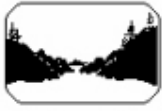


Letter to the Editor, October 18, 2008



The Enterprise

220 Jewett Blvd, PO Box 218, White Salmon, WA 98672, Phone: 509.493.2112

Salmon habitat above dam is extensive

Dear Editor,

Your Condit Dam article last week (Oct. 2 issue) indicated that there are only 2 miles of salmonid habitat above the dam.

This is contrary to what Carl Dugger said during his talk at the White Salmon Library back on Dec 6, 2006. Carl retired as Regional Habitat Program Manager after 30 years with Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife. (The following paraphrases a summary which appeared in The Enterprise on 14 Dec 2006.)

Carl said that above Condit Dam, the White Salmon and its tributaries provide up to 26 miles of spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead. He said steelhead can pass falls as high as 12 to 14 feet, provided they have a sufficient plunge pool. The barrier to steelhead is the 27' high Big Brother Falls at river mile 16.2 while BZ Falls two miles downstream is the likely barrier for salmon.

BZ Falls is approximately 11 miles above the dam.

For Buck Creek, add about two miles of salmon habitat; Mill Creek, a little over one mile; Rattlesnake Creek about 2 miles; Indian Creek just over one mile; and Spring Creek about one-half mile (due to artificial barriers). Hence the total above-dam habitat may be closer to 17 miles for salmon.

It's worth noting that salmon are primarily mainstream spawners and the White Salmon River's tributaries are small for Chinook. Returning Coho, which are smaller and better jumpers, will make better use of the tributaries for spawning, and their juveniles will thrive in the White Salmon's many large pools.

Ed. LaMotte
Underwood