

Kittitas Conservation Trust

Protecting and Enhancing Critical Fish and Wildlife Habitat in the Upper Yakima River Basin for 22 years



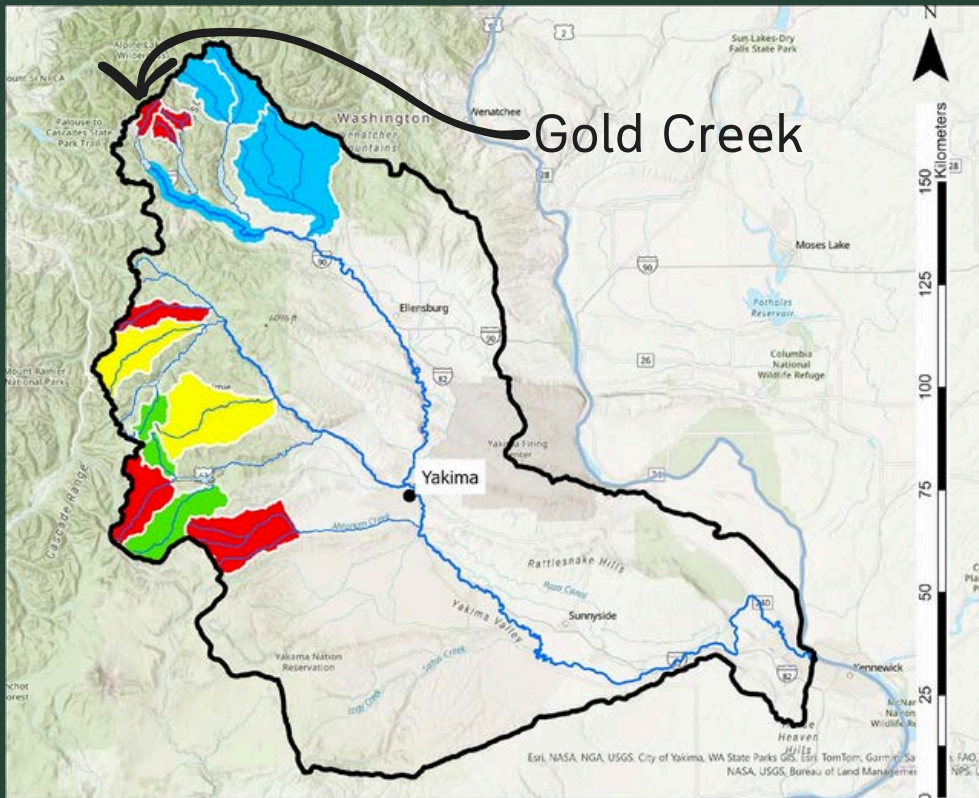
The Gold Creek Valley Restoration Project A STORY OF PERSERVERANCE



Decades of resource extraction from the Gold Creek Valley have left it in a degraded state. Clear-cut logging along the banks of Gold Creek have caused the creek to over-widen. Gravel mining has left a 27 acre, 60 foot deep pit that siphons ground water away from Gold Creek. As the creek dewater, juvenile fish are left stranded and are vulnerable to predation and desiccation. Without adequate flow, adult fish are blocked from upstream migration and unable to access their spawning grounds. The future was looking really bleak for the Gold Creek Bull Trout population until Kittitas Conservation Trust and partners began developing the Gold Creek Valley Restoration Project. KCT and partners have been working diligently for the last 13 years to study the unique hydrology of this valley, develop restoration designs, and secure restoration funding. In the last 2 years, KCT finalized restoration designs and secured over 13.4 million dollars to implement 2.5 miles of instream restoration. This project will install 141 log jams creating much needed fish habitat. Over 1.4 miles of side channels will be created to provide slow water refuge for juvenile fish and flood protection for the local community. Filling in 30 acres of gravel mining scars will stop the siphoning of ground water, and allow for the restoration of 47 acres of lost riparian and wetland habitat. Unfortunately 7.3 million dollars needed for instream restoration was contracted through federal funding programs that have been frozen. Through careful planning, KCT and grant managers are working to reallocate the remaining funds to ensure that restoration actions in the most degraded mile of Gold Creek (river mile 1-2) will not be disrupted. KCT staff will continue applying for additional funding and will expand the restoration footprint when the contracted federal funds are released. This project will **STILL** begin in the summer of 2026, as without significant, immediate efforts we will loose this population of Bull Trout forever.

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—Yakima Basin Bull Trout Populations —



- Extinct
- At Risk
- Low Abundance
- Stable



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Historically the Yakima River Basin was home to 15 genetically distinct populations of Bull Trout. Three populations are now extinct, 6 are at risk, and 2 have very low abundance. With degraded habitats and climate change threatening their existence the need for restoration is great. In the last five years, KCT has restored habitat in Box Canyon Creek and Kachess River. Monitoring has shown an immediate response in both juvenile and spawning Bull Trout post restoration. These observations gives us hope that one day the Yakima Basin Bull Trout will once again thrive.

MEET OUR NEW PROJECT MANAGER!

KELSEY MARTIN HARBRICK

Kelsey is an Ellensburg native and CWU alum. She spent 5 years working as a marine biologist in California and Hawaii, before moving back to Central Washington. She has been a member of Kittitas County Search and Rescue for 5 years and counting, is an avid hiker, SCUBA diver, certified skydiver, and gymnastics coach. But, most of all, she has an unwavering love for our natural world and is fiercely passionate about protecting it!

