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April 27, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee Members

FROM: Stacy Horton, Washington Staff

SUBJECT: Yakima Basin Aquatic Restoration Project

BACKGROUND:

Presenters: John Marvin, Interim Upper Yakima Habitat Coordinator for the Yakima Nation Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project, and Rebecca Wassell, Yakima Basin Program Director for the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, will be presenting information on restoration work in the Yakima River watershed implemented to improve floodplain habitat.

Summary: The Yakima Basin "Wood Fiesta" Helicopter Aquatic Restoration project was a multi-watershed collaborative effort aimed at enhancing aquatic habitat in remote watersheds that were greatly altered by past management practices. Large wood was placed instream and on the floodplain of seven Yakima River tributaries using a helicopter to restore hydrologic and habitat function for improved production of Yakama Nation treaty reserved fish species. The project sites were remote areas where terrain and or vegetation limited the use of ground-based equipment for wood placement. The objectives of this project were to increase instream complexity, capture mobile sediment to reverse channel incision, increase adjacent floodplain inundation and improve stream temperature heterogeneity and more robust riparian corridors.

Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group partnered with the Yakama Nation on three projects sites: North Fork Manastash Creek, Little Rattlesnake Creek, and the Little Naches River. The projects were supported through funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board,

the Bonneville Power Administration, the McNary Mitigation Fund, the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and The Nature Conservancy. Additional project support was received from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources as project landowners.

The Lick Creek, Swauk Creek, Umtanum Creek and Status Creek sites were managed by Yakama Nation Fisheries with funding and project support from the Bonneville Power Administration, the McNary Mitigation Fund, the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, the USDA Forest Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the private landowners of the Swauk Valley Ranch.

Relevance: A core strategy in the 2014/2020 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program is to protect and restore natural ecosystem functions, habitats and biological diversity, key to sustaining healthy populations of fish, wildlife, and plants. The Yakima Basin Side Channels Land Acquisition Project (1997-051-00) is designed to provide benefits that protect, restore and enhance aquatic conditions across a basinwide landscape.

More Info: This restoration project has resulted in articles, news stories, and blogs:

Yakima Basin "Wood Fiesta",

<https://yakamafish-nsn.gov/restore/projects/yakima-basin-wood-fiesta>

"Wood Fiesta" Stream and Floodplain Habitat Restoration Project,

<https://midcolumbiafisheries.org/restoration/floodplain-reconnection/helicopter-large-wood-replenishment/>

'Wood fiesta': Logs will be building blocks for stream restoration in Yakima basin,

https://www.yakimaherald.com/news/local/wood-fiesta-logs-will-be-building-blocks-for-stream-restoration-in-yakima-basin/article_409c0e4c-e89b-11e8-948b-7f4037bae000.html

Wood Fiesta: Improving floodplains in Yakima watershed,

<https://ecology.wa.gov/Blog/Posts/October-2018/Wood-Fiesta-Improving-floodplains-in-Yakima-waters>

WOOD FIESTA: YAKAMA NATION SALMON HABITAT PROJECT TRANSPORTS BY HELICOPTER LOGS TO STREAMS,

<https://www.cbbulletin.com/wood-fiesta-yakama-nation-salmon-habitat-project-transport-by-helicopter-logs-to-streams/>

Wood Fiesta: The Yakima Basin Helicopter Aquatic Restoration Effort,
https://dashboard.yakamafish-star.net/sites/default/files/2019-06/10_Bunce_Presentation2019.pdf?current=/DataQuery/Reports

Wood Fiesta project delivers thousands of logs by helicopter for stream restoration,
https://www.dailyrecordnews.com/news/wood-fiesta-project-delivers-thousands-of-logs-by-helicopter-for-stream-restoration/article_d9190a07-cbbb-5246-bd14-7b5860ed5c3c.html