets.
- o How reasonable the costs are relative to similar projects.

C. Preserves high-quality habitat. Describe projects on the list that will preserve high-quality habitat.

Our first ranked project, Yakima River Corridor Plan Implementation Phase II, will acquire 39.19 acres of floodplain, protecting 1.3 miles of riverfront riverine habitat. This will complete the acquisition of lands by the Bureau of Land Management and Kittitas County in the Ringer Loop Reach, south of Ellensburg between Jefferies Levee and Yakima Canyon (RM 151.5 to RM 148). It will allow for the reconnection of 650 acres of floodplain along a 3.5 mile corridor. Since 2000, our Lead Entity has received 27 acquisition proposals and funded 22, or 81% of those requests. However, SRFB funding represents a relatively small portion of overall acquisition spending in the Yakima Basin.

D. Sponsored by an organization with a successful record of project implementation. For example, identify the number of previous SRFB projects funded and completed.

Table 2: History of SRFB Projects

Yakima Basin Projects Over \$5 million					
Rank	Project	Sponsor	Number of projects previously funded	Number of projects previously completed	Number of active projects
1	Yakima River Corridor Plan Implementation Phase II	Kittitas County	4	2	0
2	Toppenish Creek at Pom Pom Road Floodplain Reconnection	Yakama Nation	43	26	7

E. Provides benefit to listed and non-listed fish species. Identify projects on the regional list that primarily benefit listed fish. Identify projects on the regional list that primarily benefit non-listed species.

All projects on our 2022 list provide primary benefit to listed fish species. Please see Table 6 below for full details.

F. Implements a high-priority project or action in a region or watershed salmon recovery plan. Identify where and how the project is identified as a high-priority in the referenced plan.

Both projects (including an alternate) implement priority recovery actions identified in the Yakima Steelhead Recovery Plan and/or the Yakima Bull Trout Action Plan.

Both of the projects also aligned with the TAG Focus Project List (as described in response to 2C). Please see the following summary table of funded projects for additional detail:

Table 3: Local Review Committee Designations

Yakima Basin Projects Over \$5 million			
Rank	Project	Local Review Committee Fund Category	Alignment with Plans and Priorities
1	Yakima River Corridor Plan Implementation Phase II	Recommended for Funding	<p>TAG Focus Action #21: Upper Yakima Floodplain & Side Channel Restoration</p> <p>Steelhead Recovery Plan:</p> <p>Upper Yakima Action #12: Reduce confinement of Upper Yakima River</p> <p>Upper Yakima Action #13: Protect and restore floodplain, riparian, and in-channel habitats in the Kittitas Reach</p> <p>Basin-wide Action #12: Improve recruitment of cottonwoods</p>
2	Toppenish Creek at Pom Pom Road Floodplain Reconnection	Recommended for Funding	<p>TAG Focus Action #4: Toppenish Floodplain and Side Channel Restoration.</p> <p>Steelhead Recovery Plan:</p> <p>Toppenish Action #3: Replace undersized crossing culvert in Toppenish Creek</p>

G. Provides for match above the minimum requirement percentage. Identify the project’s match percentage and the regional match total.

The match requirement is waived for the 2022 SRFB Large Salmon Habitat Projects grant round. However, additional outside funds were leveraged for both projects to reach project budgets exceeding \$5 million.

Table 4: Project Budgets

Yakima Basin Projects Over \$5 million				
Project Name (not ranked)	SRFB Request	Match	% Match	Project Total
Yakima River Corridor Plan Implementation Phase II	\$3,609,135	\$0	0%	\$5,000,001
Toppenish Creek at Pom Pom Road Floodplain Reconnection	\$3,609,135	\$0	0%	\$5,000,001

H. Involves members of the Veterans Conservation Corps established in Revised Code of Washington 43.60A.150.

To our knowledge, none of our recommended projects involve members of the veteran’s conservation corps.

4. Local Review Processes

A. Provide project evaluation criteria and documentation (local technical reviewer and citizen committee score sheet or comment forms) of the local citizens advisory group and technical advisory group ratings for each project, including explanations for differences between the two groups’ ratings.

The Local Review Committee evaluated these projects. They were responsible for determining the technical validity of a project, and how valuable the project is to salmonid populations. They were also responsible for evaluating how the project might affect the community, and how much community support the project garnered. The final ranks were determined by the Local Review Committee and approved by the Board. They developed the ranking by considering the qualitative score and fifteen different certainty of success criteria, which includes items such as project sequencing, uncertainties and constraints, organizational capacity, and reasonable budget. The Local Review Committee’s proposed project ranking was then submitted to the Board for

review. The Board could either approve the list as submitted or remand the list to the Local Review Committee for reconsideration but the Board could not re-rank projects. This process is set up to meet the requirements of the state statute creating the SRFB and the Lead Entity Program and is designed to ensure that projects proposed for SRFB funding are technically solid, address priority issues, and are broadly supported by diverse community interests.

The Local Review Committee met to evaluate projects qualitatively using the criteria described in question 2C and rank projects on September 20.

The Citizen Committee’s final ranked list was presented to and approved by the Board on September 26.

Local Review Committee Evaluation Form

This online survey lists the “certainty of success” categories described previously, and the Local Review Committee members used it as a guide to discuss these factors. The main intent of this survey was to maintain consistency in the project evaluations, and to help Lead Entity staff document the discussion.

Please see the attached ranking forms for project specific details.

B. Identify the local technical review team (include expertise, names, and affiliations of members).

Table 5: Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board Local Review Committee

Name	Affiliation	Expertise
Ryan Anderson	Bonneville Environmental Foundation	Senior Program Manager Watersheds
Max Linden	Retired from the City of Yakima	Wastewater Utility Engineer
Rachel Little	Benton Conservation District	Fish Biologist
Jennifer Nelson	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Katy Pfannenstien	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Fish Biologist
Danielle Squeochs	Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation	Hydrologist

All voting members are independent of a regional organization as they work with the lead entity as representatives of their field of expertise.

C. Explain how and when the SRFB Review Panel participated in the local process, if applicable.

SRFB Review Panel member Jennifer O’Neal attended sponsor presentations held September 12. The Board received review panel comments in late September. These comments were shared with

applicants, the Local Review Committee members, and applicants were asked to respond to questions and address these issues to strengthen their proposals as they entered them into PRISM.

On October 3, project sponsors whose projects were listed as “Needs More Information” or “Project of Concern” following site tours, will have the opportunity to clarify feedback from the state review panel. Both representatives of the state review panel, RCO staff, Lead Entity staff, and project sponsors will be present. Lead Entity staff worked with sponsors prior to the call to develop their clarifying questions.

5. Local evaluation process and project lists.

A. Explain how multi-year implementation plans or Salmon Recovery Portal helped to develop project lists

The August 2009 Yakima Steelhead Recovery Plan outlines a list of recommended recovery actions that will contribute to restoring steelhead to viable levels in the Yakima basin; the Yakima Bull Trout Action Plan identified specific priority actions that will contribute to recovering bull trout populations in the Yakima Basin. Project applicants were asked to identify the actions that pertained to their projects in their applications.

The YBFWRB Focus Project List was added to our Lead Entity process in 2013. In response to committee members request to improve the fit between SRFB proposals and the biological priorities that Technical Advisory Group participants feel need to be addressed, a Technical Advisory Group working group convened to develop a process to identify and describe focus actions. The result of this process was the YBFWRB [Focus Project List](#). It helps identify the most timely/urgent of the high priority Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) projects and apply those funding resources to projects that represent the most immediate needs of priority species. The list was last reviewed and updated in late 2021.

The list is used to:

- Give the Technical Advisory Group a way to proactively guide Yakima Basin SRFB funding towards high priority actions.
- Provide guidance to sponsors deciding what types of projects to pursue and propose.
- Strengthen the link between the SRFB project review criteria and recovery plan priorities.

Project List Summary Table

Following is a project list summary table for the region. For the Middle Columbia River Salmon Recovery Region, there are two projects submitted by the Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board for the Large Salmon Habitat Projects Track 2 grant round. This includes \$3,609,135 in SRFB funding for 2 projects with budgets over \$5 million, including one alternate project.

Table 6: Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board Proposed Projects

Yakima Basin Projects Over \$5 million					
Rank	Project Number	Name	Sponsor	Primary Fish Stock Benefited	Priority in Recovery Plan or Strategy
1	22-1961	Yakima River Corridor Plan Implementation Phase II	Kittitas County	Steelhead, Chinook, and Other Resident Trout	TAG Focus Action #21: Upper Yakima Floodplain & Side Channel Restoration Steelhead Recovery Plan: Upper Yakima Action #12: Reduce confinement of Upper Yakima River Upper Yakima Action #13: Protect and restore floodplain, riparian, and in-channel habitats in the Kittitas Reach Basin-wide Action #12: Improve recruitment of cottonwoods
2	22-1967	Toppenish Creek at Pom Pom Road Floodplain Reconnection	Yakama Nation	Steelhead and Lamprey	TAG Focus Action #4: Toppenish Floodplain and Side Channel Restoration. Steelhead Recovery Plan: Toppenish Action #3: Replace undersized crossing culvert in Toppenish Creek.