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April 26, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairman Rockefeller and members of the Fish and Wildlife Committee

FROM: Tony Grover, Fish and Wildlife Division Director

SUBJECT: Briefing from Mid-Columbia Regional Fish Enhancement Group (RFEG)

Margaret Neuman, director of the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, will give an overview of Washington's fisheries enhancement groups and their activities, structure and funding. The Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group is dedicated to restoring self-sustaining populations of salmon and steelhead. Each RFEG works with landowners and community partners to protect and restore fish habitat. The Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group is a non-profit, community based group. The Mid-Columbia region includes the Yakima Basin, the Klickitat, White Salmon, and Wind Rivers, and numerous smaller tributaries in Skamania, Klickitat, Benton, Yakima, Kittitas and Franklin Counties.



REGIONAL FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUPS

A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO SALMON RECOVERY

Presenter: Margaret Neuman, Executive Director of Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group

The Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups engage communities in projects to recover salmonid populations. Fourteen Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups in Washington State are dedicated to restoring stream and habitat function through on-the-ground projects. The presentation will focus on examples of our work in the Columbia basin. Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups implement various types of projects, such as removing passage barriers, reconnecting side channels and floodplains, planting riparian buffers, and enhancing instream habitat.

Each group is a separate non-profit organization with a volunteer board of directors. The groups are small, streamline organizations with very low overhead. On average the groups spend about 8% on administration – compared to almost 50% by some state and federal agencies.

Each group has staff and volunteers to manage and implement project work. In 2011 the Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEGs) leveraged \$1.9 million in base funding to garner an additional \$15+ million in grants and donated services. With just one exception, RFEGs have not been the direct recipient of any BPA grants in the past. We do receive many other private, local, state, and federal grants. RFEGs also partner with other agencies that hold BPA grants, and individual projects have benefited tremendously from these partnerships.

Each RFEG works within a specific geographic region to involve local communities and willing landowners in on-the-ground projects. There are four Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups along the Columbia River in Washington State from the estuary to the upper Columbia.

Base funding for the Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups is administered by the Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife. This base funding comes from three sources: (1) a surcharge on sport and commercial fishing license fees, (2) the sale of surplus salmon from state-funded hatcheries, (3) direct allocations from congress. Base RFEG funding varies from year to year, but has averaged about \$135,000 per group annually, with the federal funds accounting for about 75% of that total. These federal funds have come to us via earmarks and are increasingly at risk of elimination. Each group uses the base funding to leverage or match grants, and to secure cash and in-kind contributions for restoration projects. The base funding is our main source of match, as well as support for staff and administrative expenses. Without base funding the groups would dissolve. The RFEGs are working together to identify and establish alternate sources of base funding to replace the anticipated future loss of federal funds.

Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups

Making a Difference in Salmon Recovery

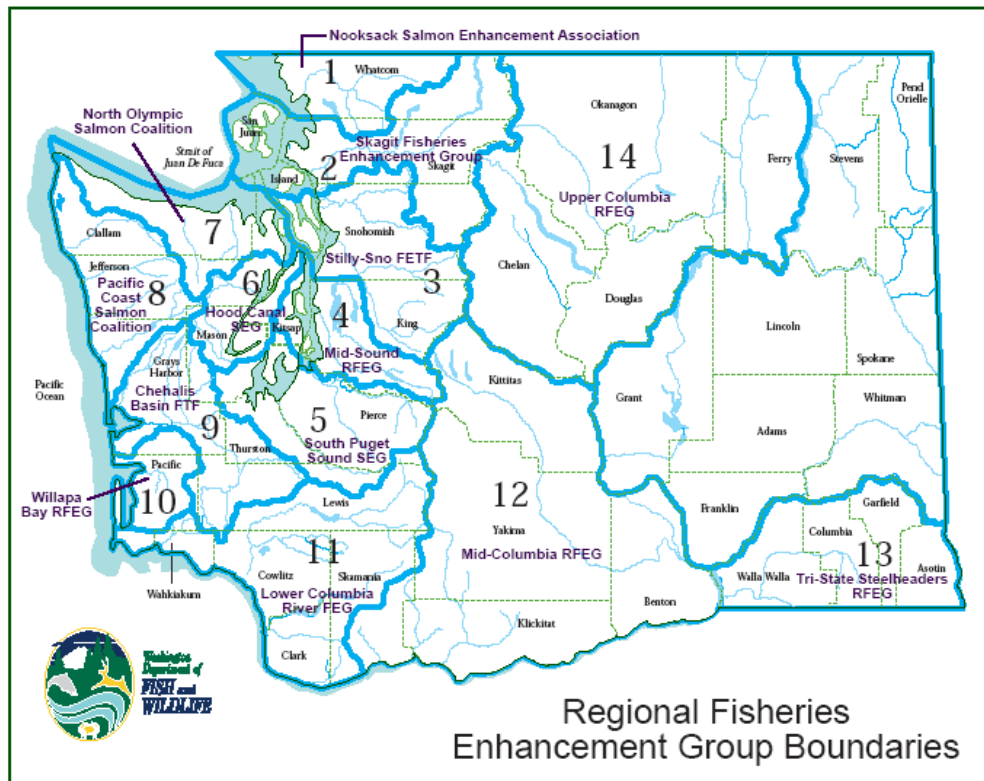


Northwest Power Planning
Council

March 8, 2012



What are Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups?



- Locally based non-profit organizations
- Directed by volunteer boards of directors
- Created by Washington State legislature in 1990
- Administratively connected to WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
- Focus on projects to restore habitat

RFEG Projects since 1995:



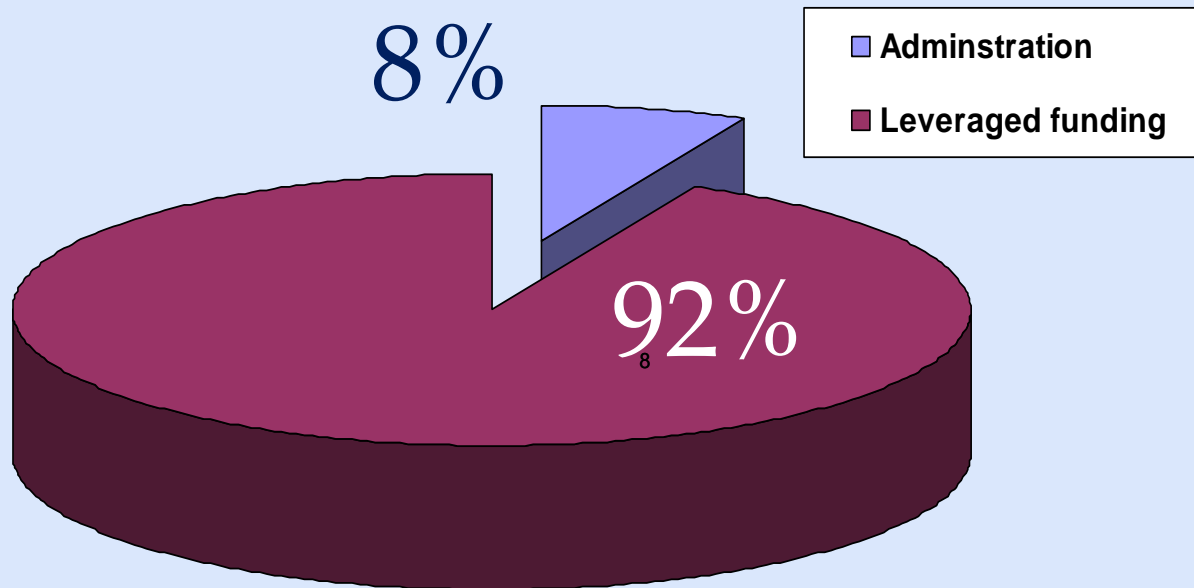
- 742 Fish Passage Projects Completed
- 847 Stream Miles Re-opened
- 535 Miles of Habitat Restored
- 963,131 Carcasses Re-distributed
- 3,209 Other Salmon Projects including monitoring
- Over 69,000,000 Fish Released
- 1.09 million Hours Volunteered
- \$22 million State and Federal Funding
- \$145 million Additional Funding Leveraged

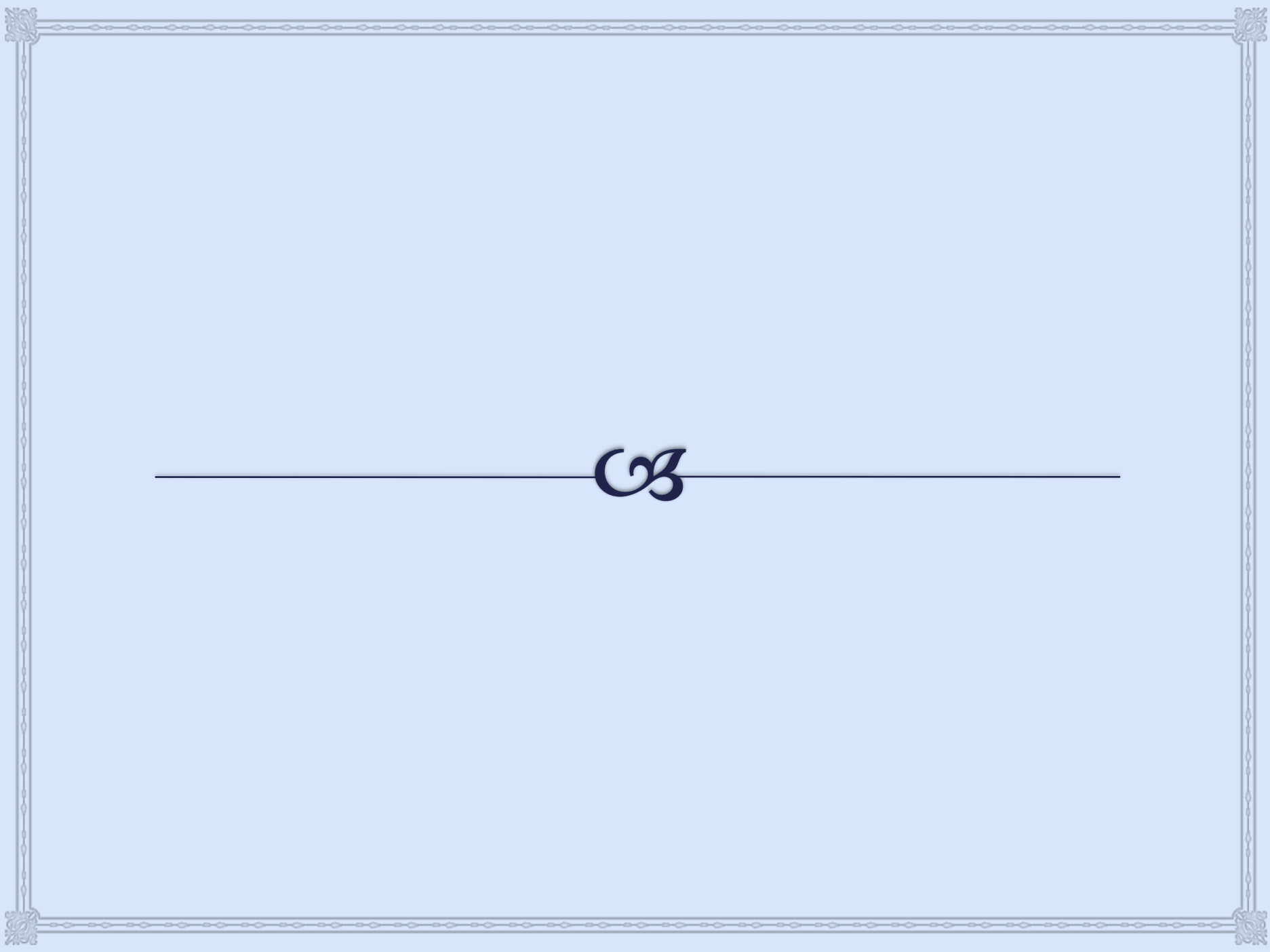
Strengths of RFEGs

- Focus on local priorities
- Large base of local volunteers
- Strong connection to lead entities, recovery boards, conservation districts, local municipalities and others
- Strong links to co-managers
- Coordination across state



RFEG Administration:





RFEG Funding:



RFEG “Base”
funds (historically
~ \$130k per group
annually) are
leveraged ~8:1

∞ Funding

- ∞ State: \$40k per RFEG via WDFW (Non General Fund) from surcharge on fishing licenses
- ∞ State: ??? Sale of surplus salmon from state hatcheries
- ∞ Federal: \$90k per RFEG
- ∞ The Rest \$: Competitive Grants, In-kind, Creativity, and Leveraging

∞ Federal funds are NOT secured beyond 2013

- ∞ RFEGs are currently working on funding alternatives to possibly fill the gap
- ∞ Without federal funds, RFEG capacity will be greatly reduced

Four RFEGs in the Columbia Basin (Washington) 14 RFEGs Total



FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT
GROUP



Kooskooskie Dam removal on Mill Creek



Before



After

Whitney Creek Bridge



Before

After



Sediment Reduction in the Touchet River



Pre-Construction



Post-Construction

Hamilton Springs Spawning Channel





Reecer Creek Floodplain Restoration

Reecer Creek Floodplain Restoration



Wilson Creek Riparian Planting



Hemlock Dam Removal



Before



After



Before



After

Dean Creek

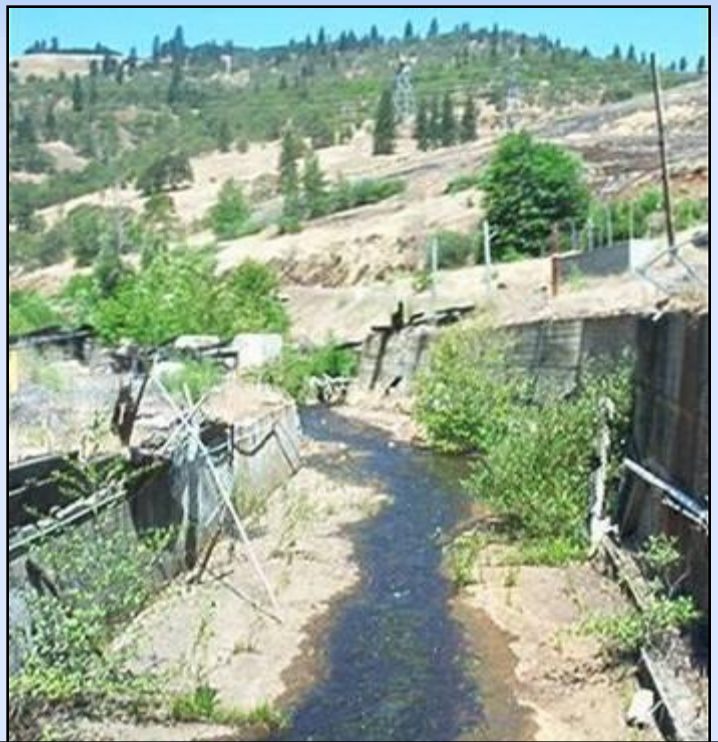
Taneum Creek



Before



After

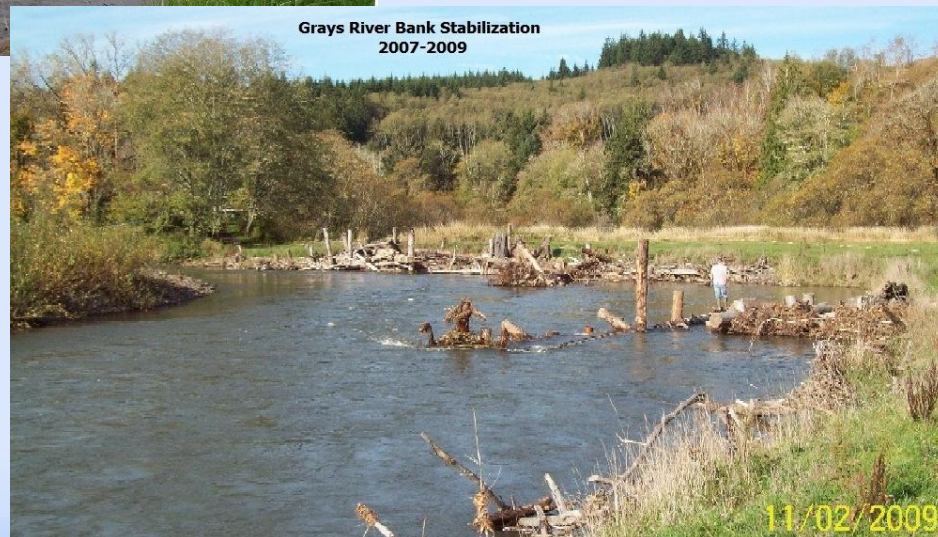


Synder Creek

Grays River



Before



After

Indian Mary Springs

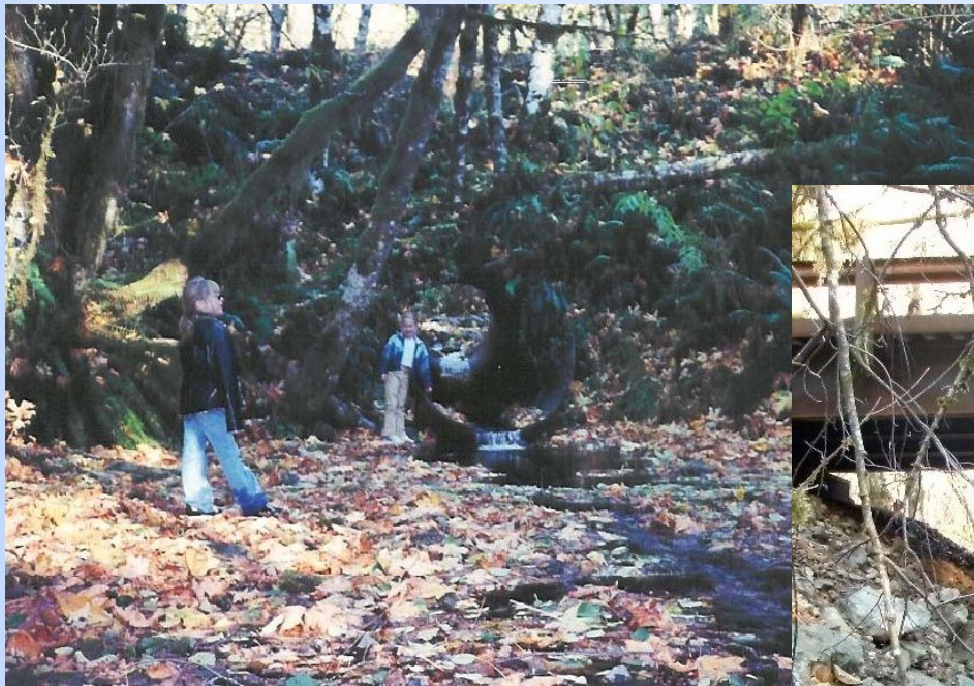


Before

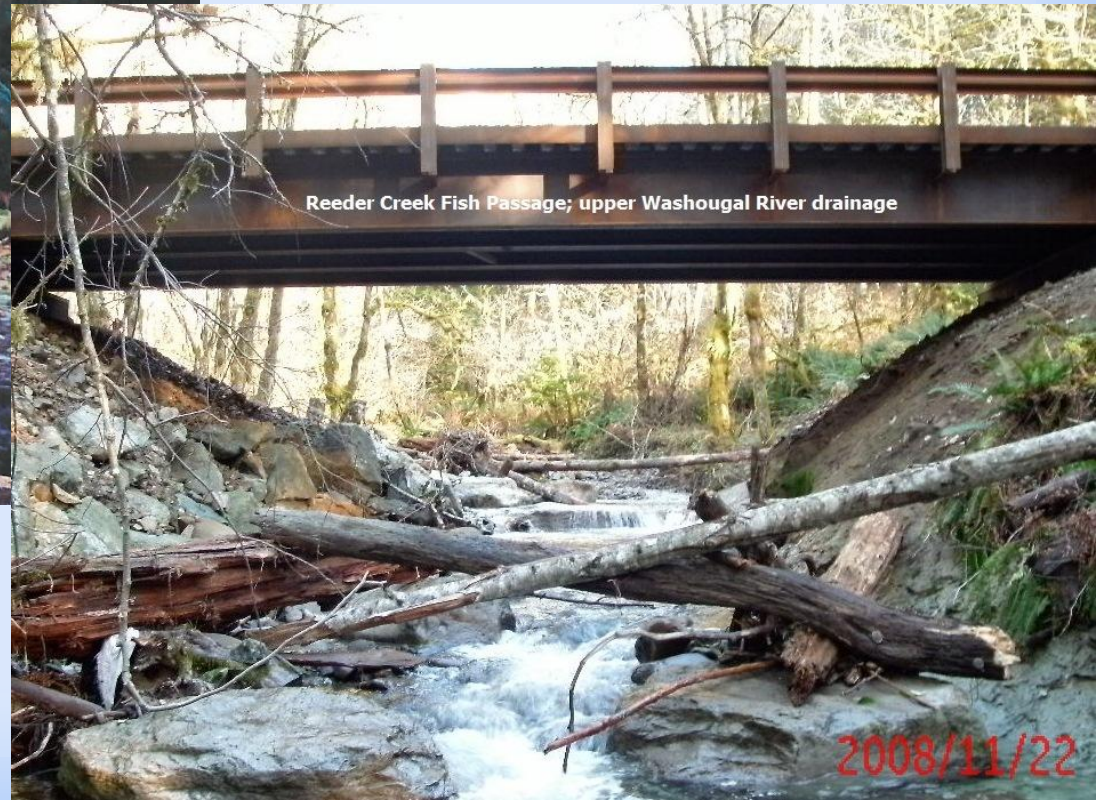


After

Reeder Creek Fish Passage: Upper Washougal River Drainage



Before



After

2008/11/22

More RFEG Projects:

Nutrient Enhancement



Service Learning



Fish Population Assessments



Habitat Assessments



Education



Beaver Projects



RFEGs – More than 1 million hours donated to salmon recovery!



Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups

*Dedicated to enhancing Washington State's
salmon populations for future generations*

Questions?

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