

Cowlitz Indian Tribe



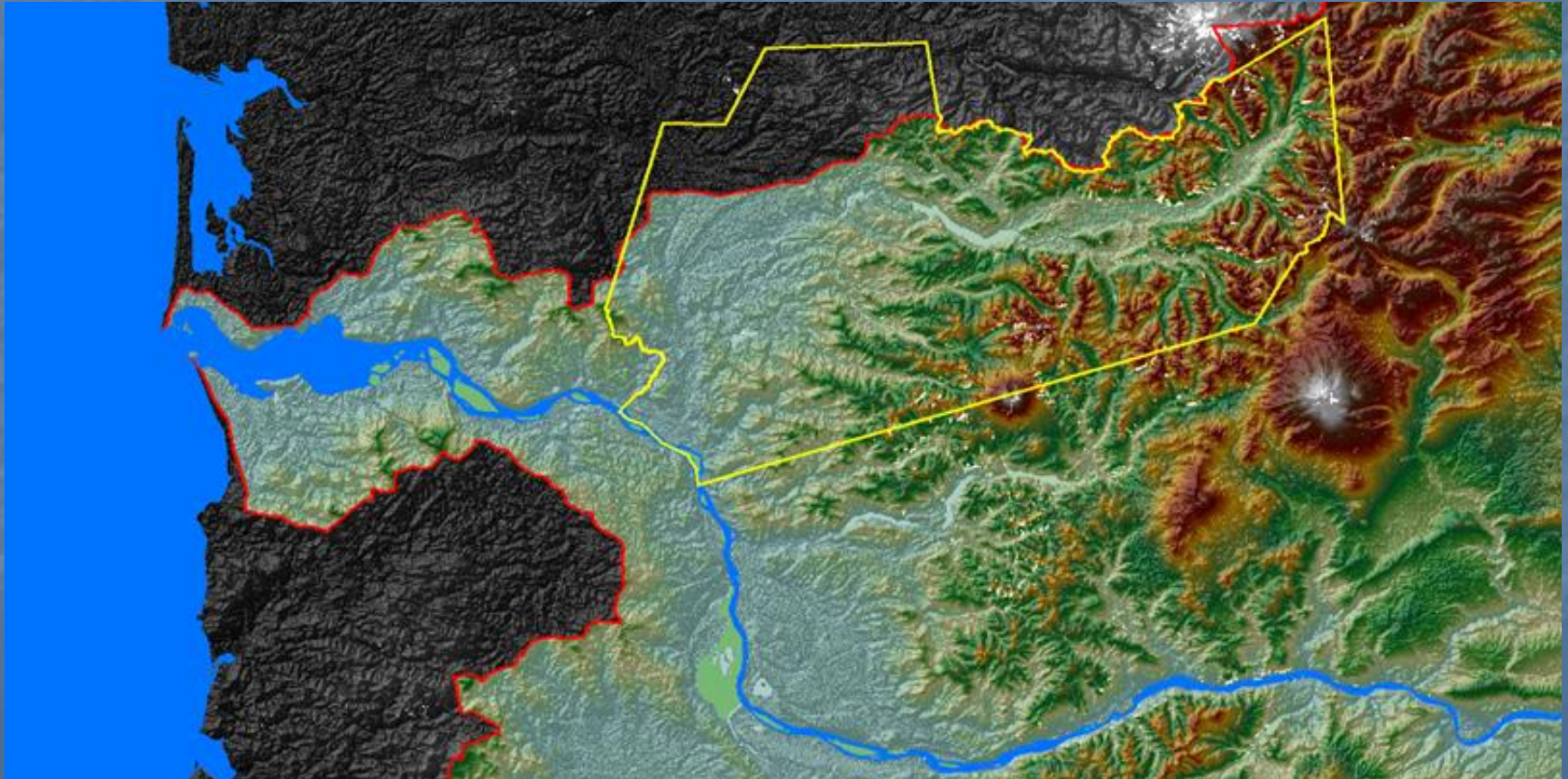
05/15/2012 presentation: The Columbia River Estuary Conference

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History Overview

- Negotiated at the Chehalis River Treaty Council in 1855 (negotiations failed).
- 1855 – 1900: Many members scattered to different areas of SW Washington & NW Oregon, some driven by force to other reservations.
- Some families were able to survive and stay in homelands and others returned after forced removal.
- Pursued Congressional Recognition during early 1900s (17 bills before Congress; one bill that passed both houses vetoed by Calvin Coolidge in 1928).

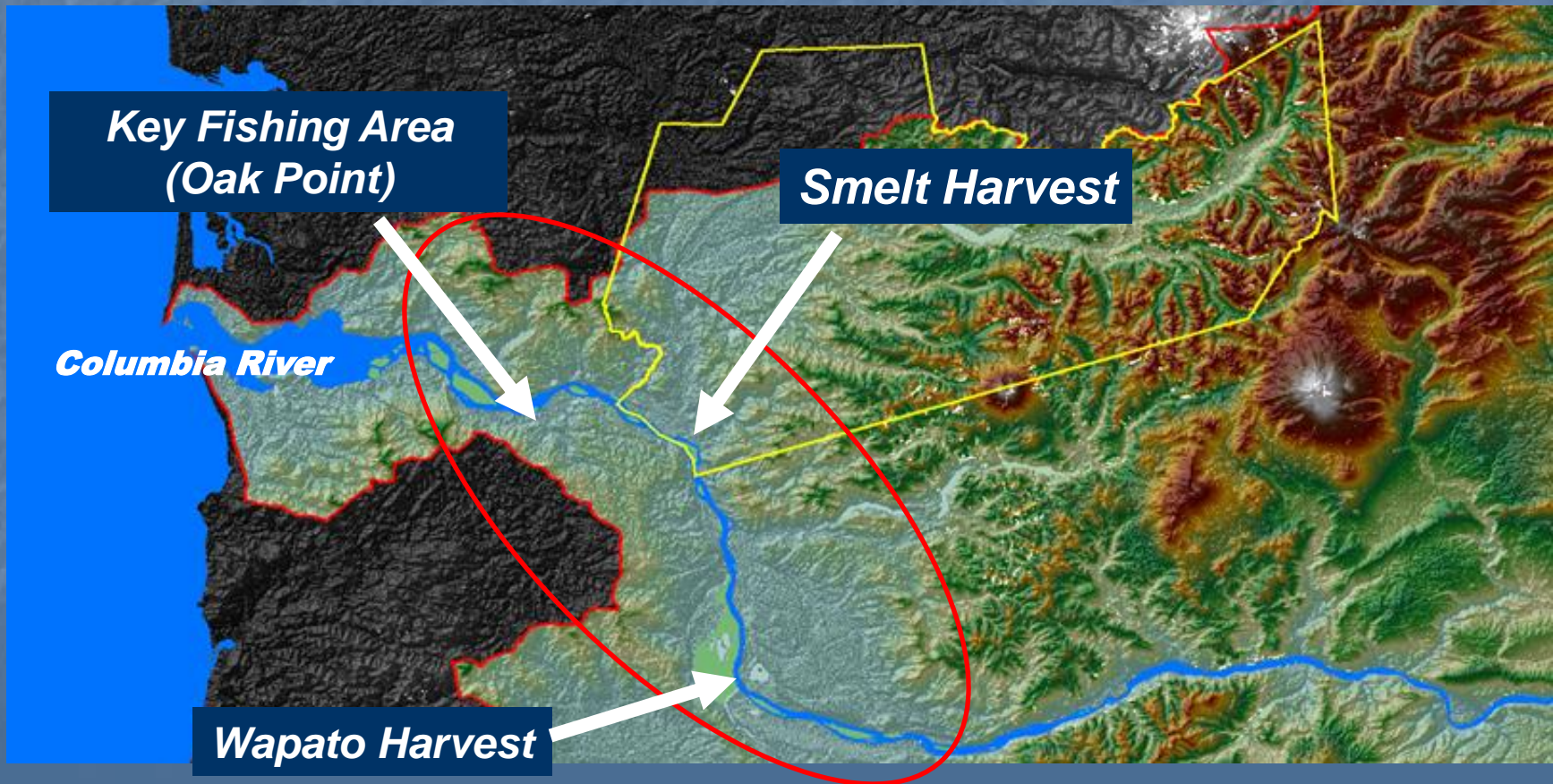
- Pursued land claims under Docket 218 with the Indian Claims Commission. In 1973, ICC determined 1.66 million acres exclusively used and occupied by the Cowlitz People.
- Became *Federally Acknowledged Tribe* in 2000 (appeal of decision upheld in 2002).



Lower Columbia region Culturally Important to Tribe

Provided For:

- Resource Harvest, Inter-Tribal Trading, Travel Corridors, Inter-Tribal Gatherings, etc.
- Our environment is a part of traditions, legends, folklore and many other components of our way of life which is important to existence.



Cowlitz Indian Tribe Natural Resources Department (NRD)

Mission:

To protect, conserve, restore and promote culturally-relevant species and landscapes integral to the unique identity of the Cowlitz People. To further educate the community and inspire future leaders and participants in this vision.

Columbia River Estuary

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe has been working on four primary activities within the Estuary:

- Habitat Restoration**
- Smelt Research & Recovery**
- Columbian White-tailed Deer Recovery**
- Columbia River Treaty Review**

Habitat Restoration



**Overall strategy:
Restore hydrology
and functions to
support ecology of
culturally important
plants and animals
by:**

- Understanding the ecology of culturally significant plants and animals.
- Find where those functions still exist on the landscape.
- Enhance those functions and ecologies where possible.
- Steward and maintain those places into perpetuity.
- Restore degraded habitat where opportunity and needs arise.

Challenges & Opportunities



Eulachon or Smelt

- November 2007 Cowlitz Tribe petitions the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) describing severely declining Eulachon runs.
- March 2010 NMFS lists Eulachon as “Threatened” under ESA.
- Historic Eulachon runs in northern California and Oregon rivers are already lost, or nearly so.
- The bulk of spawning for the entire range of Eulachon occurs in the tributary rivers entering the Columbia River estuary below Bonneville Dam.



2011

Final Critical Habitat for the Southern DPS of Eulachon Northern Oregon & Washington

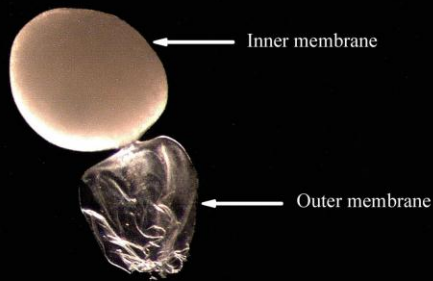


Legend

-  Designated Critical Habitat for Southern DPS of Eulachon
-  State Boundary
-  Cities and Towns

Cowlitz Tribe smelt research program has been working with WDFW, ODFW, and NMFS to understand the extant of their range in the Lower Columbia River & tributary system.

Current Efforts

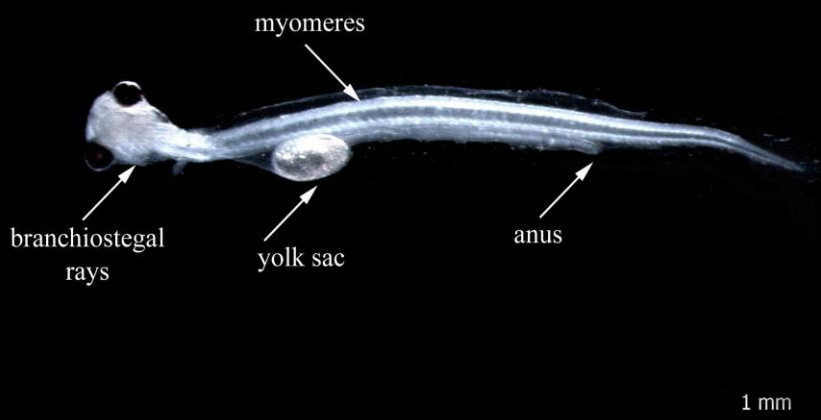


- **Collecting Data for 3 freshwater life stages (adult, egg, larvae).**

- **Understanding Habitat requirements: Flows, upstream extent, space & time among & within between river variance.**

- **To understand highest value life stage (eggs): i.e. Sand Waves show to be the preferred habitat for eggs.**

- **Working with Regulatory Agencies on the development of protection measures.**



Columbia White-tailed Deer Restoration



- Began a Wildlife Program with a successful grant application to the US Fish & Wildlife Service's Tribal Wildlife Grant Program.
- Implemented a project in an effort to establish a new sub-population of deer upstream of Longview, WA.

- Continue to monitor deer from translocation effort and working with State and Federal agencies on follow up restoration activities.
- Have future plans to work toward their recovery and ESA delisting.



Columbia River Treaty



- Agreement in 1964 between the US and Canada for Columbia River Water Management for the Benefit of Hydro-Power and Flood Control.
- Treaty has no provisions in regards to Ecosystem Health.
- 15 Columbia Basin Tribes are working with other regional sovereigns (States, and the Federal Government) to review the Treaty.
- tribes are pushing to have ecosystem function addressed under the Treaty Review and to have it become part of a new operating system of the Columbia Basin.

Flow Management

- Timing of freshets
- Size of freshets
- Water temperatures

Impacts to LC Region

- Loss of Habitat Area
- Decreased function of remaining habitat
- Invasive Species

Would like
Treaty to
Address

Currently
Implementing
Restoration
Activities

Effects

- Declined abundance of Culturally relevant species



Future Goals



- Continue to maintain partnerships with natural resources practitioners in the Estuary and build new relationships.
- Work to build upon current science within the estuary.
- Identify opportunities and implement activities to increase available habitat within the estuary for salmon, smelt, Columbian White-tailed Deer, etc.
- Maintain commitments toward long-term goals of culturally sensitive resource conservation & recovery.



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