

New strategy will guide fish passage improvements



In 2014, 2SHB 2251 created the Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board to create a statewide strategy for fish barrier removal to maximize the state's investment.

In recent decades, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has worked with local governments and non-profit groups to remove culverts that present a barrier to steelhead and salmon in streams throughout the state. Since 1999, the timber industry has also restored thousands of miles of spawning and rearing habitat under the terms of Washington's Forest and Fish Law.

It is now clear that many of these projects would have been more beneficial to migratory fish if they had been coordinated on a watershed-by-watershed basis. In many cases, barriers further downstream have continued to block fish passage due to a lack of system-wide coordination.

In 2014, the Washington State Legislature created the Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board to correct this situation and create a statewide strategy for fish barrier removal to maximize the state's investment. That strategy is especially important as lawmakers determine how to meet the cost of a 2013 court decision requiring the state to correct up to 900 additional fish barriers on state lands.

Statewide strategy focuses on key goals

2SHB 2251, approved last year, created the Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board to establish a new strategy for fish barrier removal and administer grant funding available for that purpose. The legislation established several key objectives for the new strategy including:

- **Coordination** with all relevant state agencies and local governments to maximize state investments in removing fish barriers.
- **Realizing** economies of scale by bundling projects whenever possible.
- **Streamlining** the permitting process whenever possible without compromising public safety and accountability.

Chaired by WDFW, the board includes representatives of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Department of Natural Resources, Tribes, city and county governments and the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office. In developing the statewide strategy, the board has been working closely with salmon recovery organizations and expects to approve statewide guidelines by June 2015.

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Local governments and private landowners

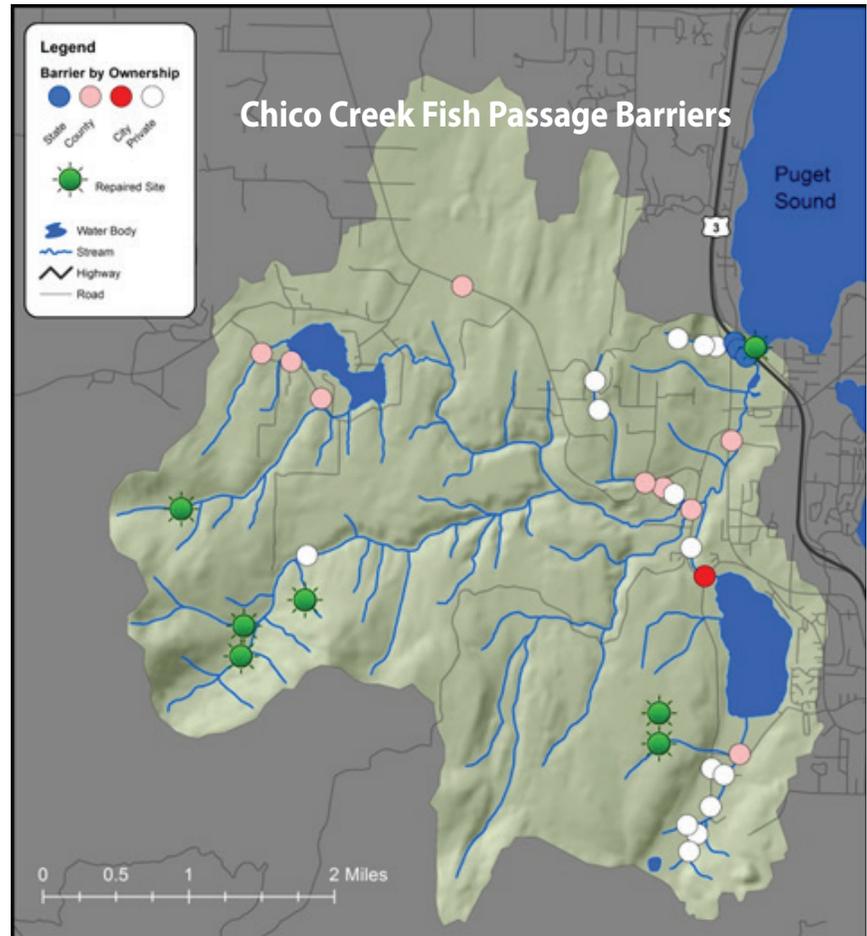
While the court decision in the “culvert case” has focused public attention on state-owned fish-passage barriers, there are far more culverts needing attention on property owned by local governments and private landowners. For that reason, last year’s legislation recognizes that any statewide strategy cannot be restricted to barriers on state land. To do so would only continue the problem of “stand-alone” projects that has undercut past efforts to improve fish passage.

Last year’s legislation makes it clear that these projects will not only be considered in the statewide plan but will also be eligible for funding available through state grant programs.

Chico Creek: Case study for coordination

Chico Creek watershed has 17 miles of potential habitat for anadromous fish, annually producing tens of thousands of chum and coho salmon important for tribal and recreational fisheries and to the local economy. However, there are 22 barriers restricting passage to upstream habitat for these species, as well as steelhead and sea-run cutthroat.

To date, approximately \$1.53 million has already been invested on fish passage projects in the watershed including collaborative efforts by Kitsap county, Suquamish Tribe, the state, and the forest industry. The total cost for replacing all of the fish passage barriers in Chico Creek is estimated to be approximately \$65 million, which includes the cost of correcting 22 barriers owned by various jurisdictions (state, city, county and private owners).



WSDOT is already working on a design to replace its barrier in the lower watershed at an estimated cost of \$47 million. So an investment of \$18 million would repairs the remaining barriers to the upstream habitat.

The Chico Creek watershed is one of the most productive systems for wild salmon in the Kitsap Peninsula. The watershed has already been inventoried, and all barriers have been identified. Correcting these barriers would not only maximize the benefits of previous culvert projects on the creek, but would also enhance other restoration projects such as the of large wood and riparian plantings.

A stable funding source that targets fish barrier removals within the highest priority streams/sub-basins is needed to move forward on Chico Creek. This would allow for synergy with state barrier corrections that can produce economy-of-scale savings for projects proposed by state agencies, local governments, and private landowners.

Preliminary priority watersheds for Fish Barrier Removal Board consideration as provided by the Salmon Recovery Regions. These data are draft and are for discussion purposes until validated by the regions. 12/16/14.

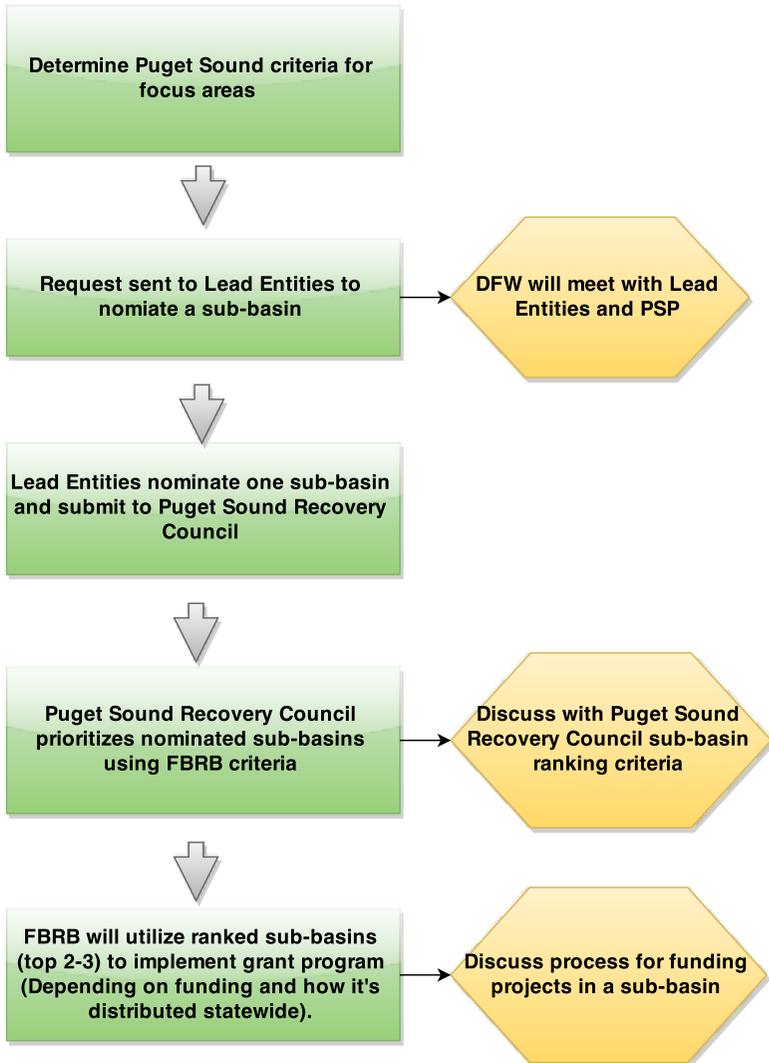
STATUS OF INFORMATION

Upper Columbia	Puget Sound	Hood Canal	Snake	Coast	Yakima	Lower Columbia
Adequate but will check in	Developing prioritization process	Revisit and clarify request	Adequate but will check in			

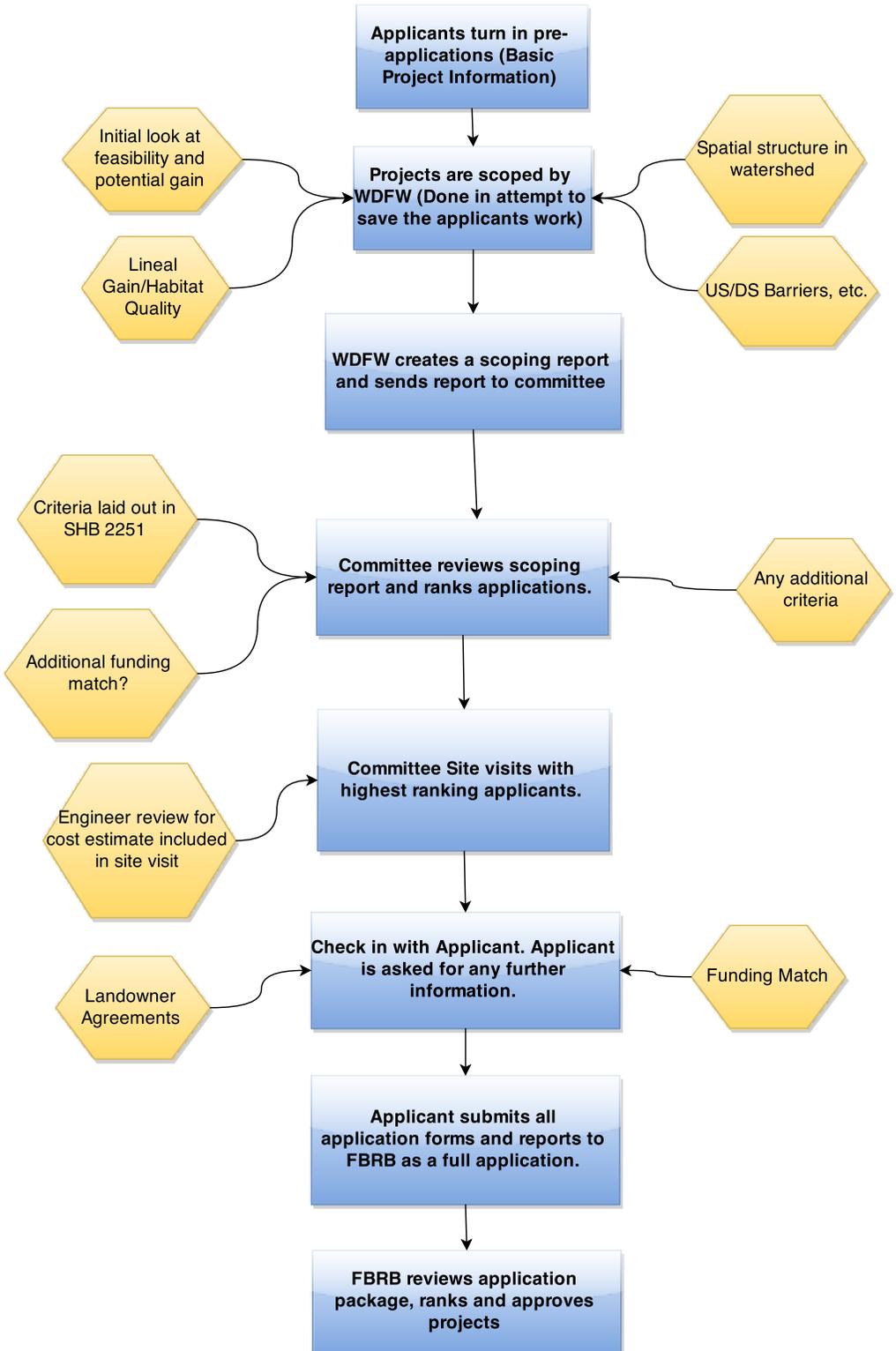
Upper Columbia	Tier	Puget Sound	Hood Canal	Snake	Coast	Yakima	Tier	Lower Columbia
Wild Horse Spring Cr	1	Skagit	Hood Canal Bridge	Mill Cr diversion	Sol Duc	Manastash	1	Mill-Abernathy-Germany
Chiliwist Cr	2	Nooksack	Kilisut	~Grande Ronde	Queets-Clearwater	Wilson-Naneum-Coleman-Cherry	1	Coweeman
Nine Mile Cr	2	West Sound (Chico)	Skokomish SF cascades and NF dam	~Snake	Upper Chehalis	Taneum	1	NF Lewis
Upper Omak Cr	2	Kennedy-Goldsborough	Snow - Salmon		Naselle	Swauk	1	EF Lewis
Siwash Cr	3	Deschutes				Shinando	2	
Gold Cr	2	Chambers-Clover				Cowiche	2	
Beaver Cr	2	N. Olympic Penn						
Early Winters Cr	3							
Lower Chewuch R.	3							

Upper Methow R.	3							
Upper Middle Methow	3							
Middle Wenatchee	2							
Chiwawa	2							
Icicle	2							
Chumstick	3							
Mission	3							
Peshastin	3							
Mad R.	3							

Process to Determine Focus Areas in Puget Sound



FBRB Proposed Grant Option 1



Grant Option 2 (example is for Puget Sound)

Project Lead Entity/Broker Option:

- Choose focus sub-basin from ranked list provided by Puget Sound Recovery Council.
- FBRB or WDFW will analyze barriers to be fixed.
- FBRB or WDFW will then choose which streams are priorities within the chosen sub-basin.
- Lead Entity or broker will then receive funding for coordination, feasibility and scoping within the prioritized streams designated in the previous step.
- Lead Entity/Broker develops a ranked project package and submits for FBRB review.
- FBRB reviews ranked list and approves projects for funding.
- Lead Entity/Broker facilitates sponsors for implementing approved projects.