

## SKYKOMISH RIVER Sultan Area

This section covers eight miles of Skykomish River from R.M. 31.0 upstream to R.M. 39.0 near Startup in Snohomish County. Eight tributaries, excluding the Sultan and Wallace rivers, and more than 35 linear stream miles. Access is via Stevens Pass Highway 2, through Sultan.

### Stream Description

From R.M. 39.0 the Skykomish drains generally west eight miles to below Sultan. Major tributaries include the Sultan River (Snohomish 1700), Wallace River (Snohomish 1800), and Wagleys, Elwell, and McCoy creeks, plus Sky Slough and numerous lengthy side channels and shorter channel splits.

The Skykomish courses over a broad valley, up to 3 miles in width, but averaging less than 1 mile in most sections. The valley floor is relatively flat with the river bounded by cleared and partially cleared land. Side valley terrain rises gradually from the bottomland, and is densely forested with mixed conifer and deciduous timber. Land use is mainly agriculture, with some clear-cut logging at higher elevations. Development consists of rural residences plus the communities of Sultan and Startup.

This Skykomish River section contains extensive channel splits winding through large islands of gravel. Usable river length is essentially doubled with these channels. Excellent pool-riffle and glide areas prevail with moderate gradient throughout. The bottom is comprised mostly of ideal spawning gravel with some larger rock and rubble. The pools and long glide areas are sufficiently deep and large enough for use as resting areas and holding waters for maturation of adult salmon. Individual channel widths vary from 20 to over 400 feet. Most banks are naturally stable, relatively low earth cuts or broad, gently sloping gravel-rubble beaches. Stream-side cover consists of strips or stands of mostly deciduous trees and underbrush.

Elwell Creek (R.M. 31.8) flows generally north from mountain foothills about six miles south of Sultan, dropping through steep ravines to its confluence with the Skykomish. Its lower two miles provide the best fish production area with a moderate gradient, good gravel composition and ideal pool-riffle areas. Excellent shade and protection are provided from deciduous growth and cut banks. Lower McCoy Creek contains similar physical features, but does not contain the watershed found in Elwell Creek. Sky Slough has been formed over the years from flood waters breaking through stream banks between R.M. 36.5 and 37.0, and cutting through the bottomland for almost two miles. It contains moderate-gentle gradient, mixed gravel with some rubble, and excellent shade and protection.

### Salmon Utilization

This section of the Skykomish provides transportation for adult and juvenile salmon using the extensive upriver production areas. Chinook, pink, chum, and some coho salmon also spawn in this reach, and in its accessible tributaries. Juvenile salmon rear throughout these accessible waters. Superb salmon production, particularly for summer-fall chinook, pink, and chum salmon occurs within the main

river channels. Elwell Creek produces chinook, coho, chum, and some pink salmon. McCoy Creek contains coho, pink, and a few chum. Wagleys Creek contains coho and a few chum, mainly in its lowermost reaches.

### Limiting Factors

Principal factors limiting salmon production within this section are flooding and channel scouring, gravel removal, and low summer flows, especially in smaller tributaries. Some side channels occasionally suffer changing flow patterns from gravel shifting at their point of divergence.

### Beneficial Developments

To keep the river within its natural floodway channel, levees were constructed in 1968 between the main Skykomish and Wallace rivers, and below the Sultan. A large rearing pond created on Wagleys Creek is used for rearing of coho salmon. Also, a state salmon hatchery on the Wallace River provides significant plants to local streams.

### Habitat Needs

Principal requirements for maintaining this exceptional fish production habitat include preserving existing stream and streambed conditions in as near a natural state as possible.

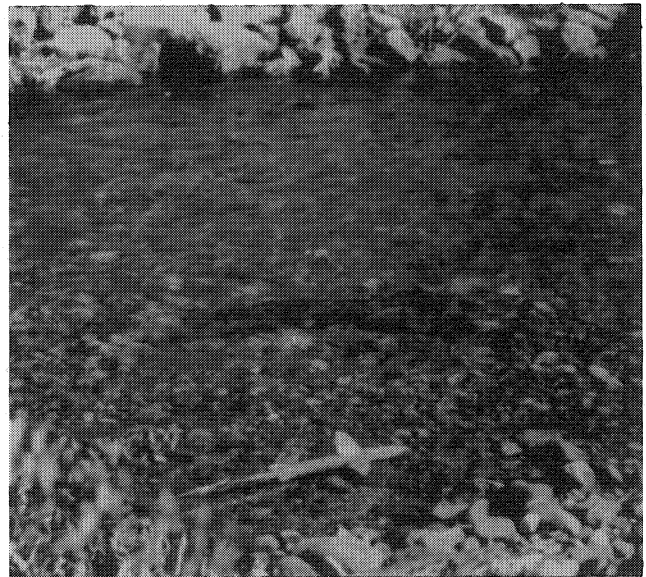
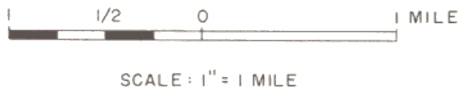


PHOTO 07-27. Elwell Creek contains spawning gravels.

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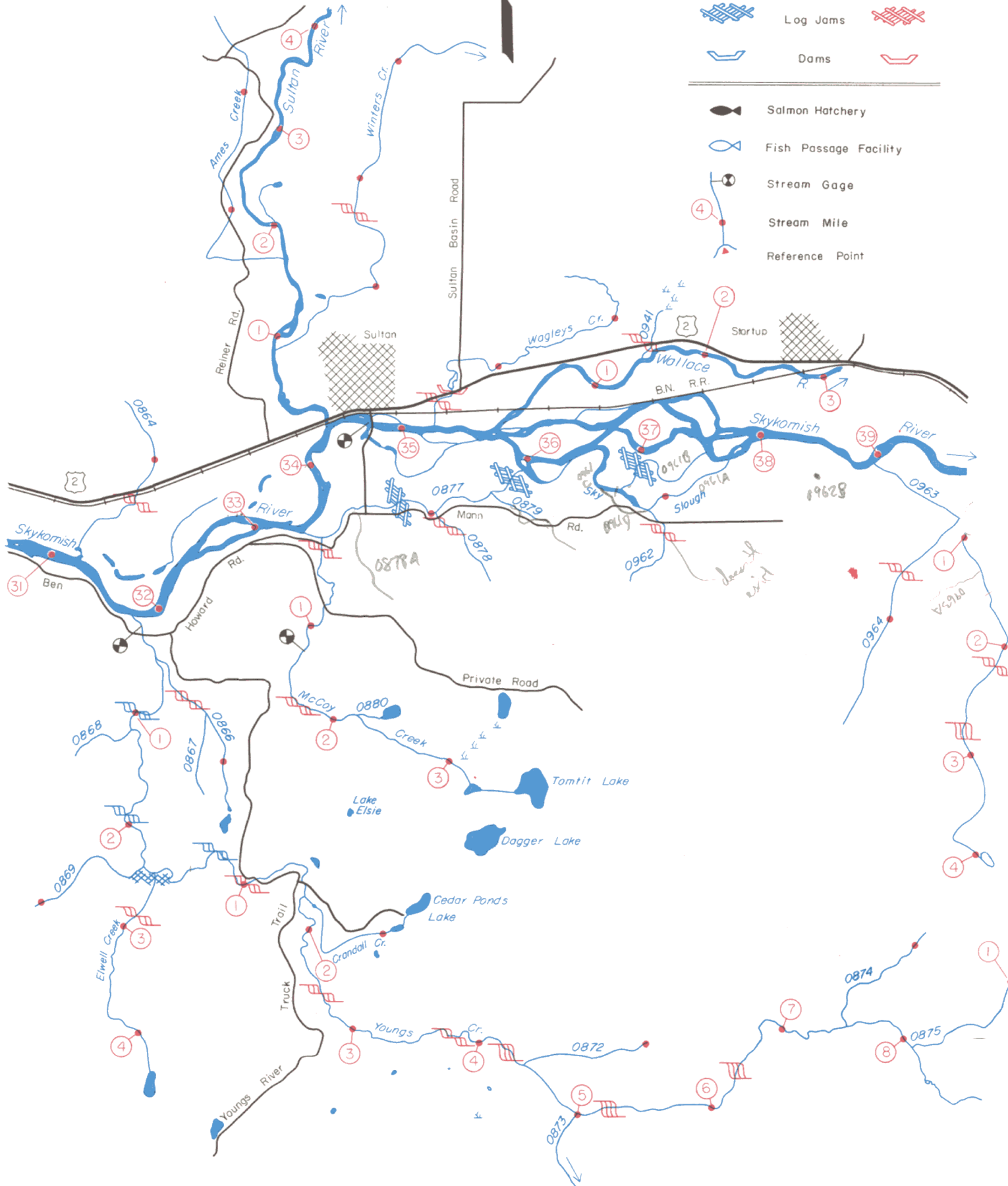


SYMBOLS

| PASSABLE - BARRIERS - IMPASSABLE |             |  |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--|
|                                  | Falls       |  |
|                                  | Cascades    |  |
|                                  | Beaver Dams |  |
|                                  | Log Jams    |  |
|                                  | Dams        |  |

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
|  | Salmon Hatchery       |
|  | Fish Passage Facility |
|  | Stream Gage           |
|  | Stream Mile           |
|  | Reference Point       |



**SKYKOMISH RIVER — SULTAN AREA**  
**Snohomish River Basin — WRIA 07**

| <b>Stream Number</b> | <b>Stream Name</b>                       | <b>Location Of Mouth</b> | <b>Length</b> | <b>Drainage Area</b> | <b>Salmon Use</b>            |
|----------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 0012                 | Snohomish River                          |                          |               |                      |                              |
|                      | Snohomish R. cont.<br>as Skykomish River | @ mi. 20.51              | —             | —                    |                              |
| 0864                 | Unnamed                                  | RB-31.2                  | 1.5           | —                    | Unknown                      |
| 0865                 | Elwell Cr.                               | LB-31.8                  | 4.3           | —                    | Chin., Coho,<br>Pink, (Chum) |
| 0866                 | Unnamed                                  | RB-0.4                   | 1.4           | —                    | (Coho)                       |
|                      | Unnamed Lk.                              | Outlet-1.4               | —             | —                    |                              |
| 0869                 | Unnamed                                  | LB-2.4                   | 1.05          | —                    | Unknown                      |
| 0870                 | Youngs Cr.                               | RB-2.5                   | 8.9           | —                    | Coho                         |
| 0871                 | Crandall Cr.                             | RB-1.7                   | 1.25          | —                    | None                         |
|                      | Unnamed Lk.                              | Outlet-1.05              | —             | —                    |                              |
|                      | Cedar<br>Ponds Lk.                       | Outlet-1.25              | —             | —                    |                              |
| 0872                 | Unnamed                                  | RB-4.4                   | 1.0           | —                    | None                         |
| 0874                 | Unnamed                                  | RB-7.5                   | 1.1           | —                    | None                         |
| 0875                 | Unnamed                                  | RB-8.1                   | 1.1           | —                    | None                         |
|                      | Unnamed Lk.                              | Outlet-4.3               | —             | —                    |                              |
| 0876                 | McCoy Creek                              | LB-33.4                  | 3.6           | —                    | Coho,Pink,(Chum)             |
| 0877                 | Unnamed Side Chan.                       | RB-0.15                  | 1.9           | —                    | Coho,Pink,(Chum)             |
|                      | Unnamed Lake                             | Outlet-3.25              | —             | —                    |                              |
|                      | Tomtit Lk.                               | Outlet-3.6               | —             | —                    |                              |
| 0881                 | Sultan River                             | RB-34.4                  | 30.4          | —                    | Chin., Coho,<br>Pink, Chum   |
|                      | (See Snohomish 1703)                     |                          |               |                      |                              |
| 0939                 | Wagleys Creek                            | RB-35.2                  | 2.6           | —                    | Coho, (Chum)                 |
|                      | Unnamed Pond                             | Outlet-0.36              | —             | —                    |                              |
| 0940                 | Wallace River                            | RB-35.7                  | 15.1          | 58.4                 | Chin., Coho,<br>Pink, Chum   |
|                      | (See Snohomish 1803)                     |                          |               |                      |                              |
| 0961                 | Sky Slough                               | LB-36.5                  | 1.6           | —                    | Chin., Coho,<br>Pink, Chum   |
| 0963                 | Unnamed                                  | LB-38.9                  | 4.0           | —                    | Coho,Pink,(Chum)             |
|                      | (See Snohomish 1903)                     |                          |               |                      |                              |
|                      | (Cont. Snohomish 1903)                   |                          |               |                      |                              |

