



# Culverts & salmon recovery

2020

Support and fund a comprehensive approach to culvert corrections that includes state, local, and private barriers.

1 Washington is mandated to fix state-owned, fish-blocking culverts.

2 But fixing only state-owned culverts will not solve the problem.

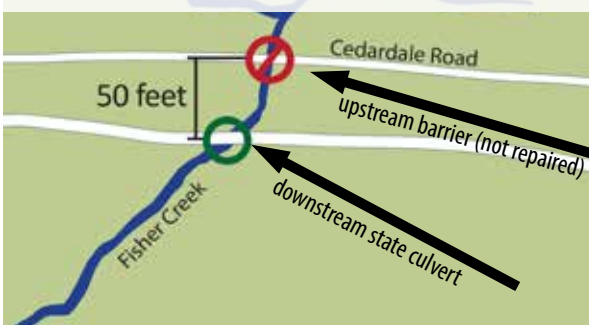
3 Fish need access to streams no matter who owns the barrier. A coordinated approach is best.

**1** Undersized and deficient culverts—built as part of the state’s transportation infrastructure—impair the ability of migratory fish, like salmon, to access prime habitat and achieve their natural abundance. The U.S. Supreme Court recently upheld an injunction requiring the state to fix its fish-blocking culverts by 2030. The Legislature will wrestle with this daunting funding commitment this session.

**2** Fixing only state-owned culverts will make the state’s investment incomplete at best and ineffective at worst. **On average, there are two downstream and five upstream culverts associated with each state barrier.**

Investing only in state-owned culverts without addressing all barriers will not achieve the goal of salmon recovery. For many years, people across the state have spent millions restoring salmon habitat—now we need to restore access to it.

A recently completed WSDOT fish passage project on Fisher Creek shows the opportunity. This \$8.7 million project has a local barrier just 50 feet upstream that, if corrected, could restore access to 14 miles of salmon habitat.



**3** It’s time to support and fund a coordinated program that removes state, local, and private barriers to truly open habitat throughout a watershed. **Strong cities need:**

- A framework to fund corrections, including fully funding the Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB).
- Long-term, sufficient funding to correct nonstate barriers in coordination with the state’s legal obligation.
- Prioritizing whole stream systems to maximize return of salmon and the public investment.

**City culvert repair has a potential cost of \$4.2 billion\* and no identified revenue source.**

\*Using the average correction cost of a WSDOT barrier of \$3.4 million, applied to the 1,233 known city barriers

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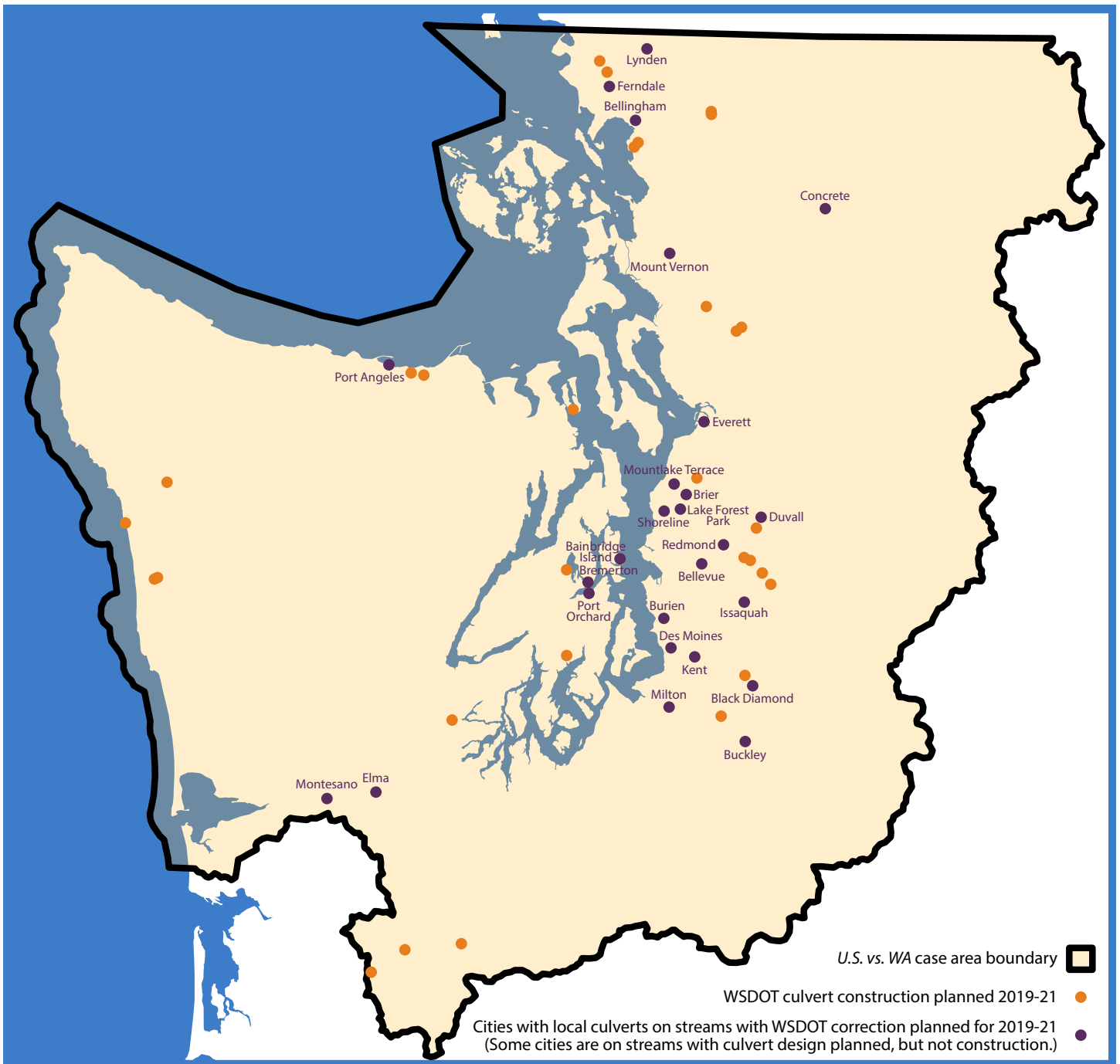
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**The average cost of a WSDOT barrier correction is \$3.4 million. Comparing this to city transportation budgets makes clear that cities need state funding assistance to correct local culverts, which is essential to restoring full access to salmon-spawning streams.**

Cities with local culverts on streams with DOT culvert correction planned for 2019-21	Barriers		Total city transportation spending in 2018 (non-enterprise funds)
	Downstream	Upstream	
Bainbridge Island	1	4	\$2.8 million
Bellevue	4	5	\$35.9 million
Bellingham	15	32	\$9.7 million
Black Diamond	2		\$268,554
Bremerton		3	\$6.7 million
Brier		2	\$203,018
Buckley		1	\$1.1 million
Burien	2	2	\$2.9 million
Concrete	4	2	\$100,577
Des Moines		3	\$5 million
Duvall		2	\$713,207
Elma		11	\$95,506
Everett		9	\$7.3 million
Ferndale		1	\$1.5 million
Issaquah		2	\$22.6 million
Kent		2	\$8.7 million
Lake Forest Park	2	16	\$1.1 million
Lynden	4		\$1.1 million
Milton	1	1	\$303,262
Montesano		19	\$20,171
Mount Vernon		2	\$2.8 million
Mountlake Terrace		20	\$1 million
Port Angeles	3	1	\$1.7 million
Port Orchard		3	\$1.7 million
Redmond		5	\$11.1 million
Shoreline		1	\$3.9 million
City barriers up/downstream from the 34 WSDOT planned corrections	38	149	

**Investing only in state-owned barrier corrections will not achieve the goal of salmon recovery. It's time to fully fund a coordinated program that includes city-owned barriers.**



# Additional information

"Many people are unaware of the huge scale of the problem. It's a significant issue... It's one of the highest priorities we have for salmon recovery."

—Jeff Breckel, Former Executive Director, Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board

The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision, upholding a federal court order mandating the state fix state-owned culverts that are blocking migratory salmon and steelhead by 2030, has received a lot of attention. Less well known is the fact that the fish barriers that the state is legally obligated to remove have other barriers up and down stream that will effectively make the state's investment incomplete at best, and ineffective at worst. Now is the time to support and fund a coordinated program that removes state, local, and private barriers that will truly open up habitat throughout a watershed.

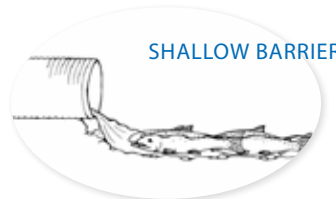
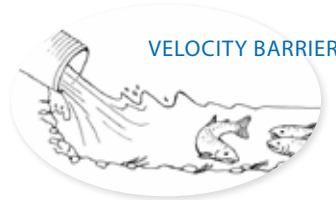
Cities and counties have pursued a strategic approach to create a coordinated effort on culvert removal.

**Salmon and orca recovery are linked. Salmon abundance is key to orca survival.**

We took part in reconvening the state's Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board and worked with our partners to develop a coordinated approach with the salmon recovery regions. We have funded barrier inventory and identification work. We sought direct funding in the transportation package and authority for culvert correction to serve as priority mitigation for transportation projects.

While we have made progress, now is the time to cement that work and commit to the future of salmon. Cities need a coordinated, comprehensive, and long-term funding investment for the Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board to address these barriers.

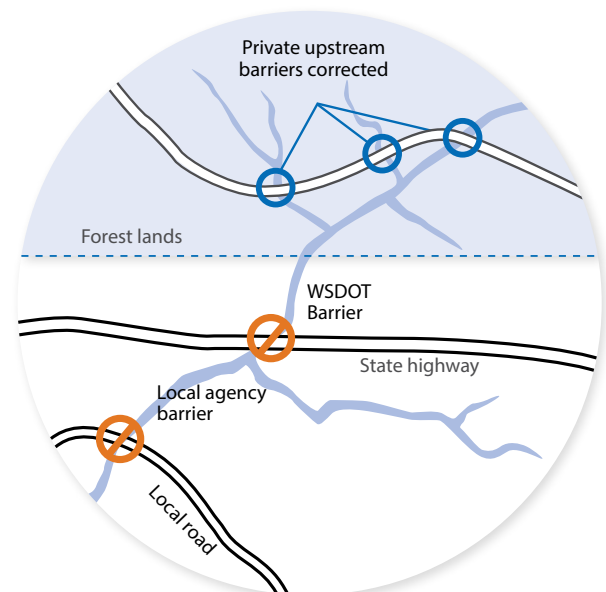
## Not all culverts are created equal



Many older culverts were not designed for fish passage:

- A steep or too narrow culvert will cause a stream to flow too fast
- A culvert too high above the stream bed will defy even the hardest jumpers
- An undersized culvert can be overwhelmed by storms and debris and cause flooding.

Source: Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board



Upstream barriers have largely been fixed on forest lands. Now we need to tackle downstream barriers which are mostly state- and locally-owned.

Source: Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board

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