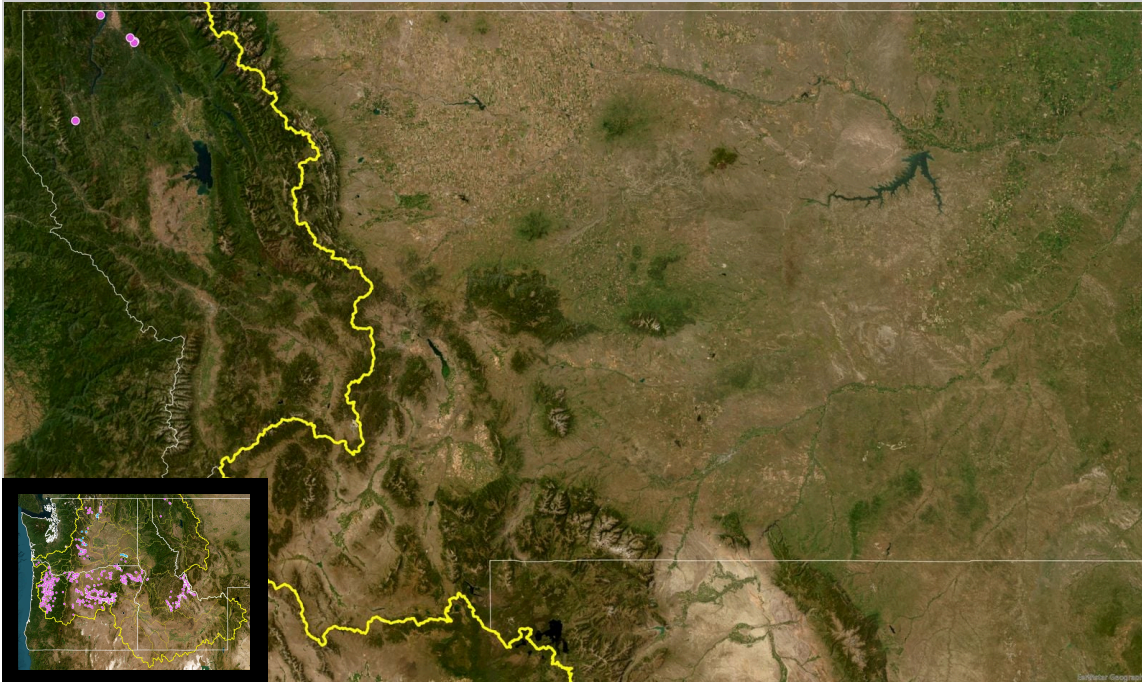


NPCC Fish and Wildlife Program Fish Screens in Montana



The installation and maintenance of five fish screens in the Columbia River Basin portion of Montana are funded primarily through BPA. Other screens are funded through non-BPA funds. Maintained at irrigation diversions, the screens prevent fish from being drawn into ditches and ensure their return to the main waterways. These screens protect many species; however the focus is on preventing the entrainment, injury, and potential death of native bull trout and cutthroat trout or recreational species such as brown trout and rainbow trout. The goals are to protect fish populations while improving the efficiency of infrastructure for water users.

Fish screening experts and water users work together to select and install screens that ensure reliable flow while protecting fish and minimizing maintenance needs. Choosing the correct fish screen requires evaluating many aspects of a diversion. Factors reviewed for screen selection include:

- Site-specific conditions
- Species present
- Water rights and instream flow
- Screen specifications (e.g., effective screening area and screen submergence)
- Maintenance requirements (e.g., passive versus active cleaning systems)

Screens

5

Sponsors

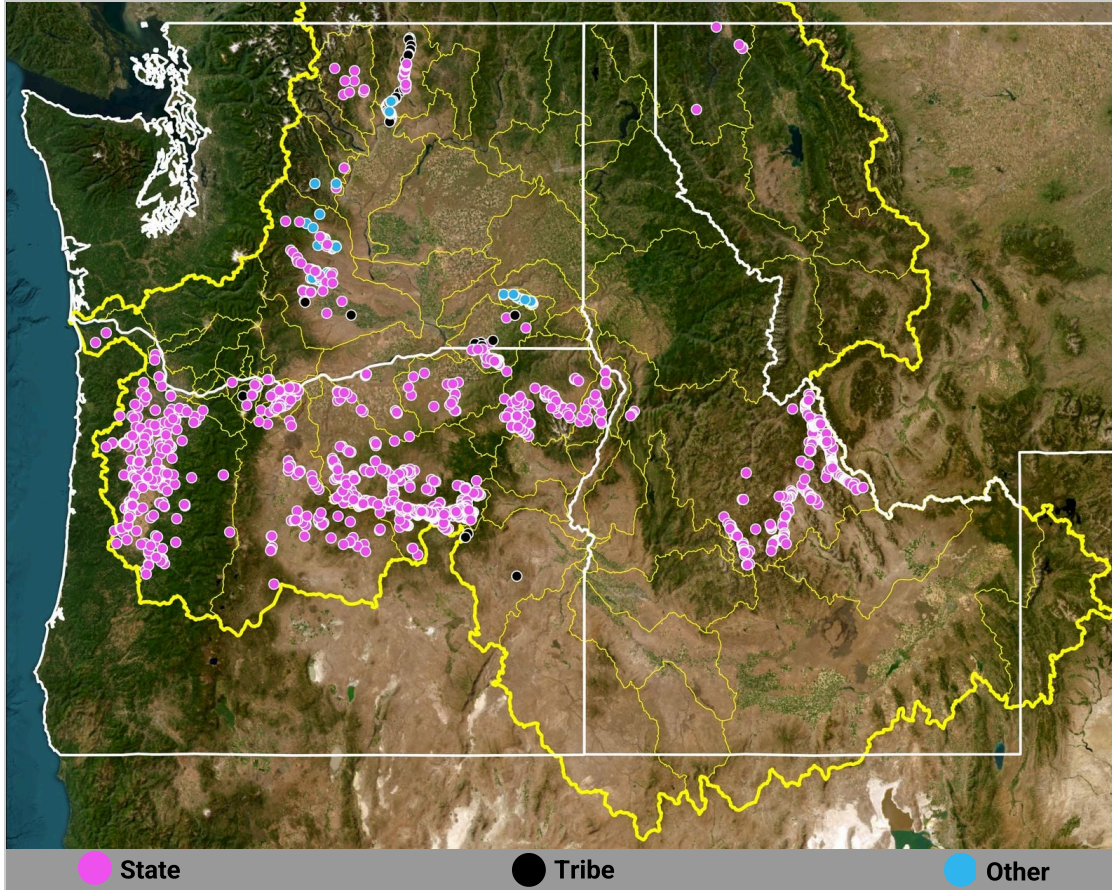
1

Subbasins

5



Columbia River Basin Fish Screen Programs



Diversions and Screening in the Columbia River Basin: The Early Days

The use of irrigation ditches in the Columbia River Basin dates back to the 1800s. By the early-1900s, the effects of these diversions were realized and laws were enacted requiring water diverters to screen their diversions.

By the early-1930s, state agencies were implementing fish screening programs and by the 1950s the programs were funded by the Mitchell Act. As Mitchell Act funding plateaued in the early-1990s, it became apparent this funding could not solely support the construction of new screen projects while supporting the operation and maintenance costs of existing screens.

Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program: Funding for Columbia River Basin Fish Screening Programs

In 1991, to support Mitchell Act-funded screen programs, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC) directed the region's fish screen managers to coordinate the basin's programs. Subsequently, the managers established the Fish Screen Oversight Committee and the NPCC committed to fund fish screen and passage programs through its Fish and Wildlife Program.

Screens
1,821

Subbasins
Screened
25

Species Protected
10

Sponsors
14

Landowner Cooperation: The Key to Success

Fish screening programs funded through the NPCC's Program assist with the recovery of ESA-listed fish, especially in areas where extensive irrigation exists. Since a significant amount of fish habitat is on private land, the success of these programs would not be possible without the support, cooperation, and commitment from landowners.