Eagle Island Chum Salmon Spawning Channel Project

Todd Hillson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife





Outline

- Brief historical overview of Lower Columbia River (LCR) chum salmon
- LCR chum salmon limiting factors
- Why is this project important for recovery of LCR chum salmon
- A time-line and funding history of the Eagle Island spawning channel project
- Overview of the design
- Pre-proposal comments & questions

Historic Overview

Based on commercial landings & habitat, 0.5 - 1 million chum salmon returned to Columbia River basin (ISAB 2015-1)

Upper Distribution Celilo Falls

Decline in the 1940's

- Loss, degradation, and impeded access to spawning habitat
- Changes to estuary ecology and habitat
- Altered mainstem & tributary hydrology
- Harvest



Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- Currently, between 1,000s & 10,000s of chum salmon return to the LCR
 - 17 historic populations in the Columbia River (90% of which are extirpated)
 - Limited current distribution (Mostly in Washington)
- Listed as Threatened under Endangered Species Act in 1999
 - 1 ESU for Lower Columbia River
 - Divided into 3 geographic stratum (Coast, Cascade & Gorge)



Lower Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead ESA Recovery Plan, NOAA - 2013



LCR Chum Salmon Limiting Factors

Harvest Hydro Hatcheries Habitat

Limiting Factor - Harvest



Historic Catch

- Annual Landings of adults ranged from 100-500K adults
- Appropriate harvest rate for a healthy population of chum salmon is 48% (Chapman 1986)
- Fisheries Managers reduced harvest in 1950s due to declines in abundance
 Current Harvest
 - Harvest prohibited on LCR chum salmon
 - Incidental impacts in Chinook and/or coho salmon targeted commercial fisheries limited to <5%.

Limiting Factor - Hydro

 Bonneville Dam flooded chum spawning areas upstream to The Dalles (Celilo Falls)

 Cowlitz and Lewis River Hydro limiting upstream distribution and natural watershed processes.

Bonneville tailwater fluctuations are minimized to protect Columbia River mainstem spawning (e.g. dewatering redds/eggs)

Limiting Factor - Hatcheries

- Little/no current or historical impact from LCR chum salmon hatchery programs
 - Currently four hatchery chum programs in the LCR – Grays, Big Creek (ODFW), Lewis, and Duncan
 - All WDFW Programs are integrated with annual values of recent pNOB >90-95% and pHOS ranging from 0-10%
- Potential predation impact on fry outmigrants from releases of hatchery yearling age juveniles



Grays Status & Trend



Limiting Factor - Habitat

- Key chum salmon spawning and incubation habitat occurred in off-channel or braided portions of rivers.
- Because this habitat produces high egg-to-fry survival which is needed to sustain populations when ocean survival is low.
- Typically this type of habitat occurred in the lowest portions of rivers and has been negatively impacted by agriculture, dikes, levees, and population growth.

EF Lewis Historic Channels



Completed Habitat Restoration

Duncan Creek spawning channels constructed in 2001 & upgraded in 2008, extended in 2011



LCFEG implementation of multi-species restoration Hamilton Springs constructed in 1980s, upgraded and extended in 2011



Skamokawa Spawning Channels

- Completed in summer of 2017
- ELJ and small berms installed to protect two spawning channels (Emlen & McNally)



Crazy Johnson Spawning Channels

• Completed in fall of 2017 by the LCFEG



Habitat Effectiveness Monitoring

- Spawning channel egg-to-fry survival
 - Duncan Creek Channels mean=54%, range 35-86%
 - Hamilton Springs mean=48%, range 38-60%
- Natural off-channel egg-to-fry survival
 - Crazy Johnson Creek Spawning area mean 28%, range 18-38%
- River channel egg-to-fry survival
 - Grays River mean=17%, range 2-33%
- Natural and artificial off-channel sites have higher, and less variable, egg-to-fry survival compared to river channel survival

Why is high egg-to-fry/ freshwater survival critical to recovering LCR chum salmon?

1) Necessary to overcome the low Smoltto-Adult Survival Rates (SARs) experienced by LCR chum salmon as fry migrants

2) Critical for populations to persist during prolonged periods of poor ocean conditions

Ocean Indicators & Forecasting

- There has been a lot of research on how ocean conditions affect the growth and survival of juvenile salmon in the northern California Current
- Standardized physical and biological metrics have been developed to describe ocean conditions – known as "ecosystem indicators"
- These ecosystem indicators have been used to forecast adult returns for Chinook and coho salmon
- WDFW uses these same ecosystem indicators to predict SARs and forecast adult chum salmon returns to the Columbia River

		_	_	_					_	Year	_	_	_	_	_				_
Ecosystem Indicators	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	201
PDO (Sum Dec-March)	5.07	-1.75	-4.17	1.86	-1.73	7.45	1.85	2.44	1.94	-0.17	-3.06	-5.41	2.17	-3.65	-5.07	-1.67	1.24	9.26	6.
PDO (Sum May-Sept)	-0.37	-5.13	-3.58	-4.22	-0.26	3.42	2.96	3.48	0.28	0.91	-7.63	-1.11	-3.53	-6.45	-7.79	-3.47	5.07	8.08	
ONI (Average Jan-June)	1.12	-1.07	-1.07	-0.40	0.18	0.27	0.20	0.47	-0.30	0.08	-0.98	-0.23	0.55	-0.72	-0.43	-0.30	-0.28	0.67	1
46050 SST ("C; May-Sept)	13.66	13.00	12.54	12.56	12.30	12.92	14.59	13.56	12.77	13.87	12.39	13.02	12.92	13.06	13.26	13.37	13,43	14.05	13.
Upper 20 m T (°C: Nov-Mar)	12.27	10.31	10.12	10.22	10.08	10.70	10.85	10.60	10.61	10.04	9.33	10.19	11.01	10.02	9.62	10.09	9.47	12.75	12
Upper 20 m T (°C- May Sent)	10.38	10.13	10.19	9.77	8.98	9.62	11.39	10.73	9.97	9.99	9.30	9.90	10.14	10.05	9.95	10.63	10.97	10.04	10
Deep temperature	8.59	7.63	7.74	7.56	7.46	7.81	7.89	7.97	7.83	7.58	7.48	7.73	7.89	7.81	7.56	7.94	8.38	8.08	7.
(May-Sept)	33.54	33.86	33.78	33.86	33.85	33.68	33.66	33.77	33.85	33.88	33.87	33.72	33.61	33.74	33.75	33.76	33.53	33.71	33.
Copepod richness anom.	4.54	-2.58	-3.41	-1.03	-1.12	1.99	1.42	4.39	2.68	-0.63	-0.76	-0.64	3.12	-2.13	-1.31	-2.51	-0.11	7.76	8
N. copepod biomass anom.	-0.76	0.04	0.15	0.15	0.29	-0.13	0.06	-0.84	-0.01	0.14	0.26	0.15	0.16	0.44	0.39	0.28	0.26	-0.33	-0.
5. copepod biomass anom.	0.60	-0.23	-0.21	-0.21	-0.23	0.09	0.20	0.55	0.07	-0.07	-0.23	-0.19	0.21	-0.14	-0.19	-0.20	-0.02	0.43	0.
Biological transition	263	134	97	101	108	156	132	230	180	81	64	65	169	82	125	91	162	Never	Ne
Ichthyoplankton biomass	0.12	0.90	1.80	1.25	1.05	0.46	0.58	0.83	0.59	0.60	1.84	0.89	1.65	0.61	0.99	1.16	0.43	1.63	1
Ichthyoplankton community	-2.13	10.40	-42.67	-31.69	-36.80	1.39	49.41	47.23	-38.11	8.26	-40.10	15.31	26.19	7.60	-35.45	-27.36	-15.69	48.49	55.
Chinook salmon juvenile	0.26	1.27	1.04	0.44	0.85	0.63	0.42	0.13	0.69	0.86	2.56	0.97	0.89	0.46	1.32	1.35	0.86	0.57	0
Coho salmon juvenile catches (no. km ⁴ : June)	0.35	2.29	1.50	2.87	2.51	3.58	1.13	0.23	1.13	3.49	3.37	1.87	1.84	1.26	1.12	4.91	1.63	1.95	1
Principal Component scores (PC1)	4.92	-2.16	-2.82	-2.09	-2.53	0.87	2.41	3.58	-0.08	-0.95	-4.71	-1.49	0.88	-1.79	-2.65	-2.10	0.74	4.94	5
Principal Component scores (PC2)	1.53	-0.04	0.05	-0.85	-1.49	-0.53	2.31	0.25	-0.24	-0.09	-2.14	0.65	-0.44	1.60	0.63	0.58	3.09	-2.14	-2
Ecosystem Indicators not include	d in the	meand	f ranks	or stati	stical a	alyses				_	_	_		_			_		_
Physical Spring Trans. UI based (day of year)	83	88	134	120	84	109	113	142	109	70	87	82	95	105	123	97	129	103	
Physical Spring Trans. Hydrographic (day of year)	187	119	142	129	120	141	157	209	123	136	102	136	169	119	140	106	162	124	3
Upwelling Anomaly (April-May)	-14	19	-36	2	-12	-34	-27	-55	-14	9	0	-5	-35	-36	-35	-21	-37	50	
Length of Upwelling Season UI based (days)	191	205	151	173	218	168	177	129	195	201	179	201	161	153	161	163	133	175	1
SST NH-5 ("C: May-Sept)	11.30	11.08	11.04	10.98	10.15	10.85	12.85	11.73	11.36	11.80	10.66	11.99	11.41	11.08	11.66	11.66	11.71	11.57	11
Copepod Community Index (MDS axis 1 scores)	0.65	-0.89	-0.90	-0.83	-1.02	-0.27	-0.23	0.46	-0.06	-0.72	-0.96	-0.86	-0.29	-0.77	-0.83	-0.91	-0.39	0.52	0
Coho Juy Catches	0.11	1.12	1.27	0.47	0.98	0.29	0.07	0.02	0.16	0.15	0.27	0.01	0.02	0.20	0.13	NA	NA	NA	



Early Life History for Chum Salmon

- Juveniles emigrate from February to early May
- Size 38-42mm (~1.6 inches)
- Working Hypothesis: Early marine (first year) survival explains most of the variability in ocean survival
- Data Analysis
 - Grays Hatchery releases & Duncan spawning channel production paired with broodyear adult returns are used to estimate smolt-to-adult return rates (SARs)
 - NOAA Ocean Indicators (PC1 scores)
 - Logit(SARs) = a + b(Principle Component 1)





Logistic Regression Results



Grays River Hatchery-origin, Broodyears 1998-2007, 2009-2012 Duncan Spawning Channel-origin, Broodyears 2003-2012



Progeny-Per-Parent, values greater than 1.0 equals population growth, in only 46% of recent NOR cohort/ broodyear returns.

Limiting Factors Summary

- Ocean survival explains much of the variation in life cycle survival but, except for estuary restoration, not much can be done to improve ocean survival.
- The only remaining healthy chum salmon populations have protected spawning and incubation areas.
- High freshwater survival only exists in protected offchannel sites, below hydro-regulated dams, artificial spawning channels, hatcheries, and remote-site incubators.
- Working Hypothesis: The quality and quantity of spawning and incubation habitat is limiting recovery of this species.



Timeline of Overall Project

- 2010 to 2012 Scoping project initiated under BPA Project 2008-710-00 (LCR chum BiOp project) to identify sites within the Lewis River basin with the potential to support a large chum salmon spawning channel
 - Ten sites were initially identified, six in the EF Lewis River basin and four in the Lewis River basin
 - Reduced to four sites (two each in the EF Lewis and Lewis)
 - In the summer of 2011, sites were surveyed, test pits and pump tests were conducted at all sites; piezometers were installed to monitor groundwater over a chum salmon spawning and incubation season.
 - After considering all evaluation results and criteria, the Eagle Island Site was determined to have the most potential
 - In 2012, additional surveys and groundwater monitoring were conducted along with an analysis of the hydrology and hydraulic conditions at the Eagle Island Site.
 - A 30% design plan and design report were generated

Timeline - Continued

- 2013 Goal was to move project into construction phase
 - However, BPA budget issues prevented substantial progress towards construction
 - Funds from BPA LCR chum BiOp project were used to conduct another year of groundwater monitoring and generate a comprehensive report and final design plans
- 2014 Funding was secured through the Odessa Water Withdrawal Project Mitigation Fund to secure construction permits and cost share construction cost.
 - Design was reviewed by LCFRB SRFB TAC in 2014 for fatal flaws - none found
 - Additional funds to complete construction would be requested from BPA through their LCR chum BiOp project.

Timeline - Continued

- Construction was planned to start at first opportunity after construction permits were secured (late Spring – Summer of 2015 or 2016)
 - All Construction permits were secured by Spring of 2016
 - Construction was planned to start in late Spring of 2016
 - Late Spring of 2016, funds from the BPA LCR chum BiOp project were used to purchase the majority of the construction materials needed (rock, spawning gravel, toe and pile logs, root wads, etc...)
 - Construction was delayed due to a landowner issue concerning the easement road to property. Purchased materials stored off-site.
 - Negotiated an agreement with landowner concerning easement in the fall of 2016.
 - They backed out at the last minute due to perceived impacts to their property from another project.
- Odessa Mitigation funding was repurposed in the fall of 2016 to construct one of the two Skamokawa basin chum salmon spawning channels in 2017

Timeline - Continued

- Re-engaged landowner with easement issue. Work to improve the easement road and move construction materials onto project site was scheduled for fall of 2017
 - Landowner changed position again and locked gate on easement road.
- January of 2018, the Title Company that insured the easement tried to negotiate with the landowner to resolve issues. Unfortunately, the landowner stated the easement issue could only be resolved through the court system.
 - The Title Company initiated a lawsuit against the landowner over the easement on May 2, 2018.
 - Summer of 2018 Lawsuit was settled out of court.

History of Project Funding

- The BPA, through their LCR Chum BiOp project, have invested approximately \$575K in this project to date
 - Scoping and evaluation, design reports and construction plans, and purchase of construction materials
- Approximately \$215K of the Odessa Water Withdrawal Mitigation Fund was used for advancing this project towards construction
- Estimated final cost of project: \$1.65 to \$1.75 million
 - ~\$890K has already been expended
 - Between \$750-\$850K needed to complete
 - \$600-\$800K from BPA and/or other sources
 - \$100K SFRB grant



Source: Inter-Fluve Inc. Eagle Island Chum Spawning Channel FINAL DESIGN REPORT.



Figure 3. (A) looking upstream in the trench during the pump test. (B) The transition from soil, to sand, and finally alluvium can be seen in the wall of the trench.

Source: Inter-Fluve Inc. Eagle Island Chum Spawning Channel FINAL DESIGN REPORT.



Figure 2. LiDAR hillshade map and site topographic survey points. Additional survey data of the North and South channels were also available and used for this project.

Source: Inter-Fluve Inc. Eagle Island Chum Spawning Channel FINAL DESIGN REPORT.







Pre-Proposal Comments & Questions

Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board

- > Why is this so expensive?
- > Do you anticipate this being delayed further?
- > What maintenance is expected?
- > Consider adding other projects in the immediate vicinity.

Utilities

- Reference channel adjacent to this proposed channel. How has the other channel performed?
- > How does this channel differ in objective?
- How will benefits be determined (very few chum salmon available).
- What are the plans to bring Chum to use the channel (hatchery?).
- Other grants have been secured, and permitting and logs secured. Funds are for construction only (20% of total construction costs). Where do monitoring funds come from?

National Marine Fisheries Service

- > Expand on benefits to focal reintroduction species.
- Monitoring should include juvenile use by other focal species.
- > More detailed budget.

Cowlitz Tribe

- The regional value of chum population enhancement is well supported within the proposal. While constructed channels should be a second-to-last measure behind hatchery production, the constrained and controlled nature of the Lewis mainstem leaves few viable options for enhancing chum habitat and populations.
- This project entered into agreement with SRFB in July 2019. The budget provided to SRFB indicated that the total construction cost was \$900,000 (total project cost, including A&E, was not supplied), of which SRFB provided \$100,000. At that time, WDFW did not indicate that they would seek additional funds from the ACC or elsewhere to complete the project, other than a negotiated amount from BPA.
- The Aquatic Fund preproposal indicates that the \$175,000 requested from the ACC is only 10% of the total project cost (i.e., total project \$1.75 million). The Engineer's Estimate for construction provided by the applicant is roughly \$700,000.

Cowlitz Tribe - continued

- The applicant states that WDFW has already expended \$890K on the project without turning dirt (but an undefined portion of this money has been used to purchase construction materials). Please explain why this is a wise use of ACC funds, given the apparent free spending of other funds previously committed to the project without measurable progress on the project.
- The SRFB proposal listed Washington DNR State Owned Aquatic Lands (SOAL) as a landowner. The only landowner acknowledgement form attached is from WDFW. Has landownership changed on the project footprint?
- Groundwater chum channels constructed elsewhere in the Columbia Basin have required periodic maintenance to maintain their productivity. The addition of an infiltration gallery introduces an additional layer of long-term operational uncertainty. How would WDFW address the long-term operation and maintenance of this artificially constructed habitat?



Progeny Per Parent Values by BroodYear and corresponding PC1 values (negative is better) for outmigration year from NOAAs Ocean Metrics Analysis.



Project Location: South Side of Lewis River Near Upstream Tip of Eagle Island at RM 11.3





Individual ancestry values for combined contemporary and archived Lower Columbia River and Pacific Coast chum salmon collections from STRUCTURE analysis at K = 4.