



Lower Columbia River

Fish Health Center

Station Facts

- Established in 1954; second-oldest Service Fish Health Center
- Serves Little White Salmon, Willard, Carson, Spring Creek, Eagle Creek, Warm Springs NFHs
- Provides service to the Yakama Nation's Prosser and Klickitat Hatcheries, the Abernathy Fish Technical Center, and in special cases, state and private facilities
- Funded by the Service, NOAA-Fisheries, Yakama Nation, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Staff: 5 Fish Health Specialists, a Biological Science Aid, Administrative Officer, and contract Veterinarian
- WA Congressional District 3

Contact Information

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Who We Are

Fish Health Centers (FHCs) provide expertise in aquatic animal health, including diagnostics, monitoring, investigations, certifications, and training related to both wild and captive populations. FHCs coordinate the Wild Fish Health Survey and address emerging pathogen issues through applied research and innovative management strategies.

How We Help

The Lower Columbia River Fish Health Center (FHC) uses veterinary technology to monitor health and prevent disease in four salmon species, steelhead, lamprey and sturgeon. The FHC's technical expertise supports Service, tribal, and other partners' recovery, mitigation, supplementation, and restoration programs.

Key Initiatives

We work with partners to improve fish passage operations at the dams, rehabilitate stream habitat through safe nutrient enrichment projects, protect endangered fish restoration efforts, and monitor wild fish health before and after special events such as dam removal. FHC's technical assistance has also helped agencies redesign hatchery facilities.



FHC treatments increase viability of incubating eggs

Ongoing Projects

Emerging Shad and Salmon Pathogens: The FHC and U.S. Geological Survey test different life stages of Columbia River American shad. This invasive fish carries elevated infections of Ichthyophonus, which can cause wasting disease in salmon. The Health Center monitors wild and hatchery salmonids to assess parasite transmission rates between species from environmental changes.

Mucus and Fish Health Testing: Studies have shown that non-lethal mucus swabbing enables detection of infectious hematopoietic necrosis virus in Chinook salmon and steelhead kelts. An ongoing FHC/Abernathy Fish Technology Center study is refining and validating this methodology to detect the virus in other steelhead life stages, using both cell culture and newer DNA technology.



Collection of Pacific Lamprey from Eagle Creek, OR, for studies on disease transmission and rearing

