

Bull Trout Final Critical Habitat Justification: Rationale for Why Habitat is Essential, and Documentation of Occupancy

Chapter 18. Mid-Columbia Recovery Unit—Sheep and Granite Creeks Critical Habitat Unit

Chapter 18. Sheep and Granite Creeks Critical Habitat Unit

The Sheep and Granite Creeks CHU is essential for maintaining bull trout distribution within this unique geographic region of the Mid-Columbia RU. This CHU occurs immediately below Hells Canyon Dam. Two drainages occur within this CHU: Sheep and Granite Creeks, both within Idaho. This CHU is essential due to its location in the southeastern extent of the Middle Columbia RU and the presence of both fluvial and resident life history forms. Migratory life history expression is needed for the long-term conservation of the species, but some resident populations may also contain unique genes that promote resistance to specific threats (see Appendix 1 for more detailed information).

This CHU is located within Adams and Idaho Counties in Idaho, approximately 21.0 km (13.0 mi) east of Riggins, Idaho. In the Sheep and Granite Creeks CHU, 47.9 km (29.7 mi) of streams are designated as critical habitat.

The following water bodies are included in this CHU (see Table 51):

(A) Sheep Creek from its confluence with the Snake River upstream 9.6 km (6.0 mi) to its confluence with East Fork Sheep Creek provides spawning and rearing habitat; Sheep Creek from its confluence with East Fork Sheep Creek upstream 8.8 km (5.4 mi) to its headwaters contains FMO habitat; and Clarks Fork from its confluence with Sheep Creek upstream 9.1 km (5.6 mi) to its headwaters contains FMO habitat.

(B) Granite Creek from its confluence with the Snake River upstream 10.9 km (6.8 mi) provides spawning and rearing habitat, and then from this point on Granite Creek upstream 9.5 km (5.9 mi) to its headwaters contains FMO habitat.

Table 51. Water body segments designated as critical habitat for bull trout, including documentation of occupancy and site-specific rationale in the Sheep and Granite Creeks CHU/CHSU

CHU—CHSU	Water Body Name	State	Information Documenting Bull Trout Occupancy	Essential Habitat Rationale	LLID
Sheep/Granite	Granite Creek	ID	(StreamNet 2009, pg. 1; Chandler et al. 2001 pg. 19)	Rationale provided in Sheep/Granite CHU justification text	1166550 453487
Sheep/Granite	Clarks Fork	ID	(StreamNet 2009, pg. 3)	Rationale provided in Sheep/Granite CHU justification text	1165325 45577
Sheep/Granite	Sheep Creek	ID	(StreamNet 2009, pg. 3; Chandler and Richter 2001, pg. 5; Chandler et al. 2001, pg. 28-29)	Rationale provided in Sheep/Granite CHU justification text	1165553 454677