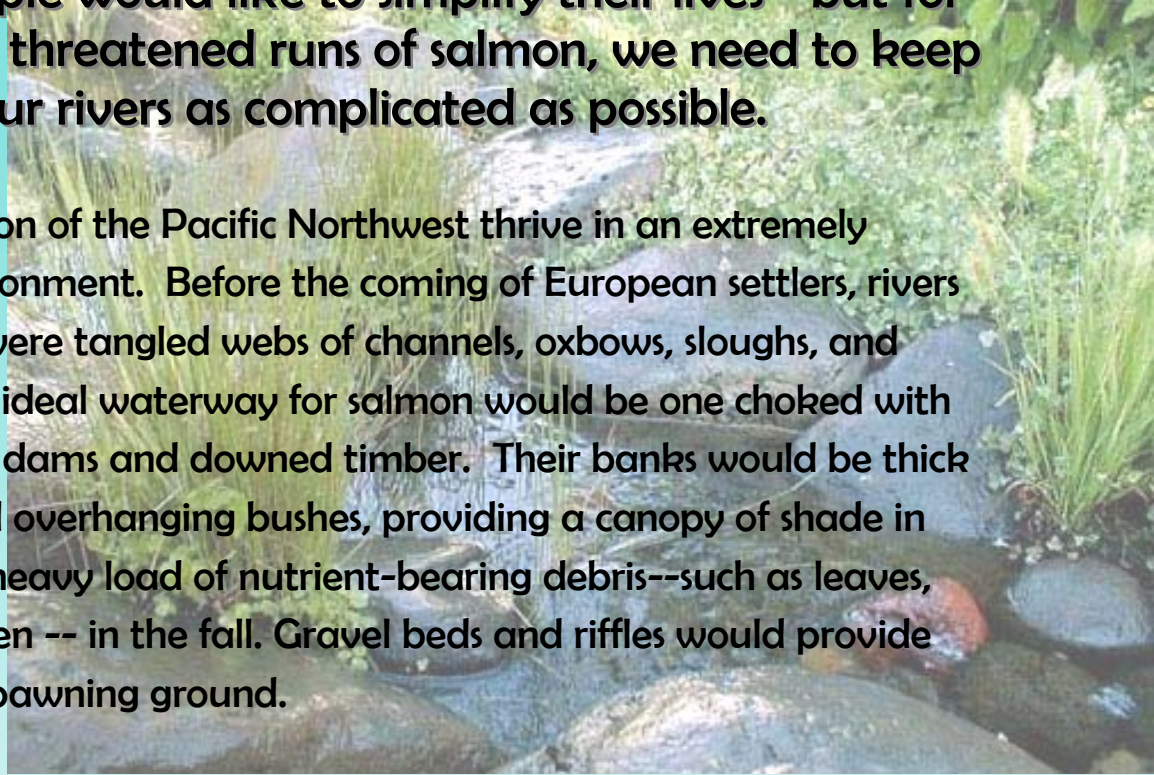


# Simple: Not the Solution for Salmon

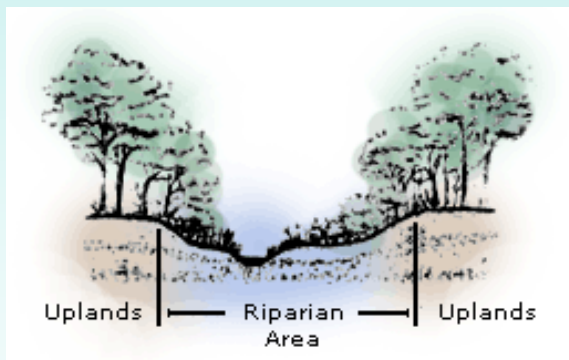
Many people would like to simplify their lives - but for the sake of threatened runs of salmon, we need to keep our rivers as complicated as possible.

The wild salmon of the Pacific Northwest thrive in an extremely complex environment. Before the coming of European settlers, rivers and streams were tangled webs of channels, oxbows, sloughs, and wetlands. An ideal waterway for salmon would be one choked with brush, beaver dams and downed timber. Their banks would be thick with trees and overhanging bushes, providing a canopy of shade in summer and heavy load of nutrient-bearing debris--such as leaves, twigs and lichen -- in the fall. Gravel beds and riffles would provide an excellent spawning ground.



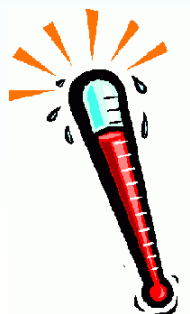
Since the settlers, much of the complex structure within our river systems has been lost due to development for agriculture, forestry,

and urbanization. Streams have been channelized, losing their meanders, and banks have been stripped of their bordering “riparian” forest, shown to the left.



The loss of stream bank vegetation affects salmon

in numerous ways. Salmon need water temperatures in the 42-65 degree Fahrenheit range (with 55-58) degrees being ideal); unshaded streams stripped of their sheltering canopies of leaves frequently reach the upper end of this range, stressing the salmon, and in warmer areas can reach lethal levels. The lack of shrubs, roots and grasses overhanging the bank deprives juvenile salmon of hiding places from predators. Exposed banks can erode, covering spawning gravel with sediment deadly to developing eggs.



# So what can YOU do?

Landowners whose property borders a stream or river can do a great deal to increase the survival of salmon by increasing the habitat complexity. This includes:

- Fence animals away from streams and provide alternative water sources. (Cost share programs, tax incentives, and labor assistance may be available. Check with the Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District.)
- Preserving streambank vegetation that is already there
  - If necessary, stabilize streambanks by re-vegetating with **native** trees, shrubs, and other plants. (For information on native species, contact the Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District.)
- Protect wetlands on your property. They help absorb floods, filter pollutants, and store and release water slowly to maintain stream flows during the summer.
- Never remove woody debris (logs, branches, beaver dams and other material) from the river or stream bottom.
- Never throw leaves or grass clippings in the stream. As the decay they use up the oxygen in the water.
- Minimize or eliminate use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers near water bodies. If you must use them, be very careful during application (for instance, don't use them in windy conditions or when rain is likely). When these chemicals reach waterways in run-off they can harm fish and water quality.

For more information on what you can do at home to help the salmon recover efforts, contact the Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District.

Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District  
Watershed Project Office  
PO Box 131  
Culdesac, ID 83524  
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All NPSWCD programs are offered on a non-discriminatory basis.

Information adapted from Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

