



COLUMBIA BASIN WATER TRANSACTIONS PROGRAM

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Salmon River near
Stanley, Idaho

2002-013-01 - WATER ENTITY - CBWTP
REPORT COVERS WORK PERFORMED UNDER BPA CONTRACT #
88943

REPORT WAS COMPLETED UNDER BPA CONTRACT # 91074
2008-104-00 - UPPER COLUMBIA LAND & WATER ACQUISITION
REPORT COVERS WORK PERFORMED UNDER BPA CONTRACT #
89000

REPORT WAS COMPLETED UNDER BPA CONTRACT # 91172
2008-206-00 - INSTREAM FLOW RESTORATION
REPORT COVERS WORK PERFORMED UNDER BPA CONTRACT #
73982 REL 140

REPORT WAS COMPLETED UNDER BPA CONTRACT # 73982 REL
169

REPORT DATE RANGE: 10/1/2021 – 9/30/2022

A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP
WITH BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION,
AND NORTHWEST POWER AND CONSERVATION COUNCIL



An angler in Bitterroot River, Montana



The **Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program** (CBWTP) was developed in 2002 to address chronically diminished stream flows in tributaries of the Columbia River.

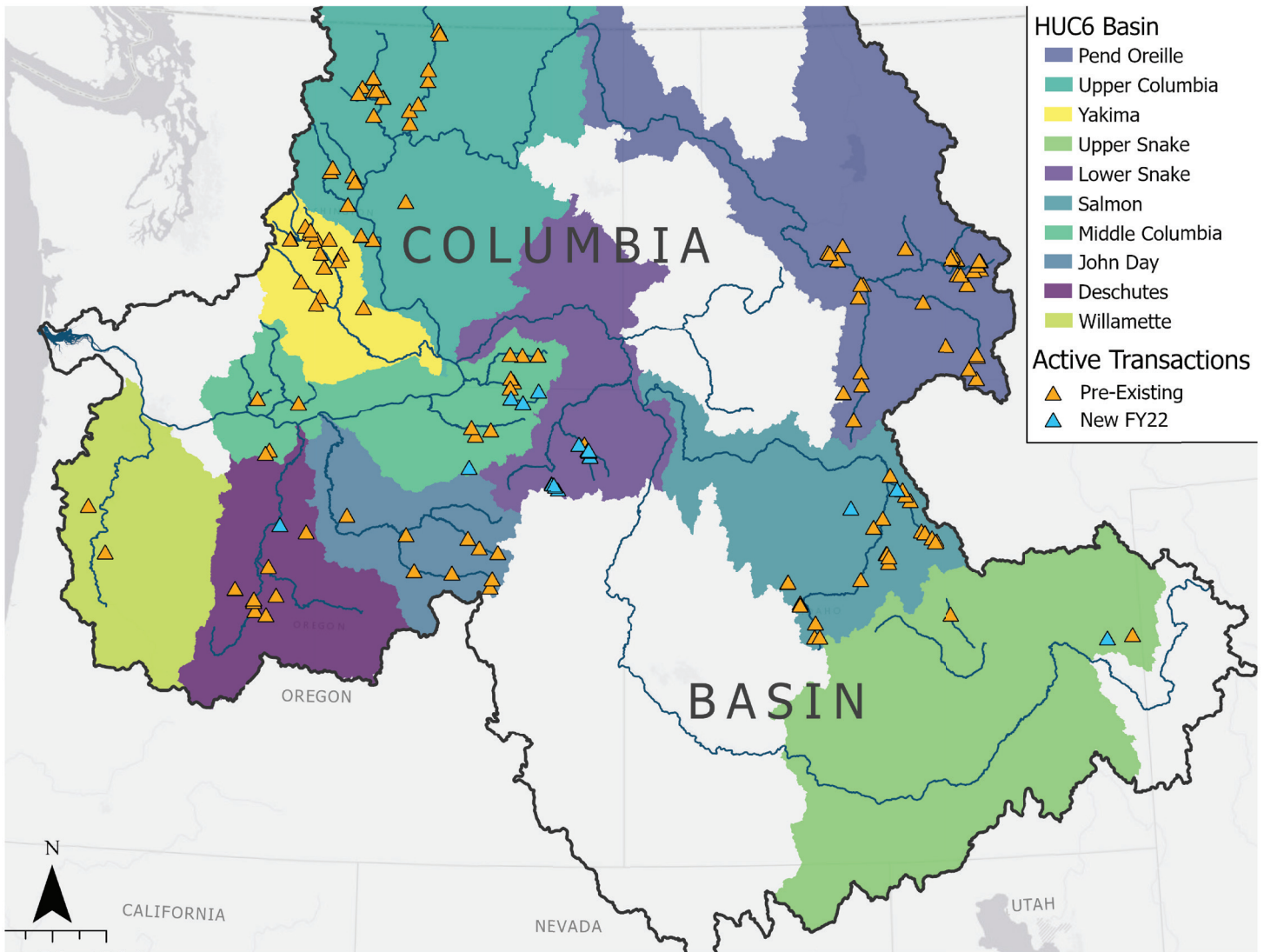
The native fish species of the Columbia River Basin rely on the healthy flow of rivers and streams for their survival, resilience and persistence. But stretches of many streams and rivers in the Basin run low — and sometimes dry — in summer and early fall because of legal water withdrawals. Inadequate stream flows, often the result of competing out-of-stream water uses like crop irrigation, are a key factor limiting the productivity of Pacific salmon, steelhead trout, and a host of resident fish species.

To enhance stream flow, the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program (CBWTP) works through locally based entities to acquire water rights voluntarily from willing landowners. Using temporary and permanent water rights acquisitions and other incentive-based approaches, the CBWTP supports grantees in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana to assist landowners who wish to restore flows to key fish habitat. Voluntary, market-based water transactions provide an effective and fair way to balance out-of-stream water uses with the need to maintain stream flow for imperiled fish.

From 2002 to 2022, the CBWTP has completed over 680 water right transactions, which have restored more than 2.15 million acre-feet of water to key tributary streams in the Columbia Basin.

Funding for this program is provided by the Bonneville Power Administration in cooperation with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council.





THE COLUMBIA BASIN

Conserving fresh water for people *and* fish

The Columbia Basin covers 258,000 square miles, making it one of the largest river basins in the United States. The Basin includes public and private lands, multiple mountain ranges, arid valleys, lush forests, and agricultural lands. The mainstem of the Columbia River rises in British Columbia, Canada, winds its way through Washington State, and forms a significant portion of the border with Oregon before meeting the Pacific Ocean near Astoria, Oregon. This region contains abundant rivers and streams that deliver water to the Columbia River and its tributaries to provide critical fish and wildlife habitat, renewable energy, drinking water, irrigation for agricultural production, and scenery that makes the area a diverse and vibrant ecosystem.

The Columbia Basin is home to several threatened and endangered fish species that depend on the freshwater system to migrate and fulfill their life cycle. However, many of these streams are dewatered due to over-appropriation, irrigation and agricultural practices, climate change, and

drought. A large part of the Columbia Basin receives very little rain. In these arid parts of the Basin, diverting water for on-farm use is often a direct tradeoff with freshwater ecosystem health. The Basin's rivers and streams provide habitat for myriad fish and wildlife species, including some of the region's last remaining wild salmon runs. Healthy fish populations are vital to local economies, serve as a food source for people who rely on subsistence fishing, and are part of the cultural identity of Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest, who define themselves as Salmon People.

In 2002, the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) established a partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, in cooperation with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, to launch the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program to restore flows to key fish habitats through voluntary, market-based temporary and permanent water rights acquisitions and other incentive-based approaches.



Bull trout



Chinook salmon

2022 HIGHLIGHTS

Securing water for fish in a year of program growth



107

Streams with active CBWTP transactions in 2022

Representing the largest water transaction program in the Pacific Northwest, CBWTP enhances streamflows in flow-limited streams throughout the Columbia Basin. CBWTP works through locally based entities to acquire water rights voluntarily from willing landowners. Using temporary and permanent water rights acquisitions and other incentive-based approaches increase flows to benefit native fish species.

This competitive grant program provides support for transaction development, implementation, and monitoring to ensure maximum benefit and compliance of transactions throughout their life cycle. The program supports a network of Qualified Local Entities (QLEs) that includes nonprofits, state agencies, municipalities, and tribes who work to build trust and relationships with water users to develop win-win water solutions. Restoring instream flows requires taking small, incremental steps toward a longer-term vision. CBWTP strives towards permanent instream flow and works to steadily expand the quantity of protected water in key fish streams throughout the Basin, year after year.



21,086

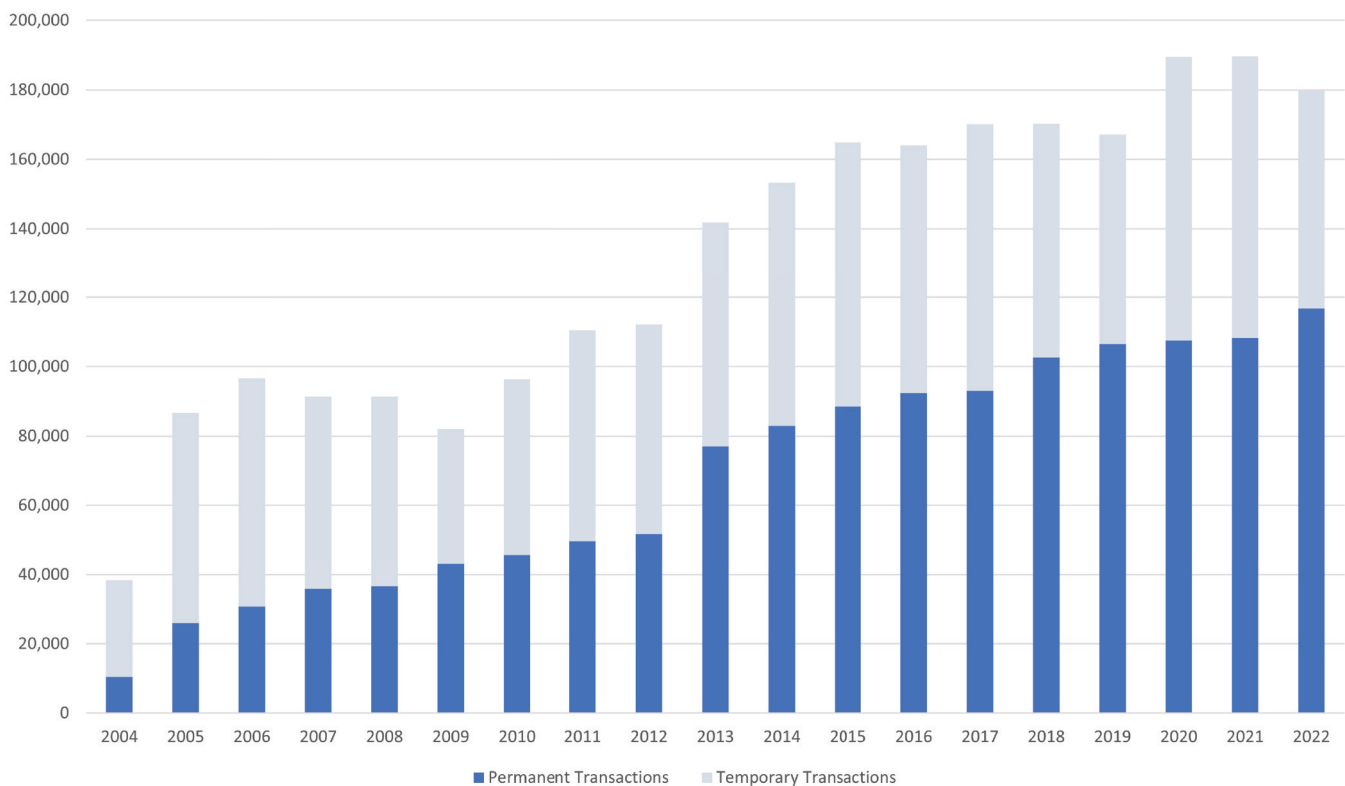
New acre feet protected in stream in 2022

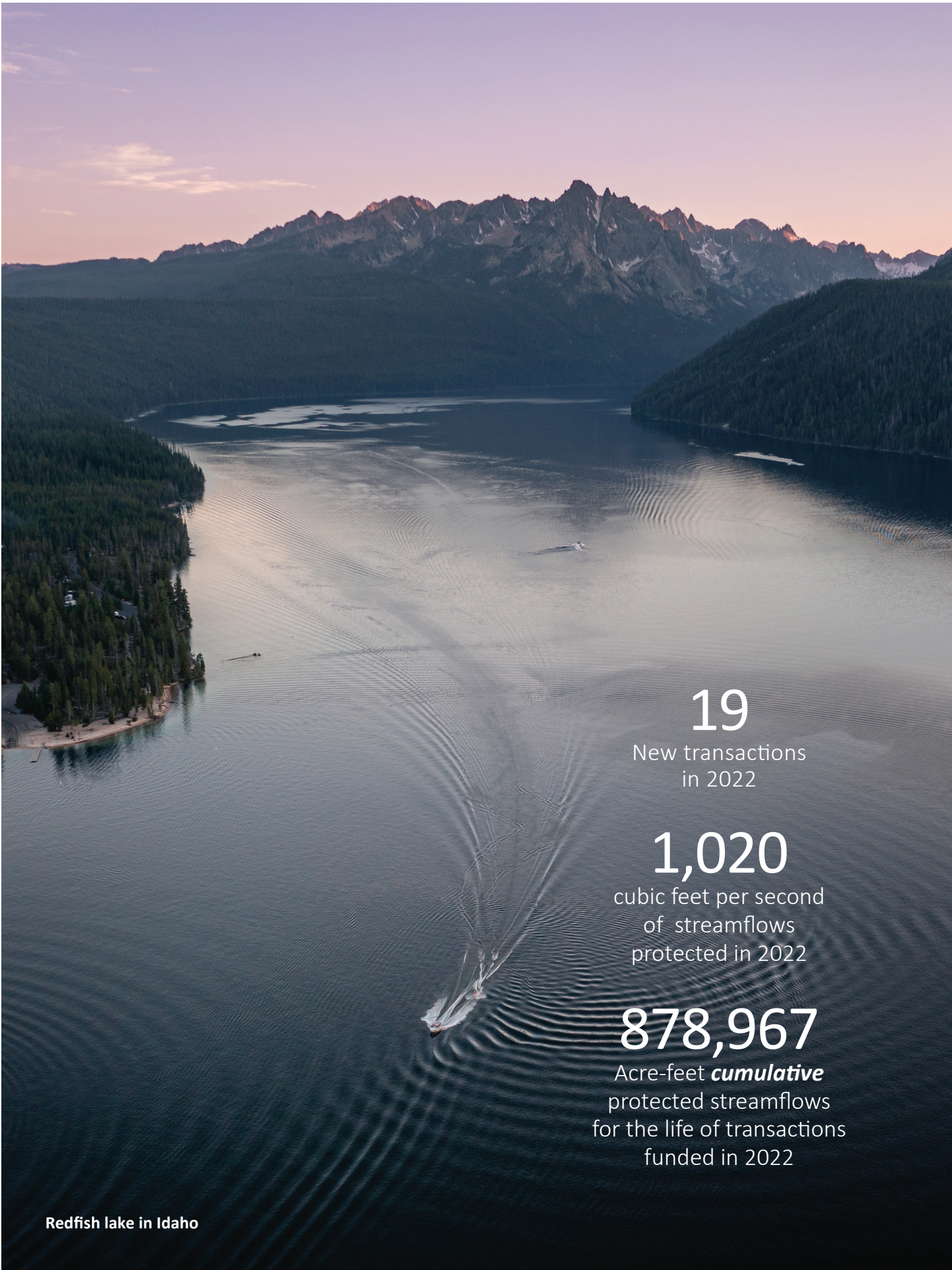
In 2022, CBWTP grantees continued to develop meaningful instream flow transactions and work with landowners while also investing in administrative efficiencies and advancements. For example, all QLEs transferred their transaction and monitoring data to a new and robust database. Some other highlights are the Idaho Water Resource Board's work with the US Forest Service and Western Rivers Conservancy to protect water rights acquire as part of a larger land deal, which also helped fulfill US treaty obligations with the Shoshone-Bannok Tribes. Washington State saw the successful closing of a 26cfs transaction by Trout Unlimited on the mainstream Methow River; the cumulation of multiple years of collaboration with the Barkley Irrigation Company and Methow Valley Irrigation District. These activities, in addition to many more accomplishments, all help to secure water and meet the needs of fish and people in the Columbia Basin.

2022 INVESTMENTS THROUGH THE CBWTP

CHELAN COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCE DEPARTMENT	\$13,750
CLARK FORK COALITION	\$184,639
DESCHUTES RIVER CONSERVANCY	\$224,904
IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES	\$301,297
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION	\$11,743
NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION	\$17,617
NEZ PERCE TRIBE	\$17,616.56
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE	\$52,548
TROUT UNLIMITED - MONTANA WATER PROJECT	\$113,092
TROUT UNLIMITED - OREGON	\$180,117
TROUT UNLIMITED - WASHINGTON WATER PROJECT	\$270,671
WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE	\$95,833
WASHINGTON WATER TRUST	\$369,128
WATER TRANSACTIONS	\$1,644,366
TOTAL	\$3,748,830

Protected Flow in Acre Feet (2003-2022)





19

New transactions
in 2022

1,020

cubic feet per second
of streamflows
protected in 2022

878,967

Acre-feet ***cumulative***
protected streamflows
for the life of transactions
funded in 2022

Redfish lake in Idaho



Bitterroot River in Montana

IDAHO

Identifying, Assessing, Prioritizing and Implementing Water Transactions in the Upper Salmon and Teton River Basins (ID)

Idaho Department of Water Resources

Total payment: \$471,661

Identify, assess, prioritize, and implement new water transactions in the Upper Salmon and Teton River Basins. Project will improve tributary flows for the benefit of Snake River Spring/Summer-run Chinook salmon, Snake River steelhead, and native trout populations.

Increase Flow Restoration Efforts in the Nez Perce Tribal Geographies (ID, OR, WA)

Nez Perce Tribe

Total payment: \$17,617

Increase flow restoration efforts in the Nez Perce tribal geographies. Project will increase tribal capacity to coordinate with other groups developing water transactions within the broad geography of ceded lands, and also enable the Tribe to propose transactions uniquely linked to tribal relationships, tribal treaty rights, and tribal sovereignty.

MONTANA

Water Transaction Development in the Clark Fork River Basin (MT)

Clark Fork Coalition

Total payment: \$184,639

Identify, implement and monitor water transactions in the Clark Fork basin of Montana. Project will improve stream flows and aquatic habitat conditions for native trout.

Support for Water Transfers to Instream Flows (MT)

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

Total payment: \$11,743

Assist organizations developing water transactions with review and coordination of project proposals. Project will efficiently process instream flow water right change applications to legally protect instream water acquired through water right transactions.

Restoring, Reconnecting, and Protecting Instream Flow in the Upper Clark Fork Basin (MT)

Trout Unlimited – Montana Water Project

Total payment: \$179,692

Develop water right leases and transactions that work to augment streamflow and critical habitat for native trout species, including bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout, throughout the Clark Fork River basin, Blackfoot River and Bitterroot River subbasins. Project will reconnect key tributaries to their mainstems and restore chronically dewatered stream reaches.

OREGON

Deschutes Basin Streamflow Restoration (OR)

Deschutes River Conservancy

Total payment: \$252,886

Restore stream flow in Oregon’s Deschutes Basin through water transactions. Project will improve habitat and water quality for native fish, including salmon and federally listed steelhead trout.

Real-Time Instream Flow Assessment of Transactions (OR)

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Total payment: \$52,548

Continue to develop a real-time instream flow tracking system to ensure that Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program transactions are monitored and enforced through an automated program. Project will increase instream flows by ensuring stakeholders are immediately aware when legally protected senior instream flows are not being met and regulation or management adjustments are necessary.

Elevating Instream Flow Enhancement in the Umatilla Tribal Geographies and Northeast Oregon (OR)

Trout Unlimited - Oregon

Total payment: \$983,521

Identify, prioritize and develop water transactions in the Grande Ronde, Wallowa, Umatilla, Walla Walla and John Day River Basins working in collaboration with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Project will improve future flow regimes for ESA-listed salmonids, mitigate for out of stream use, increase habitat quantity and lower water temperatures.

WASHINGTON

Wenatchee Subbasin Instream Flow Improvement Project (WA)

Chelan County Natural Resource Department

Total payment: \$13,750

Develop and implement water transactions in the Wenatchee subbasin in Chelan County, Washington. Project will improve instream flows and restore habitat for native salmon and steelhead populations.

Hydrologic Flow Restoration in the Yakima, Entiat, and Wenatchee Basins (WA)

Trout Unlimited – Washington Water Project

Total payment: \$676,876

Identify, prioritize and develop projects with willing water right holders in the Entiat, Yakima and Wenatchee subbasins of Washington to complete significant instream flow enhancements to priority streams and tributaries. Project will improve tributary instream habitat to benefit listed salmon and other fish species and their habitats.

Elevating Instream Flow Enhancement in the Methow & Okanogan Basins - Colville (WA)

Trout Unlimited – Washington Water Project

Total payment: \$78,644

Identify, prioritize and develop water transactions in the Methow and Okanogan sub-basins of Washington working in collaboration with the Colville Tribe. Project will increase habitat and in-stream flow in priority Colville tributaries and will build capacity for working with agricultural landowners on conservation projects that will benefit Pacific salmon, steelhead and their habitat.



Steelhead trout

Provide Streamflow Monitoring and Water Transaction Support (WA)

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Total payment:..... \$95,833

Provide stream monitoring and technical assistance to all Washington state Qualified Local Entities on prioritization, identification, and development of water right transactions. Project will provide review on monitoring plans to ensure that stream flow and, where appropriate, biological monitoring are incorporated into project monitoring plans.

Stream Flow Restoration to Benefit Salmon, Steelhead and Trout in the Columbia Basin (WA)

Washington Water Trust

Total payment:..... \$146,119

Restore fish-critical streams in the Columbia River Basin by implementing instream flow acquisitions in the Methow, Yakima, Wenatchee, Klickitat, and White Salmon River basins. Project will benefit ESA-listed Chinook salmon and steelhead.

Stream Flow Restoration to Benefit Salmon, Steelhead and Trout in the Columbia Basin - Colville (WA)

Washington Water Trust

Total payment:..... \$98,723

Restore fish-critical streams in the Columbia River Basin by implementing instream flow acquisitions in the Okanogan, Wenatchee, and Methow watersheds. Project will continue its partnership with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation to benefit ESA-listed steelhead, spring Chinook, and bull trout.

Stream Flow Restoration to Benefit Salmon, Steelhead and Trout in the Columbia Basin - Umatilla (OR, WA)

Washington Water Trust

Total payment:..... \$194,814

Restore fish-critical streams in the Columbia River Basin by implementing instream flow acquisitions in the Walla Walla basin. Project will continue its partnership with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation to benefit ESA-threatened summer steelhead and bull trout.

CBWTP FUNDING PARTNERS

Bonneville

POWER ADMINISTRATION



Northwest Power and Conservation Council

With funding from **Bonneville Power Administration** and support from the **Northwest Power and Conservation Council**, NFWF has supported an innovative, grassroots, incentive-based program to improve stream flows for at-risk fish throughout Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. The Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program, founded in 2002, is the first regional effort of its kind in the United States to enhance flows in tributaries through cooperative partnerships between flow restoration practitioners and farmers and ranchers. The program supports a combination of practices to restore instream flows to key Columbia Basin tributaries that support important anadromous and resident fish populations. NFWF is working to better align flow improvement investments with other priority habitat restoration efforts supported by private and public entities in the region.

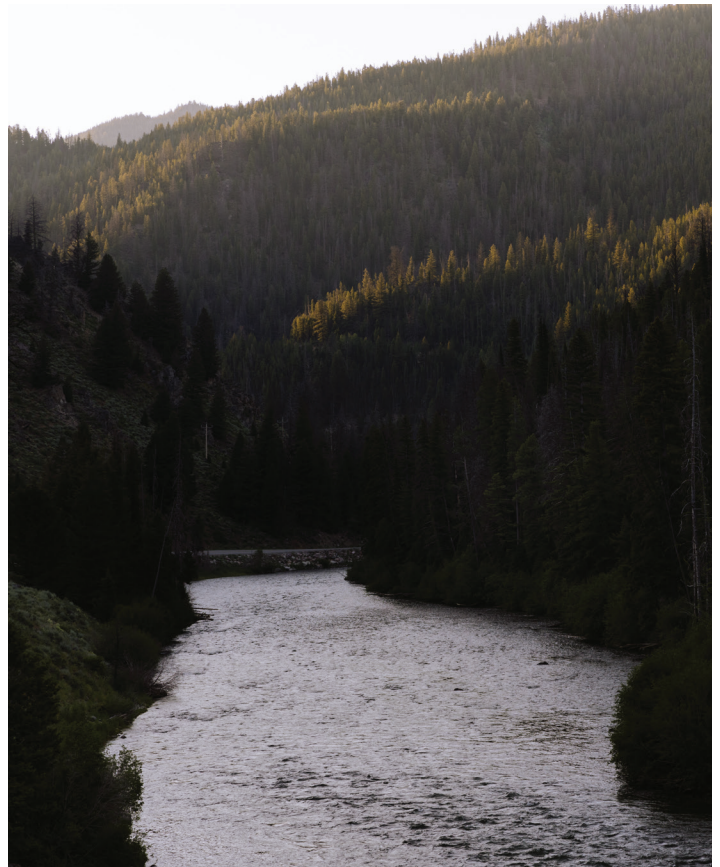
ABOUT NFWF

The **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation** is dedicated to sustaining, restoring and enhancing the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations.

NFWF will advance its mission through innovative public and private partnerships, and by investing financial resources and intellectual capital into science-based programs designed to address conservation priorities and achieve measurable outcomes.

In 36 years, NFWF has awarded more than 19,700 projects to more than 5,000 organizations in the United States and abroad.

In fiscal year 2020, the Foundation invested more than \$398.5 million to support more than 950 conservation projects across the nation. This investment leveraged more than \$303.1 million in matching support from grantees to generate a total conservation impact of more than \$701.6 million. This strong performance in fiscal year 2020 pushed the Foundation's cumulative conservation impact since its founding to \$6.8 billion.



Middle fork of the Salmon River in Idaho

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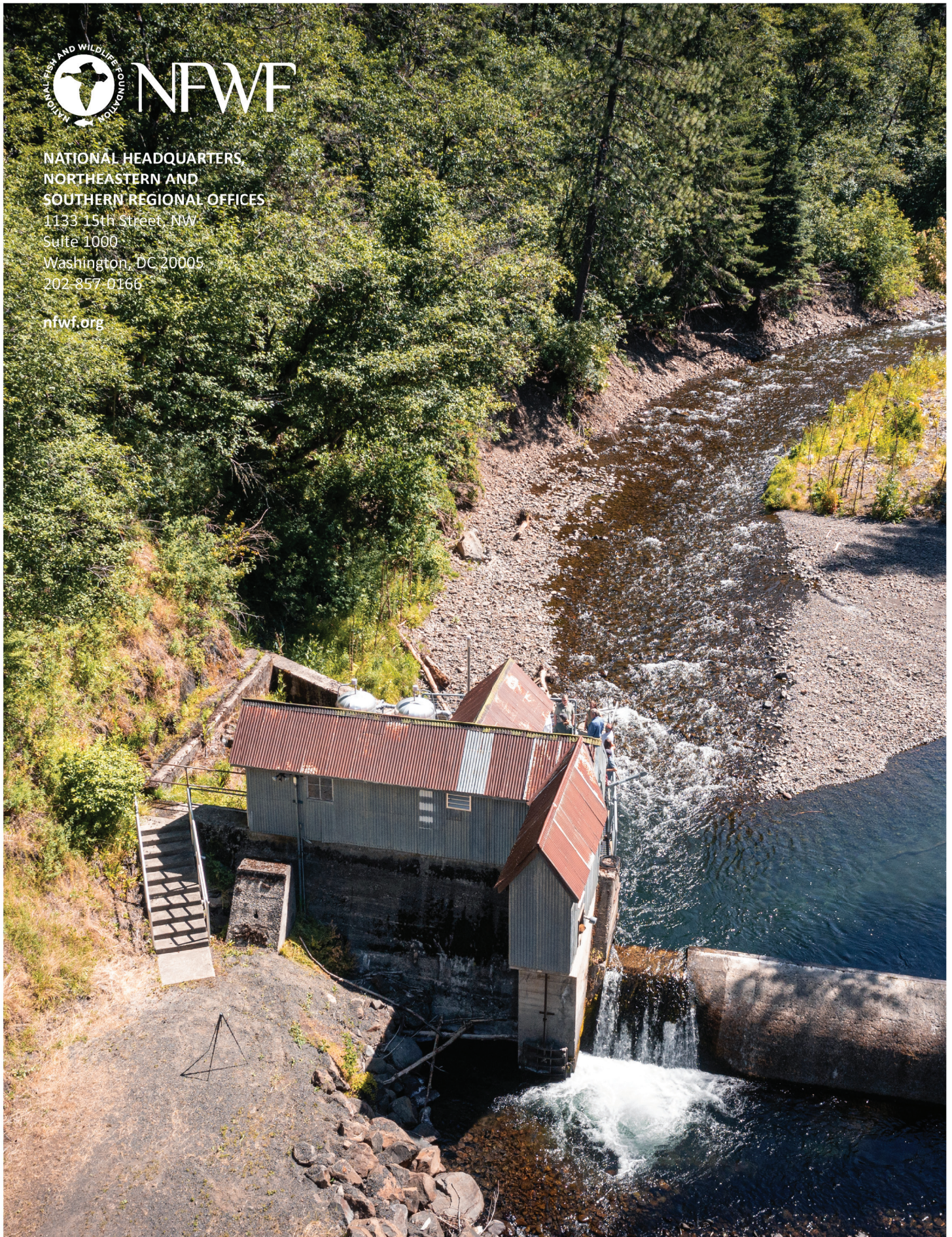


NFWF

**NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS,
NORTHEASTERN AND
SOUTHERN REGIONAL OFFICES**

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nfwf.org



Water diversion site for the city of Walla Walla, Washington