

Yakima Basin Fish & Wildlife Recovery Board

2023



AN INTRODUCTION



Who We Are

Mission

The Yakima Basin Fish & Wildlife Recovery Board's (YBFWRB) mission is to restore sustainable and harvestable populations of salmon, steelhead, bull trout, and other at-risk fish and wildlife species through collaborative, economically sensitive efforts that bring together diverse resources to promote wise resource management of the Yakima River Basin.

Organizational Structure

The YBFWRB is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation led by a 10-member Board of Directors. Directors are selected from representatives of 23 member governments, which include three counties, the Yakama Nation, and 19 cities in the Yakima Basin. The YBFWRB works with partners such as non-profit organizations, local governments, conservation districts and state and tribal fisheries programs to advance the organization's mission.

Roles

The YBFWRB:

- ✓ Coordinates funding and partnerships for multifaceted fish and wildlife restoration projects in the Yakima Basin.
- ✓ Develops strategic plans to guide fish and wildlife recovery efforts in the Yakima Basin.
- ✓ Supports efforts to implement priorities identified in its strategic plans.
- ✓ Evaluates progress towards the goals set out in its strategic plans.
- ✓ Fosters public awareness and engagement in fish and wildlife recovery issues.



PHOTO CREDIT: KEN BEVIS

Collaborative Model

Collaboration is one of the key values of the YBFWRB—we bring together local and tribal governments, state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations to support fish and wildlife recovery in the Yakima Basin.

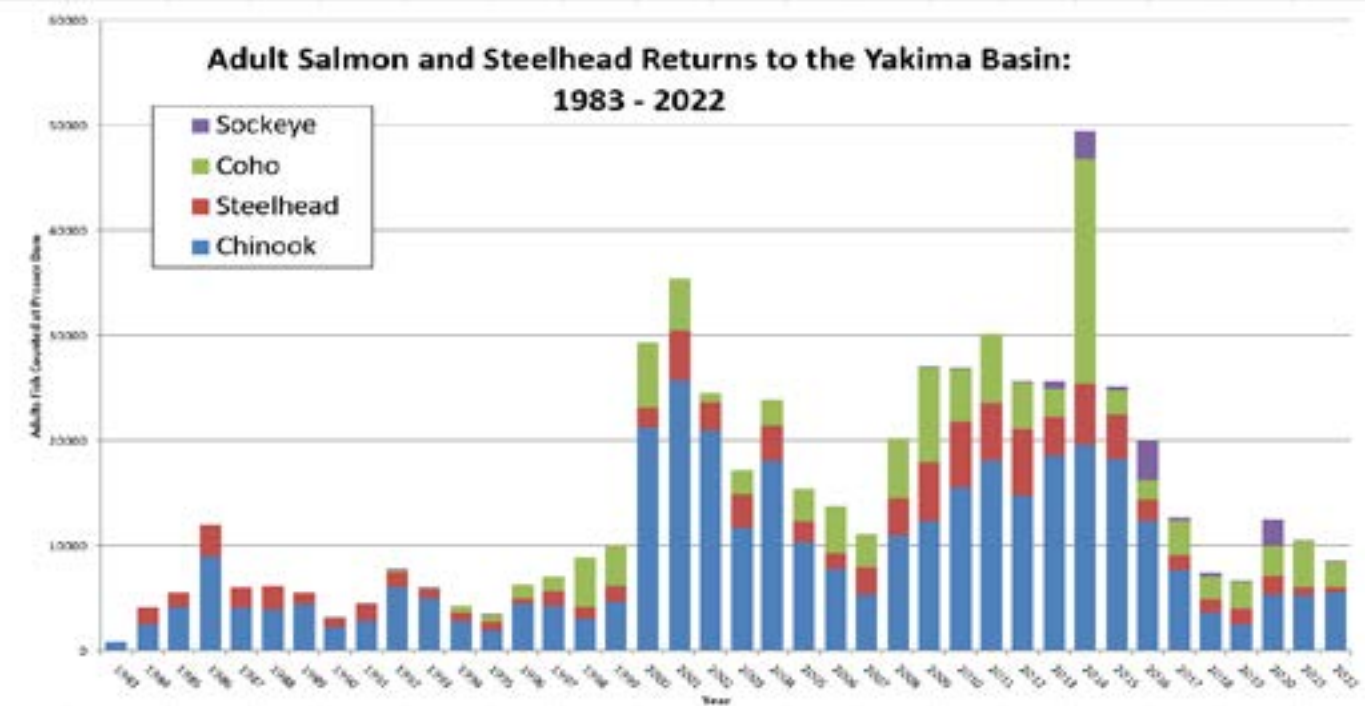
This approach gives local and regional recovery efforts a more unified voice while ensuring that diverse stakeholders are represented in planning processes, project funding, and engagement with state and federal decision-makers.

Through its partnerships, the YBFWRB is uniquely positioned to bring together technical experts, policy makers and local community representatives to build consensus around long-term solutions to fish and wildlife management issues in the Yakima Basin.



Fish Habitat Status in the Yakima Basin

The Yakima Basin was once home to plentiful and healthy fisheries. Biologists estimate that between 500,000 to 1 million salmon and steelhead returned to the Yakima Basin each year. By the late 1900s, coho, sockeye, and summer Chinook were gone, and fewer than a thousand spring/fall Chinook and steelhead were returning. These declines spurred significant efforts to improve habitats and develop conservation-oriented hatcheries. In the last 15 years, populations have begun to rebound. Total runs have ranged from 5,000 to 40,000 per year and coho have returned. In NOAA Fisheries and the US Fish and Wildlife Service manage federal fisheries programs. In 2009, the Yakama Nation began reintroducing sockeye and summer Chinook. While the picture is promising, much work remains to be done. Steelhead and bull trout are listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and other species are still well below their potential.



How Does YBFWRB Fit into Salmon Recovery?

The Yakama Nation and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife work together as co-managers to manage fisheries, run hatcheries and monitor the status of fish populations in the Basin. NOAA Fisheries and the US Fish and Wildlife Service manage federal fisheries programs, while public and private partners implement fish habitat restoration on the ground. The YBFWRB works to support and bring together these many partners as described on the following pages.



Coordinate Funding

The Yakima Basin Fish & Wildlife Recovery Board acts as the Lead Entity for state funded salmon recovery projects in the Yakima Basin. Under our contract with the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB), we solicit proposals for SRFB funding in the Yakima Basin, conduct local technical and community reviews of the proposals, and present the best of them to the SRFB for funding. As of 2022, the Yakima Basin Lead Entity has had 153 local projects approved for over \$31.2 million dollars of SRFB funding. We also help partners identify and secure matching funding sources that can support priority projects.

Develop Strategic Plans

YBFWRB is built on the belief that local partners can work together to develop scientifically sound and broadly supported recovery plans for at-risk fish and wildlife species.

It is our belief that a good plan:

- ✓ Clearly lays out objectives, how those objective will be met, and how progress will be evaluated.
- ✓ Is scientifically rigorous and well-understood by those it affects.
- ✓ Regularly used by those implementing on-the-ground actions
- ✓ Helps meet our goals, while wisely using tax-payer dollars and avoiding negative impacts on others

Support Efforts to Implement Priorities

While YBFWRB does not implement on-the-ground projects, we actively support our many partners who do. We act as a connector in the basin, helping to identify priority projects, putting the right partners in touch with each other, and working with them to find funding. We convene groups like the Yakima Bull Trout Working Group and the Ringer Area Technical Working Group, and participate in other technical working groups organized by the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan, the Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program and other partners.

What is a Lead Entity?

Lead Entities are local, watershed-based organizations that perform an essential role in salmon recovery in Washington State. Each Lead Entity operates differently but always includes a committee of local, technical experts (TAG) that evaluates the scientific efficacy of each project and a citizen committee (CC) that evaluates the socio-economic factors of salmon recovery projects. This locally-driven, collaborative model ensures that funded projects are biologically sound and have strong community support.

Our strategic plans include

- Yakima Steelhead Recovery Plan (2009)
- Yakima Bull Trout Action Plan (2012/16)
- Yakima Steelhead Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation Plan



Evaluate Progress

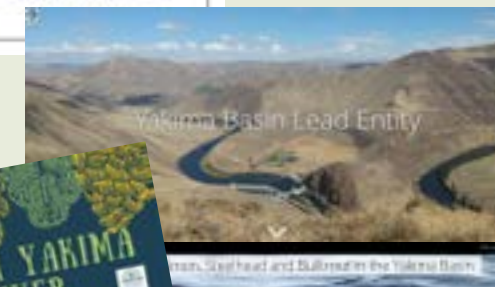
Having plans in place is a necessary first step. It is equally important to track the metrics identified in those plans to measure whether we are effectively meeting our goals. YBFWRB actively works with our partner organizations and the state through programs like PRISM and Habitat Work Schedule to ensure that we track our accomplishments and stay on the best path to recovery.

Foster Public Engagement and Awareness

One of the best ways we can assist in salmon recovery is ensuring that the story of our basin is being told. By amplifying the work our partners do and connecting the various dots around salmon recovery, we can show policy makers, legislators, and members of the public how far we've come and what is still left to do. Building broad support for salmon recovery is the key to its success.

The list below highlights some of the communications tools we're using to highlight salmon recovery efforts in the Yakima Basin.

Sample of Public Engagement Activities:



For more information on these and all of our outreach efforts, visit our website at www.ybfwrb.org

Communications Plan

The who, what, and how of our communications strategy—this plan is our roadmap for public engagement.

Yakima Basin Habitat Restoration Project Booklet

This biennial booklet showcases all projects the Yakima Basin Lead Entity has received SRFB funding for since 1999.

Yakima Basin Lead Entity StoryMap

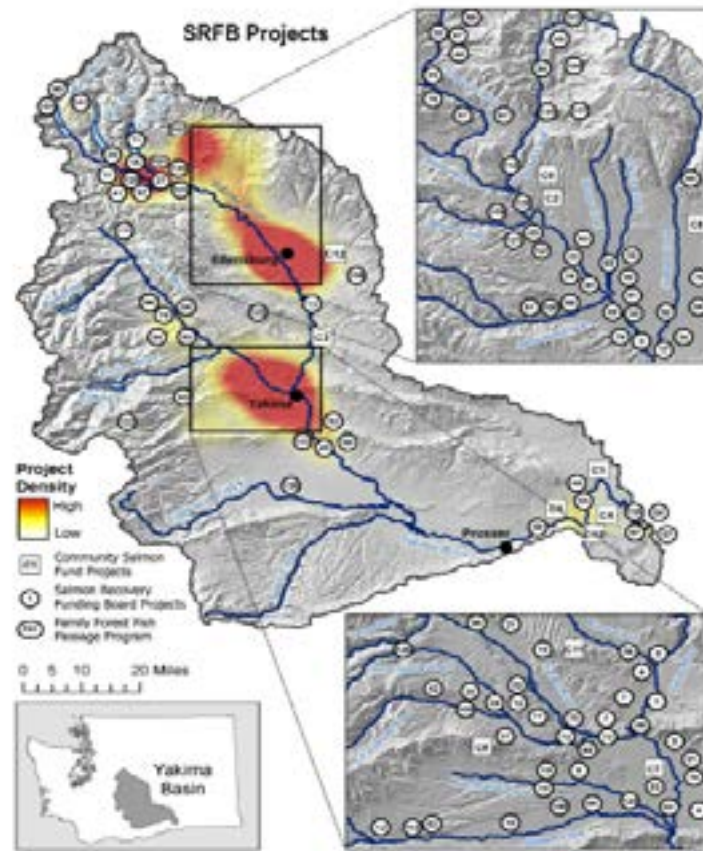
An online tool that highlights the Lead Entity program and showcases how using local technical experts and engaged citizens helps put the best possible projects on the ground in the Yakima Basin.

Local Workshops

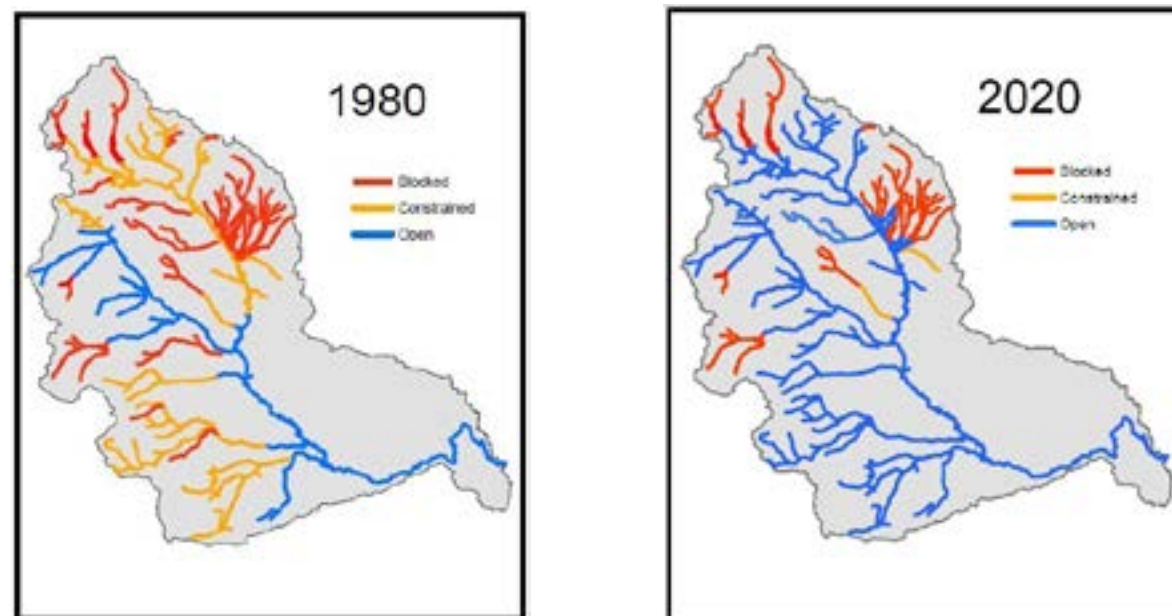
Board members representing various cities, counties and the Yakama Nation a broad discussion on the opportunities and challenges in the Yakima River Basin..



Distribution of SRFB Projects in the Yakima Basin



Progress Removing Barriers to Adult Steelhead Migration



SRFB Project Highlight: Wood Installation in the Teanaway River

Why this Project?

The Teanaway River is the most important steelhead tributary in the Upper Yakima population. Over the last 150 years, splashdams, railroad logging, clearing of streamside vegetation and more significantly reduced the quality of fish habitat in the watershed. This project is one part of a large scale effort to restore the Teanaway watershed. The project's goal is to restore instream complexity and floodplain side channel connections in the North Fork of the Teanaway River.



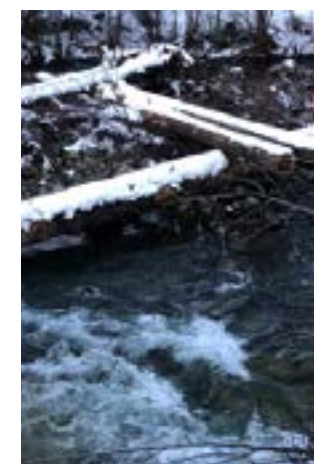
On the Ground Work

Mid-Columbia Fisheries and the Yakama Nation (YN) placed 1000 pieces of unanchored large wood in 1.5 miles of the North Fork Teanaway in 2019 using helicopter and ground-based equipment. The work was completed concurrent with the construction of six large wood trapping structures, which were designed to trap the replenishment wood and build jams. The overall project was funded by the SRFB, YBIP and BPA.



Outcomes

The project site lies within the state-owned Teanaway Community Forest, which was purchased in 2013 as an element of the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan. By placing woody material and re-contouring artificial ditch networks, the project benefited the spring Chinook, coho, and steelhead that use this watershed. The wood is already helping to retain spawning substrate and aggrade the channel bed. The project has enhanced to recreation opportunities include fishing, hunting, and wildlife observations.



Quick Facts

Sponsor: Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group
Year funded: 2018
Year completed: 2022
SRFB funding: \$246,400.00
Miles of stream treated: 1.5
Structures placed in channel: 6

Funding Breakdown

