

Title: Yakima Dams Fish Passage Assessment

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The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) began a preliminary assessment of fish passage at its five Yakima Project storage dams in the spring of 2002. Reclamation began more detailed studies in October 2003 to further evaluate passage feasibility at two high priority sites, Cle Elum and Bumping Lake.

Current study efforts are focused on development of interim (temporary, experimental) passage features at Cle Elum Dam and on collection of habitat information in Cle Elum and Bumping Lake reservoirs and tributaries.

Cle Elum Dam interim downstream passage features will be used to test juvenile fish passage on a smaller scale but similar to what is contemplated for permanent facilities. The goal is to have interim downstream passage facilities in place at Cle Elum Dam by the spring of 2005.

Reclamation, working with the US Forest Service and others, is collecting and analyzing data at Cle Elum and Bumping Lake on physical and biological conditions in the reservoirs and tributary streams. On-going habitat surveys and limnology and macroinvertebrate studies will provide essential data to be used in estimating production potential and passage benefits, and to assist the co-managers in developing reintroduction goals and objectives.

Reclamation has also developed a preliminary estimate of the capability to generate self-sustaining populations of coho salmon above Cle Elum Dam. This preliminary work will be refined, peer reviewed, and compared with other on-going modeling efforts to verify assumptions and confirm results. Similar estimates will be developed for the other target species for both Cle Elum and Bumping Lake Dams. Eventually, these estimates will help to determine passage feasibility and to refine reintroduction plans.

The fisheries co-managers are developing plans for reintroduction of anadromous fish upstream of the dams. They are developing goals and objectives and plans for monitoring and evaluation, and for supplying and handling fish. The co-managers will work in collaboration with Reclamation to test interim passage facilities.