

2015 stream surveys in the Mid Columbia region

The Watershed Health Monitoring (WHM) program samples randomly-selected streams and rivers across the state to provide a consistent, objective picture of habitat and biological conditions and to track trends.

WHM is a program designed to answer questions about the overall condition of watersheds.

Monitoring locally to answer big questions

During our monitoring, we at the Department of Ecology sample fish and amphibians, macroinvertebrates, and algae. The status of these biological communities gives us insight into the health of the watershed. We also gather chemical and physical habitat data to help us understand factors affecting overall watershed health.

The data we gather addresses two federal laws, the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act. The WHM program helps the Clean Water Act by monitoring the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of Washington's streams and rivers through time. It helps the Endangered Species Act determine if a species of fish can be removed from the Endangered Species list by analyzing the physical conditions that affect the species' continued existence.

How are the sampling sites selected?

To evaluate watershed status and trends, we use a statistical survey design to get an accurate picture of large regions without an exhaustive sampling effort. In other words, instead of conducting a census of every stream, we randomly choose sites to sample. Those sites represent the larger stream network.

In this program, we sample eight regions across the state, on a rotating basis. During 2015, we will collect samples at 50 streams and rivers in the Mid Columbia region between July 1 and October 15. We first sampled this region in 2011. We will return to half of those old sites in 2015.

The map on the back of this page shows the different regions, with past sampling sites.

Why does it matter?

Aquatic life, including salmon and trout, depends on healthy watersheds.

Standardized, representative watershed health data lets us share information about what habitat needs protection and restoration.

Web resources to learn more about Watershed Health Monitoring

Watershed Health Monitoring
www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/ep/stsmf/index.html

This work informs the *State of Salmon in Watersheds* biennial report
<http://stateofsalmon.wa.gov/>

Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy for Watershed Health and Salmon Recovery
www.rco.wa.gov/documents/monitoring/Executive_Report_final.pdf

Ecology contact

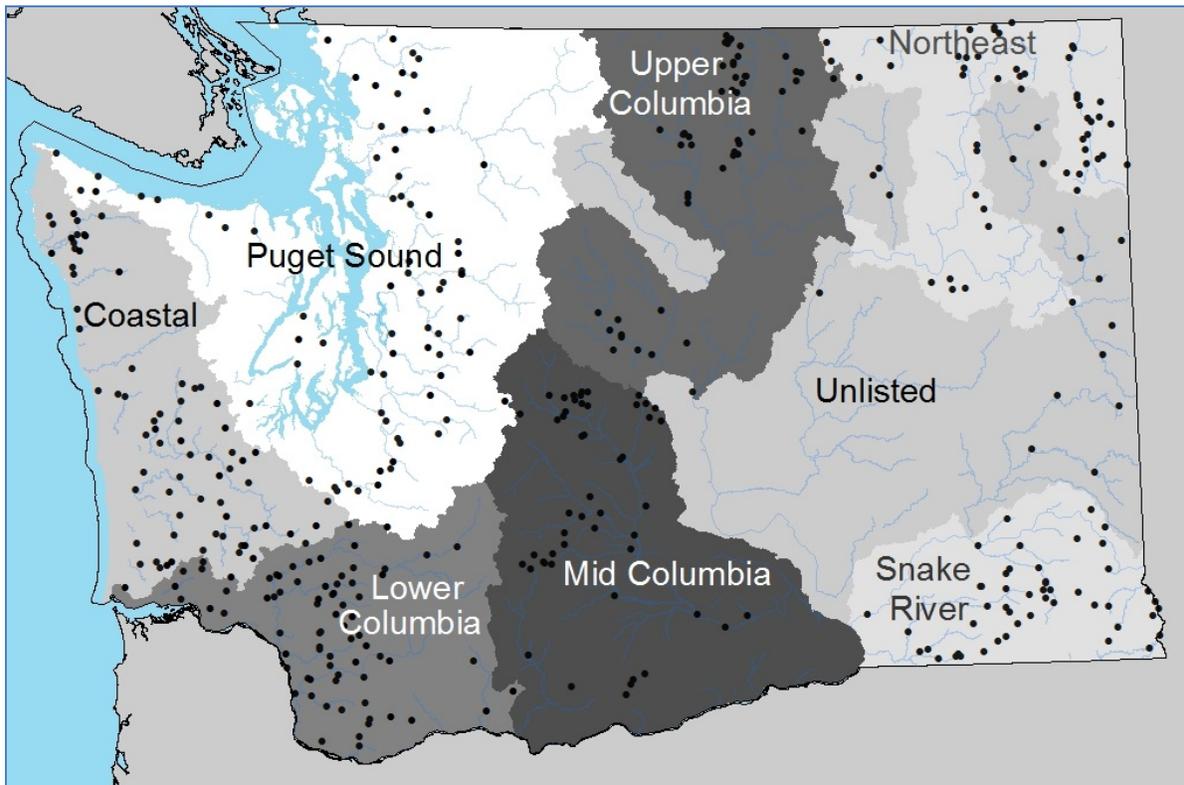
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Map of Status and Trends Regions for the Watershed Health Monitoring (WHM) program

Dots signify locations of previous field sampling (2009-2014) under the WHM program.
The Mid Columbia region will be sampled for the second time in 2015.

History and background information

The WHM program was designed with direction from Washington's Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health, a multi-agency group responsible for coordinating actions related to this type of monitoring. Data collection began in 2009, and the first full cycle through the state was completed in 2012. To date, the Department of Ecology and our partners have sampled over 550 unique sites across the state for the program.

Ecology respects private property

The Department of Ecology will always ask landowners for permission to access streams on their property. Our employees will not enter private lands unless authorized to do so by landowners.

Reports

Results of this monitoring are provided on our Watershed Health Monitoring webpage:
<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/eimreporting/Stream/STREAMSearch.aspx>

This focus sheet is available on the Department of Ecology's website at:
<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/SummaryPages/1503005.html>