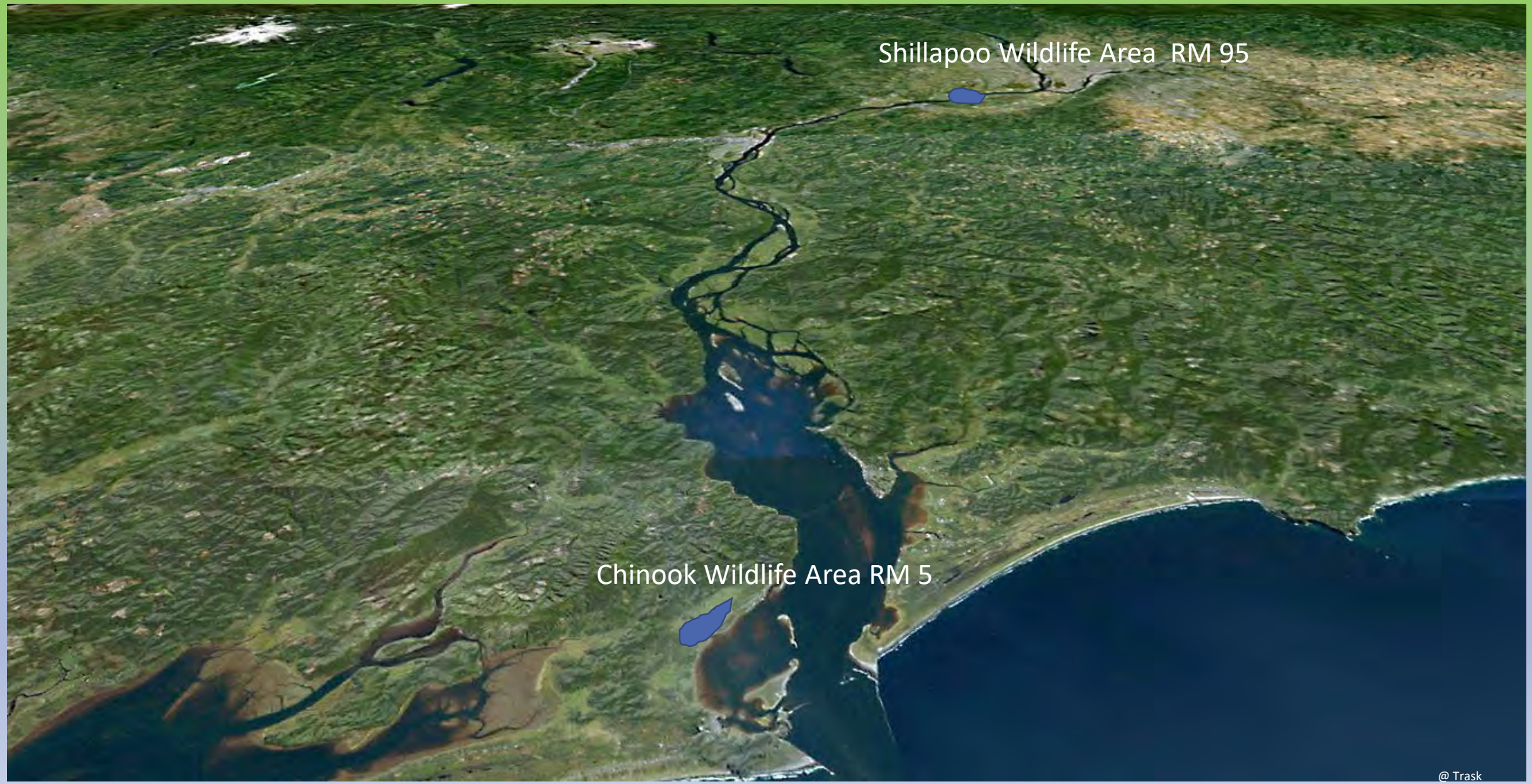
Importance of Community Engagement in Public Lands Restoration on the Lower Columbia River

Alex Uber

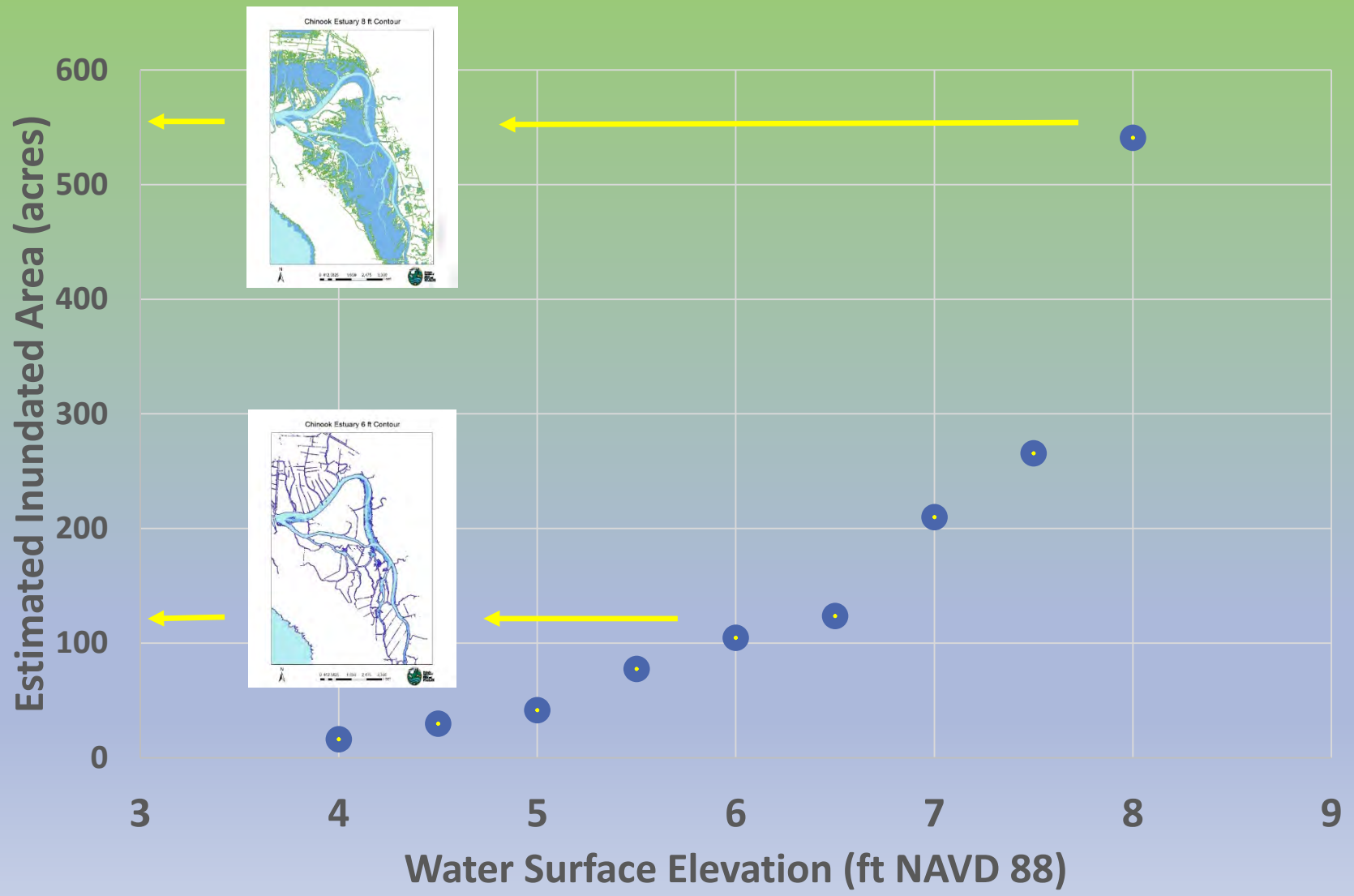
WDFW Region 5 Ridgefield WA

WDFW Wildlife Areas

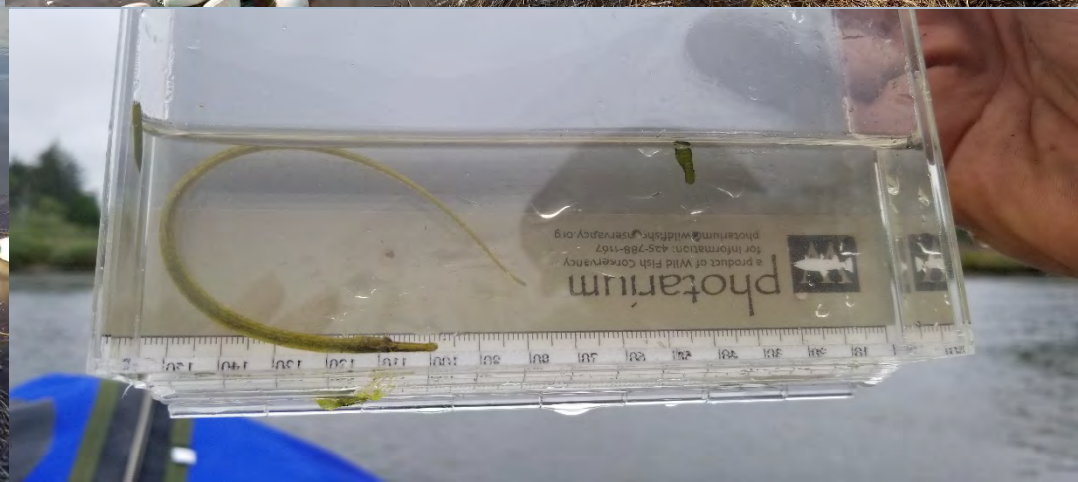


Chinook: ‘Working Lands’ Example

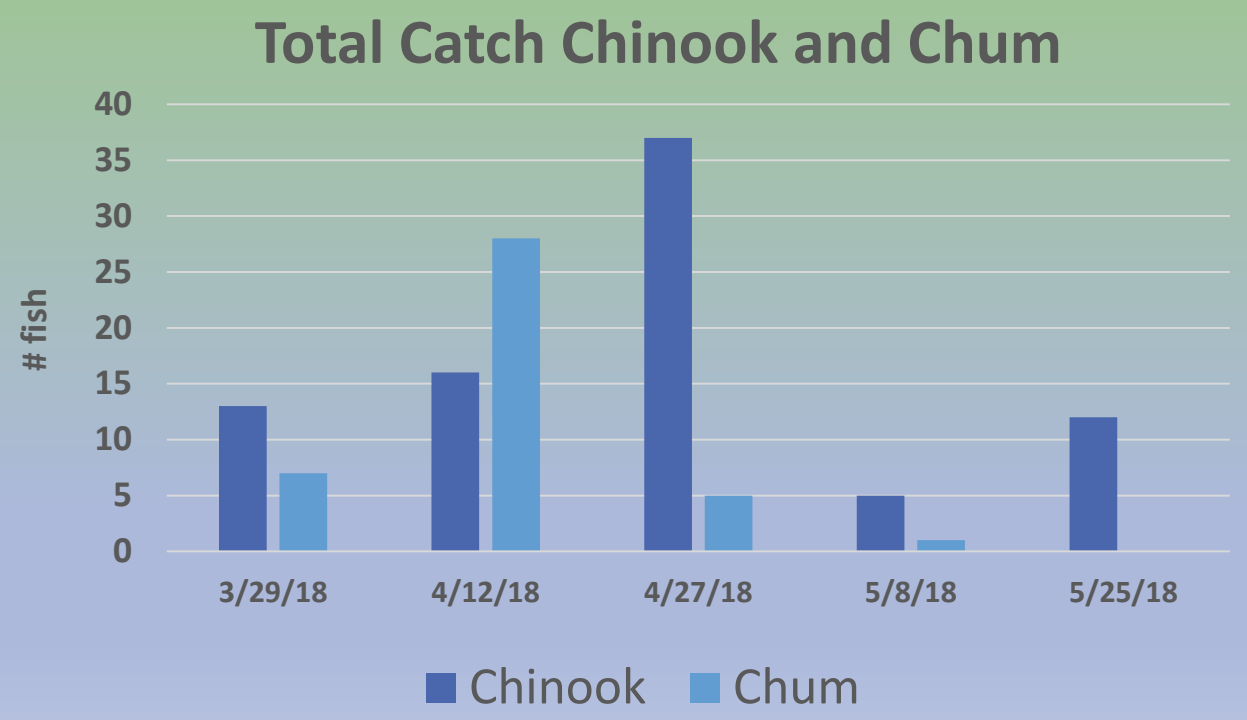
Inundated Area vs Water Surface Elevation

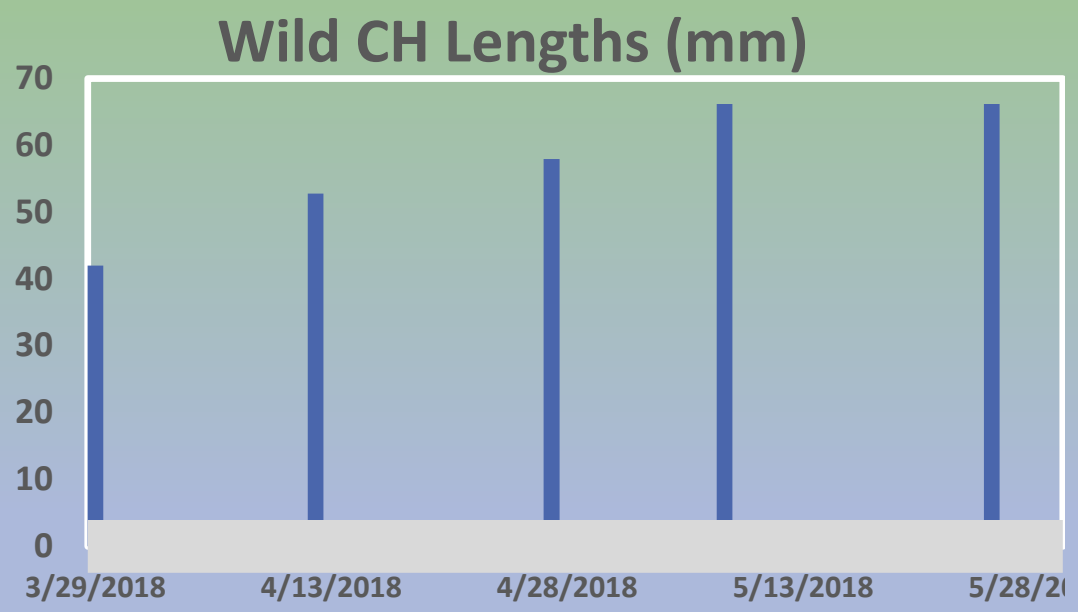


Results of Seasonal Tide Gate Management

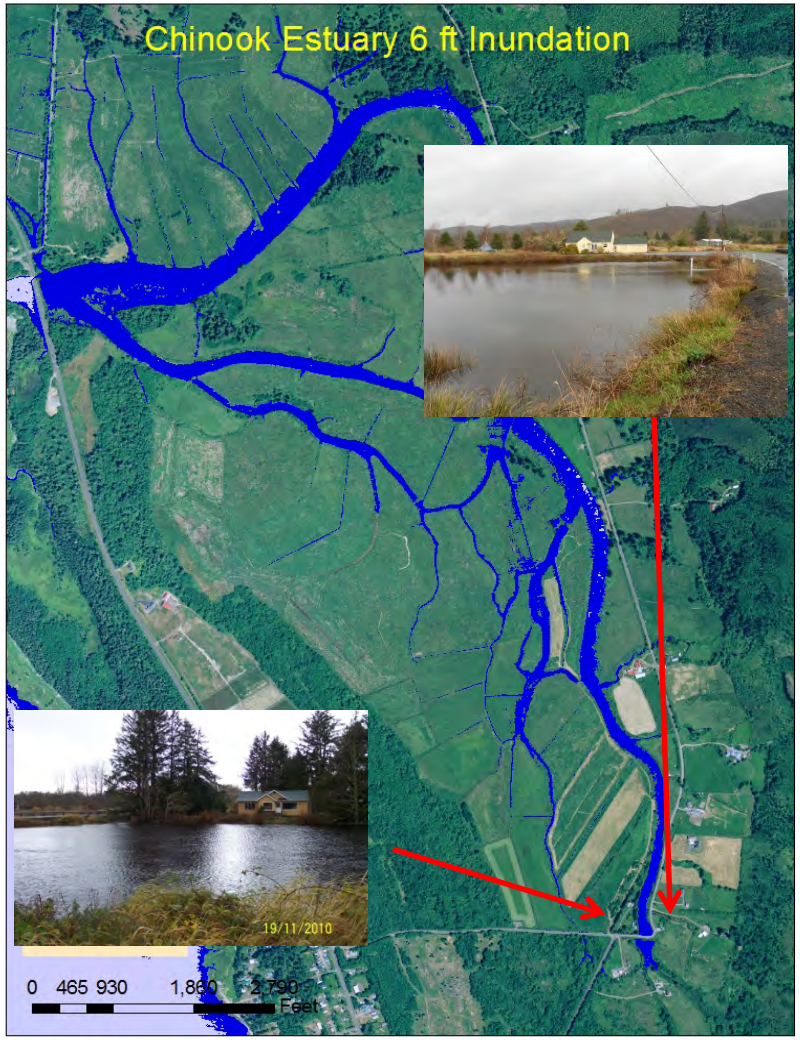


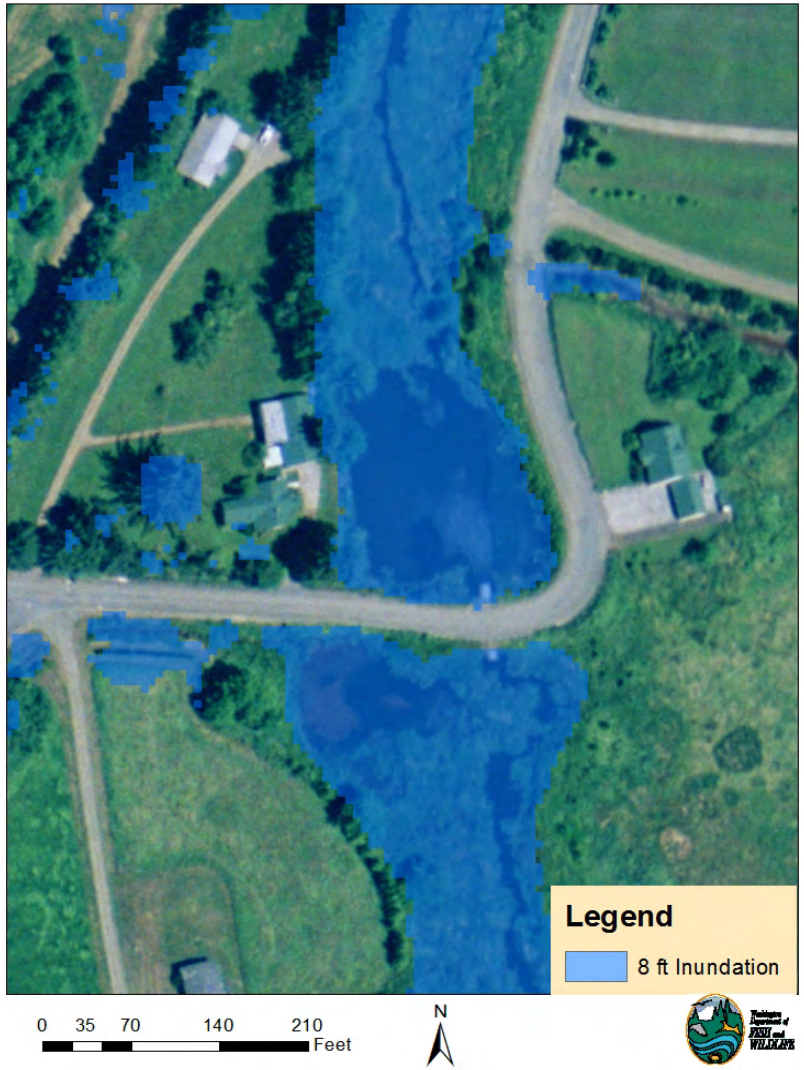
2018 Fish Use





Restoration Challenges: Private Landowner Concerns

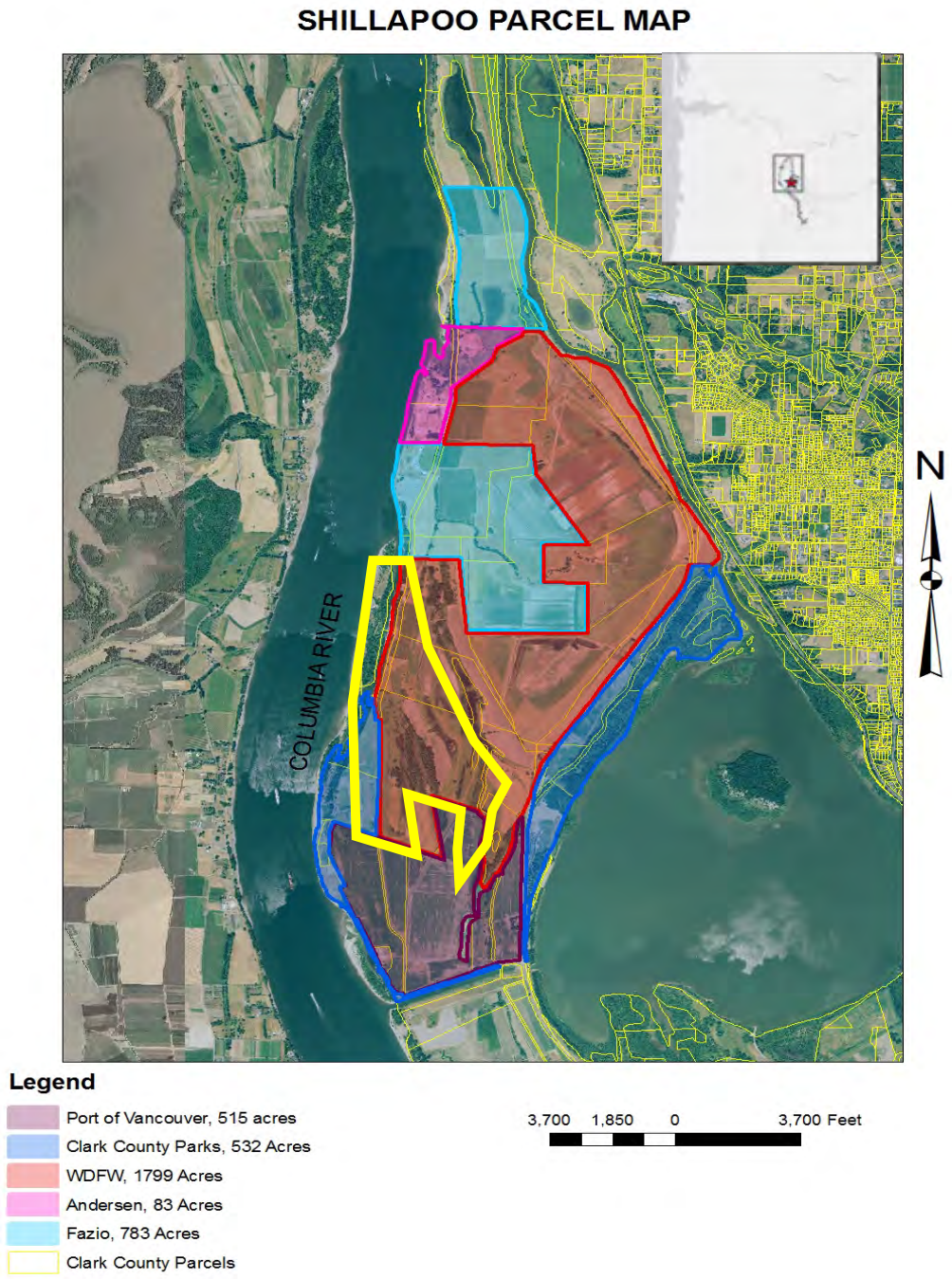




Community Engagement

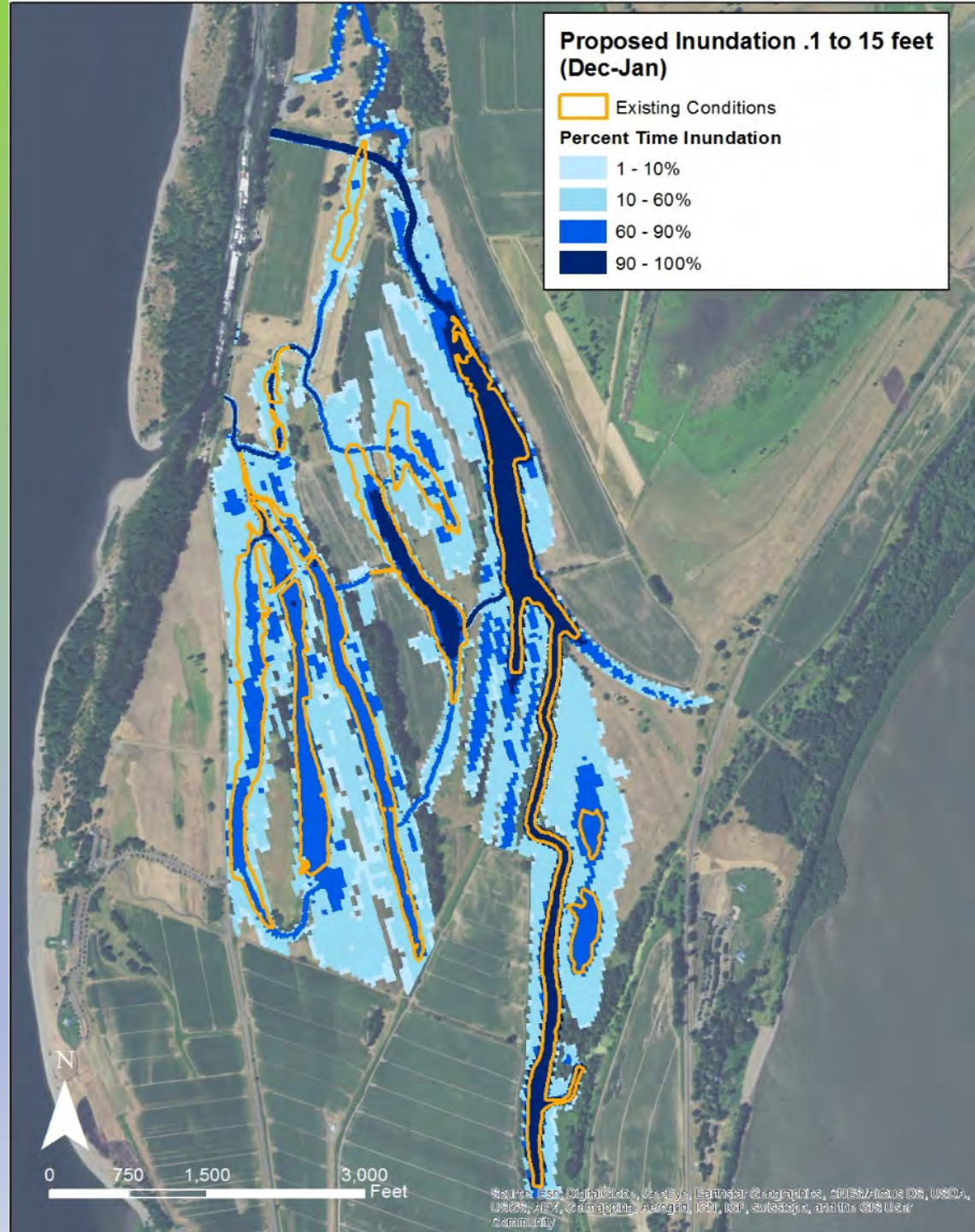
- SR-101 Tide Gate Management
- Monitoring (WSE, Salinity, Fish Use)
- Key property acquisitions
- Communication of WDFW restoration actions
- Acknowledging community concerns

Shillapoo Wildlife Area



Existing vs Proposed Hydrology:

Hydrodynamic Modeling Results



Community Involvement in Restoration at Shillapoo

- Waterfowl Hunting Stakeholder Groups
- Prior land use agreements, easements

Western Waterfowl Strategy

Estuary restoration, waterfowl management, and hunting on Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife lands

Estuary restoration, waterfowl management, and hunting on WDFW Lands

Estuary habitat restoration has been identified as a top priority in salmon recovery plans to improve survival, growth, and production of juvenile salmon. Estuary habitat can only be restored in areas that were historically estuary, so many WDFW properties that fall within this footprint are highly prioritized for restoration in salmon recovery efforts.

Historically, WDFW purchased and managed estuary lands for waterfowl habitat and recreational hunting. Recovery of listed salmon will require the restoration of estuarine processes on currently diked lands. WDFW has and will continue to make land management choices for salmon and waterfowl that may impact the public values of current land use. The following key points inform WDFW's decisions regarding how, where, and when to restore WDFW-owned lands to estuarine processes:

1. WDFW recognizes that restoring estuarine processes shifts waterfowl habitat and use. New projects have the potential to reduce current waterfowl habitat and recreational hunting.
2. Estuary restoration may impact current managed wetlands and agricultural use, which may impact waterfowl use on WDFW lands or adjacent properties.
3. Land acquisition is an essential tool for estuary restoration and may help offset changes to waterfowl habitat and recreation. When utilizing this tool, WDFW is mindful of and works to address community concerns regarding the potential impacts to the agricultural land base (from estuary restoration and purchasing of waterfowl habitat) and tax revenue.

PROTECTING LAND AND WATER FOR WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE

Our vision is a Washington where fish and wildlife thrive in healthy habitats, and where people experience and enjoy our state's natural gifts for generations to come.

By actively managing lands, restoring habitats, and preserving wild places, we serve as stewards and guardians for Washington's natural places and wildlife by:

- Preserving natural and cultural heritage;
- Providing access for hunting, fishing, and wildlife-related recreation; and
- Fostering experiences and exploration.

Regional Contacts
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Columbia Estuary
Nicole Czarnomski: 360-480-5603
WA Coast and Hood Canal
Brian Calkins: 360-249-1222

ce fish, wildlife, and recreational needs

constantly shifting to reflect new ecological and community needs. The department is eholders and working to balance the needs of the public and the fish and wildlife that we manage.

l in social and ecological landscapes, and as restoration projects are planned, we will rrent fish and wildlife recreation or ecological values through strategies like land artnerships, and on or off-site improvements.

ts on WDFW lands will be examined by a multi-disciplinary team to ensure a es, impacts, and obligations. Working with funding agencies, WDFW will ensure satisfied.

t

llion acres of wildlife areas for conservation of fish and wildlife and recreation s of Washington.

wide-ranging and include conserving and protecting native fish and wildlife and g, hunting, and other wildlife-related recreational and commercial experiences.

rt of an evolving landscape. Across all regions, these wildlife areas are experiencing tify management objectives. Climate change is leading to sea level rise, which puts dikes and levees. Urban areas are expanding into agricultural lands, creating loss of by waterfowl and reducing hunting opportunity. These losses coupled with a additional pressure on public lands

s Act listing of Chinook salmon in the Puget Sound and Lower Columbia and Salmon Treaty, restrictions have been placed on fisheries and harvest throughout estuary habitat has been identified as a top priority in salmon recovery plans to d production of juvenile salmon. Therefore, lowlands with potential for re- are of significant interest for restoration to support salmon recovery efforts.

Lessons Learned

- Public Lands = multiple stakeholders
- The myth of the ‘win-win’
- Long term engagement with stakeholders
- Funding
- ‘Working Lands’ approach

Thank You