

FCRPS BiOp Implementation

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July 2011

Location

Russell Spring Creek, in the Tucannon Subbasin of the Snake River

Biological Objectives

Increase spawning and rearing habitat for listed and non-listed fish

Species

- Snake River fall Chinook
- Snake River Steelhead
- Bull Trout

Partner

- Snake River Salmon Recovery Board
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Bonneville Power Administration
- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

References

Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) 2008 Biological Opinion

FCRPS RPA #35



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www.salmonrecovery.gov

Fish return to Russell Spring Creek

A spring-fed creek, once choked with reed canary grass and rusted-out cars, today is flowing clear and cold – home to newly-hatched steelhead fry.

“We have a customer,” says Eric Hoverson, project manager for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, pointing to a steelhead nest (known as a redd) in Russell Spring Creek. Hoverson spearheaded the creek’s restoration, in the Tucannon subbasin in southeast Washington.

Once prime steelhead and spring chinook habitat, tiny Russell Spring Creek had fallen into decline and neglect. A road culvert blocked the salmon from using the best parts of the stream. Old automobiles parked along the banks in an attempt to shore up the places prone to flooding eventually became submerged. The stream became overgrown and impassable.



Fish managers touring the Russell Spring Creek in early May 2011 spotted salmon redds in the newly-restored creek.

In 2010, the CTUIR removed the reed canary grass and all the debris from the stream channel. While the culvert had to remain in order to keep the road above it accessible, the Tribe made modifications to it, improving passage and increasing the flow by seven-fold. Logs added to the stream channel encouraged the natural meanders that provide quieter spots for young salmon to rest and hide from predators.

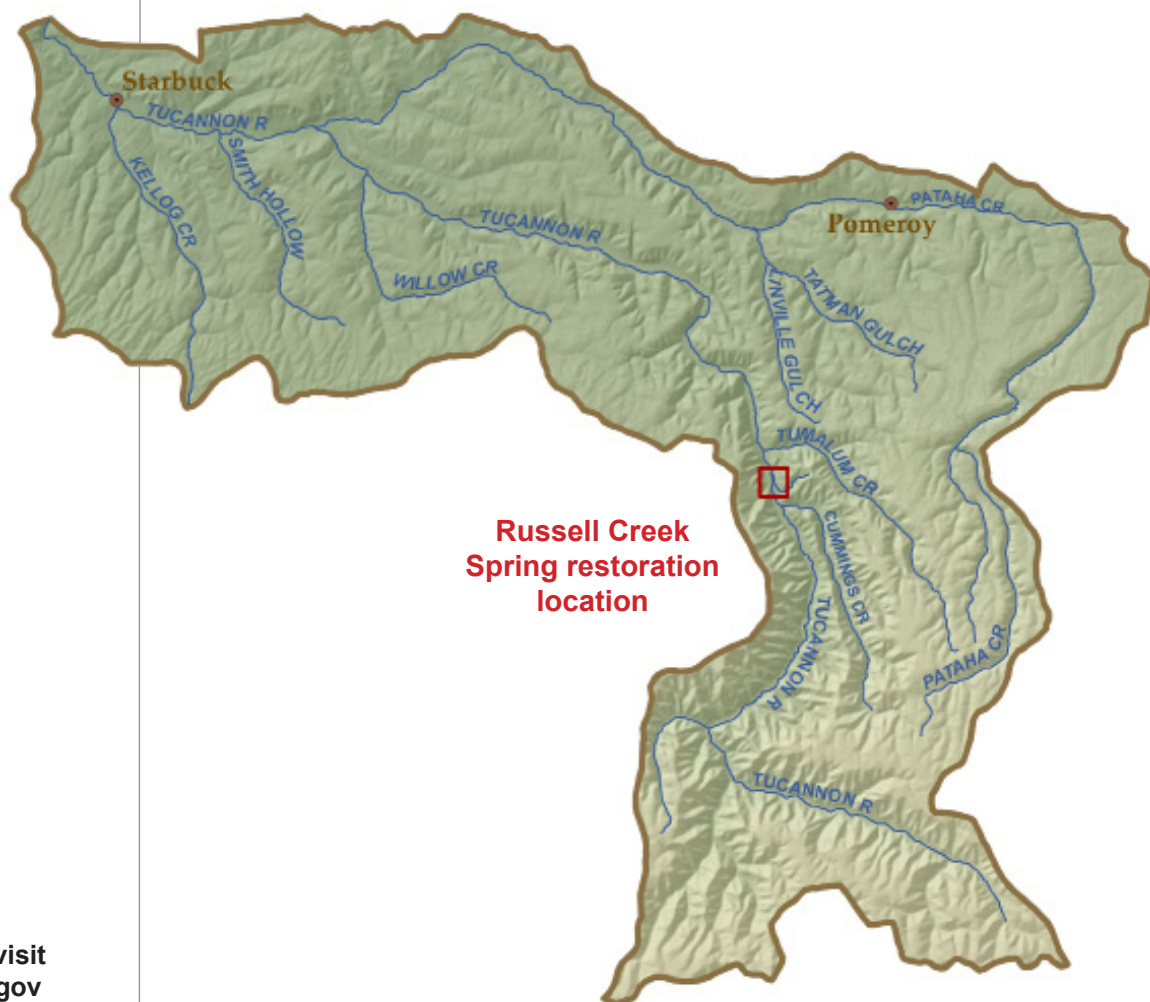


In late 2010, adult steelhead made their way up the Russell Spring Creek from the Tucannon River for the first time in decades, digging nests – known as redds – in the gravel banks. The fry hatched out in early June.

“It was good partnership all around,” says Hoverson, noting that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife staff and local landowners worked together to make it happen. BPA funded the project under the Columbia Basin Fish Accords.

Left: Natural vegetation, rocks and logs placed in the stream provide spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead.

Tucannon Subbasin of the Snake River



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