

# **Everything but the kitchen sink: the challenges and adaptive management of the upper Salmon River B-run steelhead program**

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2025 Steelhead Meeting  
Riverside Hotel, Boise, ID  
December 9, 2025

## Telling the story.....

- Background
- Management objective
- History of “B” program in the Salmon R.
- Performance
- Recent changes
- Future of program

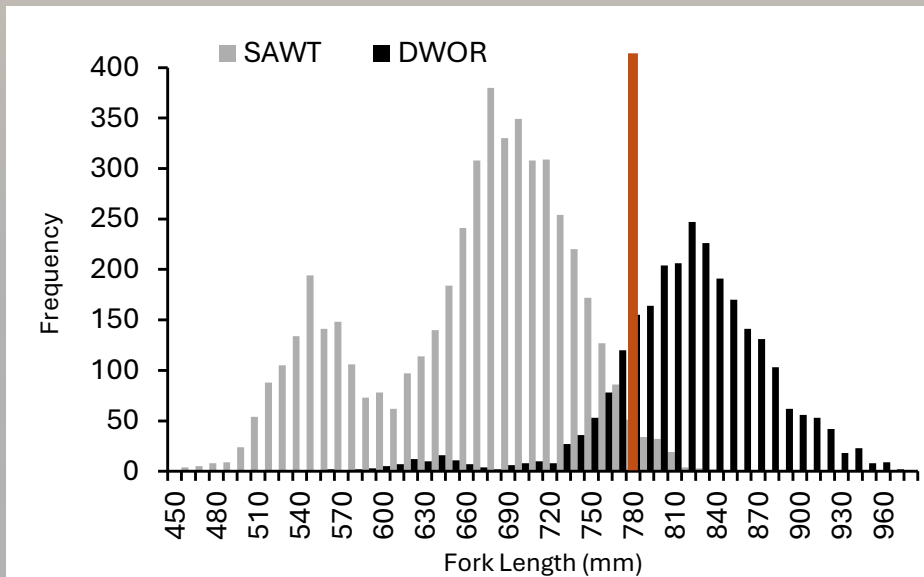


## Background: A-Run vs. B-Run Steelhead

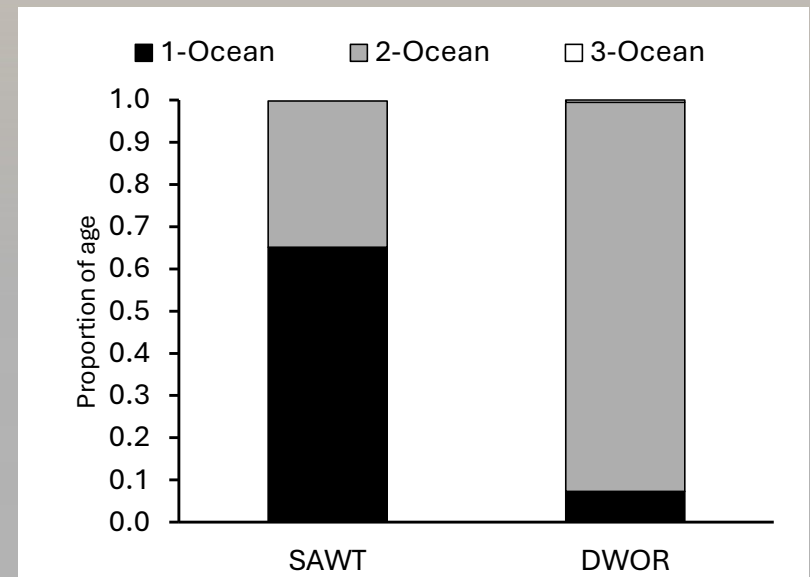
- B-run Steelhead is  $> 780\text{mm}$
- Columbia R. harvest management

B-run stocks	A-run stocks
DWOR	SAWT
USAL	PAHS

1) Larger length-at-age (FL)



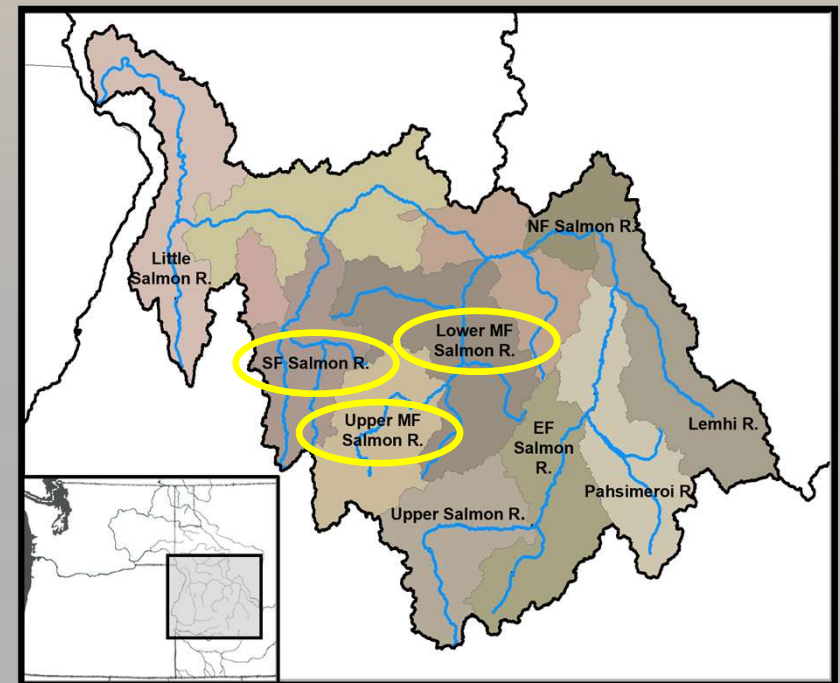
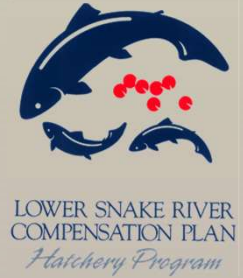
2) Older



## Management objective

To develop a locally adapted return of hatchery-origin steelhead founded from Dworshak National FH for harvest mitigation purposes

- In-place and in-kind mitigation (SFSR and MFSR)
- Adults return older and larger than SAW and PAH stocks
- Founded from DWOR stock – Clearwater R.



## History – Pahsimeroi River ( BY 1977-1981)

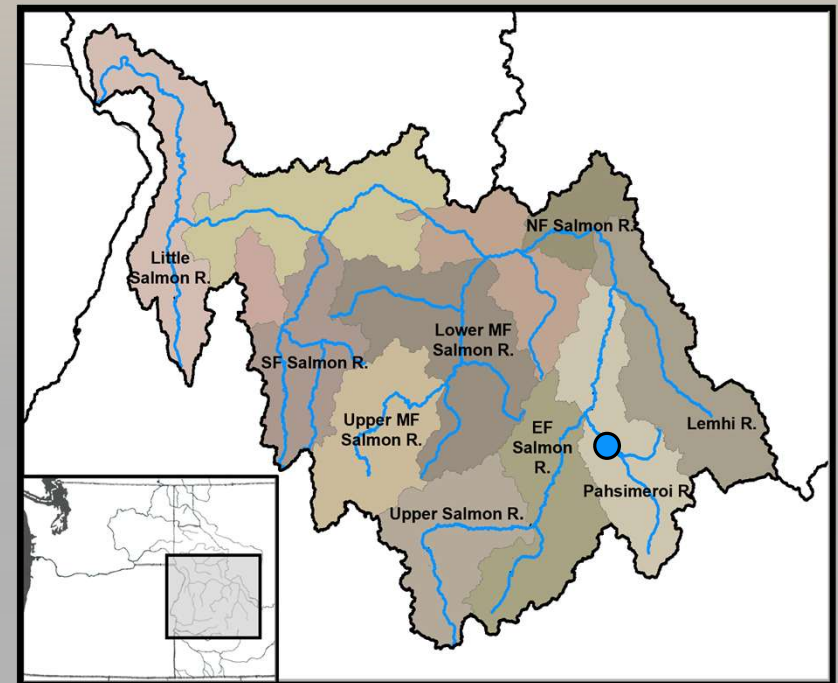


### Pahsimeroi Fish Hatchery (1967)

- Idaho Power Company
- Reared at Hagerman National
- Release Locations –Pahsimeroi R.
- Smolt releases ~ 200,000

### Challenges

- Already releasing A- run stock
  - Differentiating stocks



## History – East Fork Salmon River (BY 1982-1998)

1983 – Construction completed

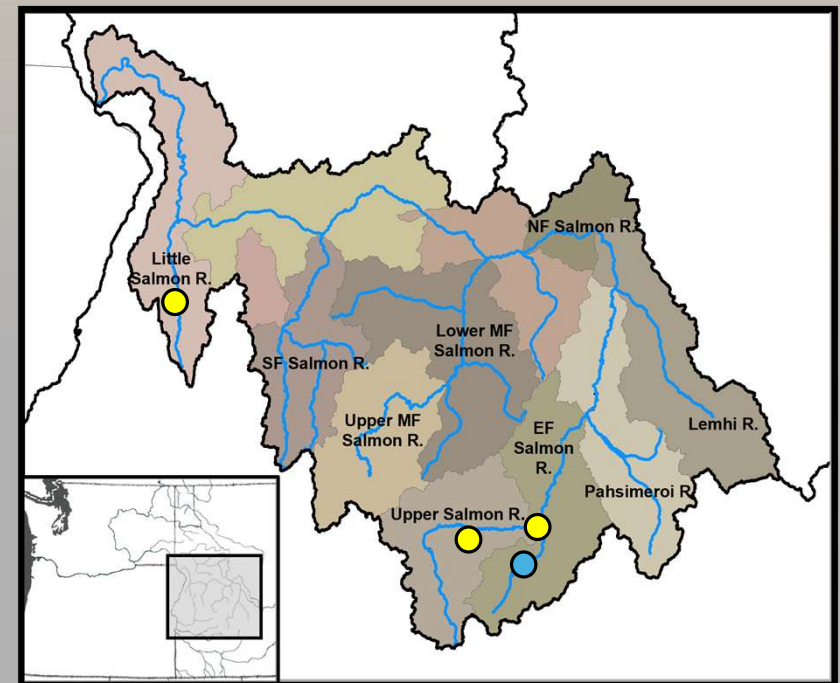
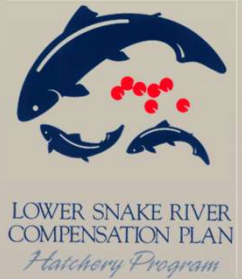
- Single stock
- Hagerman National and Magic Valley (1987)

Release locations

- Lower East Fork
- Shoshone-Bannock people gained interest in program

Challenges

- 20 miles upstream of mouth
- High rate of fall out below trap



## History – Paasasikwana Naokwaide Creek (BY 1998-2008)

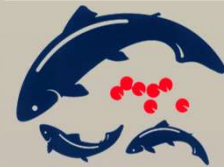
Acclimation Pond

Adult trap – picket weir

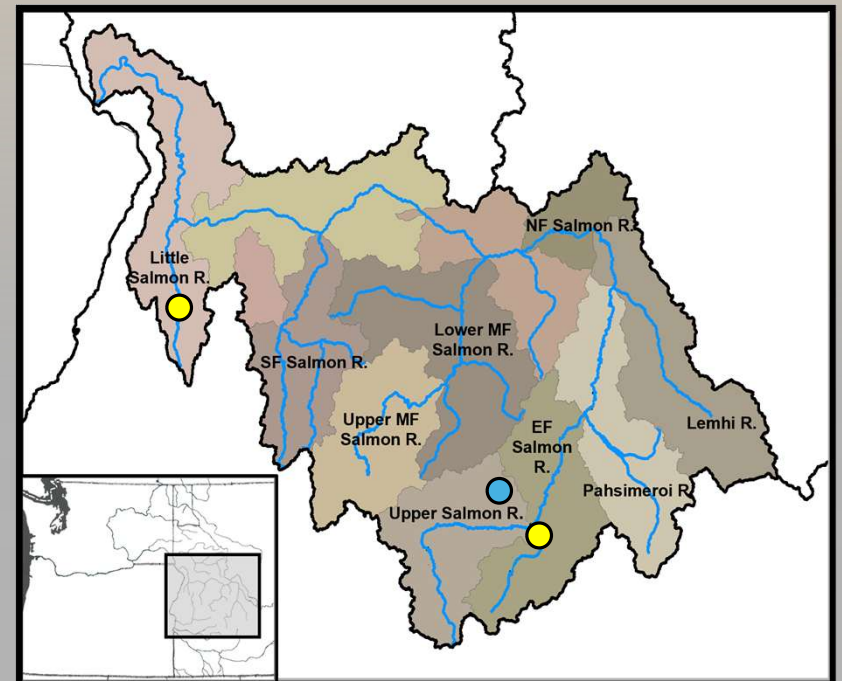
Angler broodstock collection attempted

Challenges

- High flows – weir blowouts
  - Changed weir locations
- Shallow water near mouth
- Water supply ice



LOWER SNAKE RIVER  
COMPENSATION PLAN  
*Hatchery Program*



# History – Pahsimeroi Weir (BY 2009-Current)

Interim solution – Yankee Fork

Differentiate PAH-A from USAL-B and naturals

- Marked and unmarked w/CWT
- Mark selective fisheries

Challenges

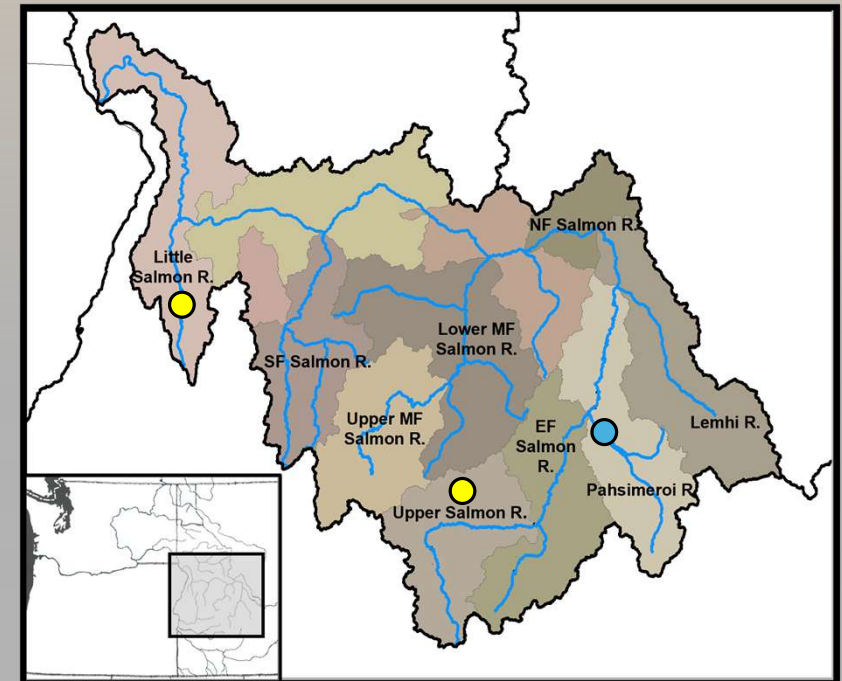
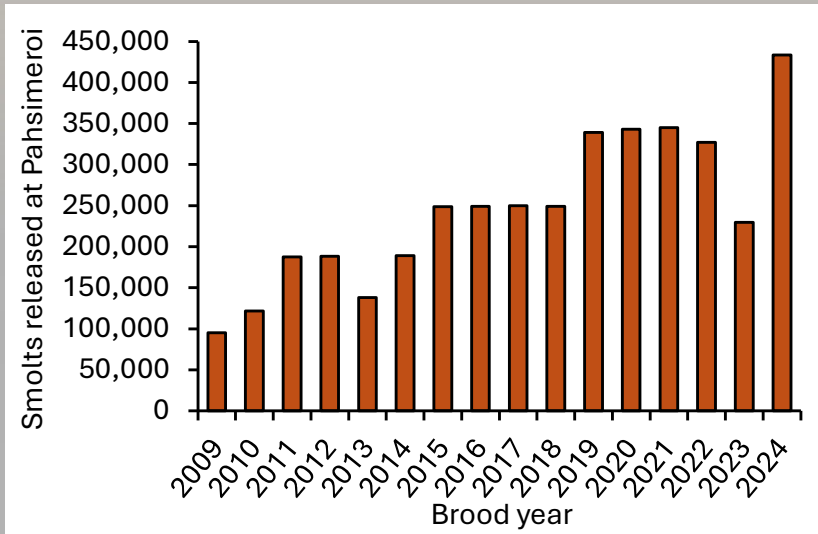
- Meeting brood

Changes

- Release numbers



Hunter Diehl



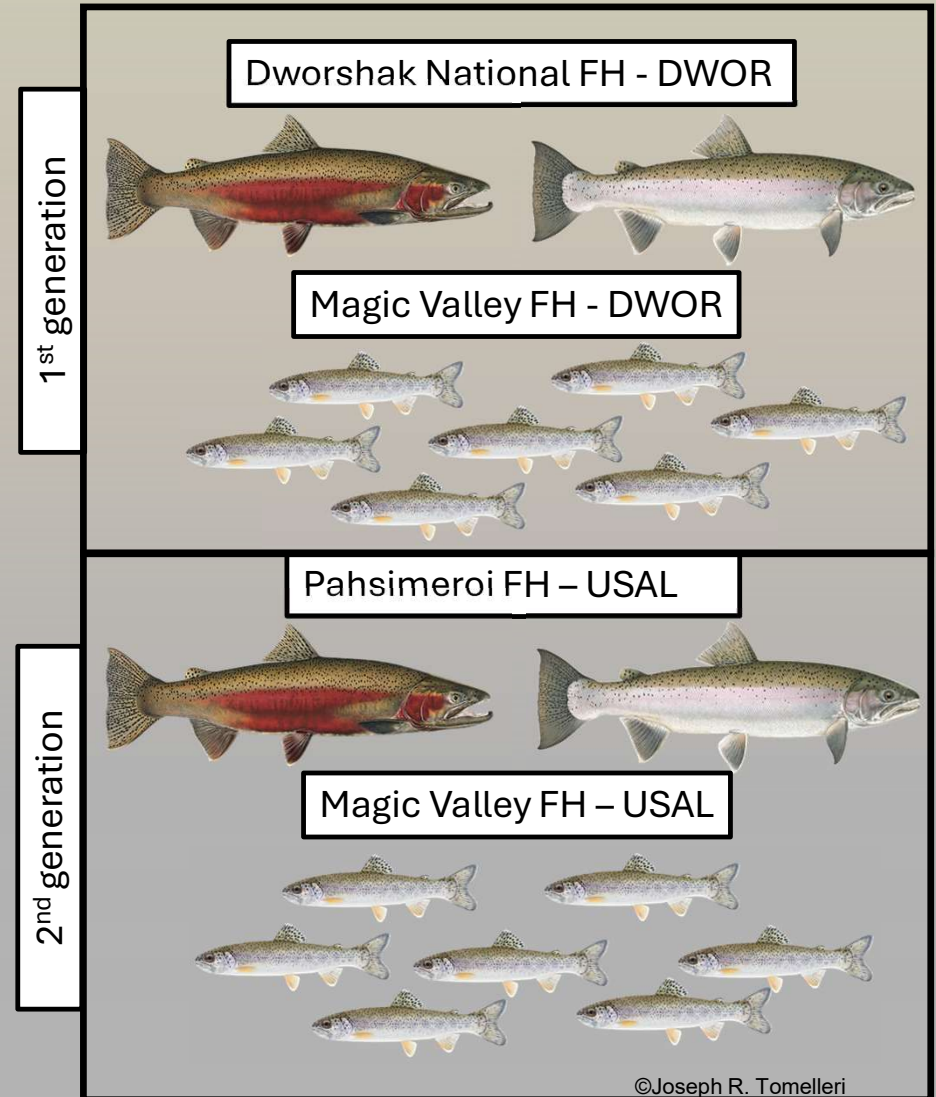
## Stock Performance

### Salmon R. B-program

- DWOR stock – first generation
- USAL stock – second/multiple generation

### Comparison stocks

- DWOR stock – Clearwater R.
  - A-run stock – Salmon R.
- 
- LSRCP mitigation goals
    - Magic Valley – 11,660 to Lower Granite Dam



## Performance – Juvenile Releases

### Promising start

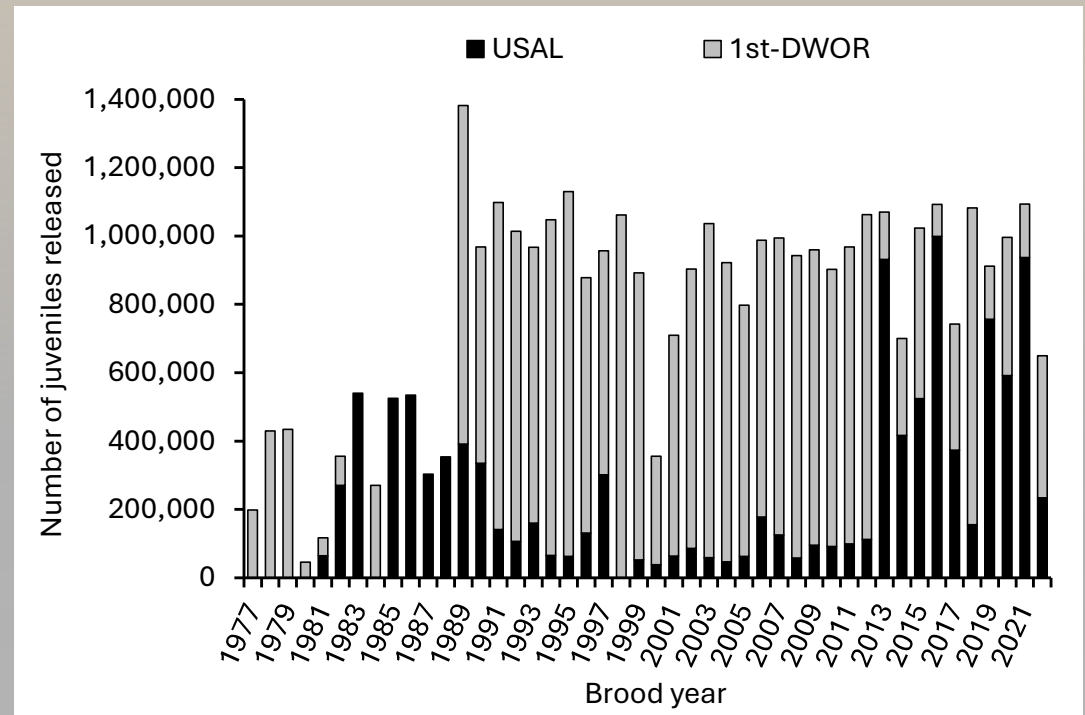
- Issues with adult collections

### Moved back to Pahsimeroi

- Improvement in brood collection

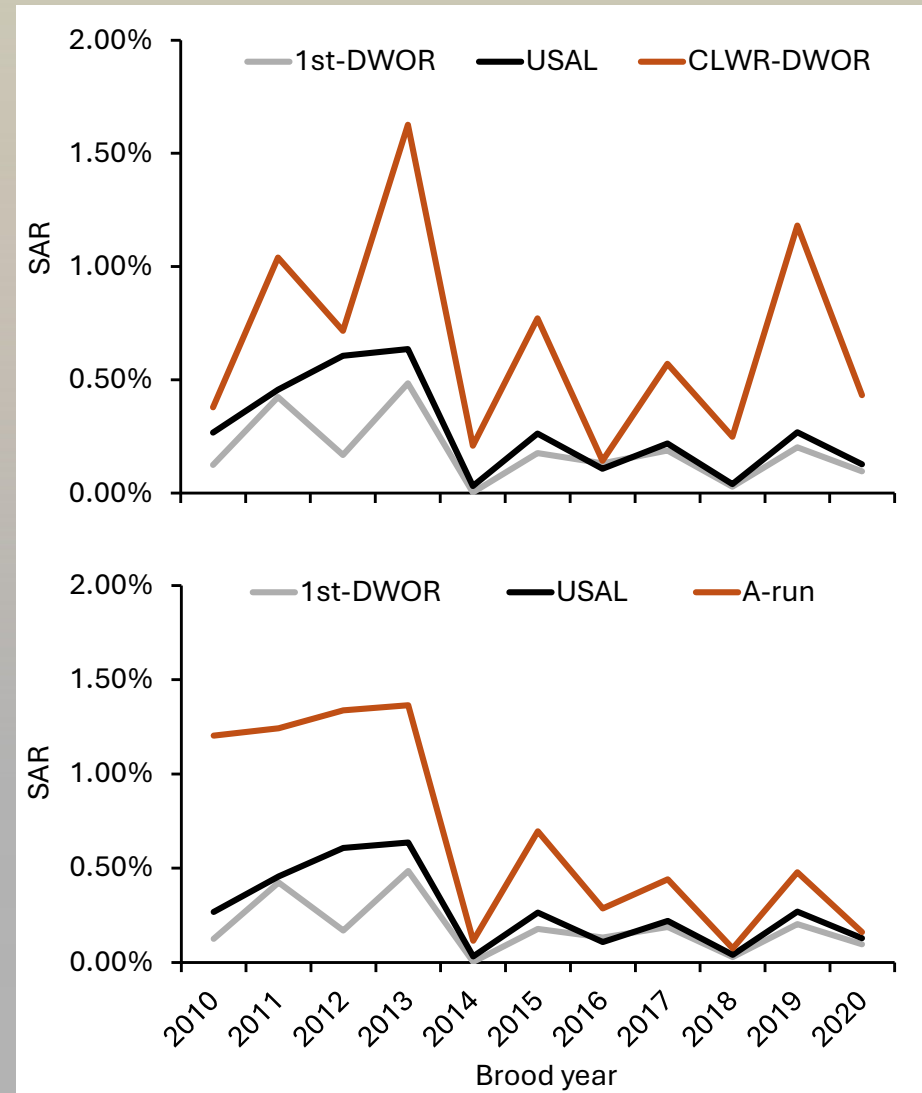
### Challenges

- Still reliant on DWOR



## Performance – SARs

- Comparison to other programs (A- and B-run)
  - Overall lower survival
- USAL outperforms 1<sup>st</sup> generation DWOR
- Challenge to meet mitigation goals
  - MVFH



## Performance – Size and Age

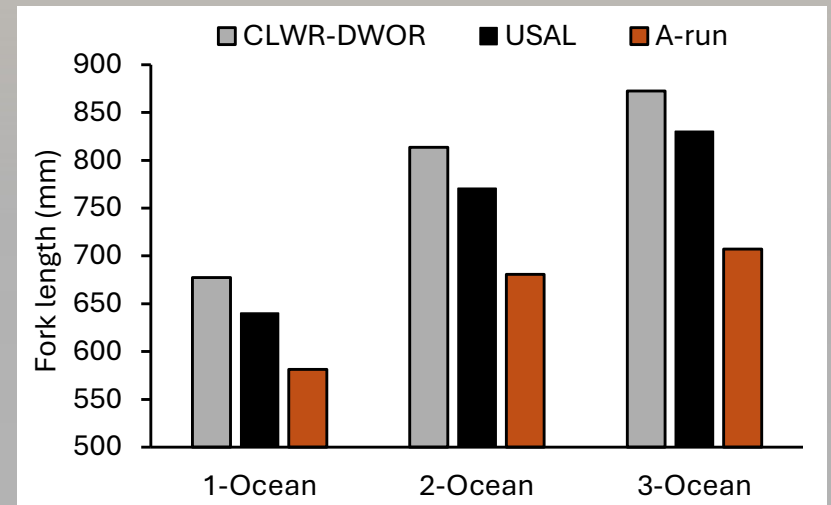
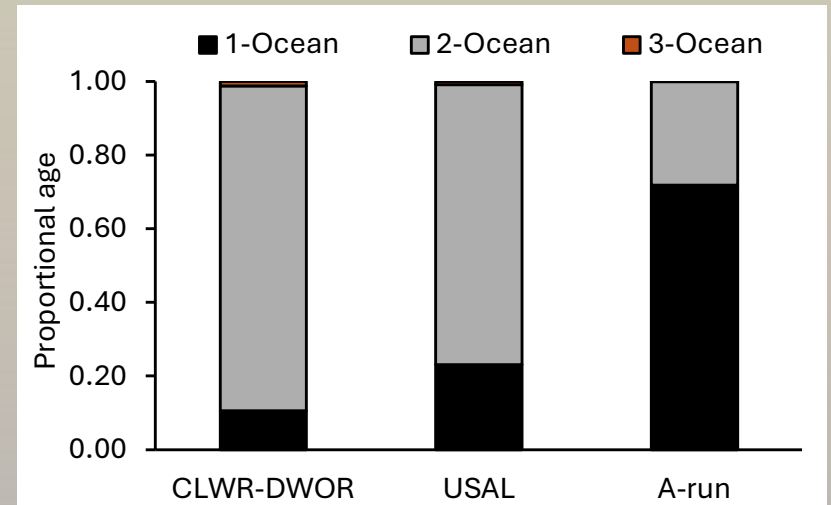
### 2-Ocean Adult Returns (BY 2010 – 2020)

- DWOR stock – 88%
- USAL stock – 76%
- SAWT stock – 28%

### Average Length of 2-Ocean Returns

- DWOR stock – 814 mm
- USAL stock – 771 mm
- SAWT stock – 681 mm

USAL stock is intermediate for both age and length-at-age

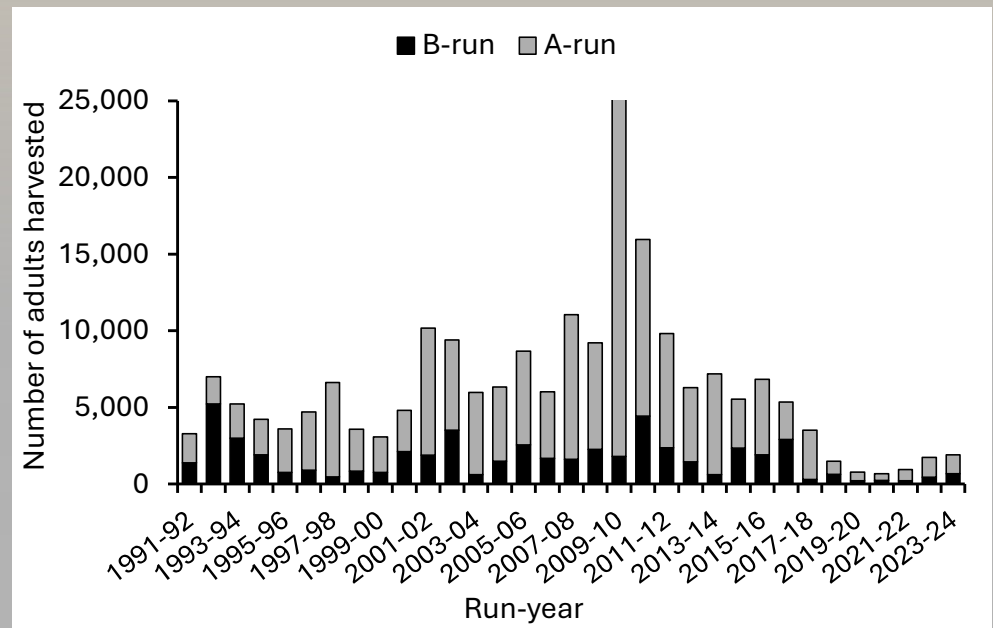


## Performance – Contribution to harvest

Contributed to harvest each year

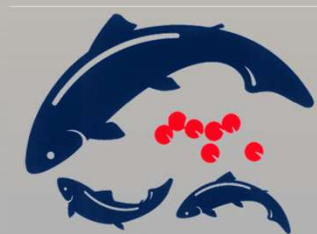
- Low returns in recent years
  - Lower number of marked individuals

Diverse harvest opportunity

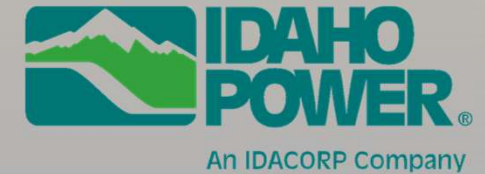


## Persistent challenges

- Inability to meet all brood needs from local returns
  - Reliance on DWOR
  - Not developing multigenerational adaptation in the Salmon R.
- Impacts to meeting LSRCP mitigation goals
  - Lower SARs
- Discussions among cooperators

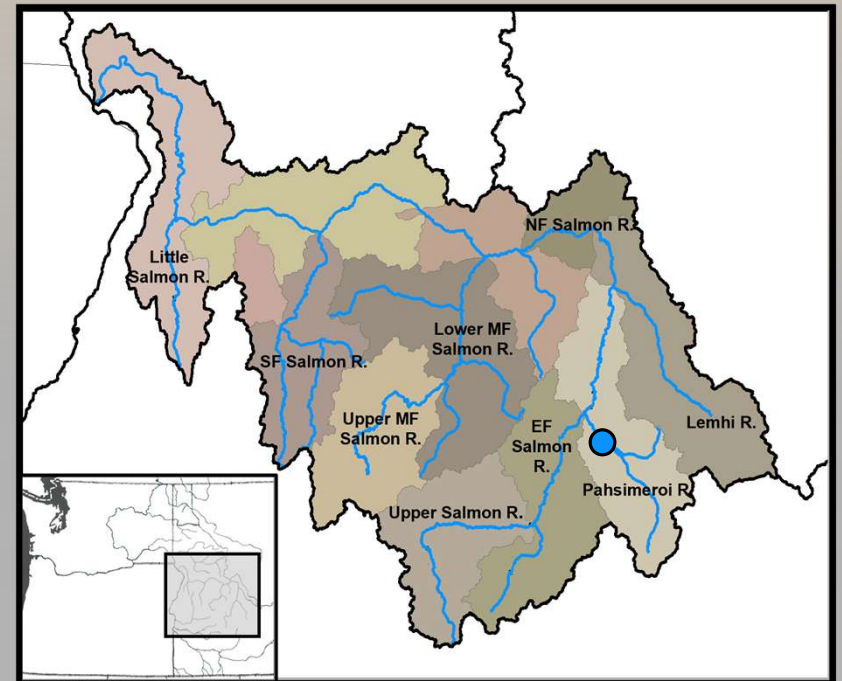


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## 2023 Changes

- Discontinued transferring eggs from Dworshak National FH to the Salmon R.
- Reduced USAL smolt target from 1.085M to 868k
- Increase smolt release at PFH from 341k to 434k



## Current returns and the Future of the program

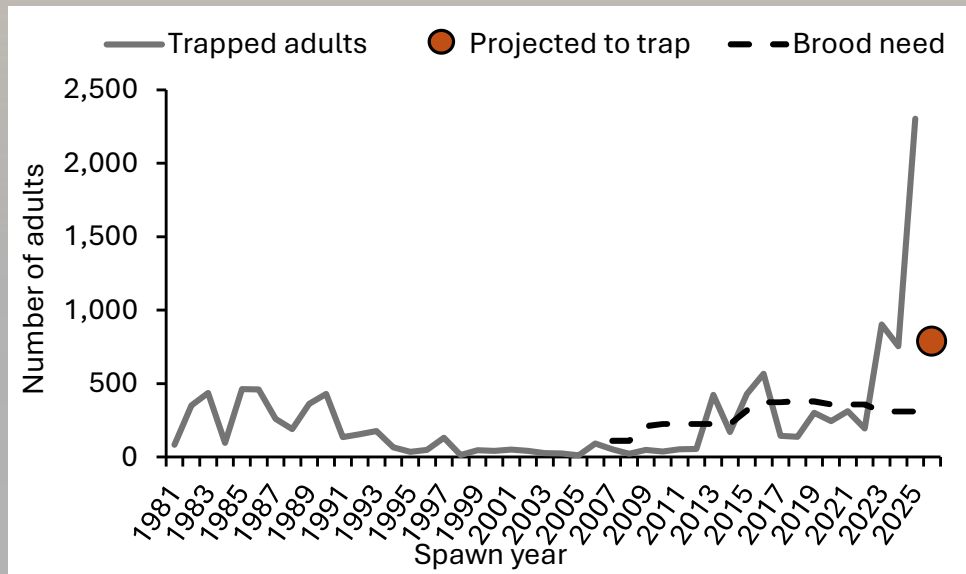
Recent adult returns promising

- Pahsimeroi FH

Brood need – 321 (182 females)

Future home of program (Yankee Fork)

- Weir installed (2025)
  - SBT operated -61 steelhead trapped



## Acknowledgements

Bill Young – Nez Perce Tribe

Joshua Jackson – Shoshone Bannock Tribes

Pahsimeroi Fish Hatchery Crew

Sawtooth Fish Hatchery Crew

Magic Valley Hatchery Crew

Dworshak National Fish Hatchery

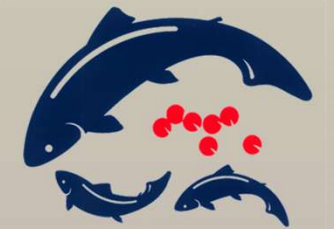
Region 7 staff

Harvest Monitoring Crews

Eagle Genetics Lab

Marking Crews

Fish Health Lab



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Questions?



## Performance – Brood collection/Adult trapping

Challenging to make brood

- Reliance on DWOR stock

