UPPER WILLAMETTE RIVER CHINOOK SALMON SPWANING SURVEYS ON QUARTZVILLE CREEK

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On September 1, 2021, the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon issued an interim injunction that directs the Corps to implement interim injunction measures intended to improve conditions for fish passage and water quality in the Willamette Valley Project (WVP) to avoid irreparable harm to Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed salmonids during the interim period until the completion of the reinitiated consultation.

The Court assigned an Expert Panel comprised of two of Plaintiffs' experts, two NMFS biologists, two Corps employees, and two "ad hoc" Federal experts to define the implementation plans of specific measures. As required by the injunction, the Expert Panel's proposed measures must "provide meaningful research, monitoring, and evaluation ("RM&E") of the interim measures." Further, the injunction mandates that the Corps "fund and/or carry out RM&E to evaluate the effects of the interim measures on Upper Willamette River (UWR) Chinook salmon and UWR steelhead."

The goal of interim injunction measure 11 (Green Peter Dam – Outplanting Plan) is to create an outplanting plan that will provide South Santiam UWR Chinook salmon and steelhead access to the Middle Santiam subbasin. In 2022, the Corps began implementing injunction measure 11 by releasing a total of 800 hatchery adult South Santiam UWR Chinook salmon into the Middle Santiam River and Quartzville Creek. We conducted spawning ground surveys over a six-week period to document the spatial and temporal distribution of redds, measure redd dimensions, evaluate female spawning success, and estimate the available spawning habitat in the upper reaches of Quartzville Creek.