

**Tribal Landowner Incentive Program Application
FY 2005
Nooksack Indian Tribe Natural Resources Department**

I. Program Summary

The Nooksack Indian Tribe Natural Resources Department (NNR) proposes to implement the replacement of man-made fish passage barriers throughout Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 1, including the Nooksack River basin, in order to restore isolated spawning and rearing habitat for high priority threatened fish stocks including Nooksack native early Chinook and bull trout.

Project Activity- Replacement of multiple Fish Passage Barriers identified by the WRIA 1 Drainage Structure Inventory and Fish Passage Assessment Project.

Watershed restoration is a primary element in the salmon recovery effort. Preliminary analyses of the factors limiting salmon recovery in the Nooksack basin are poor habitat quality and limited habitat quantity (WCC, 2002); reconnecting isolated habitat is one of the most successful and cost effective means to facilitate wild salmon production (Beamer *et al.* 1998; Scully *et al.* 1990), secondary to habitat protection measures (NNR *et al.* 2004). The installation of non-fish passable culverts fragments fish habitat for both resident and tribally significant anadromous species, and is a limiting factor that prompted Whatcom County, WA to contract the assessment and inventory work comprising the *WRIA 1 Drainage Structure Inventory and Fish Passage Assessment Project*. NNR participated as a subcontractor during the inventory efforts. The primary product of the project is an inventory of fish passage barriers located on private land, ranked by a Priority Index number (PI) generated by the *Fish Passage Barrier and Surface Water Diversion Screening Assessment and Prioritization* protocol developed by Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) Salmonid Screening, Habitat Enhancement, and Restoration (SSHEAR) Section. Whatcom County is currently contracting pre-design assessment work for top ranking barriers with the intent of permitting and obtaining funds for implementing the replacement of said barriers with fish-passable structures. NNR proposes to participate in this process by obtaining funding for five (5) fish passable culverts and (2) bridge spans for the replacement of seven (7) priority barriers located on private lands between 2005 and 2006. These barriers will be located in portions of the watershed utilized by species prioritized by the locally drafted Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 1 Salmonid Habitat Restoration Strategy v.2.4 (Lead Entity, 2004). These species are prioritized in descending order:

1. South Fork Nooksack early chinook salmon
2. North Fork/Middle Fork Nooksack early chinook salmon
3. WRIA 1 bull trout (native char)
4. WRIA 1 wild late-timed chinook
5. WRIA 1 wild-spawning coho salmon