

Salmon habitat assessment for conservation planning on the White Salmon River

Presenters Jill Hardiman, USGS and Margaret Neuman, Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group

In 2011, Condit Dam was removed from the White Salmon River, WA. Since removal there has been interest in assessing Pacific salmon habitat in the lower six miles of the White Salmon River for conservation planning. The study area for planning purposes is the area which was once inundated by Northwestern Lake prior to the removal of Condit Dam to the confluence with the Columbia River. As part of efforts by the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group to conduct conservation planning, we used current and historical habitat information to assist in the planning process. We compiled existing georeferenced habitat data into a Geographic Information System to identify areas of high quality habitat for salmon, potential areas for restoration/improvement, and areas that could be threatened. The primary sources of georeferenced data for this project include a Lidar flight contracted by PacifiCorp, bathymetry from USGS, and redd surveys from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Redd observations provide support that the study area is a migratory corridor for salmon and that the lowest two to three miles have the highest concentration of documented redds. The study area has potential for restoration/conservation areas to improve/conservate salmon habitat.