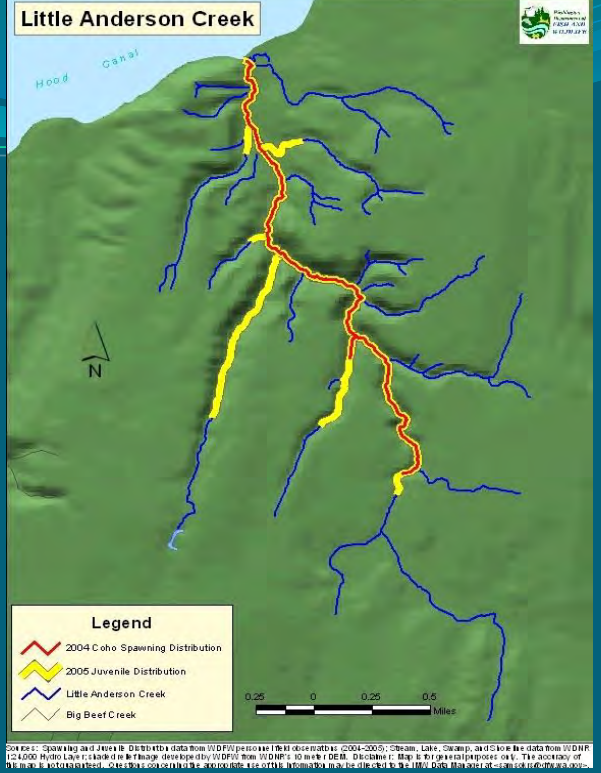
A Coordinated Statewide Approach to Removing Fish Passage Barriers

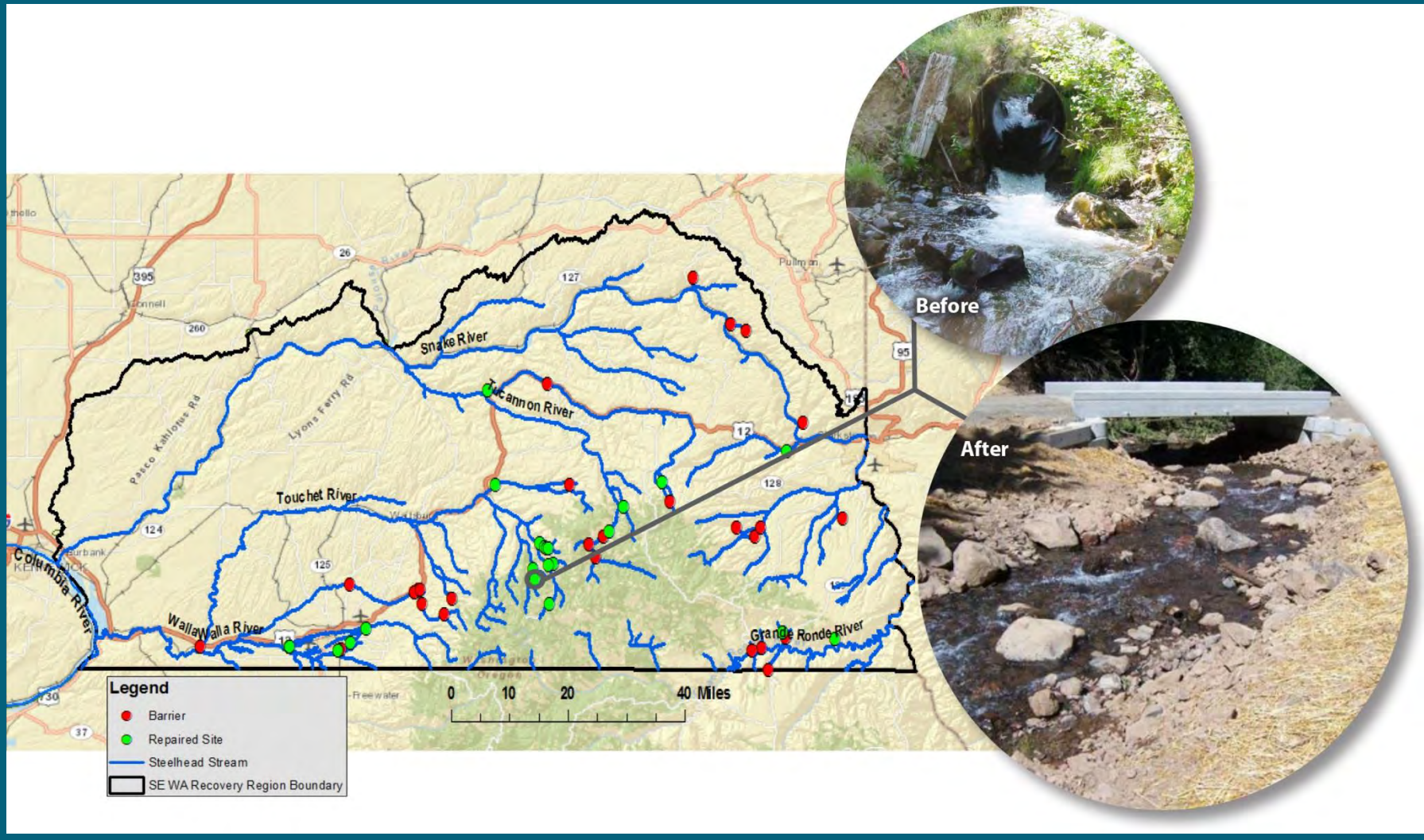
David Price (WDFW, Chair, Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB)

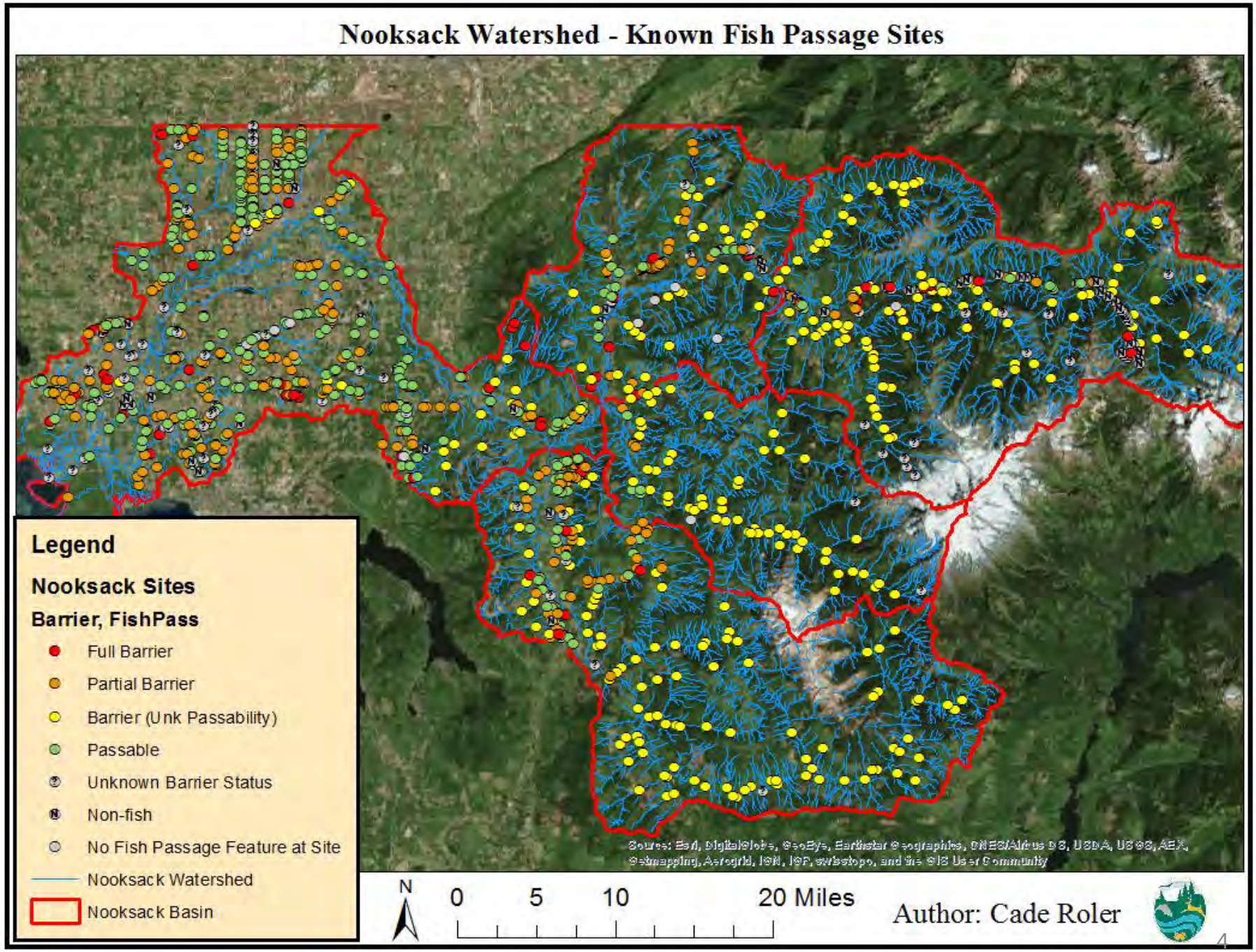
Why is Fish Passage so important?

- Salmon and steelhead have diverse life histories
- Habitat that is not available results in a loss of production potential

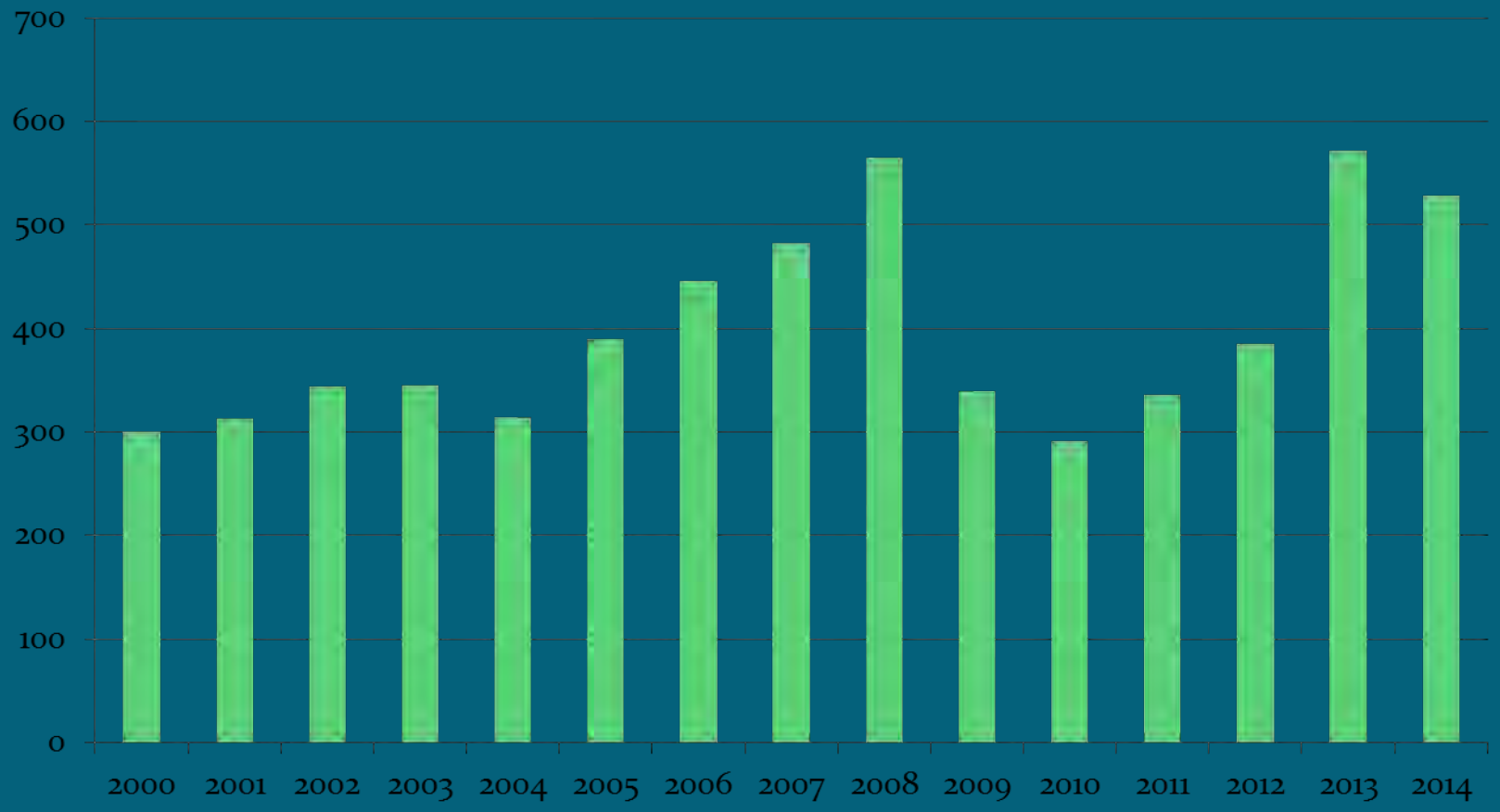


Snake River Salmon Recovery Region




Nooksack Watershed - Known Fish Passage Sites
Legend
Nooksack Sites
Barrier, FishPass
Full Barrier
Partial Barrier
Barrier (Unk Passability)
Passable
Unknown Barrier Status
Non-fish
No Fish Passage Feature at Site
Nooksack Watershed
Nooksack Basin
N
0
5
10
20 Miles
Author: Cade Roler

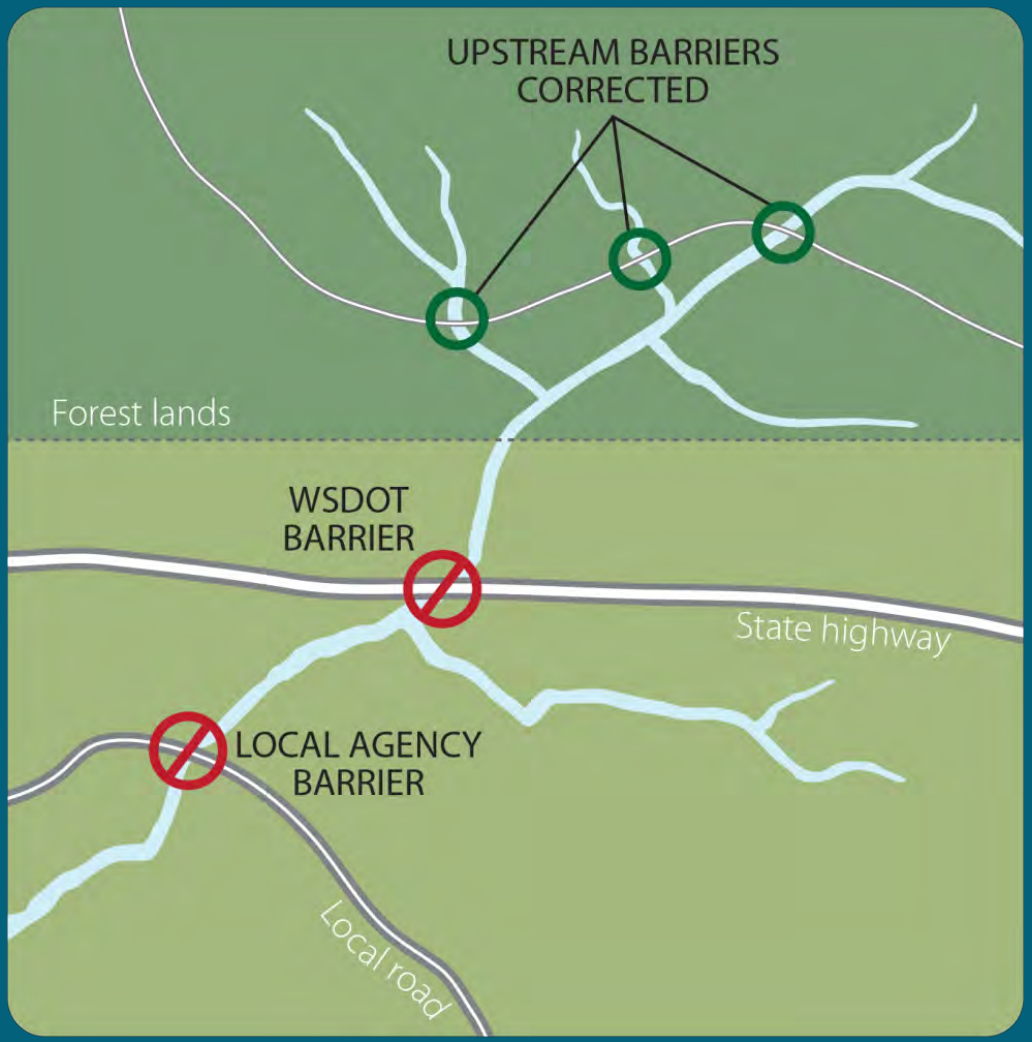
Washington Stream Miles Opened



Fish Passage Efforts - Today

- State agencies addressing their barriers
- Forest and Fish closing in on their deadline
- SRFB continues to fund barriers
- Counties and cities are fixing their barriers piecemeal
- Small forest landowners have access to grant funds (FFFPP)
- There was no comprehensive statewide fish passage effort until the Legislature created the Fish Barrier Removal Board in 2014.

A coordinated approach is necessary



2SHB 2251 – passed in 2014

- Creation of a Fish Passage Board
- Policy bill to develop a statewide strategy for correcting fish barriers
- Once prioritization is completed = request money to help local gov. and private owners with fish barriers
- WDFW (chair), GSRO, WDNR, WSDOT, Counties, Cities, Tribes

RCW 77.95.180 – Intent

- Maximize habitat opened through a coordinated investment strategy, that prioritizes opportunities to correct multiple fish barriers in whole streams rather than individual projects,
- Realize cost savings through economies of scale by bundling projects whenever possible.
- Streamlining the permitting process

Conceptual Pathways approach

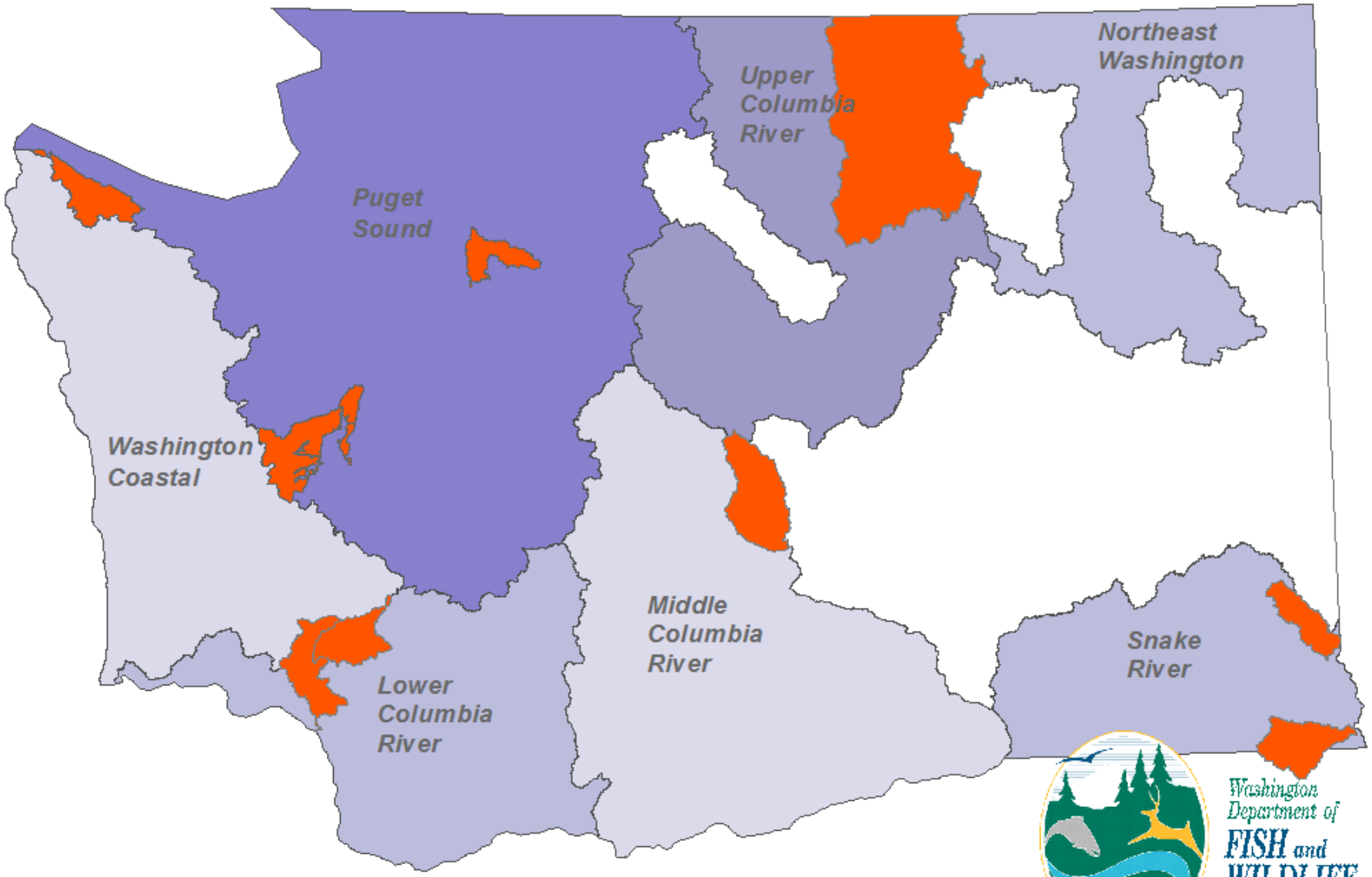
- ***Watershed approach***: The Board is developing a pathway to prioritize barrier repairs in whole stream reaches and subbasins that will have the largest benefit to salmon at a population scale

- ***Coordinated partnerships***: leverage large gains made by the investments of WSDOT, forest industry, and local governments with funding to repair barriers in close proximity to other barrier repairs.

Using the Salmon Recovery System

- Lead Entity and Salmon Recovery Region priority watershed nominations
- Local nominations for coordinated pathways partnerships
- Vetting projects recommended by the Board with local entities
- Executing grants with local project sponsors to repair barriers
- Expanding inventories using local entities under common protocols

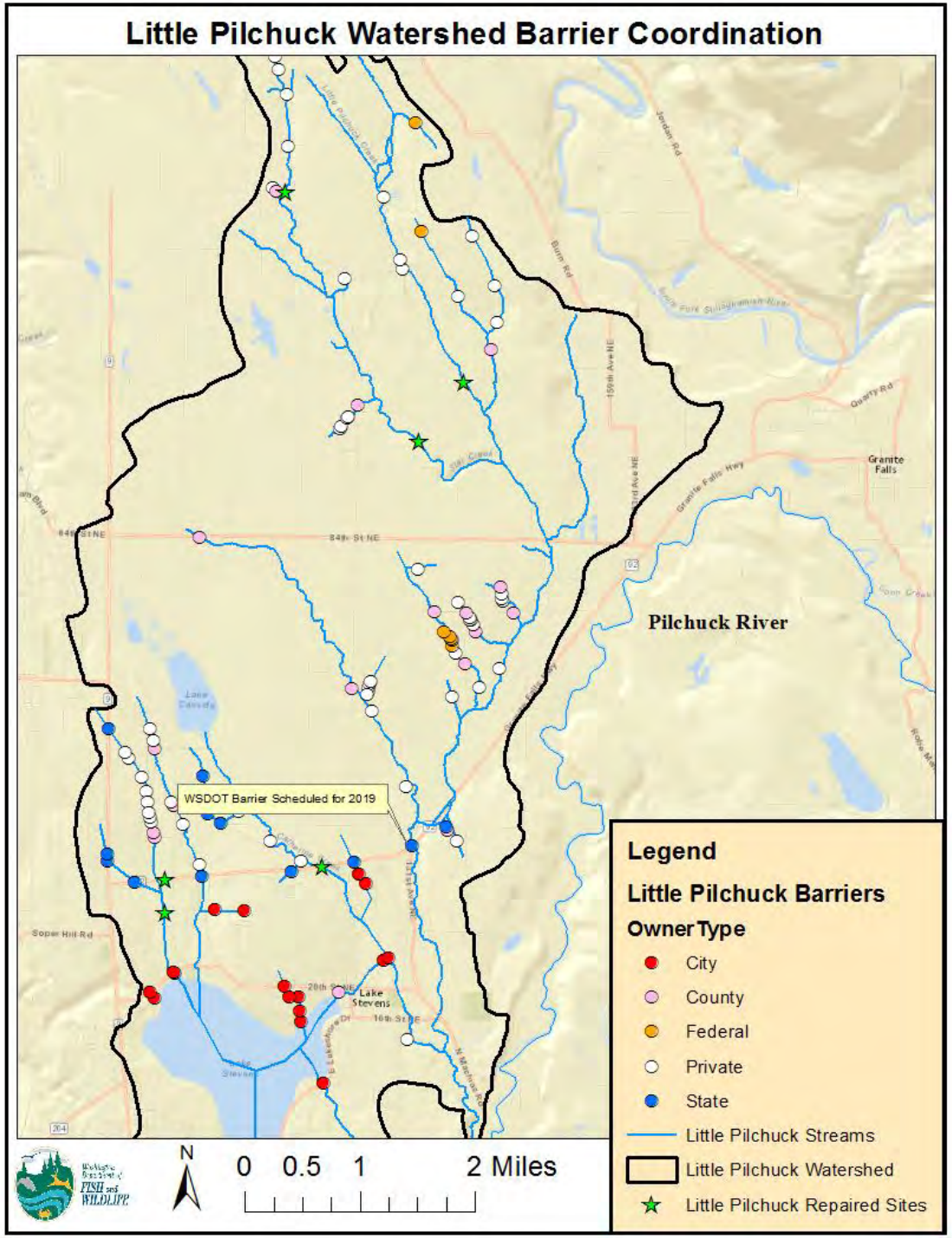
FBRB-Approved Watersheds
October 26, 2015



Washington Department of FISH and WILDLIFE

* Washington Coastal Region nominations still under review.

Watershed Approach



Watershed Pathway - Status

- All salmon recovery region recommendations were adopted by the Board
- Puget Sound and Coast recovery regions - Intrinsic Potential modeling for coho and steelhead produced habitat productivity estimates which ranked priority watersheds
- Board is now downscaling these watersheds into actionable repair reaches and subwatersheds

Coordinated Pathway - Status

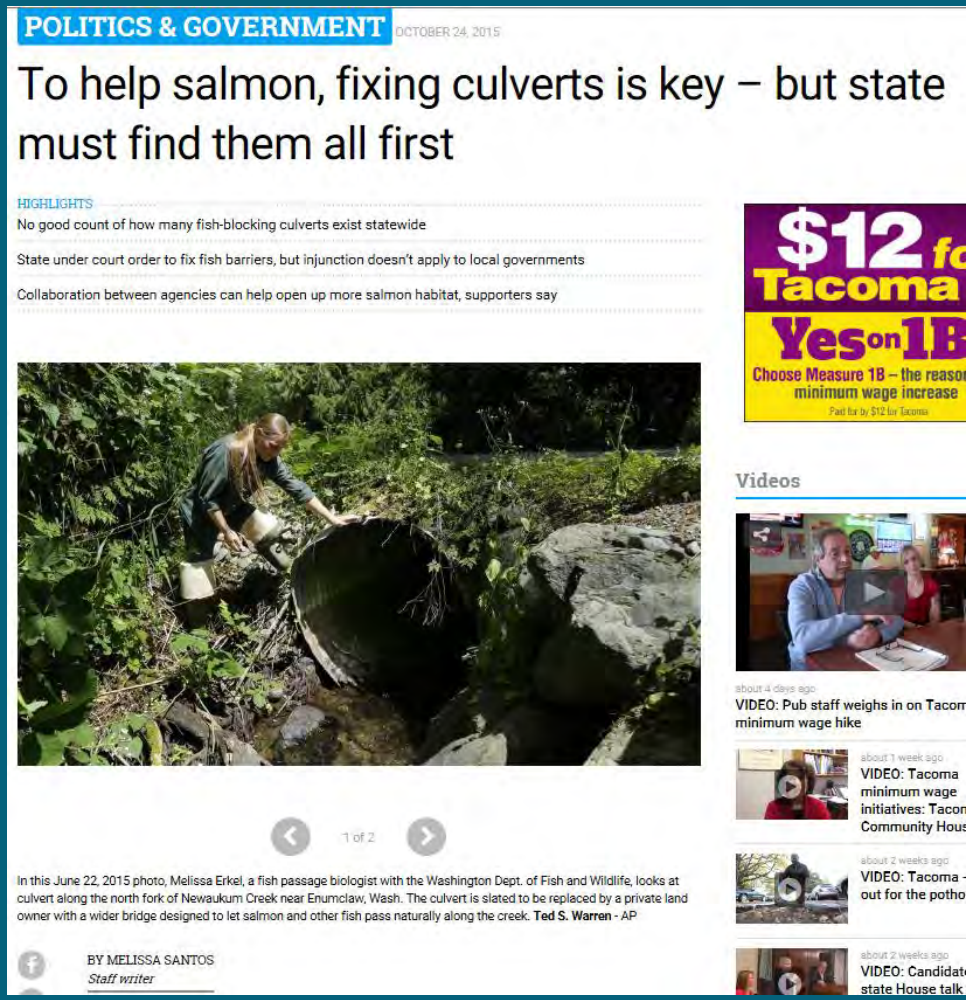
- 224 individual projects nominated (only one east side)
- Board is now validating that no barriers exist downstream of nominated projects
- Next steps: review for readiness, associated barrier corrections, and lineal habitat gain

FBRB next steps

- Develop priority barrier portfolio list (winter)
- Field verify status with local entities (spring)
- Prepare funding package for legislative action (summer)
- Implement communication strategies

Communication Strategies

- FBRB working with Pyramid Communications
- Developing communication framework
- How do we talk about fish passage?



POLITICS & GOVERNMENT OCTOBER 24, 2015

To help salmon, fixing culverts is key – but state must find them all first

HIGHLIGHTS

No good count of how many fish-blocking culverts exist statewide

State under court order to fix fish barriers, but injunction doesn't apply to local governments

Collaboration between agencies can help open up more salmon habitat, supporters say

1 of 2

In this June 22, 2015 photo, Melissa Erkel, a fish passage biologist with the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, looks at culvert along the north fork of Newaukum Creek near Enumclaw, Wash. The culvert is slated to be replaced by a private land owner with a wider bridge designed to let salmon and other fish pass naturally along the creek. **Ted S. Warren** - AP

BY MELISSA SANTOS
Staff writer

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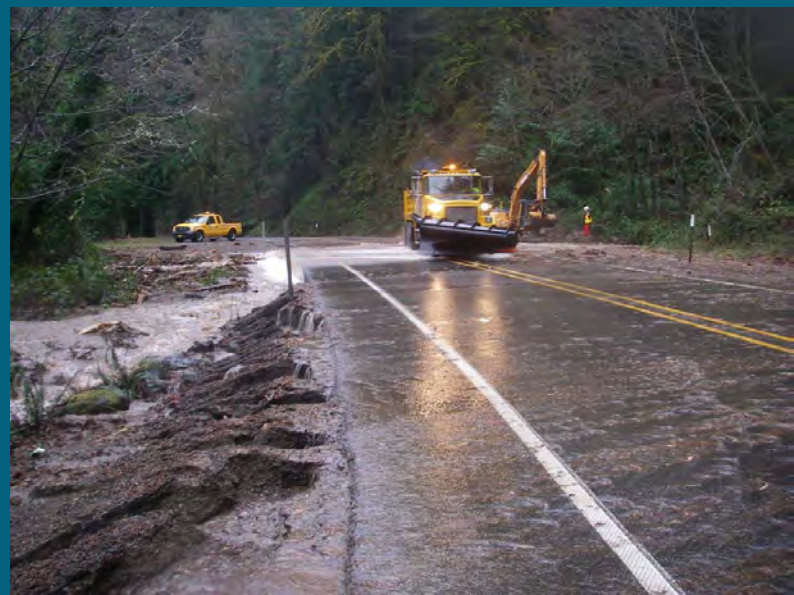
Communications Messages:

- Last great strategic investment for salmon survival
- Estimated 40,000 fish passage barrier statewide
- Repairing fish passage barrier will maximize previous and ongoing restoration and protection investments
- Road related barriers often pose additional threats to nearby landowners and communities



Partners & Coordination

- Regional Salmon Recovery Boards
- Salmon Recovery Funding Board
- NWIFC & tribes
- Lead Entities and watershed leads
- Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups
- Conservation Districts
- Local Governments
- Recreation and Conservation Office
- Transportation Improvement Board
- USACE