



Solving the Salmon Dilemma

Puget Sound Barrier Assessment

When faced with the puzzle of why salmon populations are declining in western Washington despite more than 10 years of Endangered Species Act protections, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service staff recognized the need to carry out a comprehensive field assessment of fish passage barriers. Mulling over the dilemma with the Puget Sound Federal Caucus partners, we identified federal migration barriers within Puget Sound and Washington coast watersheds that could be limiting salmon runs.

The partnership's next step was to determine the impact of these barriers. The Washington Fish and Wildlife Office was in a unique position to take on the project with an expert field crew on hand. Our staff designed and implemented the project using a landscape approach. Putting together several important pieces of the puzzle, we collected the information needed to ensure delivery of high quality data, resulting in completion of 34 habitat assessments and nine miles of in-stream habitat

evaluations. State partners are carrying out parallel efforts.

Following completion of culvert inventory and habitat assessment, agencies will coordinate with Washington Departments of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Transportation to prioritize federal and state salmon migration barriers using a watershed approach unconstrained by jurisdictional boundaries. We will continue to coordinate with WDFW, tribes and other federal agencies to ensure that federal barriers are being addressed in a logical sequence to support a comprehensive statewide effort. The partnership's efforts will benefit Chinook and coho salmon as well as bull trout.

Identifying and addressing barriers for salmon access to spawning, rearing, and other habitat on federal lands is a positive response to this important community need for improved fisheries. This is just one way the Service is helping to solve the puzzle for healthy salmon populations in the Northwest.

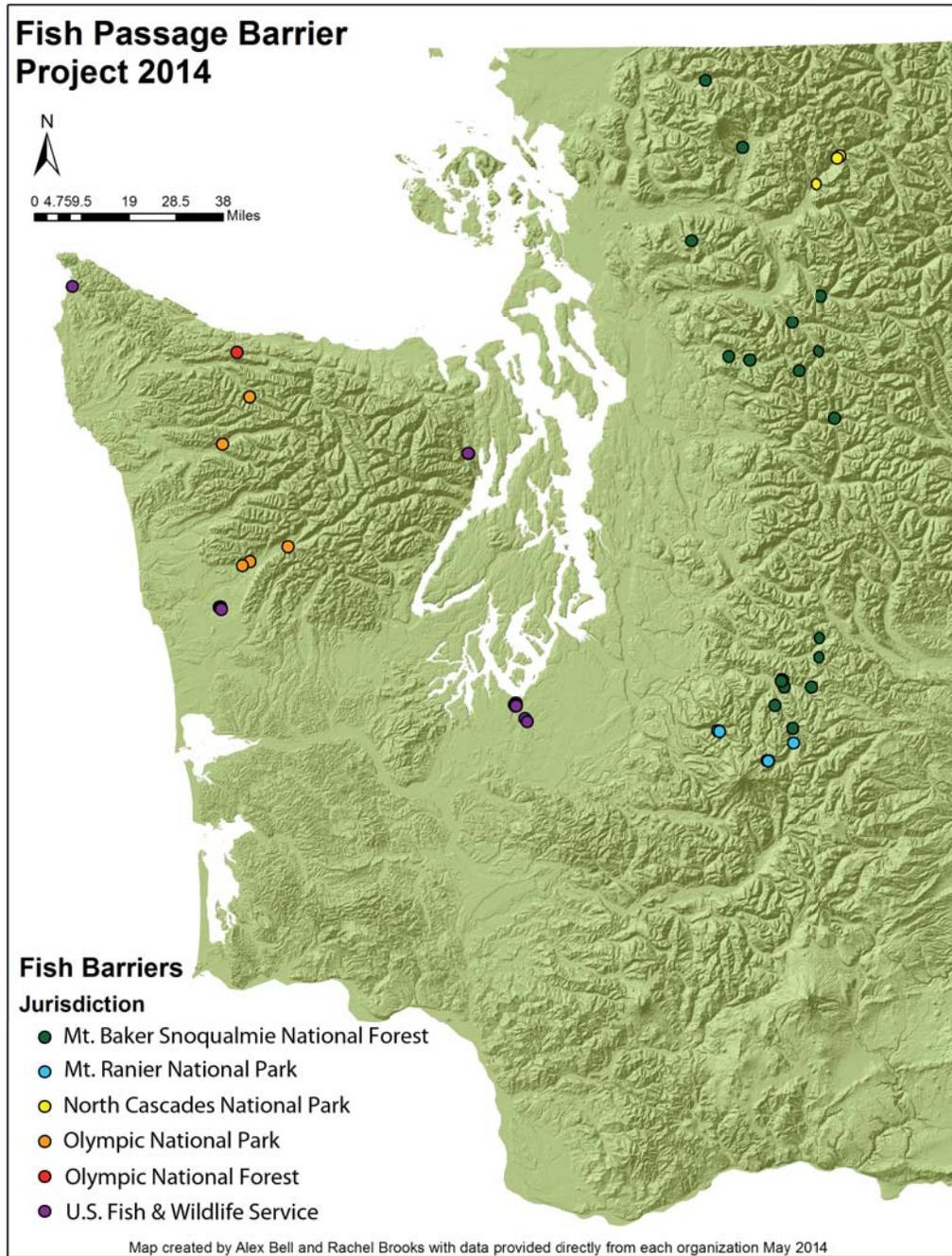


NPS/Astudillo

*Norris Yeast,
US Army Operation
Warfighter volunteer;
measured water
depth at culvert
outlet, Palmer Creek,
Mt. Baker
Snoqualmie
National Forest, WA*



Zach Moore/USFWS



Project Partners

- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
USDA Forest Service
National Park Service
- Olympic National Park
 - North Cascades National Park
 - Mt. Rainier National Park

Accomplishment Metrics

- Species benefited
- Chinook salmon (threatened)
 - Coho salmon (candidate)
 - Bull trout
- Habitat improved
- 34 barriers assessed representing nine miles of in-stream habitat



Washington Fish and Wildlife Office
510 Desmond Dr. SE, Suite 102
Lacey, WA 98503
360/753-9440
<http://www.fws.gov/wafwo/>