

## SOUTH FORK SKYKOMISH

### Sunset Falls Area

This section includes 15 miles of South Fork Skykomish River from the North Fork upstream to the town of Skykomish. Nineteen tributaries add more than 72 linear stream miles, excluding Money Creek (Snohomish 2300) and Miller River (2400). The Snohomish-King County boundary intersects the river near Baring (R.M. 56.0). Stevens Pass-Highway 2 parallels the river along its northern bank. Most of this watershed area, except for sections along the main river, is within Snoqualmie National Forest.

#### Stream Description

The South Fork Skykomish, in this section, courses generally west and northwest from the town of Skykomish (R.M. 65.0) to its confluence with the North Fork (R.M. 49.6). Heybrook Ridge, extending eastward to the Baring Mountains, separates the North and South Forks. Principal tributaries are Bridal Veil, Barclay, Index, and Lowe creeks.

The river valley is narrowly confined through this section, running between steep-sloped, densely forested mountain ridges, some to over 6,000-foot elevation. Principal development includes the town of Skykomish, the small communities of Baring and Grotto, and summer-vacation residences mainly along the lower stretch of riverfrontage. Principal activities are logging and recreation.

The upper 10.5 miles of this reach travels over mostly moderate gradient dropping some 150 feet between Skykomish and Eagle falls. The river contains a good pool-riffle balance and offers considerable high quality spawning gravel. The bottom is comprised mainly of gravel and rubble and a few scattered boulder stretches. Fall widths range from 12 to over 30 yards. Banks are mostly stable earth cuts or rubble-boulder beaches maintaining relatively dense deciduous and conifer cover.

The river falls rapidly over the next three miles. Encountered are Eagle Falls (R.M. 54.5), a 28-foot drop; Canyon Falls (R.M. 52.2), a 48-foot drop; and Sunset Falls (R.M. 51.5), an 88-foot cascade and falls combination. As would be expected, most of this stretch consists of cascades and rapids, separated by large deep pools and few riffles. The bottom is mostly bedrock and boulders with some rubble and gravel.

Below Sunset Falls, for nearly 2 miles to the North Fork, the gradient moderates once again producing mostly a pool-riffle stream with a few rapid areas. Here the bottom is mainly rubble and boulder and some fairly good gravel riffles. Fall widths range from 15 to over 30 yards. The steep, narrow banks and side slopes maintain mostly dense forest cover.

Tributaries along this reach descend from heavily forested rugged slopes and exhibit typical mountain stream character. Steep gradients and many cascades and falls occur except for short stretches near their mouths where some pool-riffle stream exists. A number of these streams originate from high mountain lakes or contain lakes within their system.

#### Salmon Utilization

This segment of river offers generally good spawning and rearing habitat, primarily for chinook and coho salmon.

Some pink salmon also use the area. Adults are captured at Sunset Falls and hauled upstream 4 miles and released above Eagle Falls. Bridal Veil Creek provides about 0.25 mile access for coho salmon; Barclay Creek 0.25 mile for chinook and coho; Index Creek, with a flatter gradient, offers about 1.5 mile for chinook, coho, and pink salmon. Lowe Creek is accessible in the lower 0.75 mile section for coho and pink. All other small tributaries are only accessible for 100 to 200 yards.

#### Limiting Factors

Principal factors affecting salmon production in this section are steep gradients, falls and cascades, and logging and road construction in some upper watershed areas. Three major barriers are Sunset, Canyon, and Eagle falls. Only a small portion of the 72 miles of tributary streams are accessible and suitable for salmon production.

#### Beneficial Developments

The major development in this section benefiting salmon production is the Sunset Falls fishway trap-and-haul facility, which opens approximately 54 river miles to salmon use. Adult salmon are released above the falls at the mouth of Barclay Creek. Since initial plants were made, in the late 1950's, coho runs have steadily built to levels approaching 15,000 fish annually. Chinook and pink runs above Sunset Falls have originated from lower river native stocks spreading upstream.

#### Habitat Needs

There is need to develop a sound watershed management plan for this area to prevent encroachment that could alter natural habitat conditions. This is especially true for future logging and road building plans, as well as summer residence developments.



PHOTO 07-30. Sunset Falls is a total barrier.

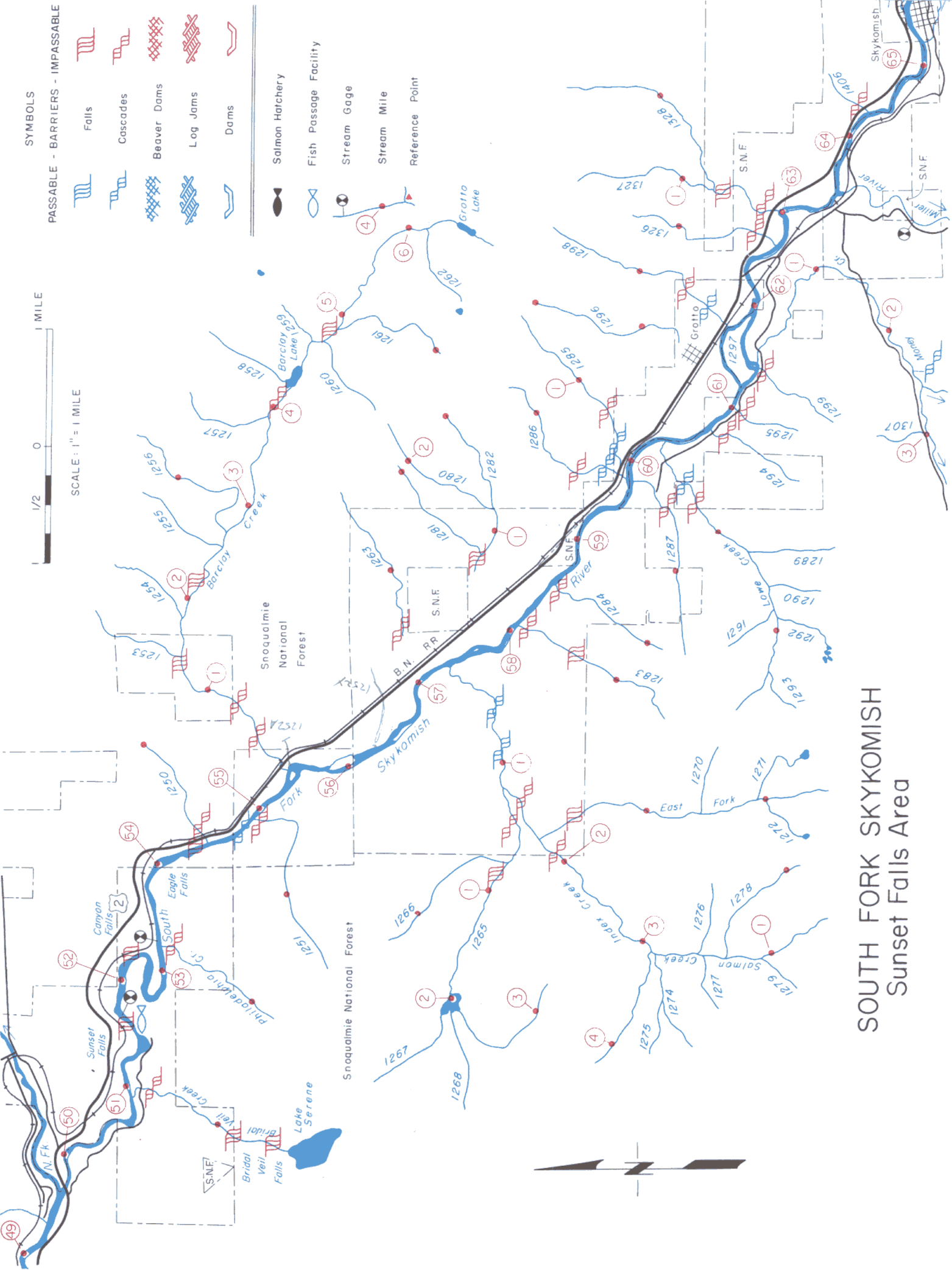
SYMBOLS

PASSABLE - BARRIERS - IMPASSABLE

- Falls
- Cascades
- Beaver Dams
- Log Jams
- Dams
- Salmon Hatchery
- Fish Passage Facility
- Stream Gage
- Stream Mile
- Reference Point



SCALE: 1" = 1 MILE



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Sunset Falls Area

**SOUTH FORK SKYKOMISH — SUNSET FALLS AREA**  
**Snohomish River Basin — WRIA 07**

Stream Number	Stream Name	Location Of Mouth	Length	Drainage Area	Salmon Use
0012	Snohomish River				
	Snohomish R. cont. as Skykomish River	@ mi. 20.51	—	—	
	Skykomish R. cont. S. Fork Skykomish R.	@ mi. 49.61	—	362.0	
1248	Bridal Veil Creek	LB-50.9	1.6	—	Coho, (Pink)
1249	Philadelphia Creek	LB-53.2	1.2	—	Unknown
1250	Unnamed	RB-54.51	1.0	—	Unknown
1251	Unnamed	LB-54.9	1.7	—	Unknown
1252	Barclay Creek	RB-55.4	6.8	8.33	(Chin.), (Coho)
1256	Unnamed	RB-2.7	1.55	—	None
	Barclay Lake	Outlet-4.2	—	—	None
1261	Unnamed	LB-4.9	1.0	—	None
	Grotto Lake	Outlet-6.45	—	—	
1263	Unnamed	RB-57.1	1.8	—	Unknown
1264	Index Creek	LB-57.3	4.2	12.3	(Chin.), (Coho), (Pink)
1265	Unnamed	LB-1.2	3.25	—	Unknown
1226	Unnamed	LB-0.7	1.3	—	None
	Unnamed Lake	Outlet-1.95	—	—	
1269	E. Fk. Index Creek	RB-1.7	2.5	—	None
1273	Salmon Creek	RB-3.1	1.5	—	None
1278	Unnamed	RB-0.6	1.1	—	None
1280	Unnamed	RB-57.6	2.4	—	Unknown
1281	Unnamed	RB-0.8	1.05	—	None
1282	Unnamed	LB-1.2	1.0	—	None
1283	Unnamed	LB-58.05	1.6	—	Unknown
1284	Unnamed	LB-58.5	1.1	—	Unknown
1285	Unnamed	RB-59.8	1.8	—	Unknown
1286	Unnamed	RB-0.1	1.4	—	Unknown
1287	Unnamed	LB-59.81	1.7	—	(Coho)
1288	Lowe Creek	LB-60.3	2.8	—	(Coho), (Pink)
1296	Unnamed	RB-61.15	2.0	—	Unknown
1297	Unnamed side channel	RB-61.2	0.8	—	Chin.,Coho,(Pink)
1298	Unnamed	RB-0.55	1.8	—	(Coho)
1300	Money Creek	LB-61.45	7.7	—	Chin.,Coho,(Pink)
	(See Snohomish 2302)				
1326	Unnamed	RB-62.7	1.4	—	(Coho)
1327	Unnamed	RB-63.0	1.9	—	Unknown

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Stream Number	Stream Name	Location Of Mouth	Length	Drainage Area	Salmon Use
1328	Unnamed	LB-0.7	1.8	—	None
1329	Miller River (See Snohomish 2403) (Cont. Snohomish 2302)	LB-63.5	15.9	46.0	Chin.,Coho,(Pink)