

Skagit 2045

Regional Transportation Plan Plan Regional de Transporte

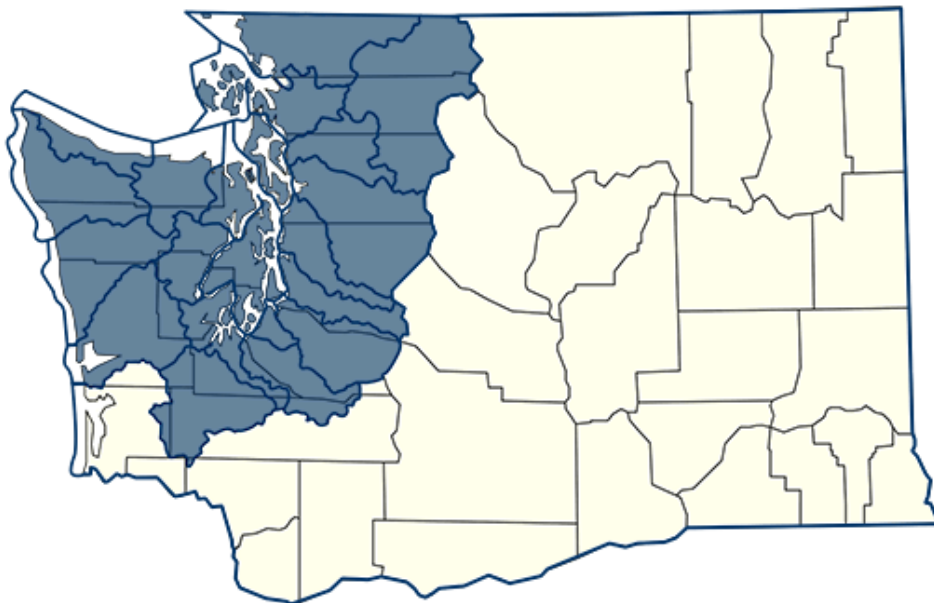
FISH PASSAGES

Barriers to fish passage are numerous in the Skagit region and are being corrected in accord with a federal injunction applying to much of western Washington state. The federal injunction requires that the Washington State Department of Transportation correct barriers to fish passage in the Skagit region, along Interstate 5 and state routes that provide the backbone of the regional transportation system. The correction of fish passages is an area of emphasis in the Skagit 2045 Regional Transportation Plan

The federal court injunction, issued in March 2013, requires WSDOT to correct fish-passage barriers that block habitat to salmon and steelhead by 2030. In addition to WSDOT, the injunction affects the departments of natural resources, fish and wildlife, and the parks and recreation commission.

Based on the latest available information from WSDOT, as of January 2021, there are 1,012 culverts this injunction applies to across the injunction area and 826 of these have the highest potential for significant habitat gain.

The affected geographic area for the federal fish passage injunction is shaded on the following map. The map also displays political boundaries for Washington's 39 counties, and Water Resource Inventory Areas for the state.



Source: Washington State Department of Transportation

EXAMPLES OF FISH PASSAGE BARRIER CORRECTION

Following are before-and-after pictures from recent fish barrier corrections in the Skagit region. One is from Interstate 5 near the south Skagit County border (Fisher Creek), and the other is east of Mount Vernon, along State Route 9 (Gribble Creek).

Fisher Creek

Before

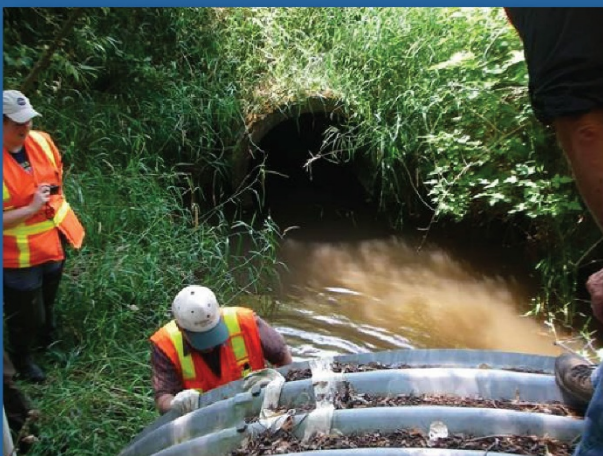


After



Gribble Creek

Before



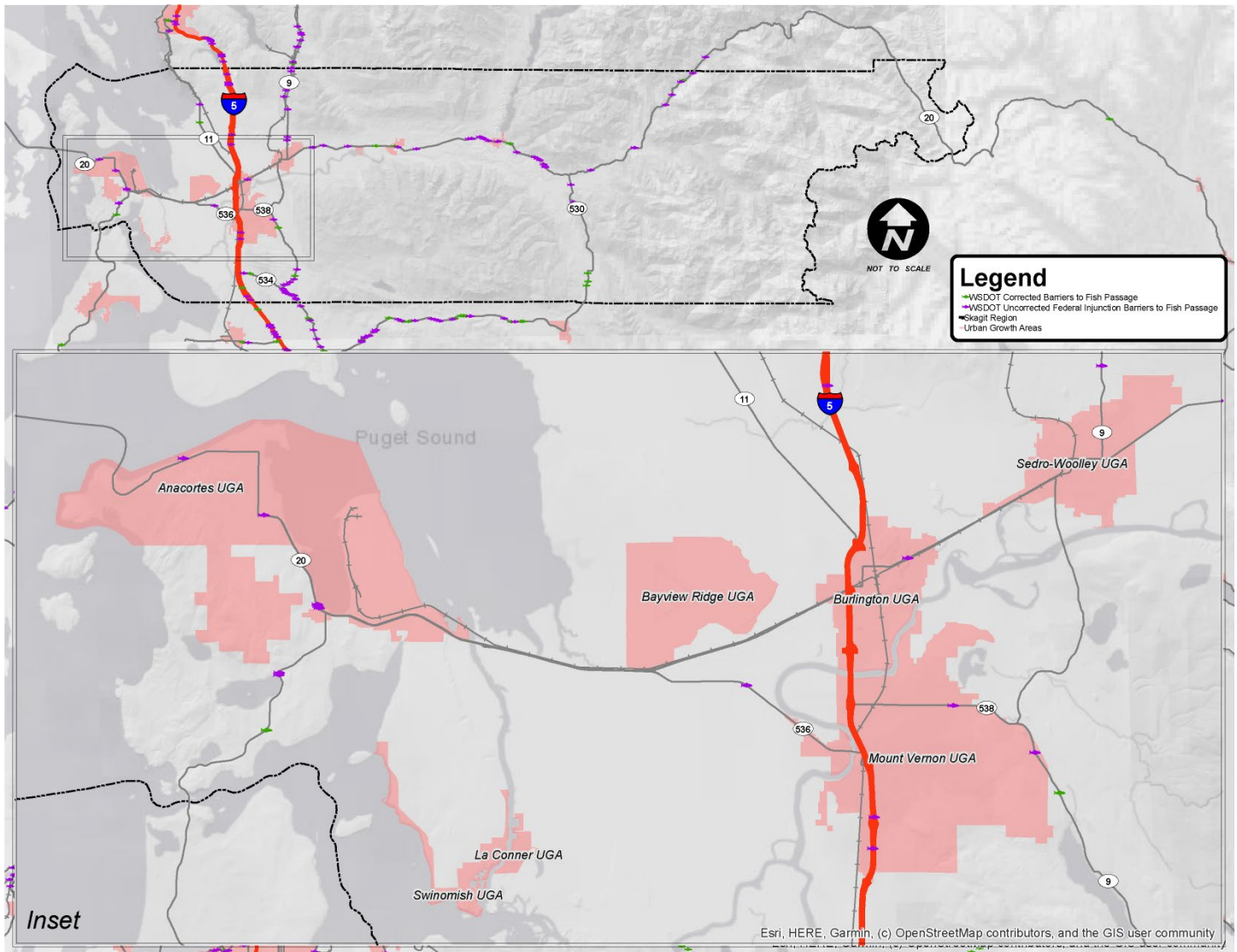
After



Source: Washington State Department of Transportation

FISH PASSAGES IN THE SKAGIT REGION

Fish-passage barriers subject to the federal injunction are included on the following map. In the Skagit region, three of these injunction barriers have been corrected, and WSDOT estimates that 50 remain to be corrected by 2030. Correction of these 50 barriers should open 90% of habitat blocked by fish-passage barriers, consistent with the federal injunction. Additional barriers to fish passage can be corrected at the end of their useful life. The map displays expected habitat gain for some barriers, and also indicates which barriers are in the planning or design phases as of December 2020. Prioritization of these barriers may change between 2021 and 2030, as WSDOT continues to correct these barriers to passage of salmon and steelhead in the Skagit region.



PROGRAMMATIC ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURES

As of December 2020, estimated expenditures to correct federal-injunction fish barriers in the Skagit region are approximately **\$400 million**. These are planning-level estimates, and actual costs of correcting fish passages are determined as projects are engineered on a case-by-base basis.

Funding determinations for WSDOT fish passages are not made by the Skagit region. However, the Skagit Council of Governments does program projects in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program, when applicable federal expenditures are programmed to correct fish passages.