



# Conservation in Washington: Powered by People



## MAKING AN IMPACT:

- *Worked with coalition of partners to assess and inventory fish barriers in the Chehalis Basin—over 2,000 fish barriers were identified.*
- *Replaced 31 blockages opening up 87.21 miles of habitat.*
- *Replaced culverts allowing streams to sustain larger numbers of salmon.*

## LEWIS COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT - REMOVING FISH BARRIERS IN THE CHEHALIS BASIN

Fish passage barriers became a large-scale concern in the late 1990's due to the miles of habitat that was no longer accessible to salmon. The Lewis County Conservation District (LCCD) began assessing culverts in the Chehalis Basin to inventory the barriers and prioritize efforts to replace blockages.

**FINDING A COMMON PATH** LCCD worked in conjunction with several state and local agencies and timber companies to address fish barrier concerns. The solution was to get the fish passage barriers assessed so separate entities throughout the basin could begin installing larger culverts and/or bridges to allow fish of all ages to migrate up and down stream. Over 2,000 barriers were identified in the Chehalis Basin. The assessment was and is still used to apply for grants and rank applications to get the barriers replaced.

**RESULTS ON THE GROUND** LCCD and their partners began replacing fish barriers in 2000. To date, the district has replaced 31 blockages, which opened up 87.21 miles of habitat. The pictures below show one barrier that was replaced in 2007. The outfall drop on the culvert made the pipe a complete barrier to all fish from migrating upstream. In the fall of 2007, adult Coho salmon were observed spawning above this project. While adult Coho salmon could access some of the sites, juvenile Coho were blocked from migrating up and down stream during rearing time in the streams. Replacing culverts allowed the stream to sustain larger numbers of salmon. Several other blockages have been removed and/or replaced in the basin by other partner agencies.

The LCCD worked closely with partners to implement consistent surveys of the barriers. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife provided training to ensure all assessments accurately determined the culverts as blockages and the sites as having fish usage, including the species of fish present.

“This has been a very rewarding endeavor for the LCCD and our cooperators,” said Bob Amrine, LCCD Manager. “The ability to apply for grants and to replace the barriers with larger culverts or bridges has been very successful.”

Culvert replaced by the Lewis County Conservation District in the Chehalis Basin before (left) and after project implementation (right)

