

Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board Annual Meeting

October 3, 2025



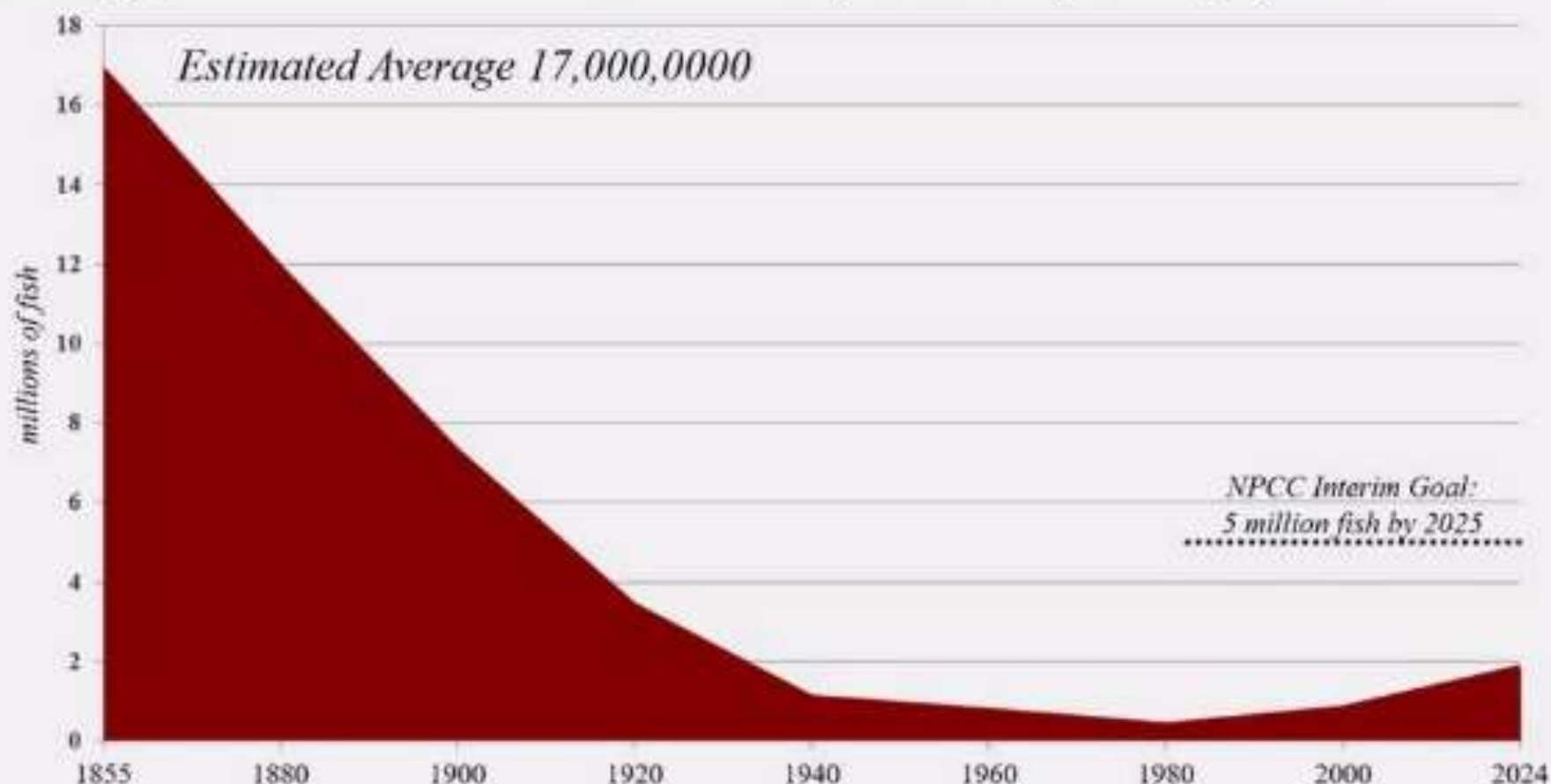
The purposes of this meeting are to:

- share recovery progress and accomplishments from 2025
- learn from partners about key management programs
- coordinate on future recovery efforts

Time	Session
12:00	Arrive Lunch is available starting at noon
12:30	Welcome & Introductions, Review Agenda <i>LCFRB Chair Todd Olson</i>
12:40	LCFRB Year in Review <i>Steve Manlow, LCFRB Executive Director</i>
1:00	Columbia River Fisheries Management <i>Charlene Hurst, PhD, Columbia River Division Manager, WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife</i>
1:20	BREAK
1:30	Harvest Management Strategy Evaluation <i>Toby Harbison, PhD, Research Scientist, WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife</i>
1:50	Statewide Salmon Strategy <i>Katie Pruitt, Salmon Recovery Coordinator, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office</i>
2:10	Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership <i>Elaine Placido, Executive Director, Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership</i>
2:30	BREAK
2:40	Questions for presenters
3:00	Round-Robin Updates <i>All meeting participants are invited to share updates with the group</i>
3:45	Wrap-up Comments <i>Todd Olson, LCFRB Chair</i>
4:00	Adjourn

SALMON DECLINE

Returning Columbia River salmon (chinook, steelhead, sockeye, coho)



Source: CRITFC. 1855 Data from NPCC historical run estimates; 1880-1920 data points extrapolated from Columbia River cannery output; 1940-present: dam counts & river mouth estimates

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission data shows the decline and slow recovery of salmon in the Columbia River basin.

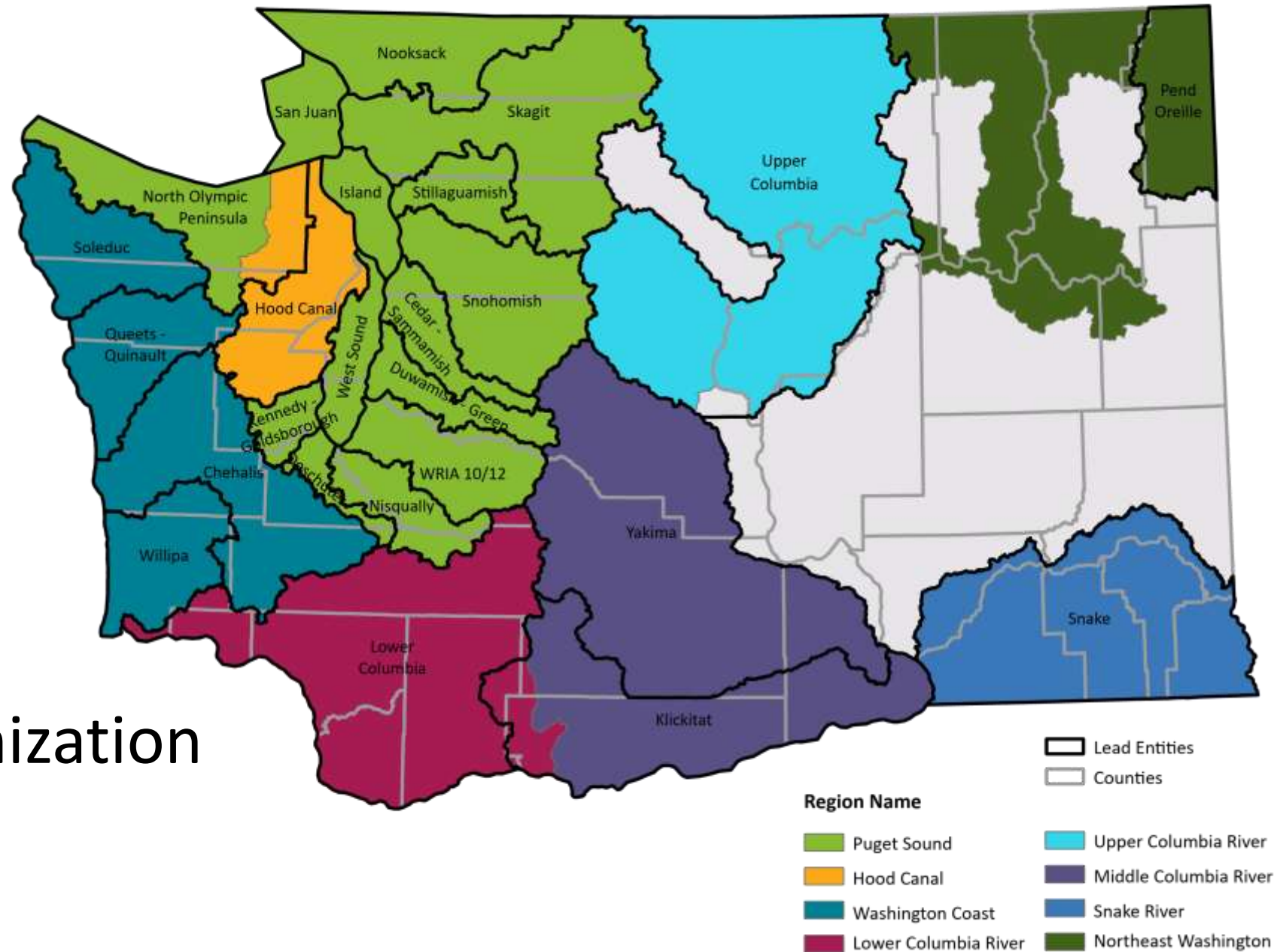


ESA Listings of Salmon and Steelhead

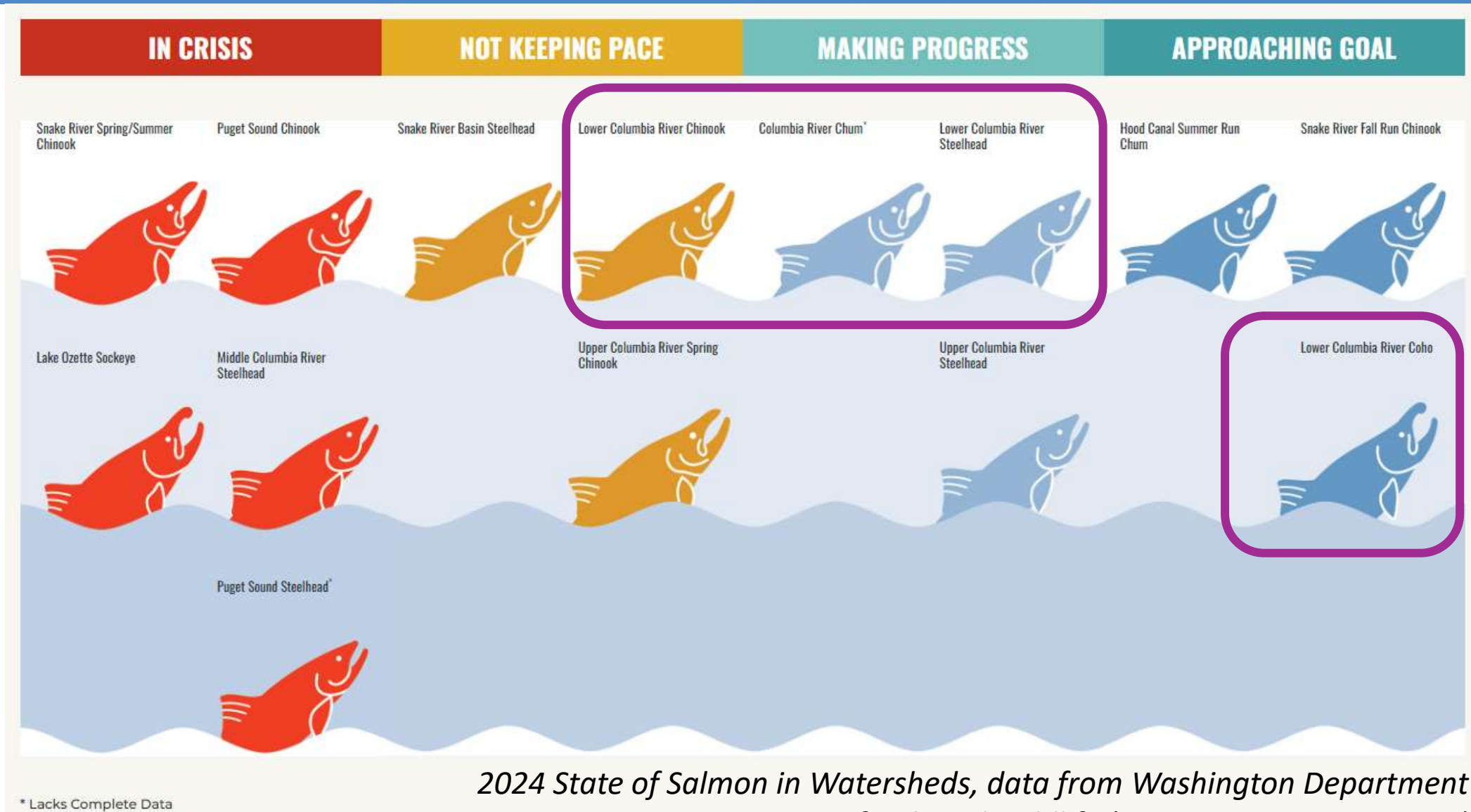
- By the late 1990's, salmon and steelhead across the west coast were listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- In the Columbia Basin, 13 salmon and steelhead stocks are listed.
- In the Washington portion of the lower Columbia, 69 populations of salmon and steelhead are ESA listed

Fish Recovery Board and Washington Salmon Recovery Act (RCW 77.85)

- Regional Organization
- Lead Entity



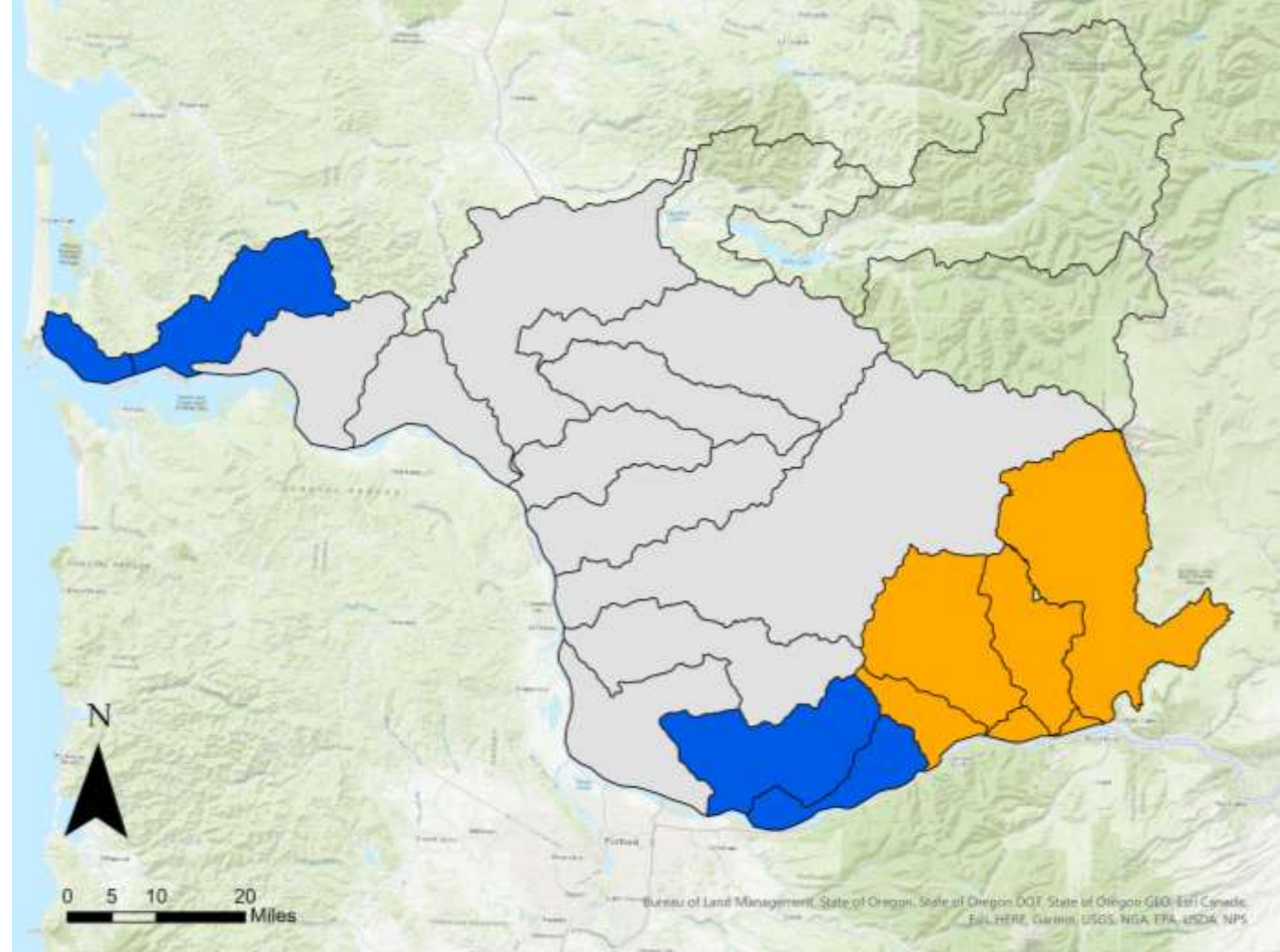
Abundance Status Update



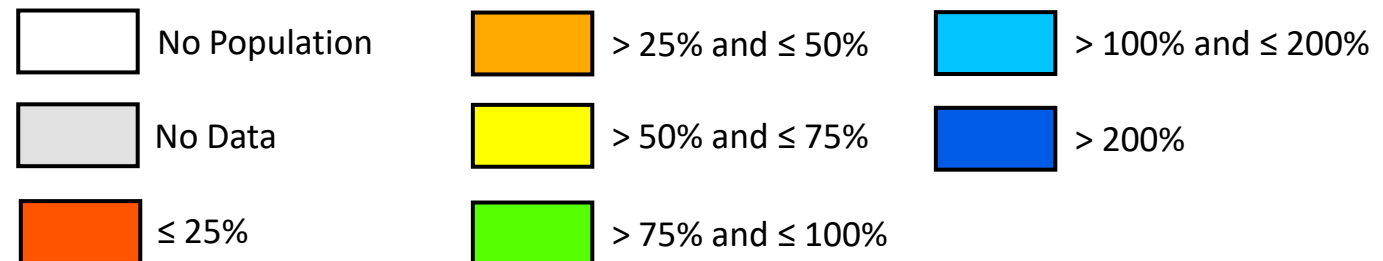
2024 State of Salmon in Watersheds, data from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (return years 2019 – 2023)

Chum Salmon

- Limited distribution across region
- Hatchery programs support reintroduction
- No targeted fisheries, very low impacts
- Grant funded habitat restoration and protection has been key in creating and expanding viable populations

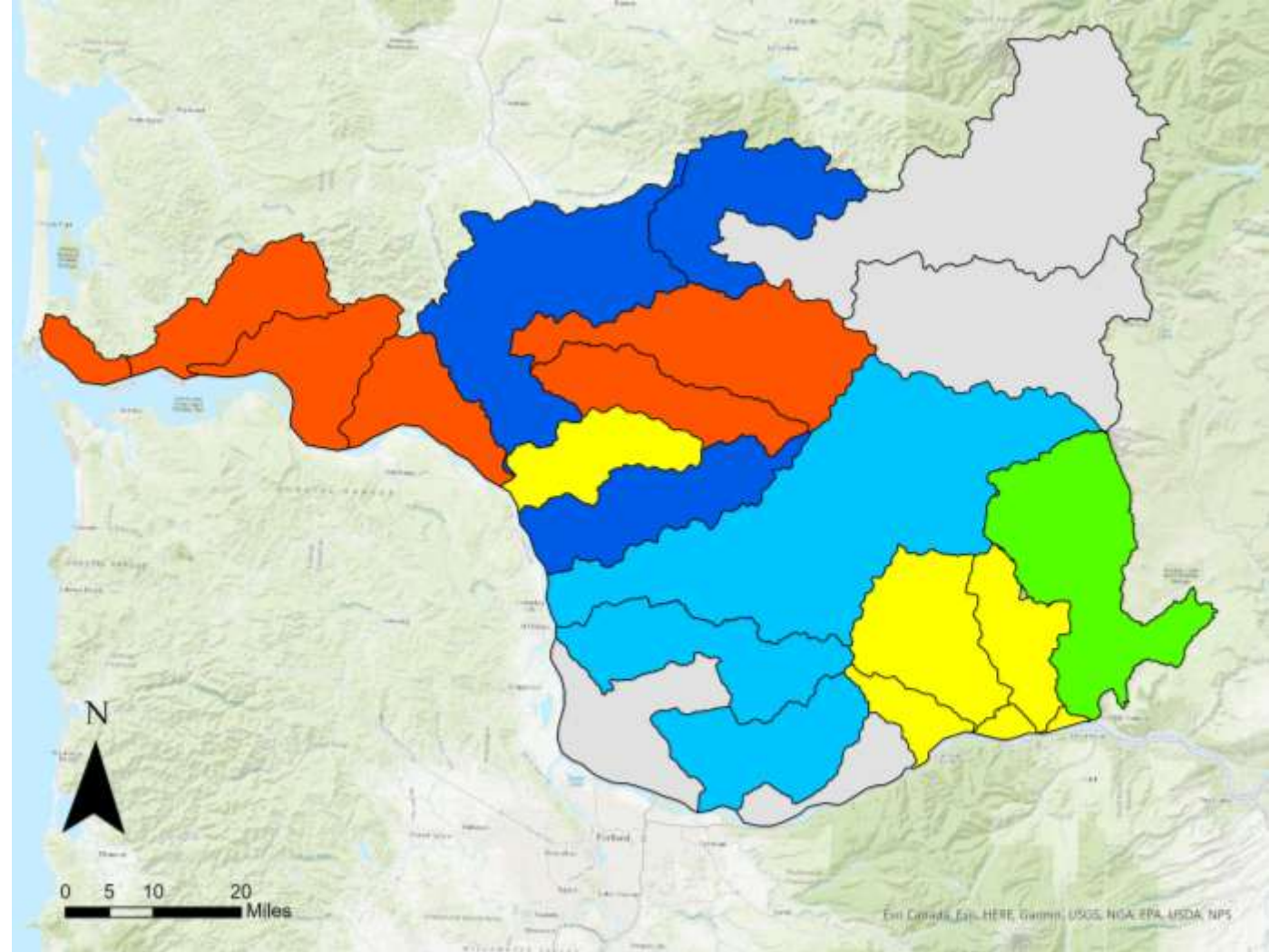


2019 – 2023 Geometric Mean Abundance as Percent of Delisting Goal

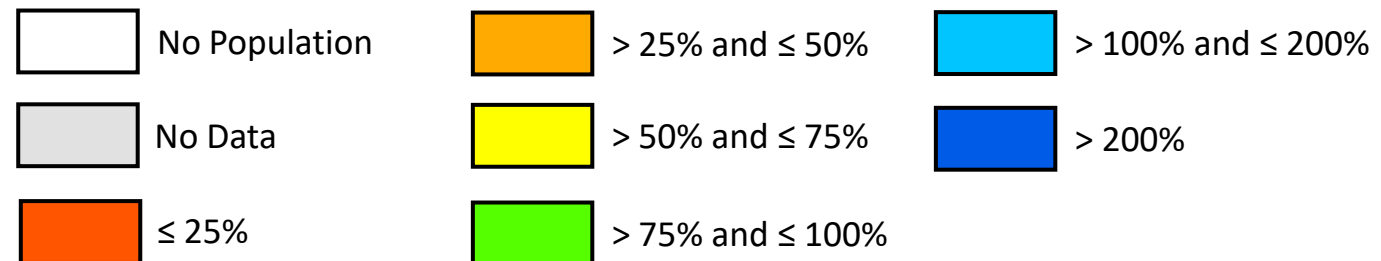


Fall Chinook Salmon

- High rates of hatchery-origin spawners in the coast, Toutle, Kalama, Lewis, and Columbia River Gorge
- Upper Cowlitz population limited to the Tilton subbasin
- Abundance based management needs reevaluation
- Reduced hatchery and harvest impacts and floodplain reconnection key to recovery

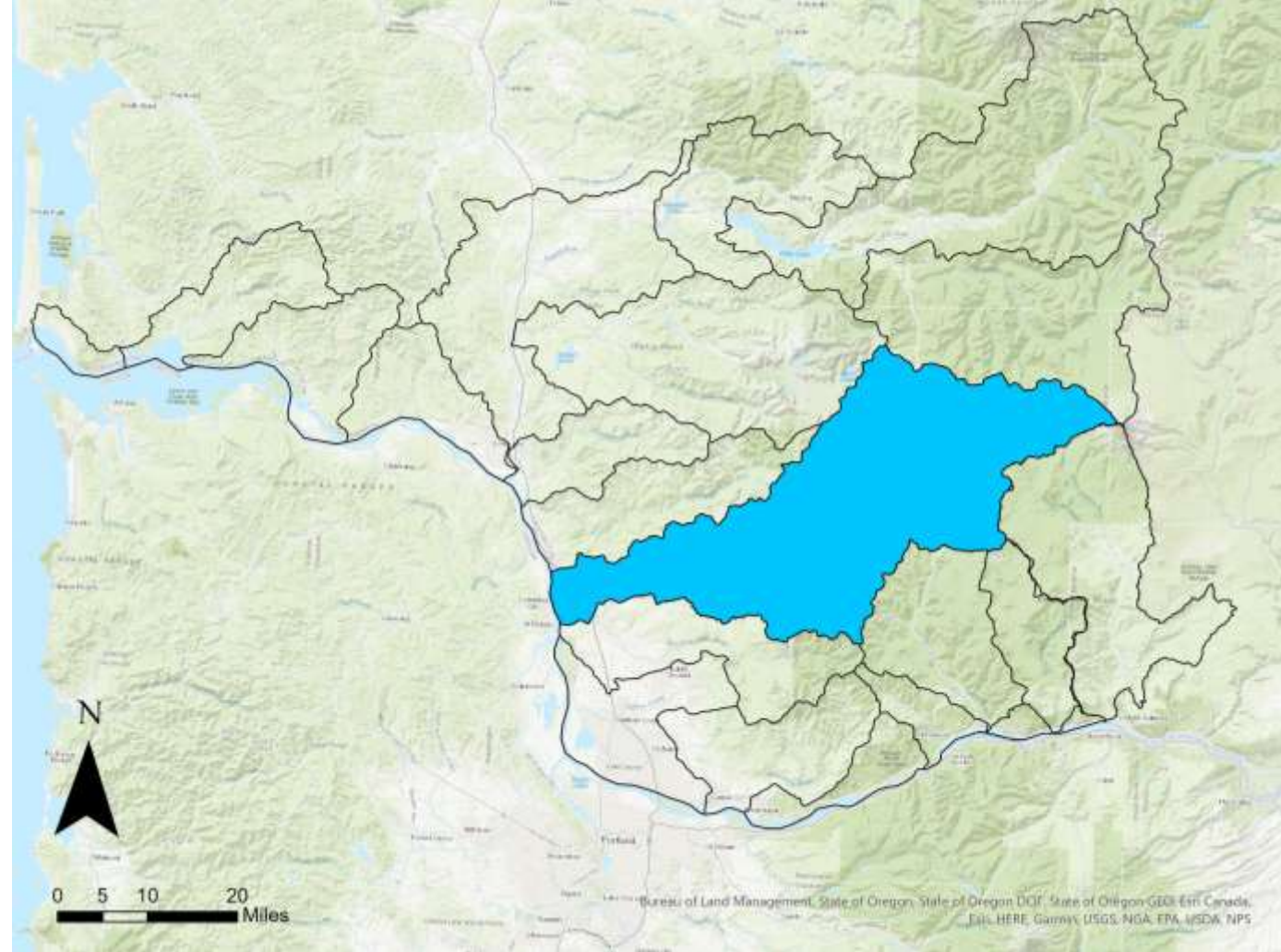


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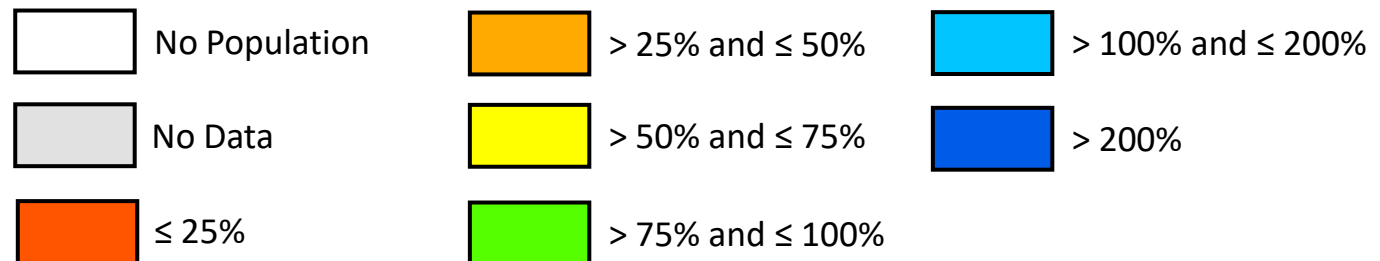


Late Fall Chinook Salmon

- 1 population that is healthy and harvestable – Lewis River
- No hatchery programs
- Not limited by blocked habitat or fish passage constraints
- Sustains a harvest rate of 44%

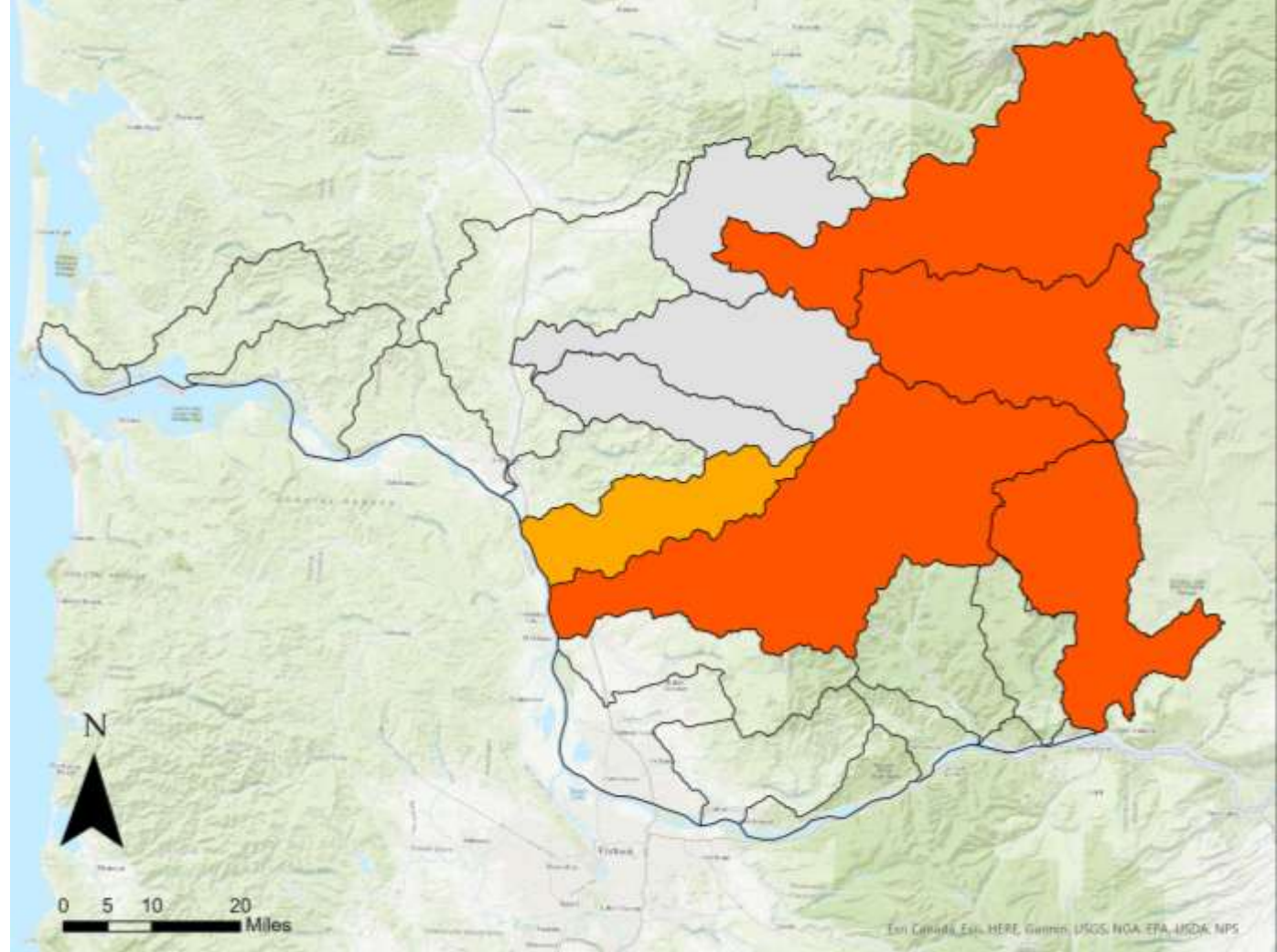


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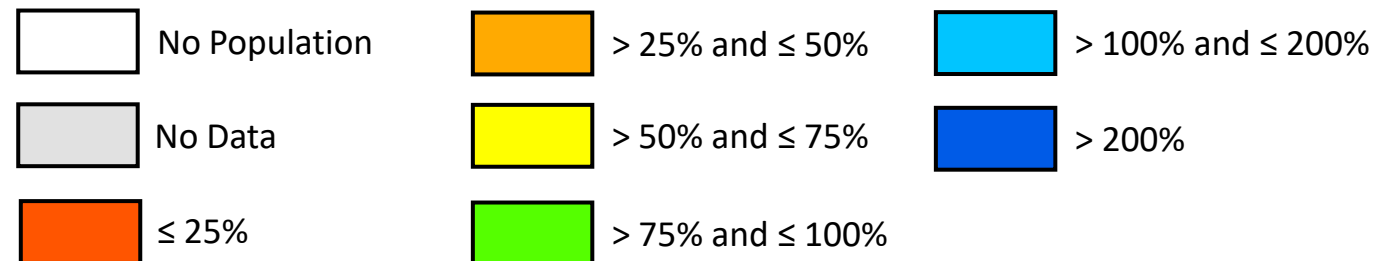


Spring Chinook Salmon

- Early stages of reintroduction in the Cowlitz and Lewis basins – juvenile collection efficiencies limit program success
- Recolonization in process in the White Salmon
- The USACE Sediment Retention Structure blocks access in the Toutle River basin
- Passage to relatively healthy watershed areas is key

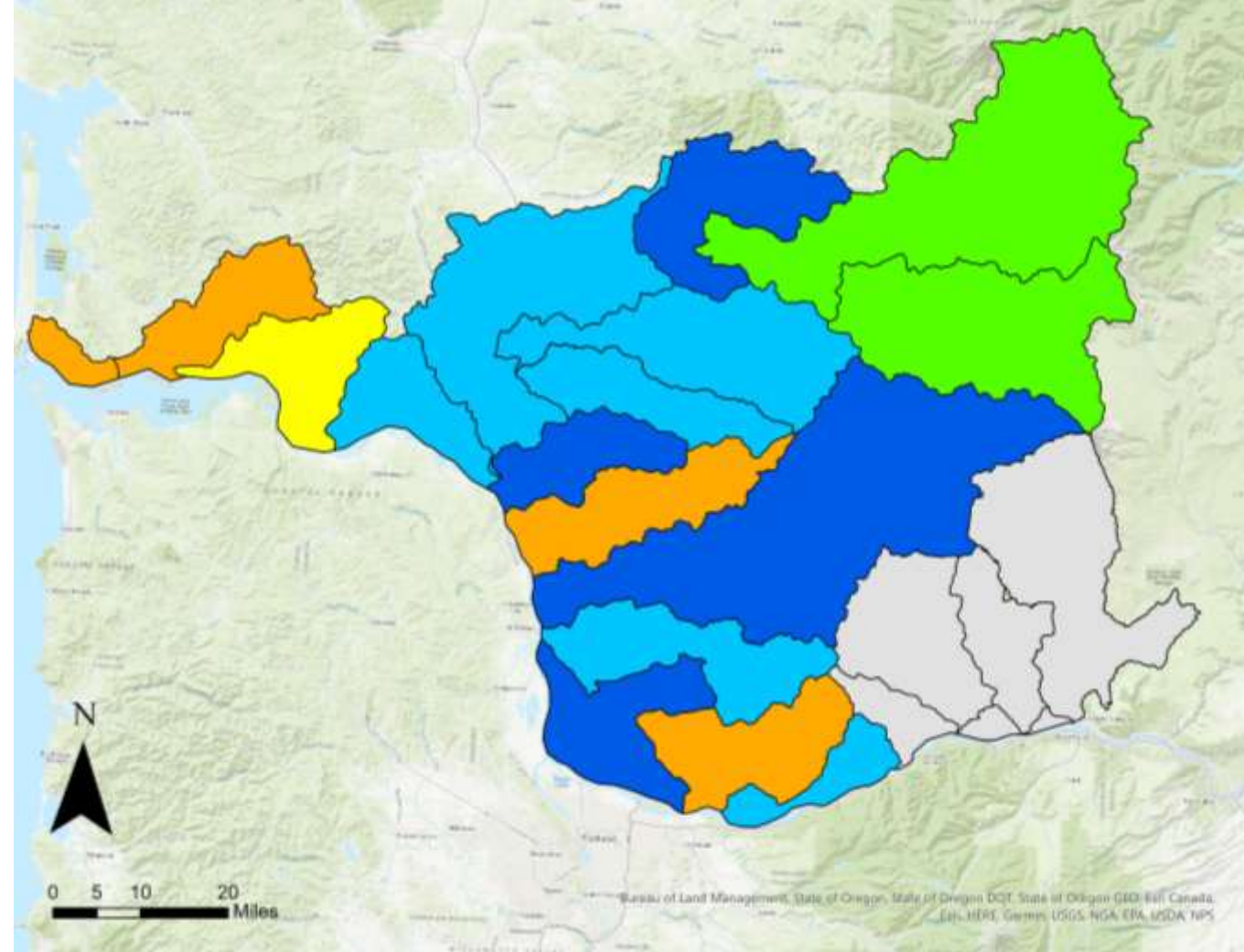


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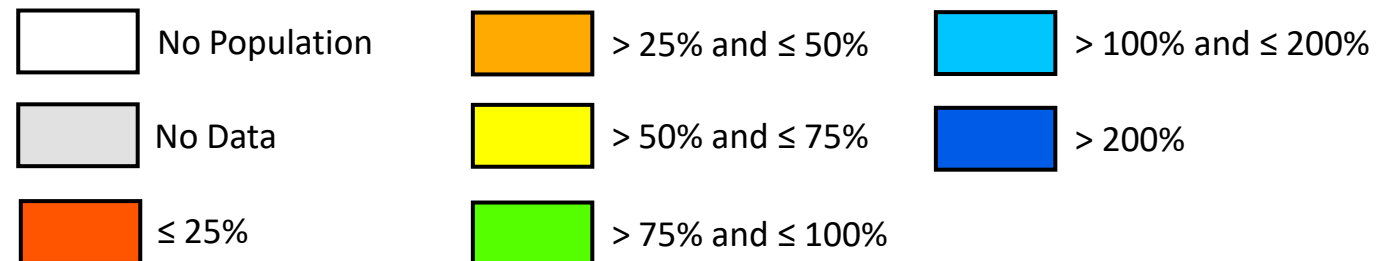


Coho Salmon

- Early stages of reintroduction in the Cowlitz and Lewis basins – juvenile collection efficiencies limit program success and bull trout redd superimposition in the Lewis is a concern
- The USACE Sediment Retention Structure limits access in the Toutle basin
- Intensively Monitored Watershed study indicates rearing habitat is a bottleneck
- Harvest rates are not a recovery bottleneck
- Habitat and fish passage limit recovery

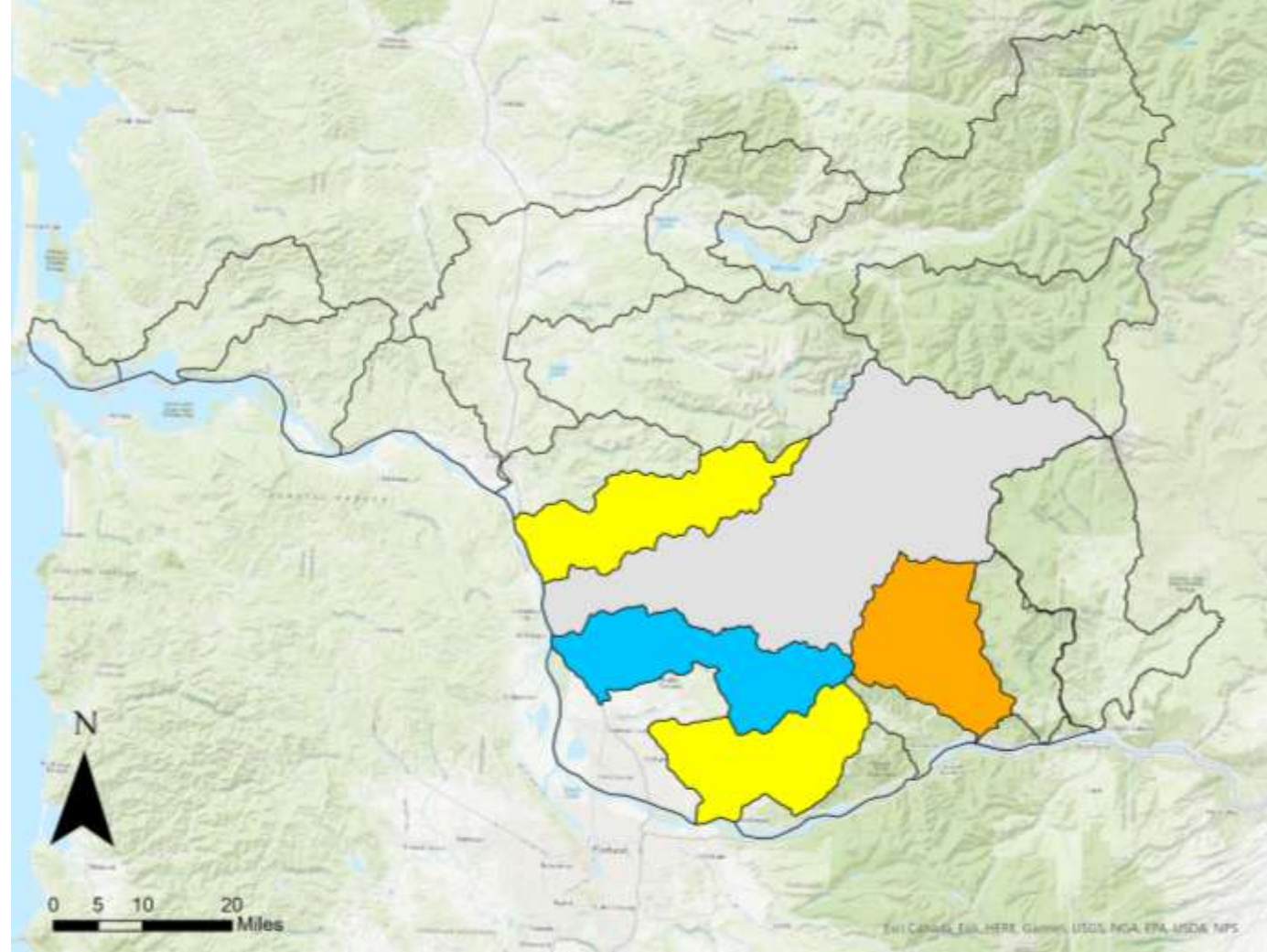


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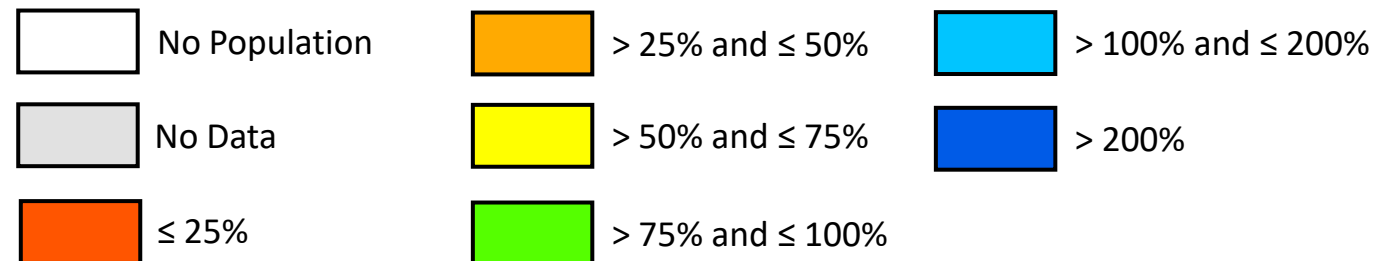


Summer Steelhead

- Limited hatchery impacts
- Relatively stable abundances
- Harvest rates are not a recovery bottleneck
- Avian predation is an emerging concern

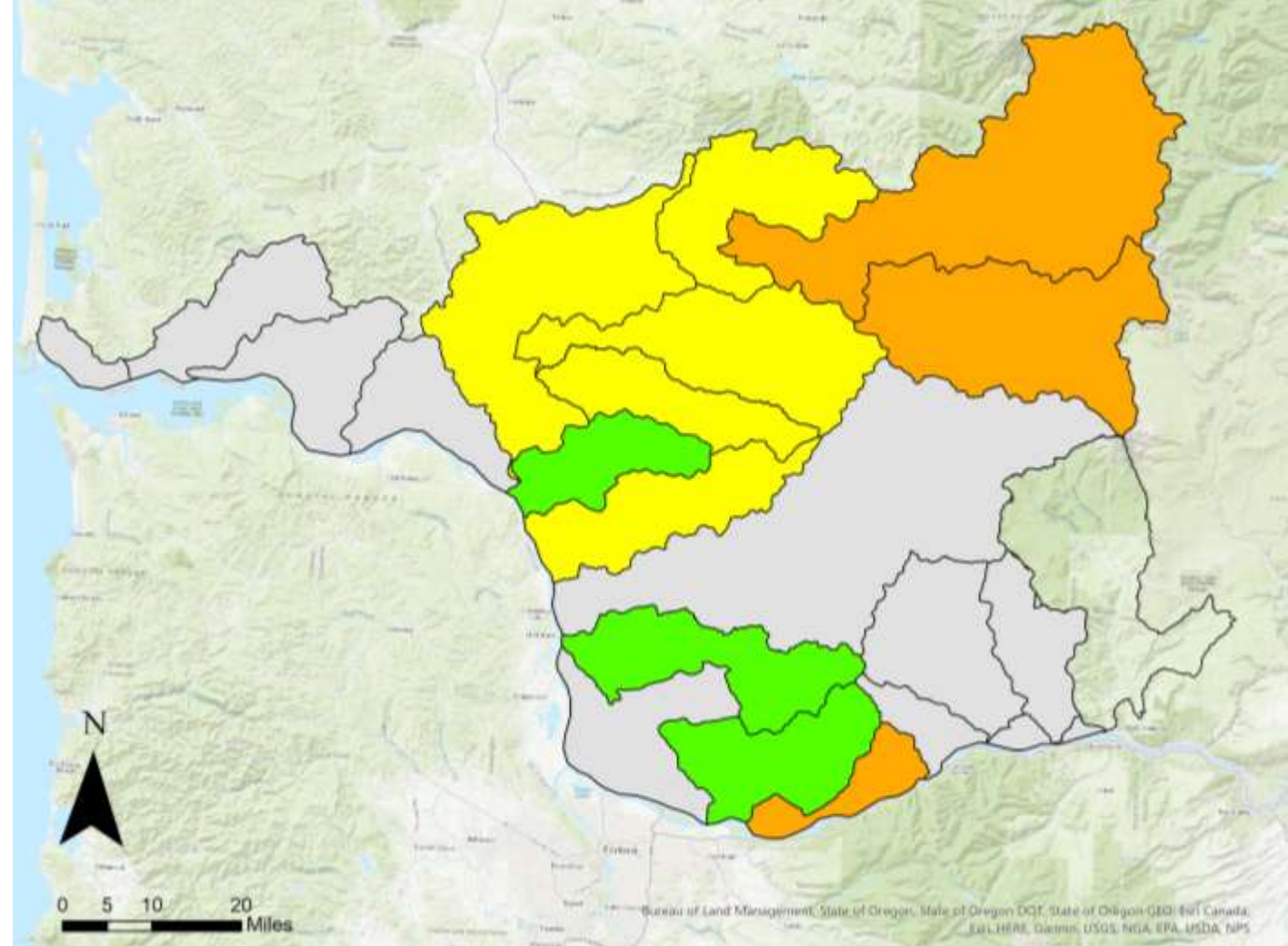


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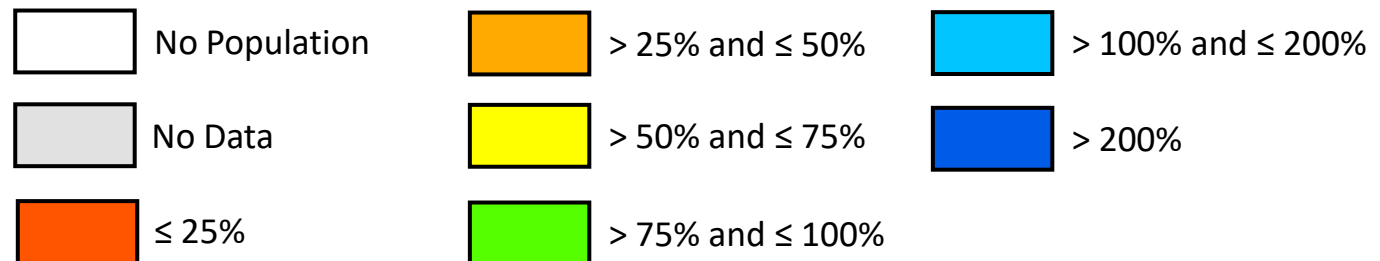


Winter Steelhead

- Early stages of reintroduction in the Cowlitz and Lewis basins - juvenile collection efficiencies limit program success
- The USACE Sediment Retention Structure limits access in the Toutle basin
- Avian predation is an emerging concern
- Harvest rates are not a recovery bottleneck



2019 – 2023 Geometric Mean Abundance as Percent of Delisting Goal



Recovery Priorities and Abundance Status

Status and Trends:

<https://stateofsalmon.wa.gov/recovery-washington/salmon-status/dashboard/>

Historical Abundance:

<https://lcfrb.org/library/recovery-plans>

Recovery Priorities and Viability Status:

<https://lcfrb.org/salmon-resource-map>

Habitat Restoration and Conservation

Grant Opportunities

The Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board manages grant programs with the goal of supporting key salmon and watershed restoration and recovery needs. Learn more about current grant opportunities by clicking on the below links.

A vertical photograph of a forest with moss-covered trees and ferns.

**Small
Grants**

A vertical photograph of a stream flowing through a forest.

**Salmon
Recovery
Funding
Board**

A vertical photograph of a river with a rocky bed and fallen logs.

**Cowlitz
Restoration
& Recovery**

A vertical photograph of a river with a rocky bed and fallen logs.

2025 Statewide Monitoring Grant Round

Table 1: Science Advisory Panel Project Scores and Ranks

Final Rank	Regional Recovery Organization	Project Number	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Average Weighted Score (0-10)	Average Rank (0-9)	Cost	Running Total Cost	
1	Puget Sound Partnership	25-1198	The Nature Conservancy	Port Susan Restoration Effectiveness Monitoring	8.0	2.0	\$300,000	\$300,000	
2	Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board	25-1240	Cowlitz Indian Tribe	Lower East Fork Grays Sediment Transport	7.7	2.8	\$241,046	\$541,046	Awarded Funding
3	Puget Sound Partnership	25-1197	Tulalip Tribes	Puget Sound Juvenile Salmon Offshore Monitoring	7.8	3.0	\$299,978	\$841,024	
4	Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board	25-1199	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Yakima River Mobile Passive Integrated Transponder Tag Detection Surveys	6.9	4.8	\$299,987	\$1,141,011	
5	Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board	25-1241	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Spawning Survey and Escapement in Lower Columbia	7.1	5.0	\$199,735	\$1,340,746	Alternate

Habitat Forums and Community Engagement

- Assist counties with plan development and updates
- Participate in state and local public comment processes
- Participate in many local, regional, and state workgroups



Wahkiakum Common Ground Workgroup

Local, Legislative, and Congressional Outreach

- With LCFEG, met with 10 lawmakers at the 2025 Salmon Day on the Hill
- Co-hosted 3 field tours for state legislative representatives and staff
- Cowlitz Restoration and Recovery Tour
- Congressional letters of support for continued PCSRF and pinniped control funding
- Responded to proposal to withdraw funding for 2022 Salmon Recovery Funding Board projects
- County Commissioner and Council workshops



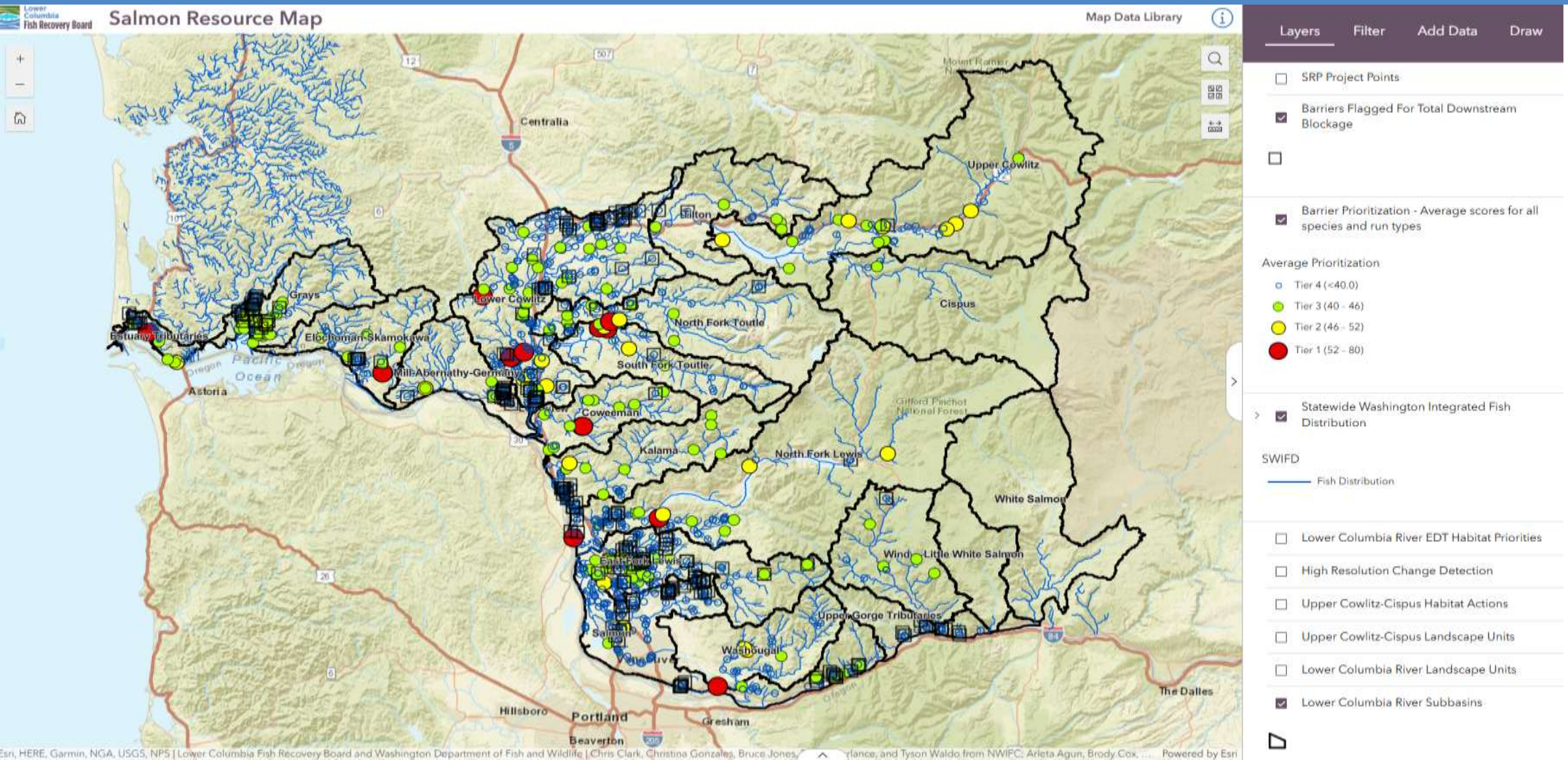
2025 Salmon Day on the Hill participants

Columbia River Basin/Mainstem Initiatives

- Facilitated Columbia Basin Council of Regions
- Feedback on habitat priorities for the Resilient Columbia Basin Agreement
- Commented on Northwest Power and Conservation Council Fish and Wildlife Program update
- Interstate Bridge Replacement Mitigation Work Group
- U.S Army Corps of Engineers Dredged Material Management Plan



Fish Passage Barrier Inventory and Prioritization



Fish Passage

- Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board membership
- Supported Cowlitz Indian Tribe's North Fork Toutle Headwaters Reconnection Project
- Supported WDFW / Wild Salmon Center North Fork Toutle Reintroduction Plan Development
- NEPA comments provided on the Spirit Lake Tunnel outlet tunnel to advocate for fish passage in alternatives analysis



Hatcheries and Harvest



- North of Falcon comments concerning harvest impacts on tule fall Chinook salmon
- Commented on draft Hatchery Genetic Management Plans for Lower Columbia Mitchell Act hatchery program updates
- WDFW Management Strategy Evaluation process for tributary fisheries

Hydroelectric Programs

- Coordinated with sponsors on development of habitat projects
- Supported development of Lewis River fish transport plans for reintroduction, in part addressing coho and bull trout interactions/recovery
- Coordinating on development of Cowlitz satellite rearing alternatives
- New partnership with Energy Northwest



Lewis River hydroelectric dam. Photo: PacifiCorp

Looking Ahead

- Track and engage in 2025/26 Fishery Management Forums (e.g., North of Falcon, Columbia River, Pacific Salmon Treaty)
- Participate in Northwest Power and Conservation Council Fish & Wildlife Program update
- Coordinate with Columbia Basin Regions and Governor's Salmon Recovery Office to develop a joint work plan for the Columbia River basin
- Continue advocacy for Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, and work with RCO and GSRO on contingency plans
- Secure funding for a region-wide riparian assessment
- Collaborate with counties and other partners to address high priority fish passage barriers
- Support reintroduction program improvements through hydroelectric forums
- Support efforts to restore habitat, manage sediment, reintroduce salmon in the Toutle River

Questions?



*South Fork Toutle River restoration photo provided by the
Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group*



**Lower
Columbia
Fish Recovery Board**