

Progress Report - October 29, 1987

- Trout plan mainstem Williamson River
- Management plan adopted by the Commission 1978

- Management objectives are being met.

accepted
KMB

MANAGEMENT OF MAIN STEM WILLIAMSON RIVER

INTRODUCTION

No management alternatives are presented for the main stem Williamson since yearling hatchery trout are no longer stocked.

The Williamson River is the major tributary to Klamath Lake and prior to liquidation of the Klamath Indian reservation in 1954, little physical and biological data were gathered as the system was essentially within the reservation boundaries. Since 1968, however, Department activities have centered on life-history studies.

The lower Williamson, in conjunction with Klamath Lake, is a productive stream and its capability to produce wild trout must be assured.

Williamson River Trout Management Program

The lower Williamson has long been known for its population of large trout. The exceptional trout growth is undoubtedly made in Klamath Lake but to date the migration pattern between the lake and river is poorly understood. The lack of public access and prohibition of angling from a floating device has kept angling pressure light and has given the trout population protection. Angling regulations are quite restrictive:

1. Regular Zone 6 angling methods and a reduced bag limit are in effect below the Highway 97 bridge.
2. A reduced bag limit, restricted terminal tackle, and 12-inch minimum size is applicable between the Highway 97 bridge and the Chiloquin bridge.
3. From the Chiloquin bridge up to the Silver Lake Road, regular Zone 6 methods, bag and length limits apply, but angling is not permitted from a floating device.
4. Terminal tackle is restricted and the bag limit reduced above the Silver Lake Road.

Spring Creek and Sprague River are both tributaries to the Williamson. The Sprague is managed for wild trout while Spring Creek is stocked with hatchery yearling rainbow.

We recommend three management objectives for the main stem Williamson:

1. Manage for wild trout only.
2. Enhance the wild trout population.
3. Continue to provide a diversity of angling experiences.

Approximately 8,000 yearling hatchery trout have been stocked adjacent to and above the mouth of Spring Creek annually in accessible areas. Deletion of this stocking program will allow Objective #1 to be met.

We believe Objective #2 can be met with the following planned programs:

1. Improve trout habitat:
 - a. Increase the size of the artificial spawning bar in lower Spring Creek.
 - b. Provide spawning gravel in many areas in the upper river. Lack of spawning gravel is a limiting factor.
 - c. Stabilize banks and provide additional trout cover in the stream above Klamath Marsh. Habitat improvement negotiations began with the U.S. Forest Service in 1974. To date, the following progress has been made:
 - 1974 - 400 shrubs planted
 - 1975 - 1,500 shrubs planted
 - 1976 - exclosure fencing
 - 1977 - 200 shrubs planted

d. Evaluate impacts before negotiating for additional public access:

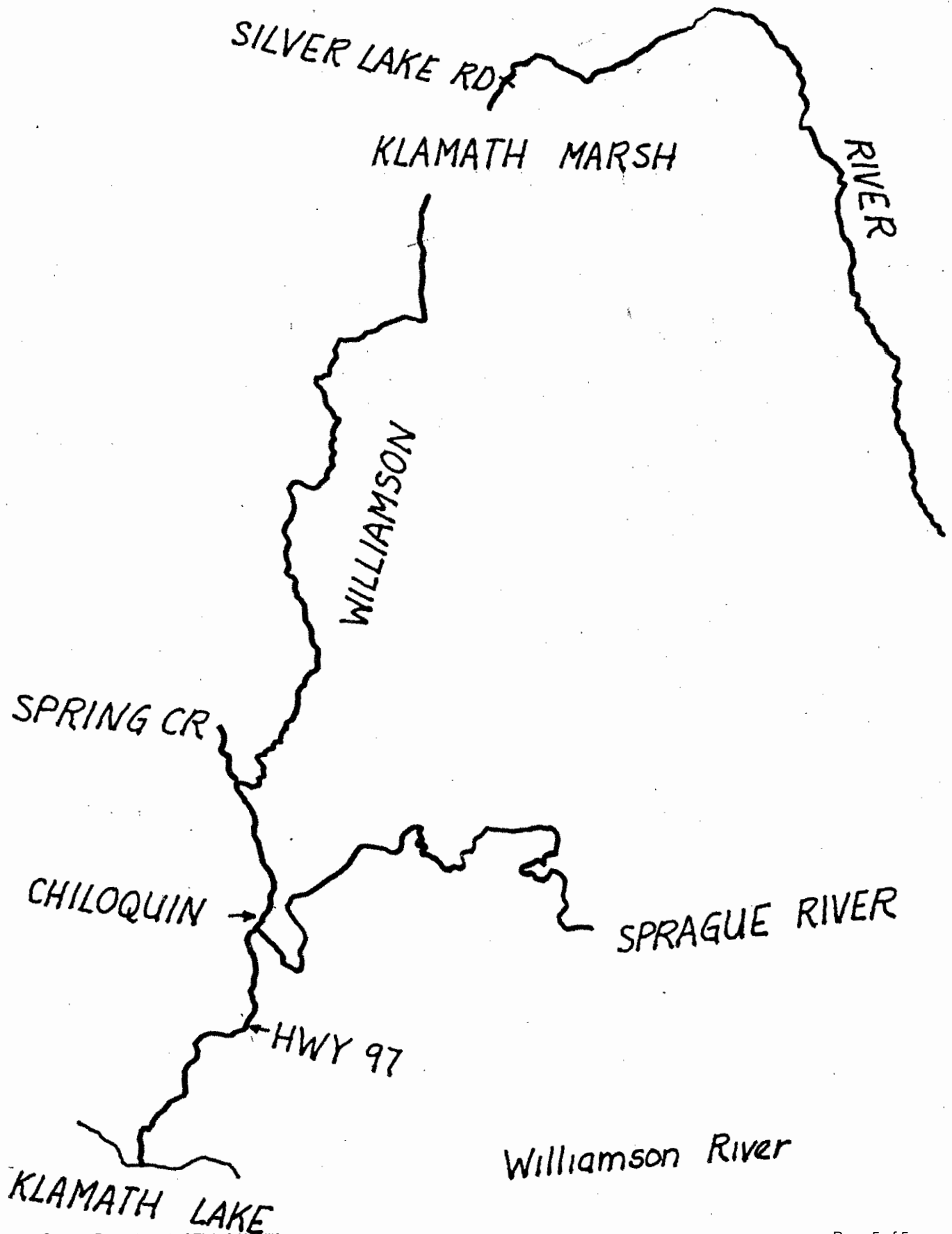
(1) All but 7 linear miles of river frontage in the upper river are private; there are few roads into the area and only one developed campground exists.

(2) In the 16.5 miles below Spring Creek, less than one mile of bank access exists for the public.

e. Encourage catch-release of wild trout. Voluntary creel boxes (lower river) show a high percentage of trout released.

A dry streambed for some distance below Klamath Marsh during the summer and irrigation diversions above the Marsh are limiting factors but cannot be improved upon.

Objective #3 is being met. A variety of angling experiences can be found throughout the river under the present regulations, and we are recommending no further changes.



KLAMATH LAKE

Williamson River