

**Title:**

Yakima River Coho Re-Introduction Feasibility Study

**Author:**

Todd Newsome

Yakama Nation Fish Biologist

(509) 945-5729, Tnews@Yakama.com

**Summary of Presentation:**

Smolts were released in 2002 on May 6, 2002 and May 28, 2002. Approximately 694,000 coho smolts were released from three acclimation sites. Two acclimation sites were located on the Naches River, Stiles and Lost Creek, and one on the Upper Yakima River in Easton. Approximately, 20,000 coho were pit tagged to monitor survival. Groups of tagged fish were divided into their appropriate acclimation site and released early (May 6, 2002) and late (May 28,2002). The early and late release treatments were implemented to find the most appropriate time to release the coho in the Yakima and Naches Basins.

The Yakima-brood (in-basin) smolts released in the Naches River on May 6, 2002, had a lower survival index to McNary Dam than those released later on May 28, 2002, 25% and 60% respectively (Neeley, 2002). The Willard (out-basin) smolts released in the Naches and Upper Yakima showed very little survival differences, 20% and 24% respectively (Neely, 2002). Yakima-brood coho smolts survived significantly higher at 60% than that of the Willard-brood coho smolts, which survived at 27%.

In 2002-2003 the Yakima River Coho escapement was greatly reduced. The escapement above Prosser Dam was 818 coho, 541 of which were adults. Of the 818 coho passing Prosser Dam, approximately 68% were of wild origin. Adult coho were found spawning from Toppenish to Roza Dam in the main stem Yakima River. The Upper Yakima River coho escapement was only 5 adults and 1 jack. There were approximately 12 redds counted in the Naches River up to Wapatox Dam (RM 17). Only 15% of the possible redds were found, the majority were found in Ahtanum Creek and Buckskin Creek (Nelson Springs).