



The mission of the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board is to restore viable and sustainable populations of salmon, steelhead, and other at-risk species through the collaborative, economically sensitive efforts, combined resources, and wise resource management of the Upper Columbia region.

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WDFW honors staff engaged in regional salmon recovery efforts

Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board

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Wenatchee, WA – The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife held its 2011 Annual Service and Recognition Awards ceremony earlier this month in Olympia, WA. The awards are given on a statewide basis, but this year the Upper Columbia region made a particularly strong showing. Five of the Department's Region 2 employees and a regional conservation organization, Trout Unlimited, received awards for achievements related to salmon recovery work in the Upper Columbia region.

With encouraging increases in recent salmon returns, it appears that regional salmon recovery efforts are showing early signs of success. Last year's spring Chinook returns were the third largest in records dating back to 1980. The 2009 count of steelhead passing Priest Rapids Dam and entering the Upper Columbia basin was the highest since 1977.

The Icicle Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited, centered in Leavenworth, received WDFW's Organization of the Year Award. The award is presented to any organized group that has consistently made outstanding efforts on behalf of Washington's fish and wildlife resources and recreation.

Regional WDFW staff recognized for their achievements include Casey Baldwin, who received the Steve Phelps Leadership in Science Award. Mr. Baldwin is a research scientist with the Department with a rare ability to communicate highly technical information in a manner that the general public and decision makers can understand. He also chairs the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board's Regional Technical Team, a consortium of experts that coordinate, review, and advise on technical issues, projects, and monitoring initiatives related to salmon and steelhead recovery in the region.

Ken Bevis received the Rocky Spencer Award. Mr. Bevis is a unique individual with a lot of compassion for the resource. In his position as Watershed Steward he has excelled at partnership building. He has a strong interest in environmental education and was also recognized for his successes in outreach and communication.

Andrew Murdoch received the Best Paper Award for his co-authored publication reporting on the differences in reproductive fitness between wild and hatchery spring Chinook. The paper will improve hatchery management practices by better integrating their role with salmon recovery goals.

Jay Deason received the Innovators Award for his work on designing and installing pit tag arrays. These devices, installed in stream beds, are a key contributor to our understanding of steelhead habitat use and life history. The data the arrays produce will lead to better management of salmon, steelhead, and their habitat.

Charity Davidson has accomplished important work related to water conservation and withdrawals from the Columbia River. She was recognized with the *Esprit de Corps Award* for her exemplary attitude and successful team building.

"This Region has diverse challenges and an enormous geographic area, but we don't have a lot of staff," noted WDFW Regional Director Dennis Beich. "But our staff is extremely dedicated; these awards are overdue recognition for the work they do to protect and manage the state's resources."

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