Climate Change Impacts on Columbia Basin Tribal Lands: Past-Present-Future

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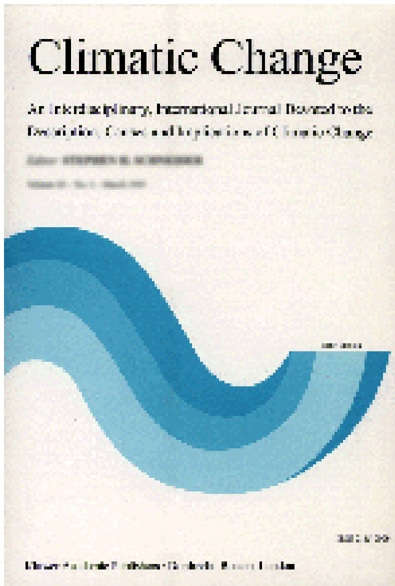
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
Portland, Oregon, USA

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission - CRITFC

CRITFC website, http://www.critfc.org

Tribes and Climate Change



Climatic Change is dedicated to the totality of the problem of climatic variability and change – its descriptions, causes, implications and interactions among these. The purpose of the journal is to provide a means of exchange between those working on problems related to climatic variations but in different disciplines. Interdisciplinary researchers or those in any discipline, be it meteorology, anthropology, agricultural science, astronomy, biology, chemistry, physics, geography, policy analysis, economics, engineering, geology, ecology, or history of climate, are invited to submit articles, provided the articles are of interdisciplinary interest. This means that authors have an opportunity to communicate the essence of their studies to people in other climate related disciplines and to interested laypersons, as well as to report on research in which the originality is in the combinations of (not necessarily original) work from several disciplines. The journal also includes vigorous editorial and book review sections.

ARTICLE WENT PUBLIC (ON-LINE) ON APRIL 17, 2013!!! ☺

http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-013-0745-0

THE CLIMATE THAT WAS...

Introduction...Methods

- Goal: (1) Assess how river flow has changed on Columbia Basin tribal lands over the last 100 years, (2) Possible impacts on salmon.
- Tributary Flow: US Geological Survey stream data for 32 basins. Flow data were naturalized (no irrigation effects) for 19 basins. Study Goals:

  (1) Shift in Seasonal Flow Fraction (i.e., Spring-Summer vs. Fall-Winter).

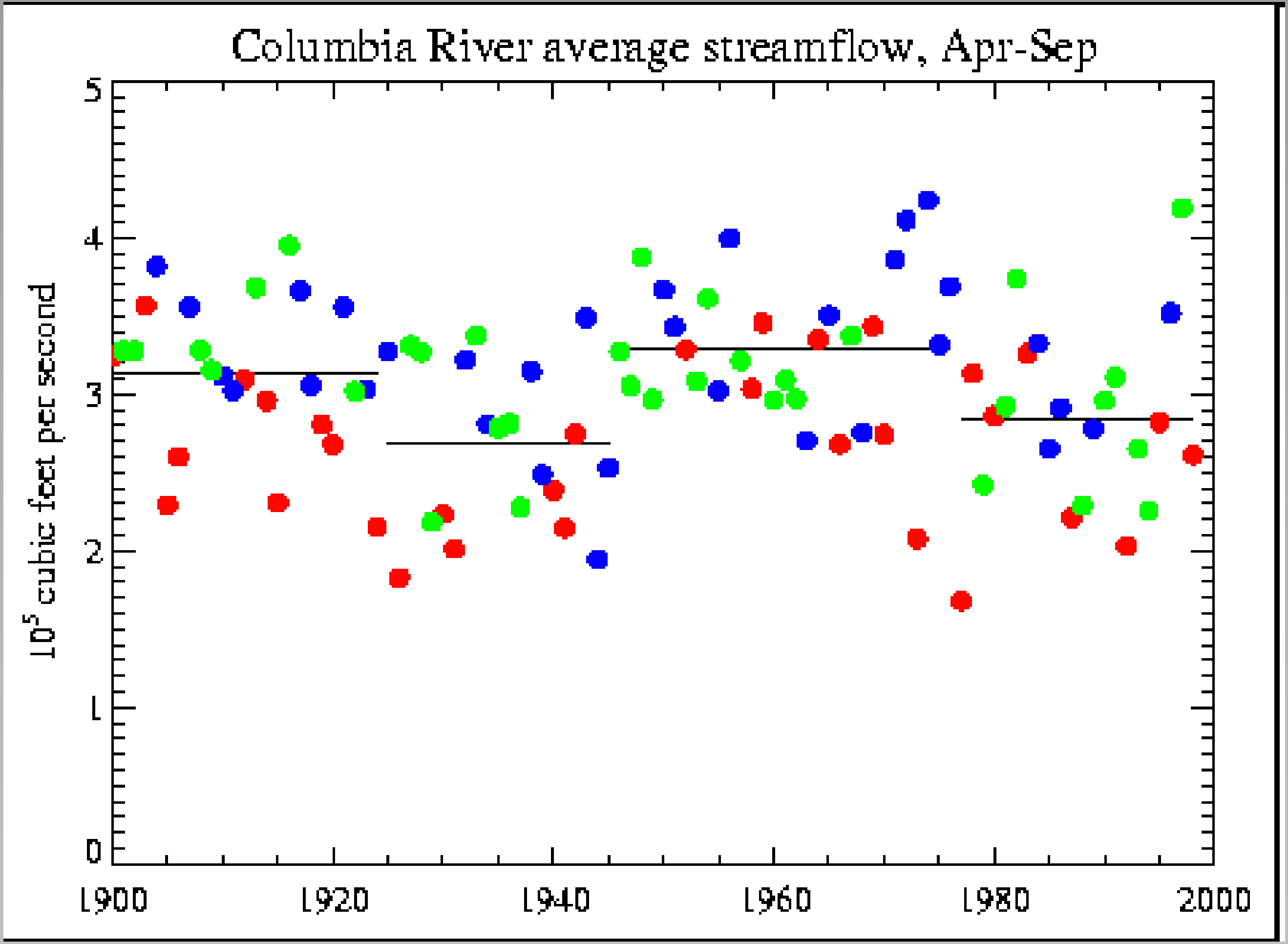
  (2) Shift in median (50^{th} percentile) annual flow Center Timing,

  (3) Shift in Spring Flow Onset (i.e., start of the spring snowmelt).

  (4) High Flow/Flood Flow (autumn-winter).

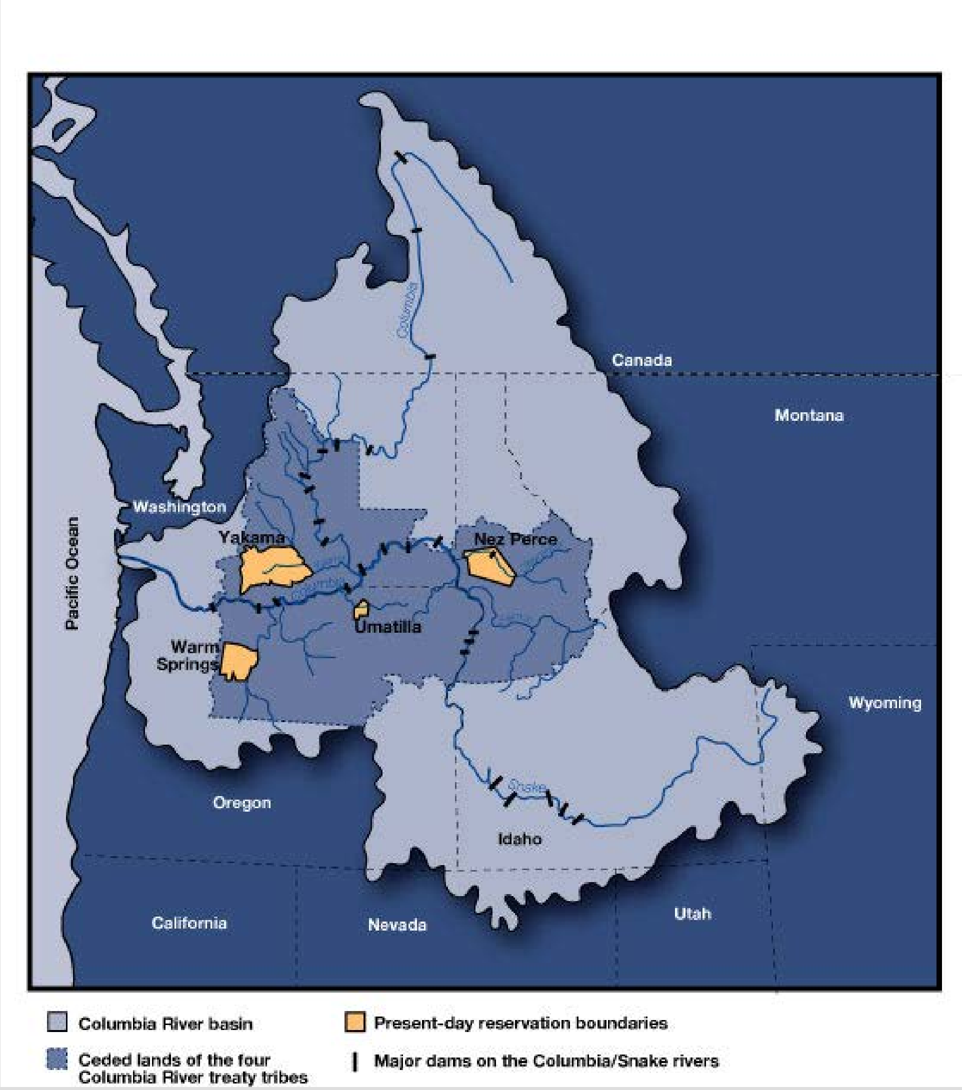
  (5) Low Flow (summer-autumn).
- Student "t-test" and Mann-Kendall trend tests were used.
- GIS data: Climate change risk for land below elevation 4000 feet?

Climate Variability and Streamflow in the PNW



Source: Climate Impacts Group, University of Washington, Seattle

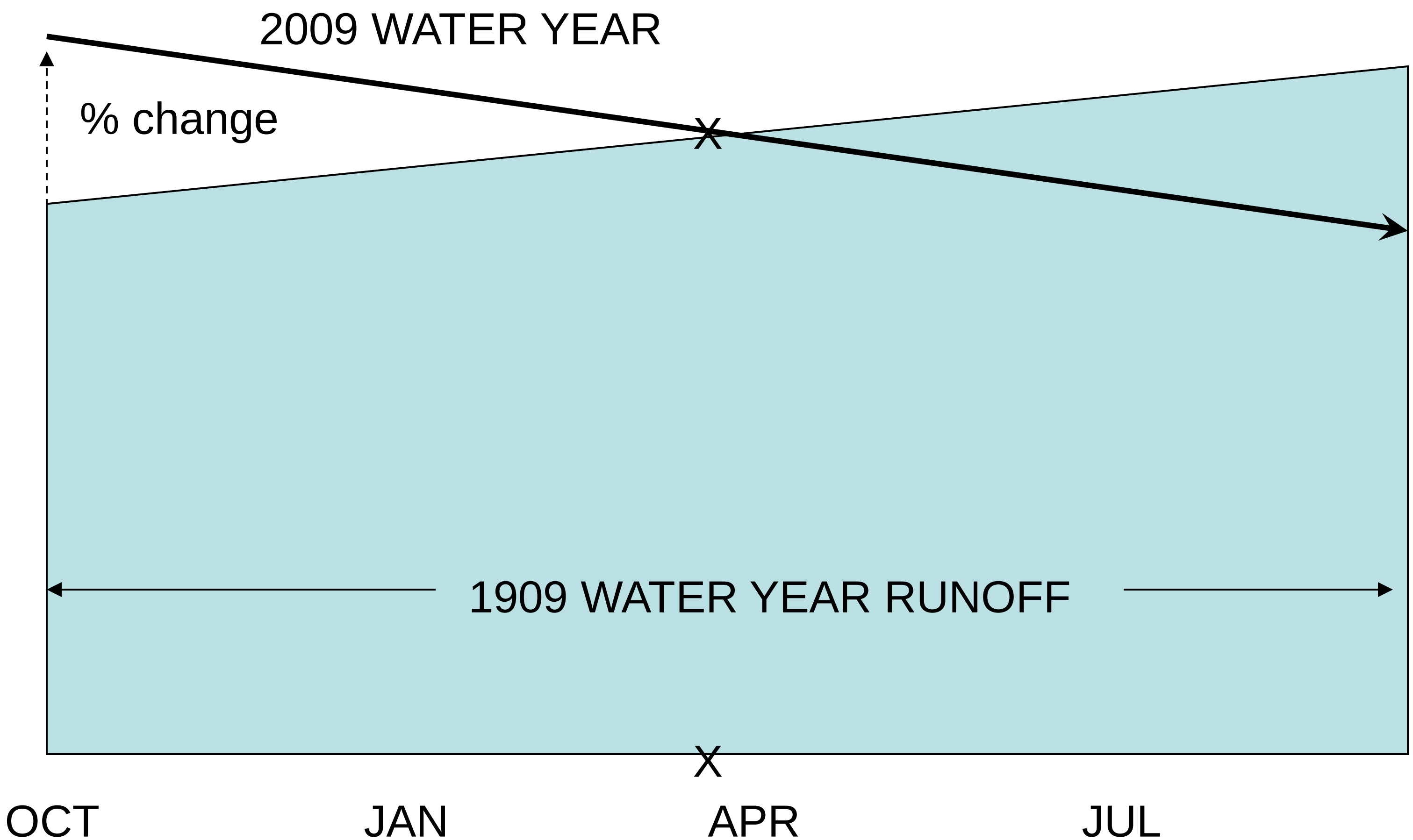
Location Map



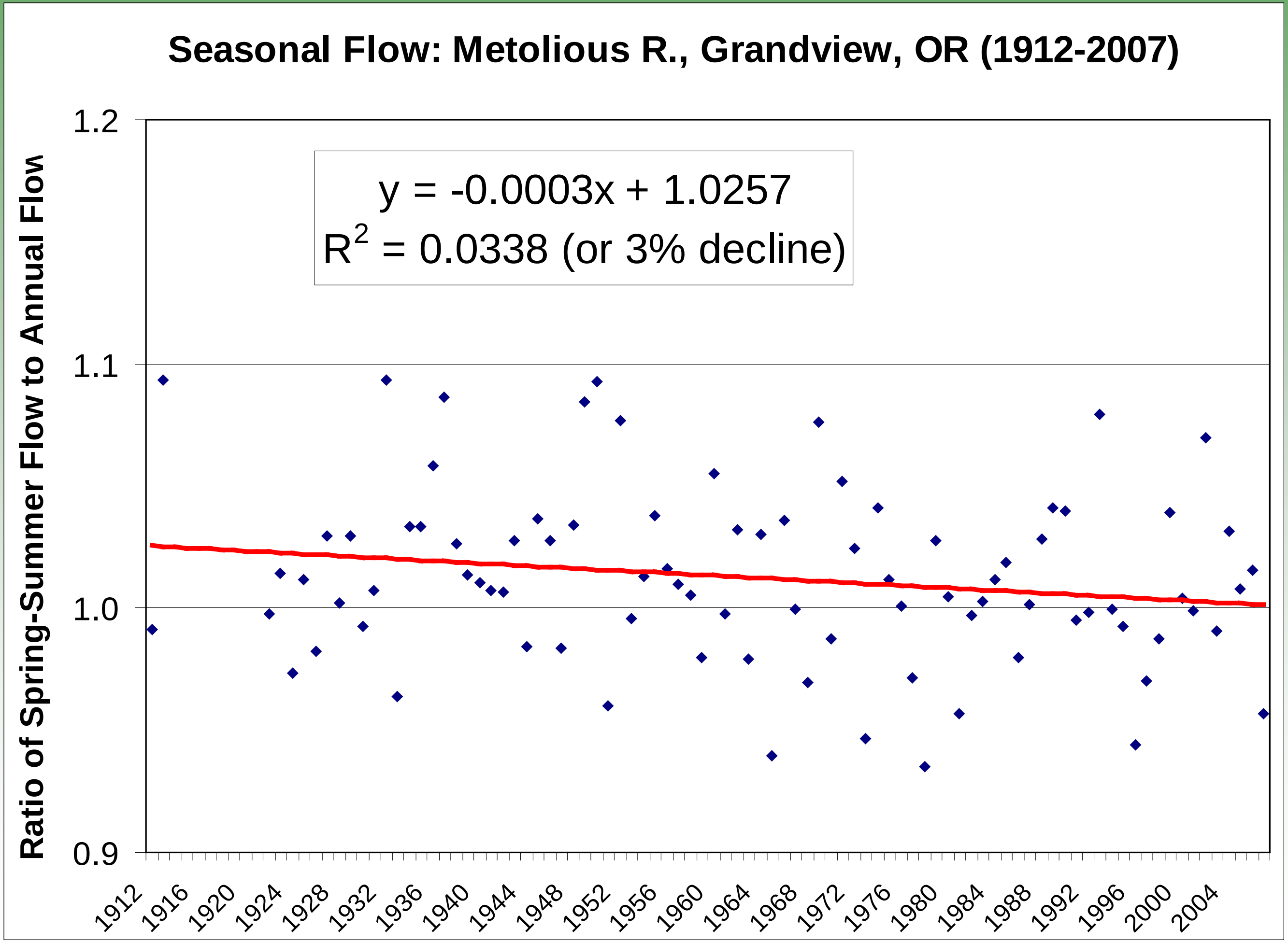
Seasonal Flow Fraction

SFF = Ratio of SPRING and SUMMER FLOW to ANNUAL FLOW

(e.g., Autumn-Winter vs. Spring-Summer volumes)

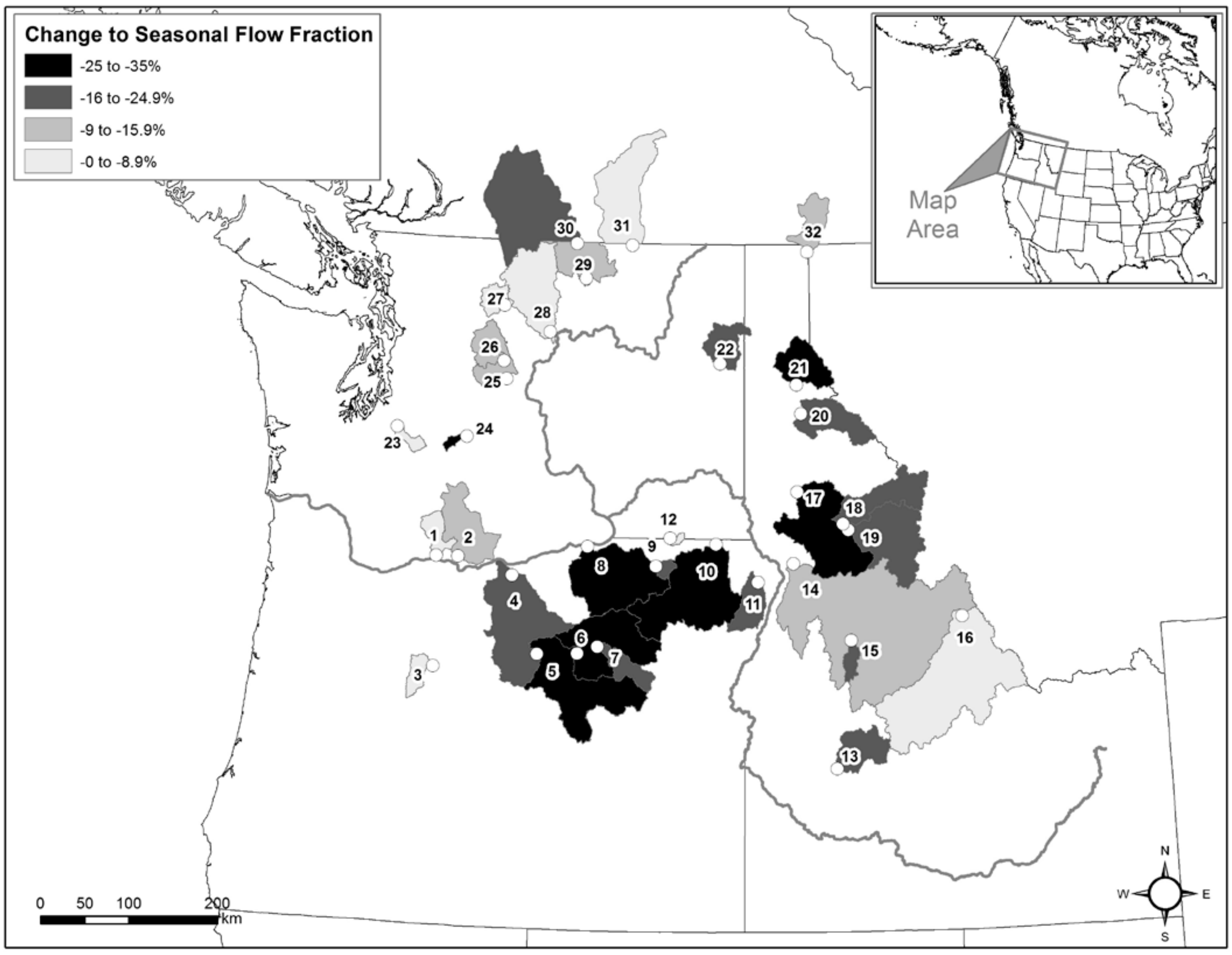


Seasonal Flow Fraction: Metolius Basin (Deschutes)



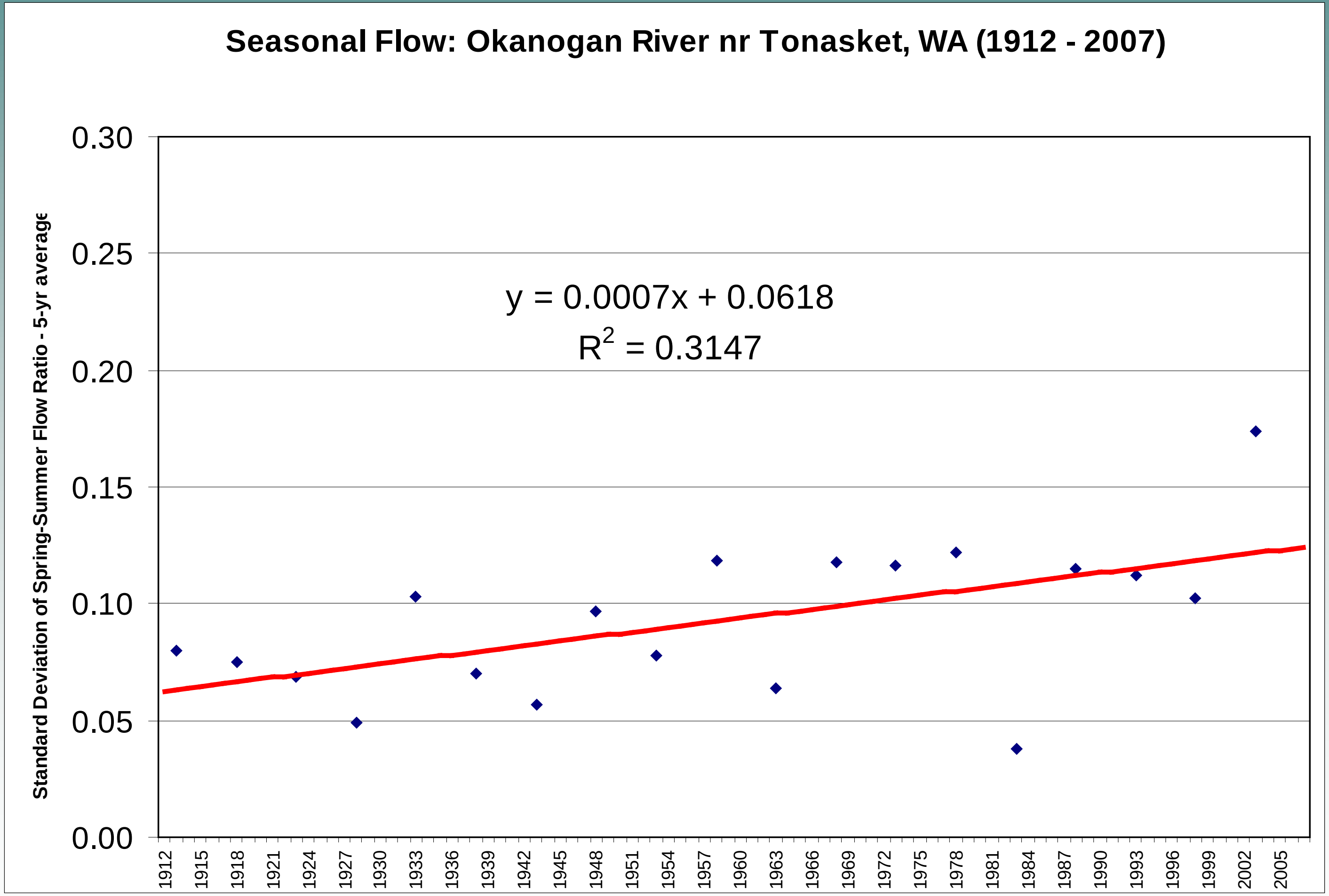
Source: Dittmer (2013)

Seasonal Flow Fraction:
spring-summer vs. autumn-winter



Source: Dittmer (2013)

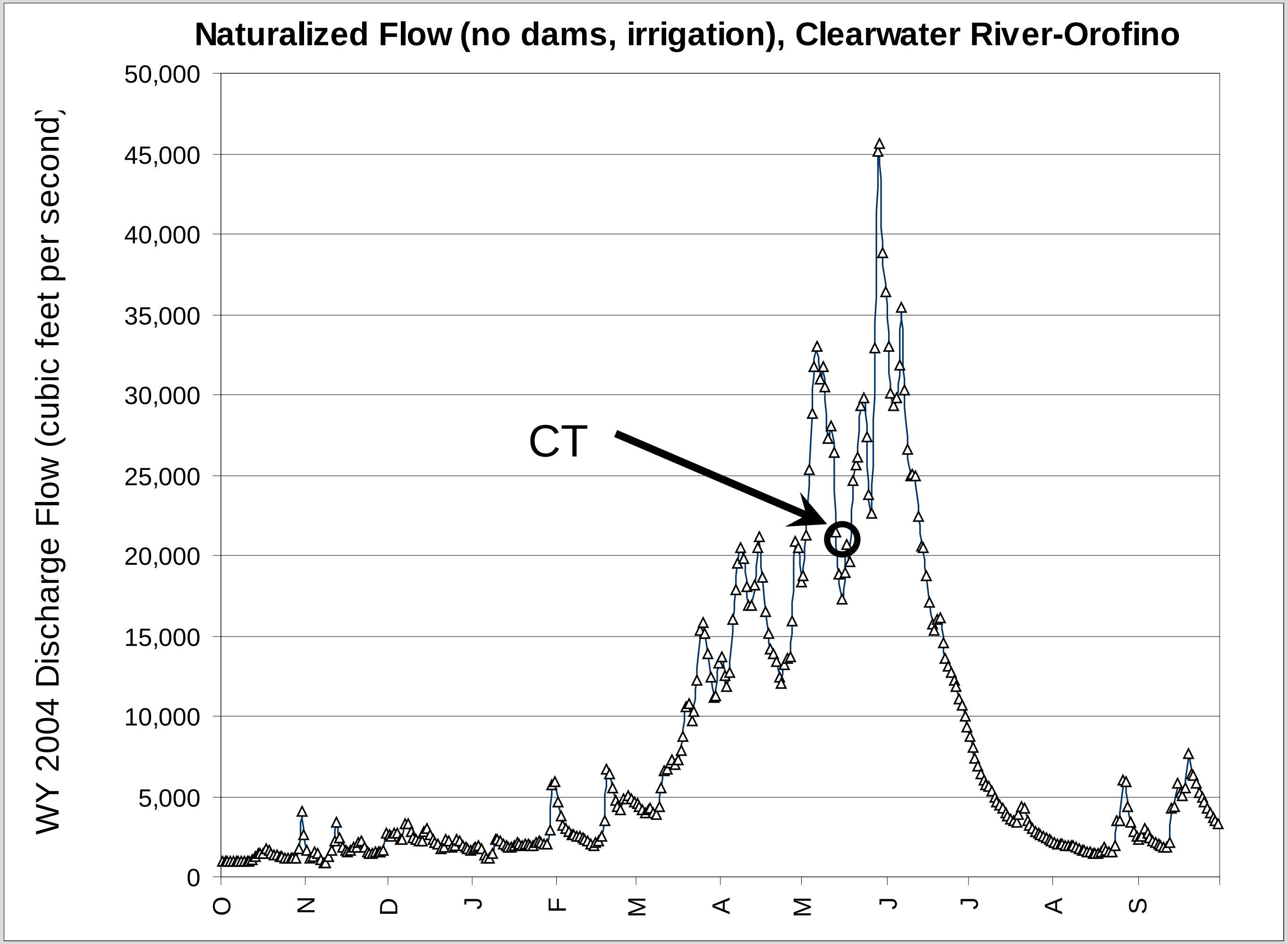
Seasonal Flow Fraction: Standard Deviation



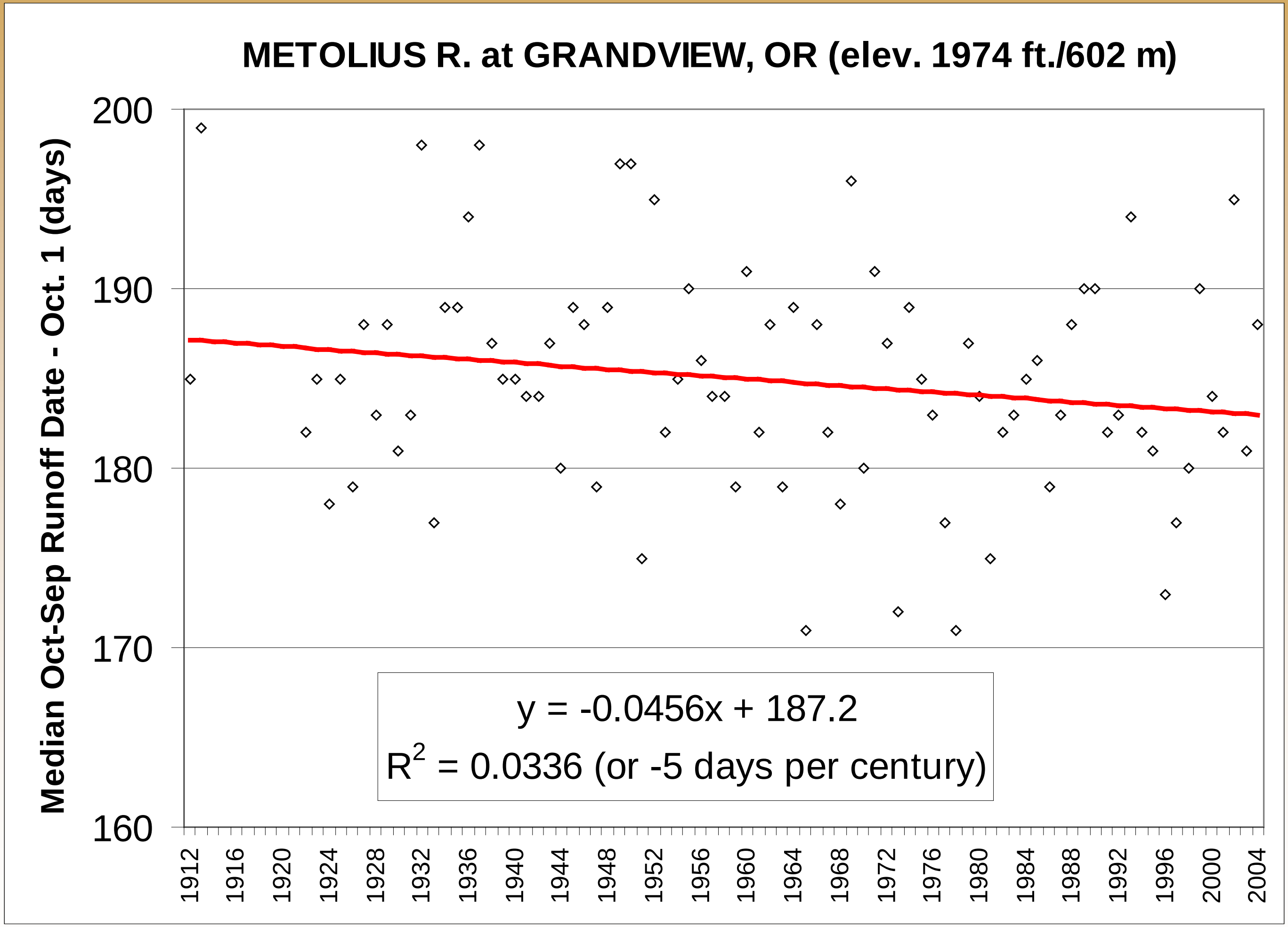
Source: Dittmer (2013)

Center-of-mass Timing

CT = MID-POINT (50%) OF WATER YEAR RUNOFF

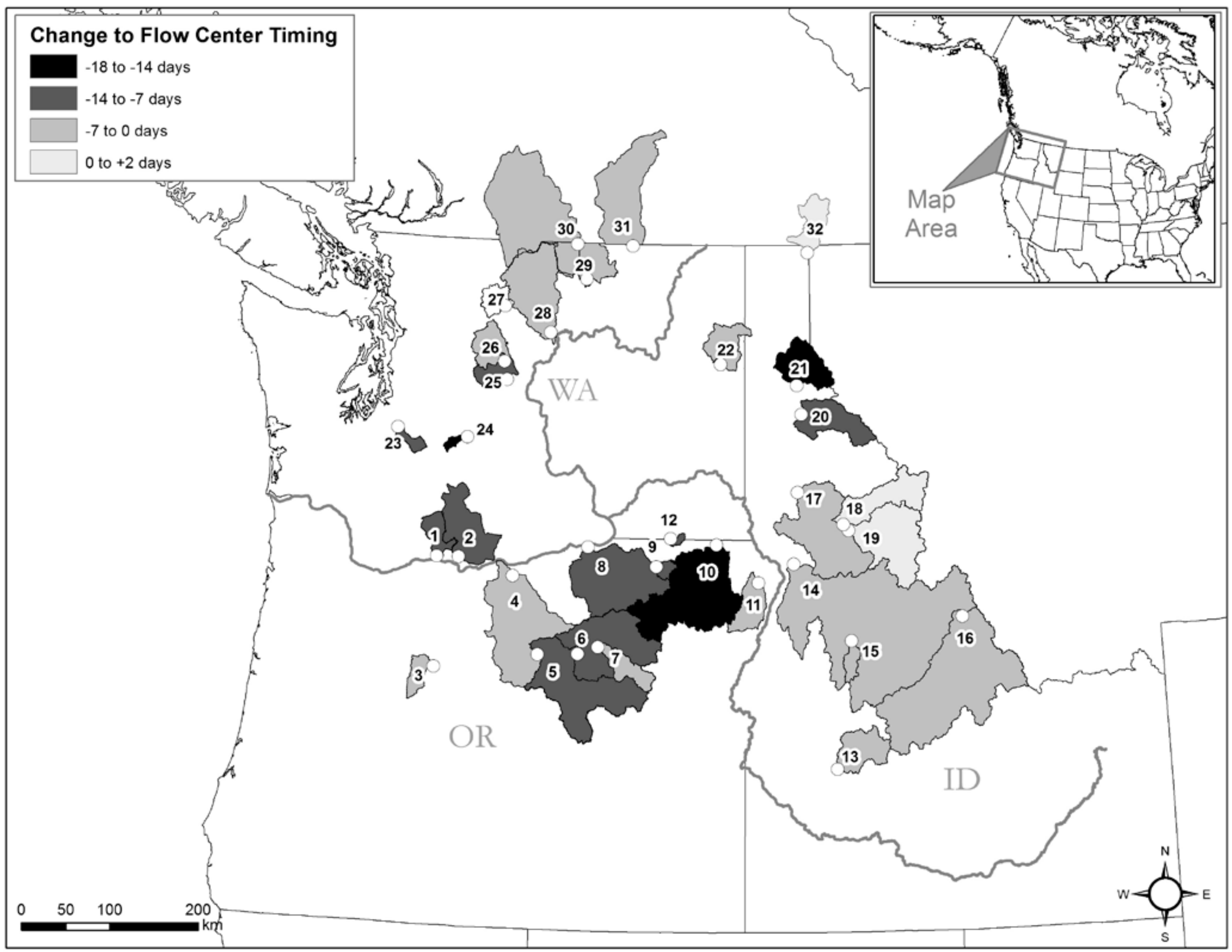


Snowmelt timing (CT): Metolius Basin (Deschutes)



Source: Dittmer (2013)

Snowmelt timing (CT): Mid-point of seasonal runoff

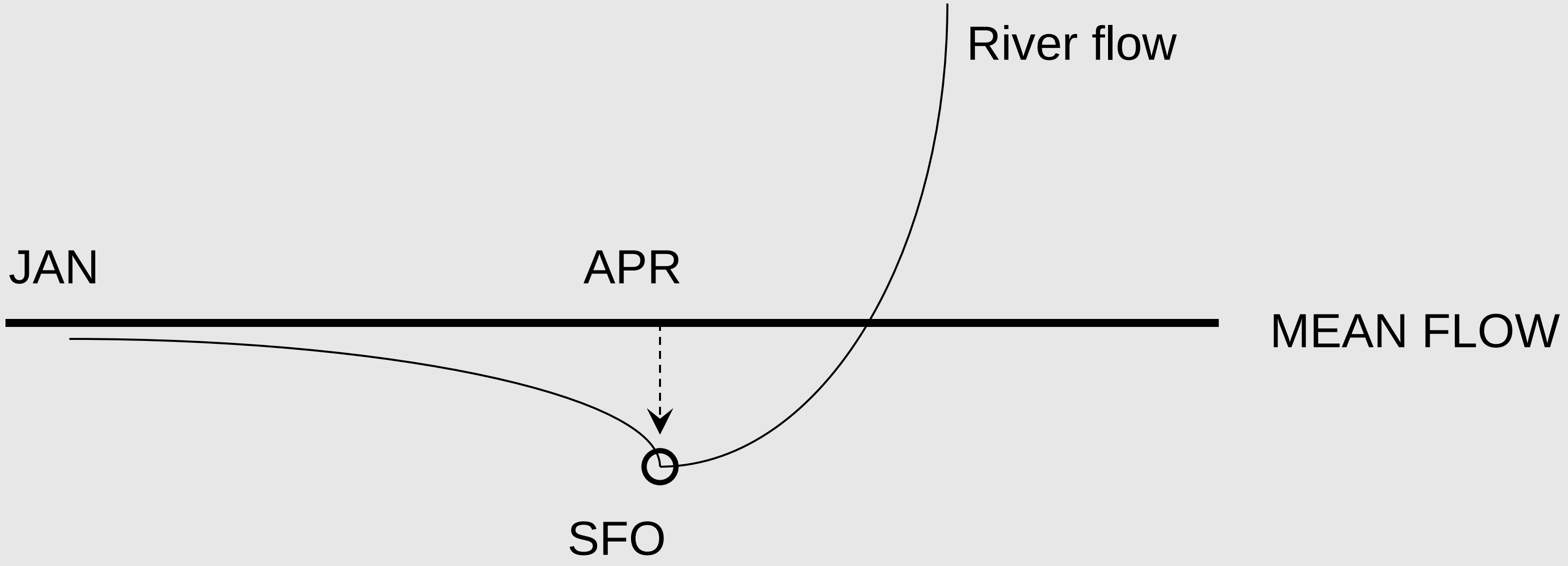


Source: Dittmer (2013)

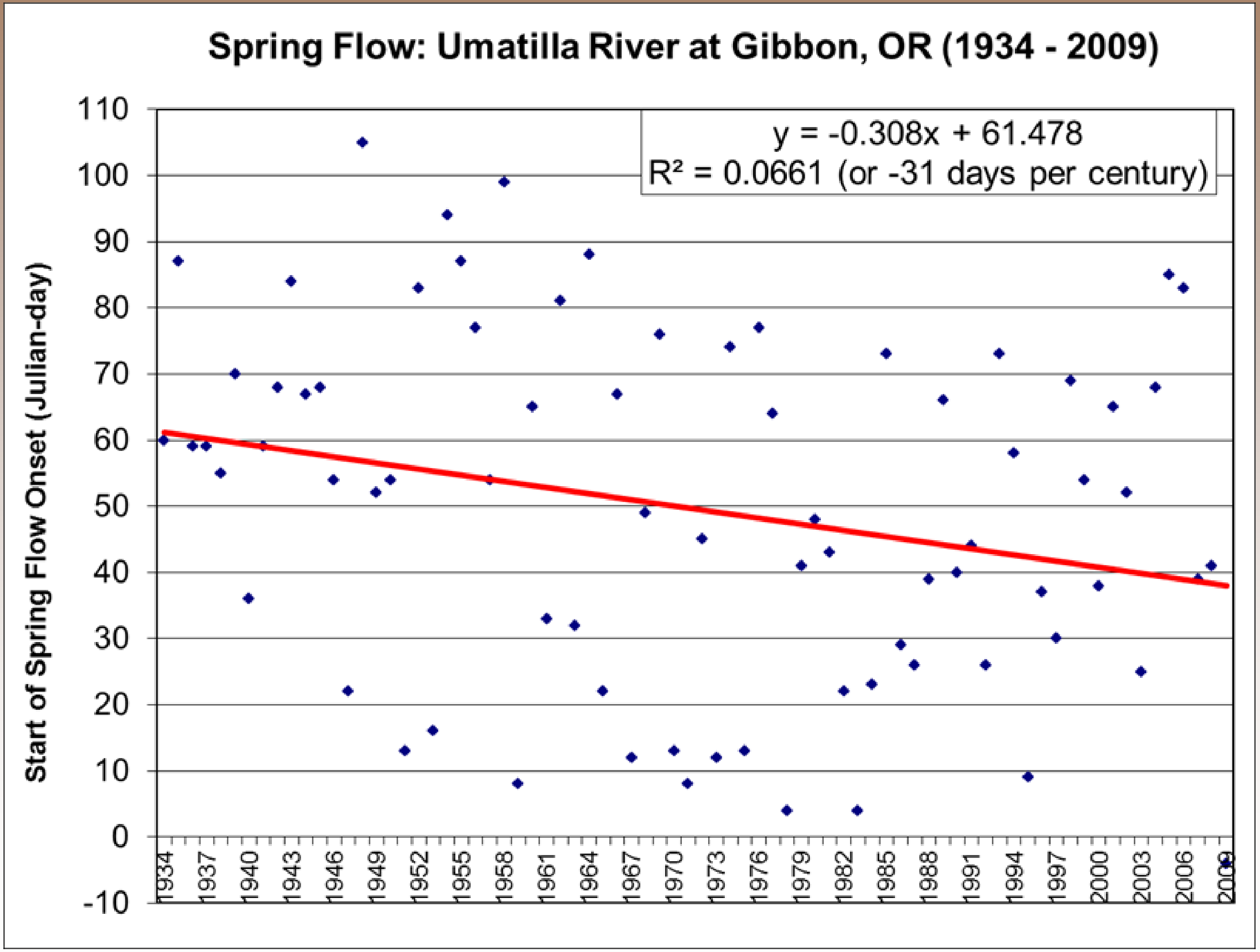
Spring Flow Onset

SFO = CUMULATIVE NEGATIVE DEPARTURES

FROM THE MEAN FLOW ARE AT A ***MINIMUM***

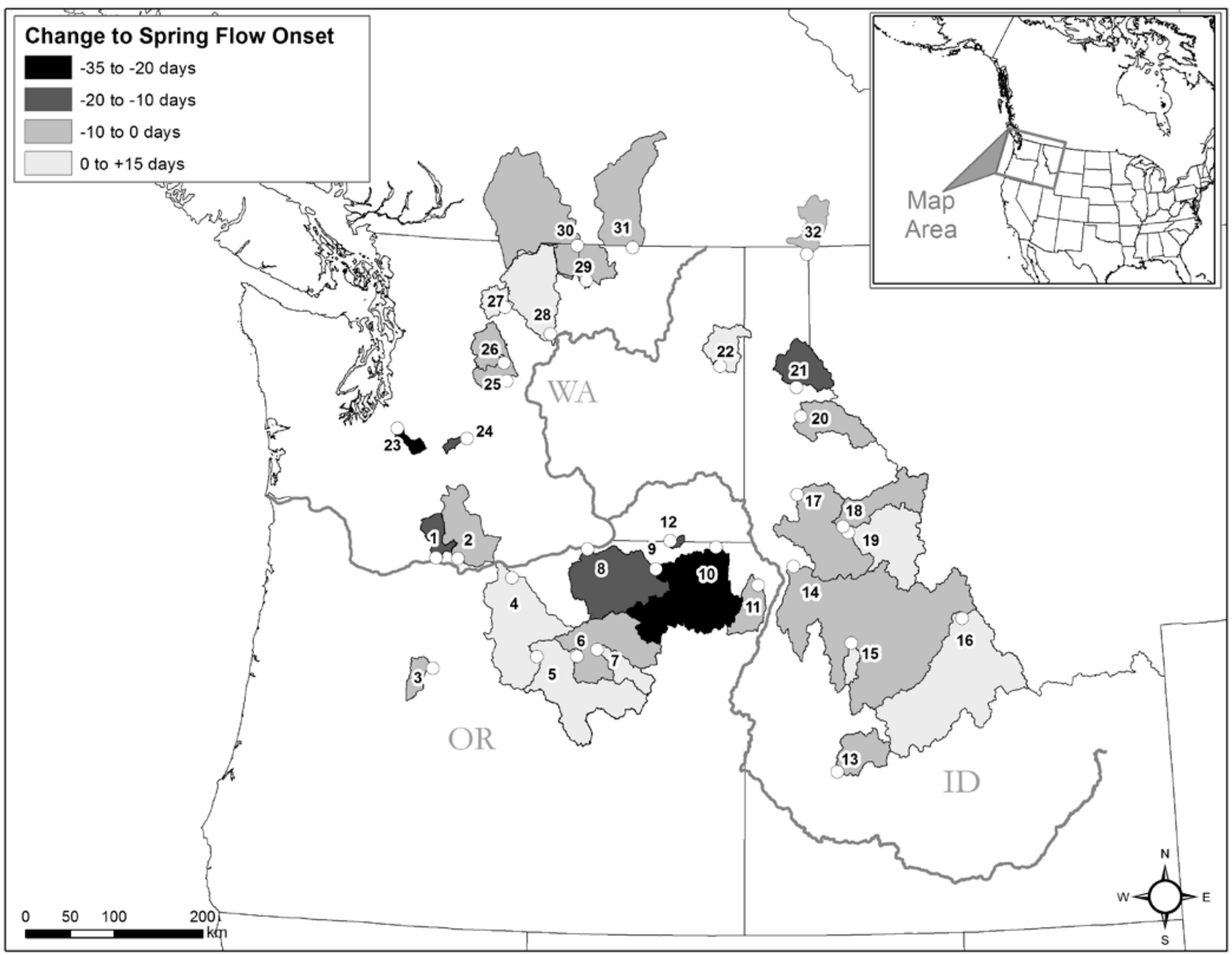


Spring Flow Onset: Umatilla Basin (at Gibbon)



Source: Dittmer (2013)

Spring Flow Onset (SFO):
start date of the seasonal snow-melt



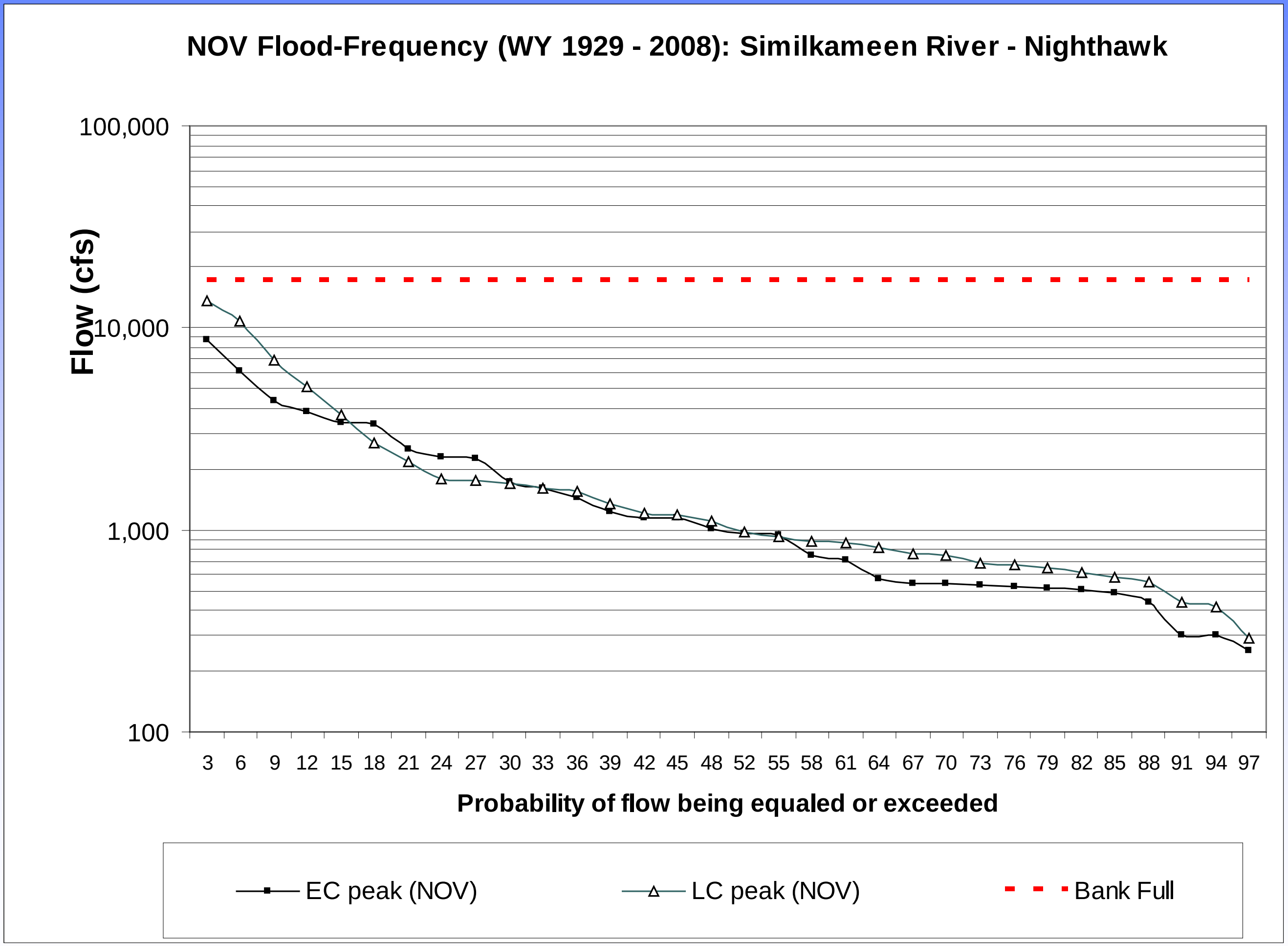
Source: Dittmer (2013)

Statistics...SFF, CT, SFO

			SFF		Mann -	CT		Mann -	SFO		Mann -
t-test 3-year moving average	Figure 1		LC vs. EC	W-C	Kendall	LC vs. EC	W-C	Kendall	LC vs. EC	W-C	Kendall
River - Gauge Location	labels	USGS Gage #	(p-value)	(p-value)	(alpha)	(p-value)	(p-value)	(alpha)	(p-value)	(p-value)	(alpha)
White Salmon	1	14123500	**0.052**	0.194	none	**0.038**	0.232	< 0.1	0.174	0.309	none
Klickitat	2	14113000	**0.008**	**0.012**	< 0.1	**0.029**	**0.061**	< 0.1	0.634	0.205	none
Metolius	3	14091500	**0.046**	**0.050**	none	**0.021**	**0.044**	none	0.496	0.500	none
John Day - McDonald	4	14048000	**0.047**	**0.086**	none	0.248	0.267	none	0.750	0.922	none
John Day - Service Crk.	5	14046500	**0.059**	**0.061**	none	0.293	0.242	none	0.566	0.806	none
John Day - Monument	6	14046000	**0.054**	**0.056**	none	0.865	0.210	none	0.870	0.683	none
John Day - Ritter	7	14044000	0.110	**0.094**	none	0.691	0.719	none	0.610	0.755	none
Umatilla - Umatilla	8	14033500	**0.018**	0.158	< 0.1	**0.002**	**0.008**	< 0.05	**0.073**	0.257	< 0.1
Umatilla - Gibbon	9	14020000	**0.056**	**0.043**	none	**0.056**	**0.054**	none	**0.011**	**0.004**	< 0.05
Grande Ronde	10	13333000	**0.006**	**0.002**	< 0.05	**0.044**	**0.005**	< 0.05	**0.048**	**0.001**	< 0.05
Imnaha	11	13292000	**0.001**	**0.000**	< 0.01	0.349	0.121	none	0.945	0.252	none
Mill Creek	12	14013000	**0.099**	0.206	none	0.221	0.569	none	0.169	0.356	none
Boise	13	13185000	**0.003**	**0.003**	< 0.01	0.233	0.111	none	0.527	0.136	none
Salmon - Whitebird	14	13317000	**0.012**	**0.013**	< 0.05	0.441	0.422	none	0.499	0.759	none
Johnson Creek	15	13313000	**0.015**	**0.014**	< 0.05	0.733	0.537	none	0.209	0.735	none
Salmon - Salmon	16	13302500	0.288	**0.037**	none	0.854	0.365	none	**0.015**	**0.029**	none
Clearw ater	17	13340000	**0.002**	**0.001**	< 0.01	0.545	0.185	none	0.515	0.593	none
Lochsa	18	13337000	0.104	**0.032**	< 0.00	0.647	0.862	none	0.654	0.638	none
Selw ay	19	13336500	**0.035**	**0.007**	< 0.05	0.407	0.925	none	**0.096**	0.522	none
St. Joe	20	12414500	**0.044**	**0.023**	< 0.05	0.594	0.212	none	0.611	0.445	none
Coeur D'Alene	21	12413000	**0.026**	**0.010**	< 0.1	**0.020**	**0.011**	< 0.05	**0.096**	**0.022**	< 0.1
Little Spokane	22	12431000	**0.089**	**0.081**	none	**0.049**	**0.002**	< 0.1	0.840	0.829	none
Puyallup	23	12093500	0.549	0.609	none	0.523	0.863	none	**0.026**	**0.047**	< 0.1
American	24	12488500	**0.010**	**0.003**	< 0.05	**0.089**	**0.024**	< 0.1	0.419	0.463	none
Wenatchee - Peshastin	25	12459000	**0.040**	**0.007**	none	0.327	**0.038**	none	0.785	0.429	none
Wenatchee - Plain	26	12457000	**0.071**	**0.018**	none	0.481	0.103	none	0.639	0.646	none
Stehekin	27	12451000	0.457	0.113	none	0.385	0.586	none	**0.030**	0.146	< 0.1
Methow	28	12449950	0.101	0.119	none	0.717	0.714	none	0.433	0.724	none
Okanogan	29	12445000	0.161	0.104	< 0.1	0.842	0.721	none	0.898	0.754	none
Similkameen	30	12442500	**0.064**	**0.009**	< 0.05	0.821	0.453	none	0.511	0.644	none
Kettle - Ferry	31	12401500	0.370	0.190	none	0.943	0.316	none	0.862	0.189	none
Moyie - Eastport	32	12306500	0.424	**0.100**	< 0.1	0.331	0.884	none	0.509	0.863	none
Average:			**0.11**	**0.08**		**0.40**	**0.34**		**0.45**	**0.46**	
Maximum			0.55	0.61		0.94	0.93		0.94	0.92	
Minimum			0.01	0.00		0.09	0.02		0.03	0.05	
Bold: p = 0.05 - 0.1		Bold-shade: p < 0.05									

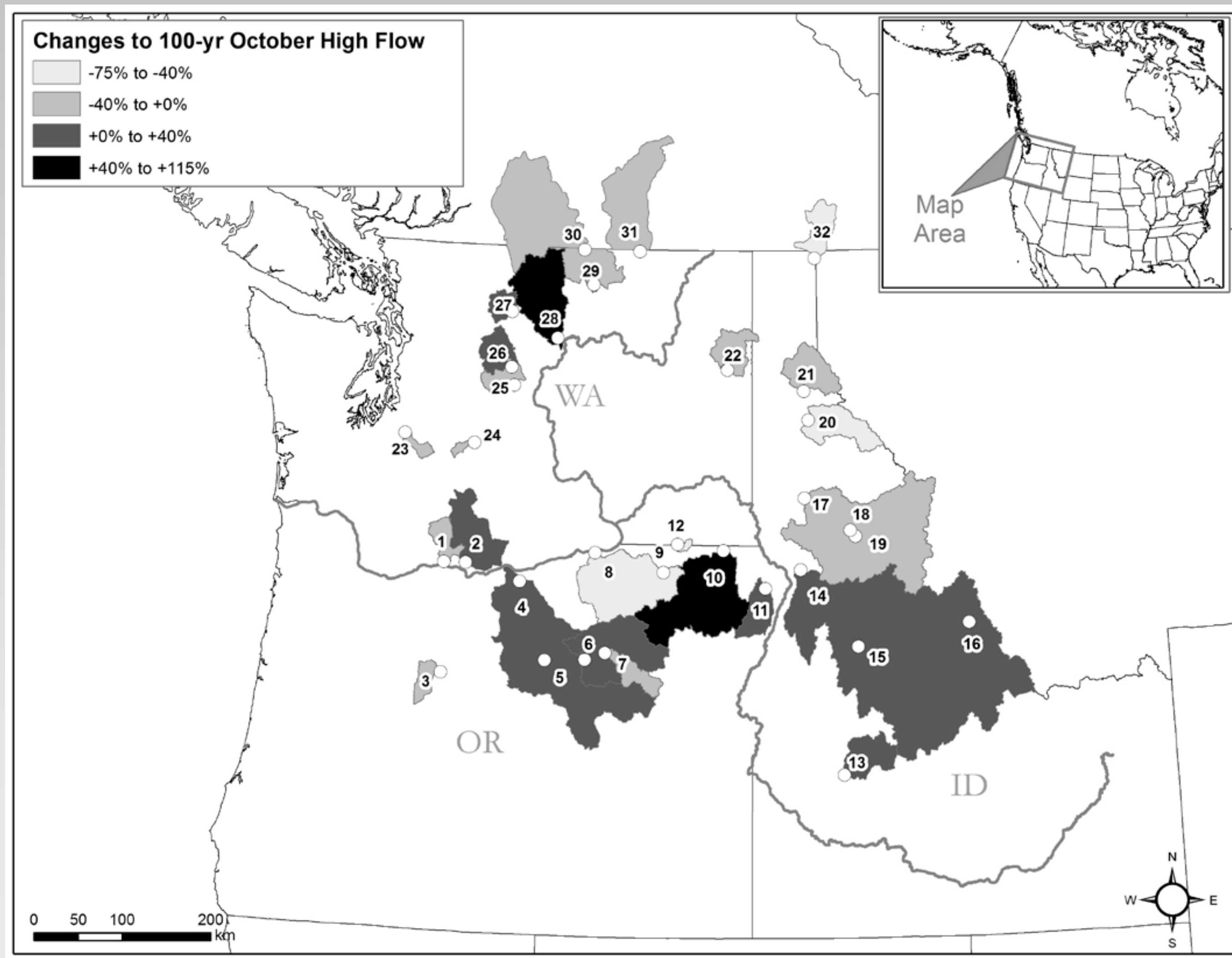
Source: Dittmer (2013)

High Flow events: Similkameen Basin (at Nighthawk)



Source: Dittmer (2013)

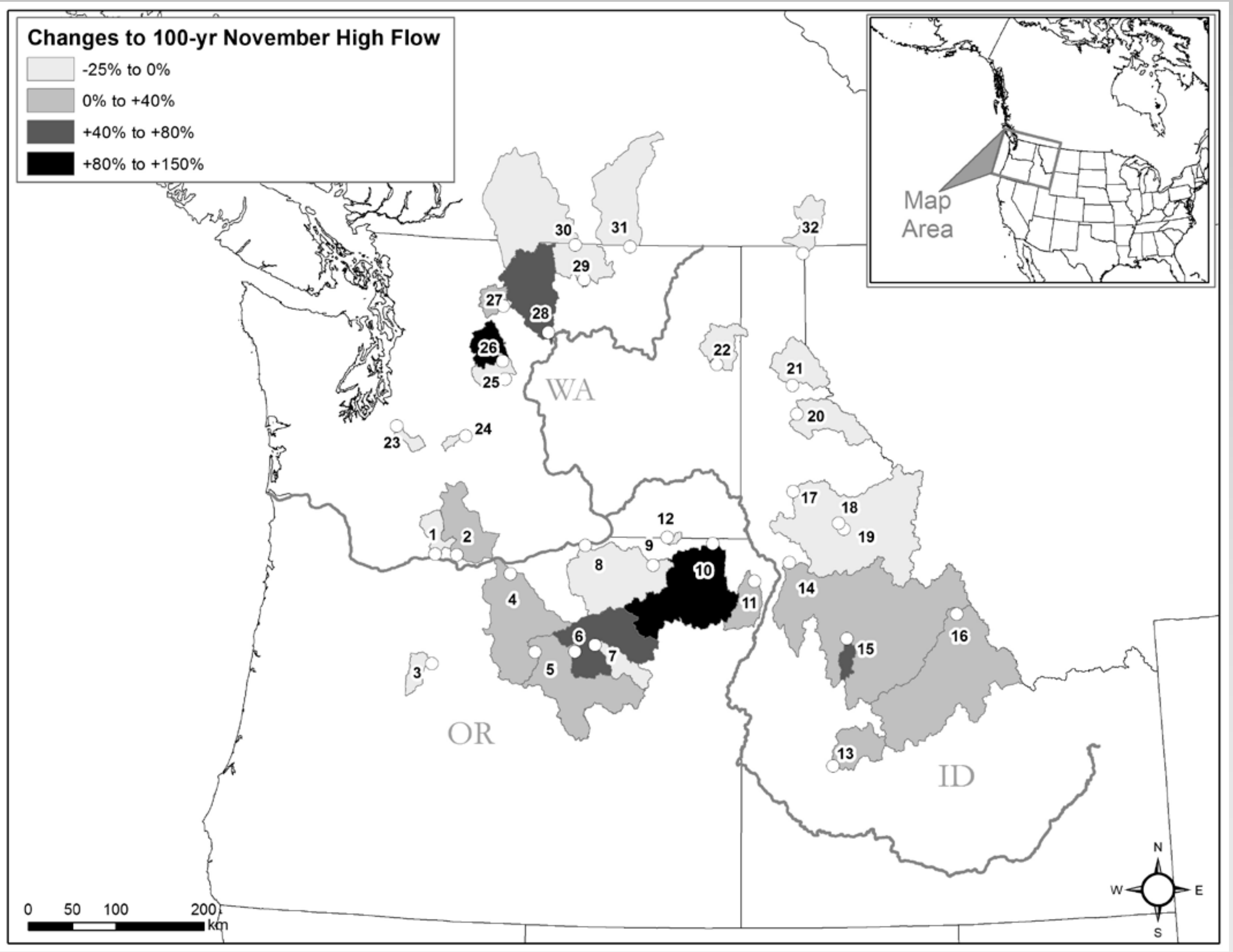
High Flow events:
Late 20th century vs. Early century 100-year flow



Source: Dittmer (2013)

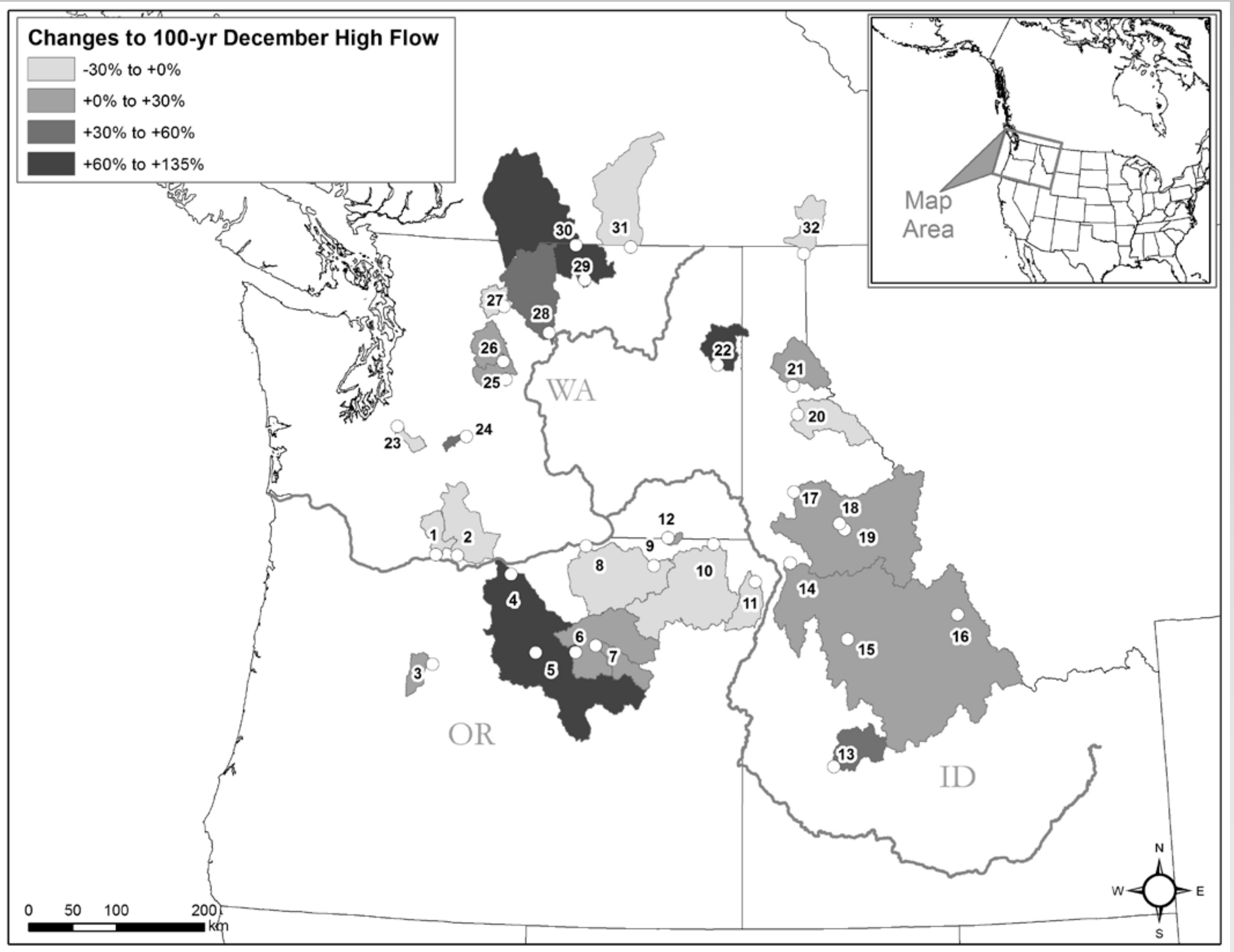
High Flow events:

Late 20th century vs. Early century 100-year flow



Source: Dittmer (2013)

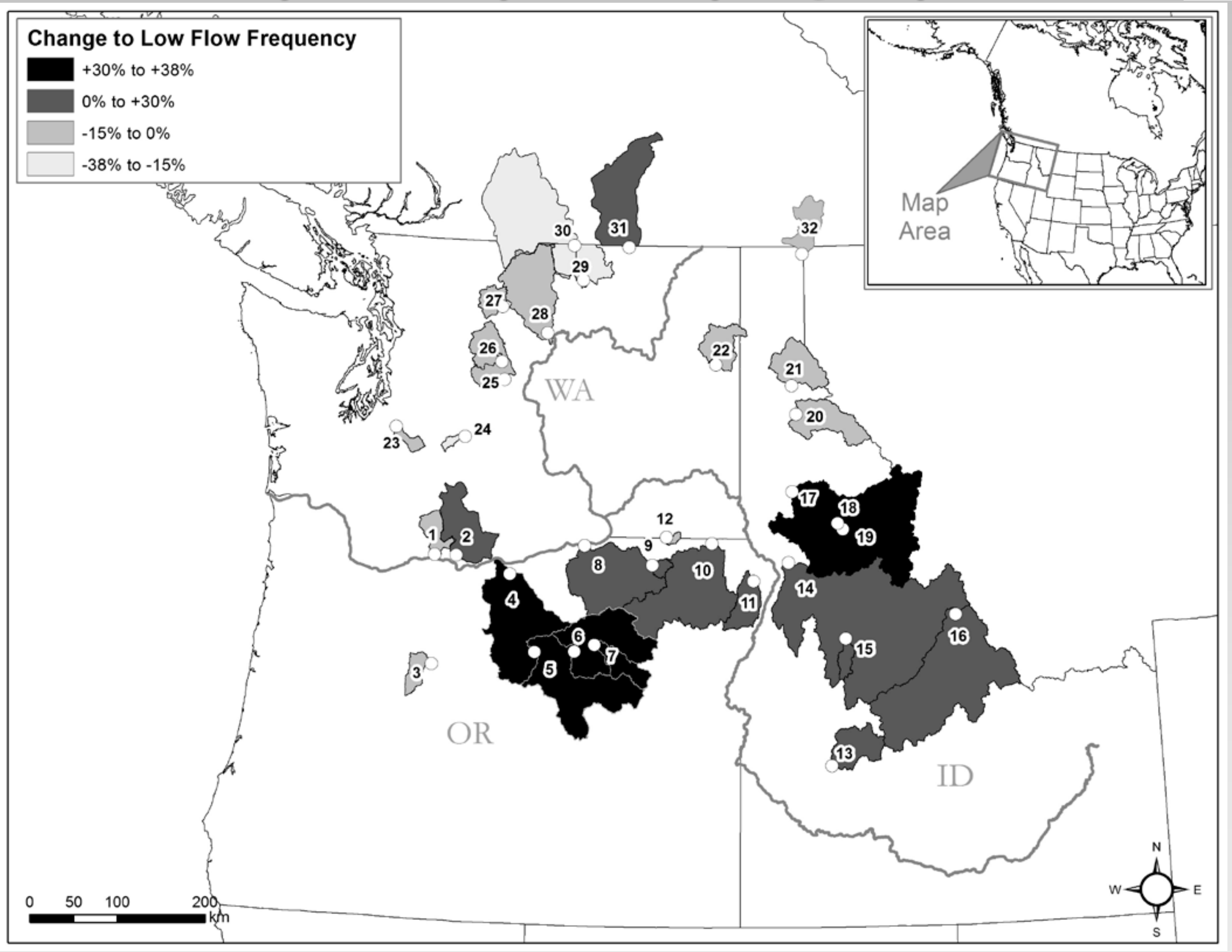
High Flow events:
Late 20th century vs. Early century 100-year flow



Source: Dittmer (2013)

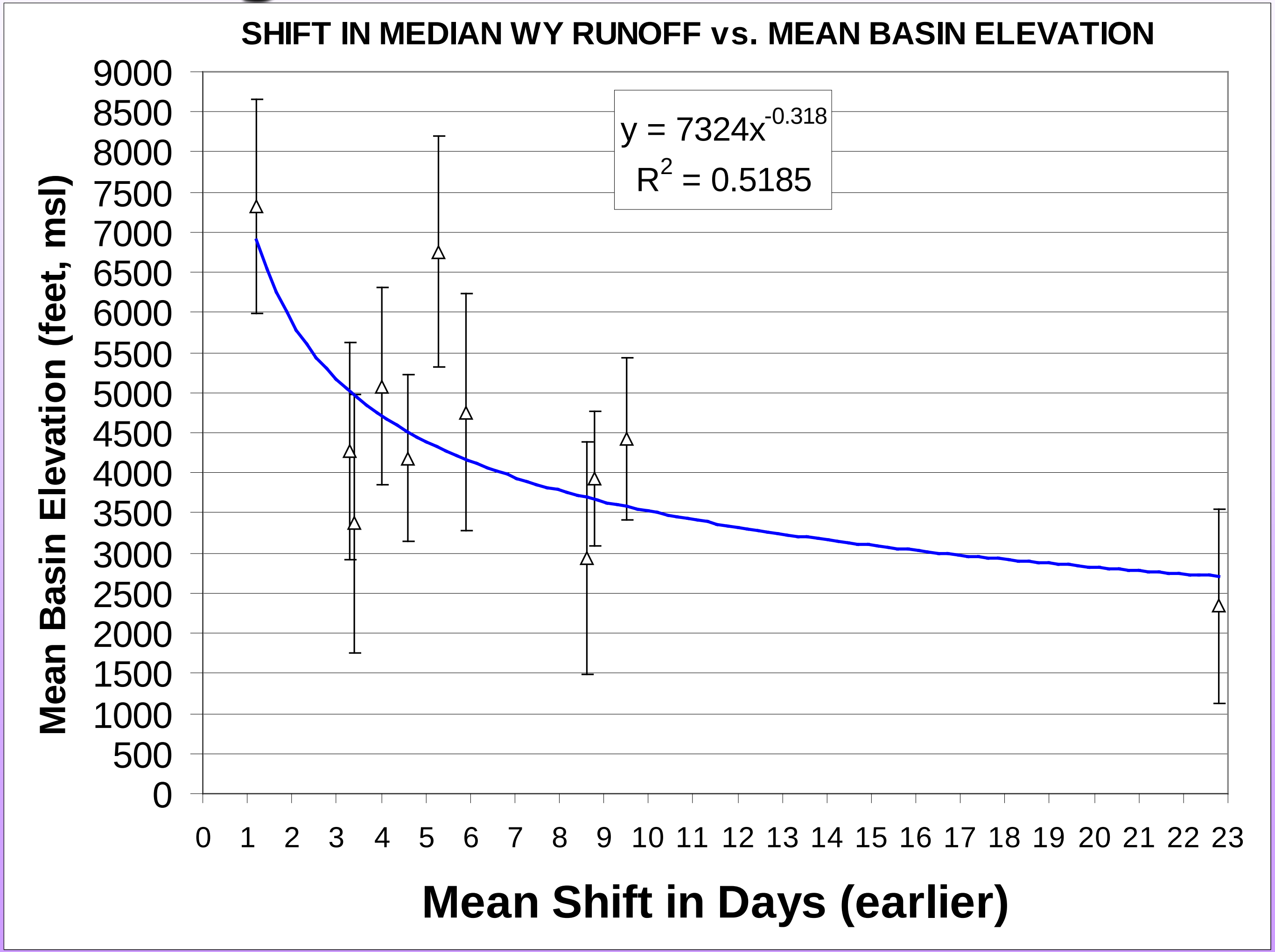
Low Flow events:

Late 20th century vs Early century 7Q10-year flow



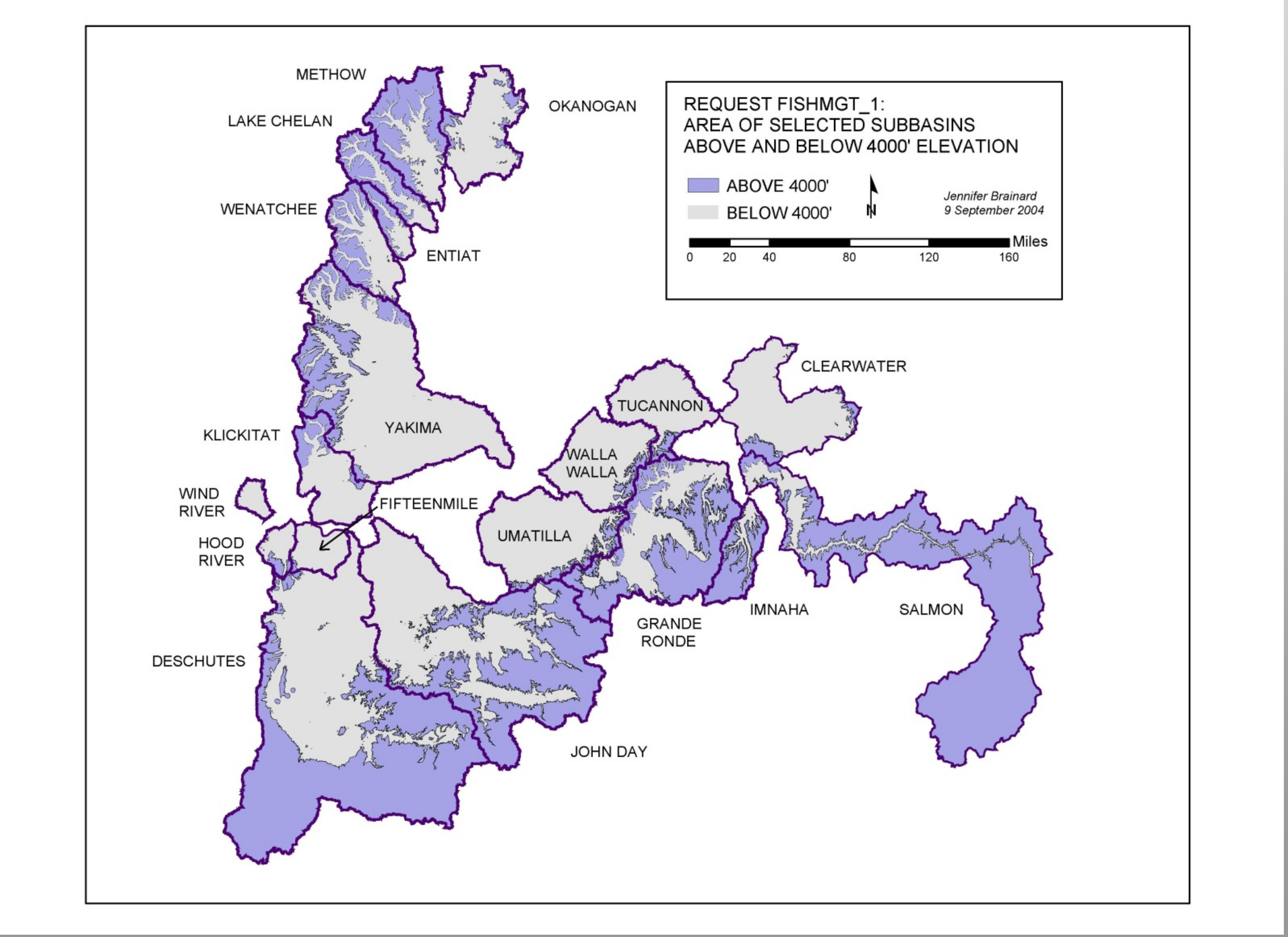
Source: Dittmer (2013)

Shift in Median Runoff Timing vs. Basin Elevation



Source: Dittmer (2013)

Climate Change Sensitivity: GIS assessment – tribal land



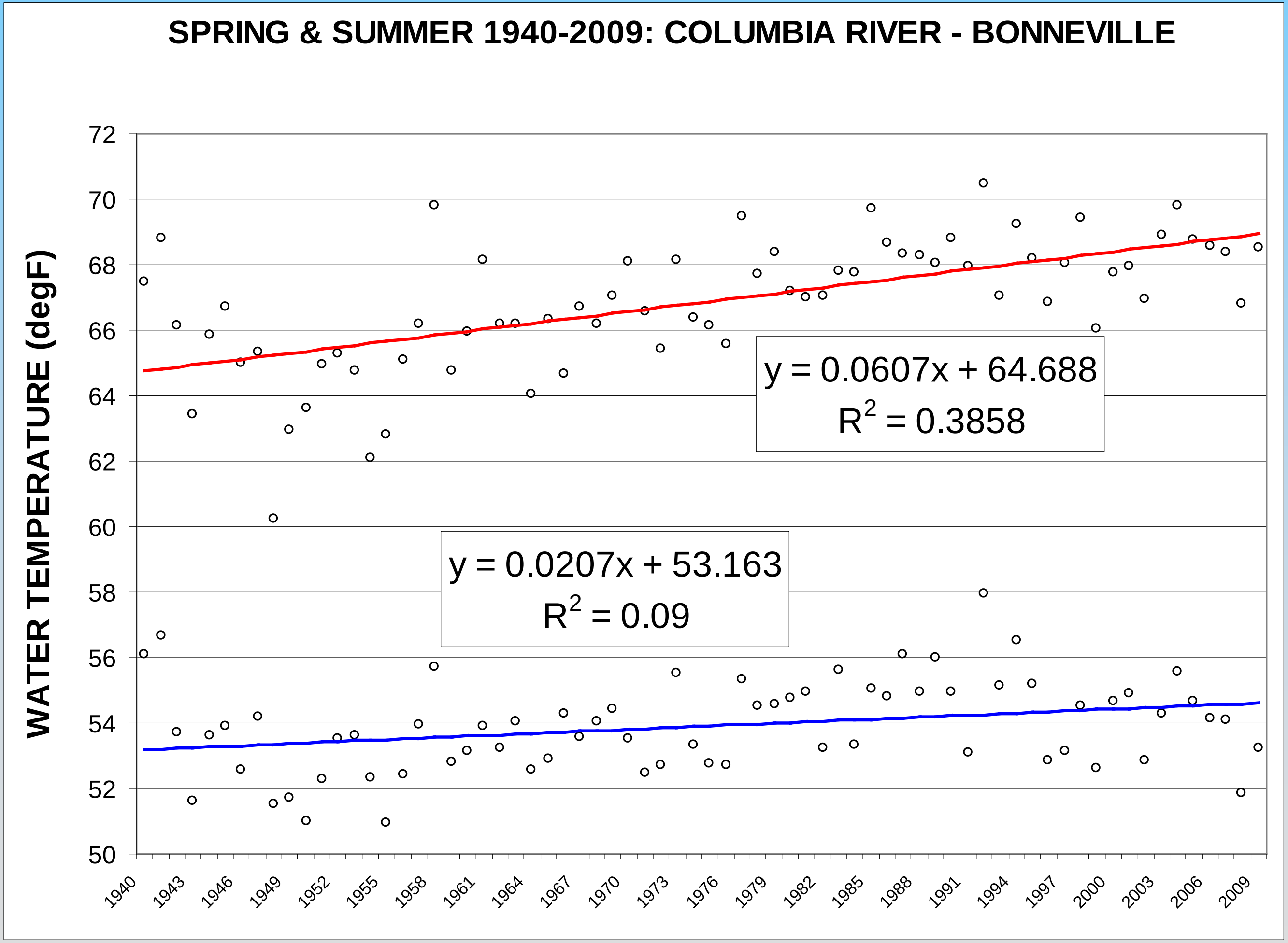
Source: David Graves, CRITFC (GIS data)

THE CLIMATE THAT IS...

Current Climate Change Issues

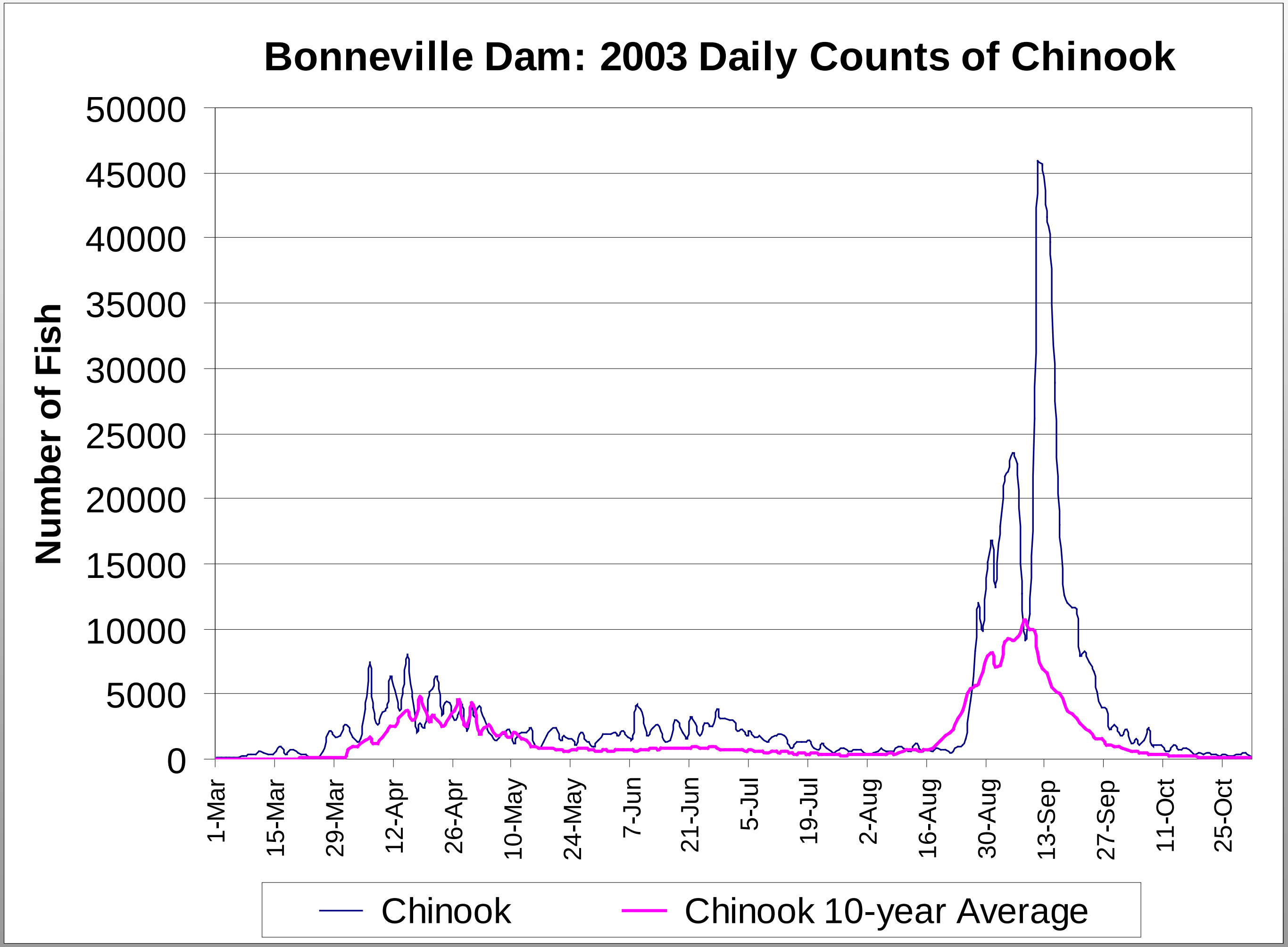
- Weather patterns are becoming more extreme and variable. Examples: more severe hurricane days, new records set for temperature (day & night), severe weather (e.g., tornadoes) in the off-season, persistent dry spells and drought, etc.
- Extreme weather variability will make water management in reservoirs more difficult and prone to **more operational errors**.
- The incubation of *redds* is sooner due to warmer winter water.
- Invasive warm water species is a growing problem.
- Hot summer Columbia R. water temperatures often exceed state standards for salmon. Adult salmon migration delays are more common at Bonneville Dam due to high temperatures (exceeds 68 degF). Fish may stray into cooler tributary streams to survive.

Water Temperature: Columbia River Basin



Data Source: US Army Corps of Engineers

Water Temperature and Fish Passage



Note what happens when water temperatures cool down to 68 degF (next slide).

Water Temperature and Fish Passage

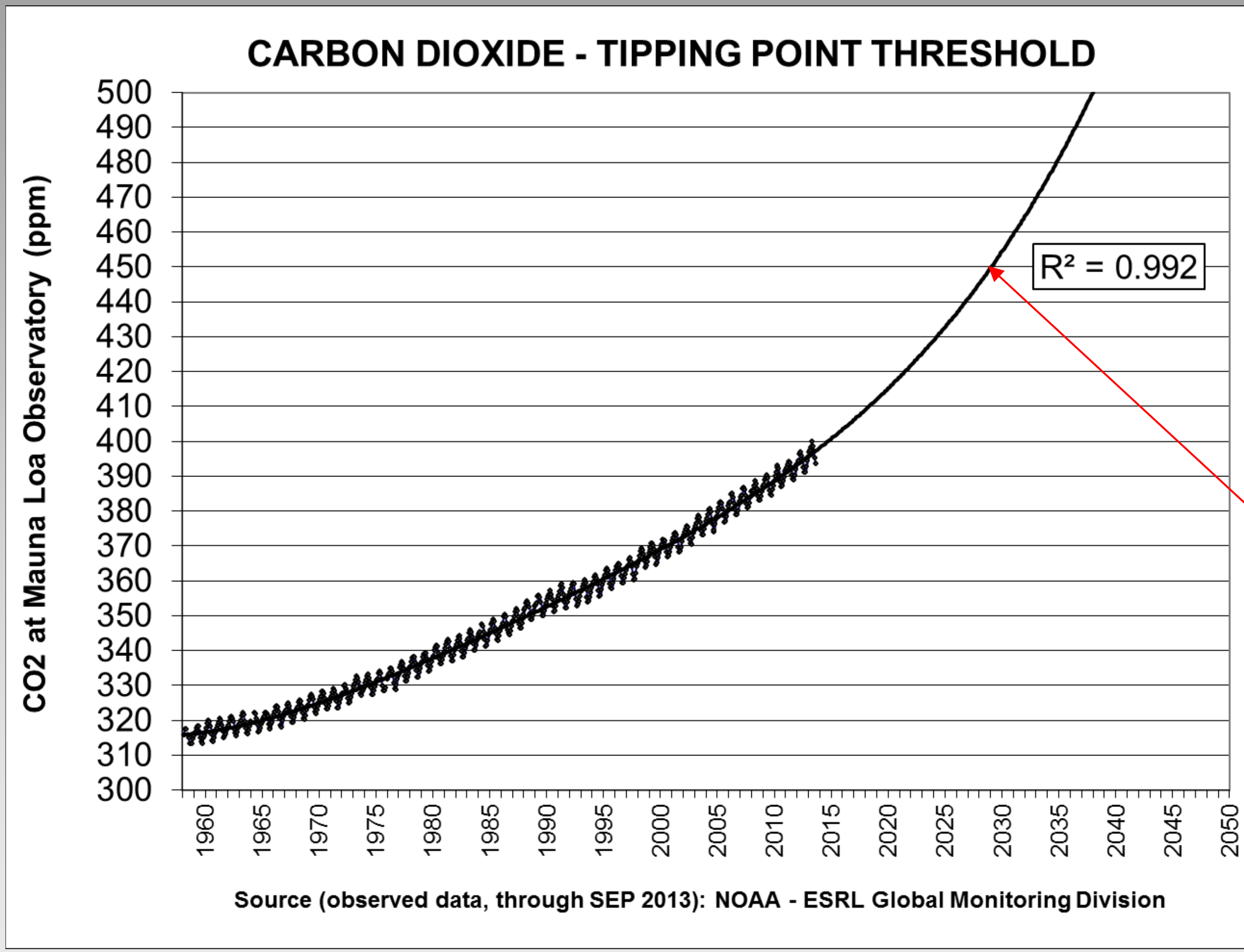
Traffic jam of salmon at the fish ladders of Bonneville Dam!!

THE CLIMATE THAT WILL BE…

Future PNW Impacts

- Loss of low level mountain snow: Apr. -28% 2020, -40% 2040.
- Increasingly highly variable (and harder to predict) spring and summer water supply. Water quality is at high risk.
- Warming water temperatures will really stress the salmon. Will the Columbia Salmon retreat to cooler BC and/or Alaska?
- Increased competition — salmon water vs. irrigation water.
- Increase in Pacific Northwest coastal "Dead Zones." (http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-deadzone2-2008may02,0,1285619.story)
- Extreme weather. New June 19, 2008 Government Report: (http://www.climatescience.gov/Library/sap/sap3-3/final-report/default.htm#chapters)
- Human health- more disease, air-borne pollutants, heat stroke.
- Could "climate refugees" move to the PNW and strain our land and water resources? Conflicts over PNW natural resources? Nexus of population growth and "climate refugees"? Great impacts to human health – poor, elderly, and young children.

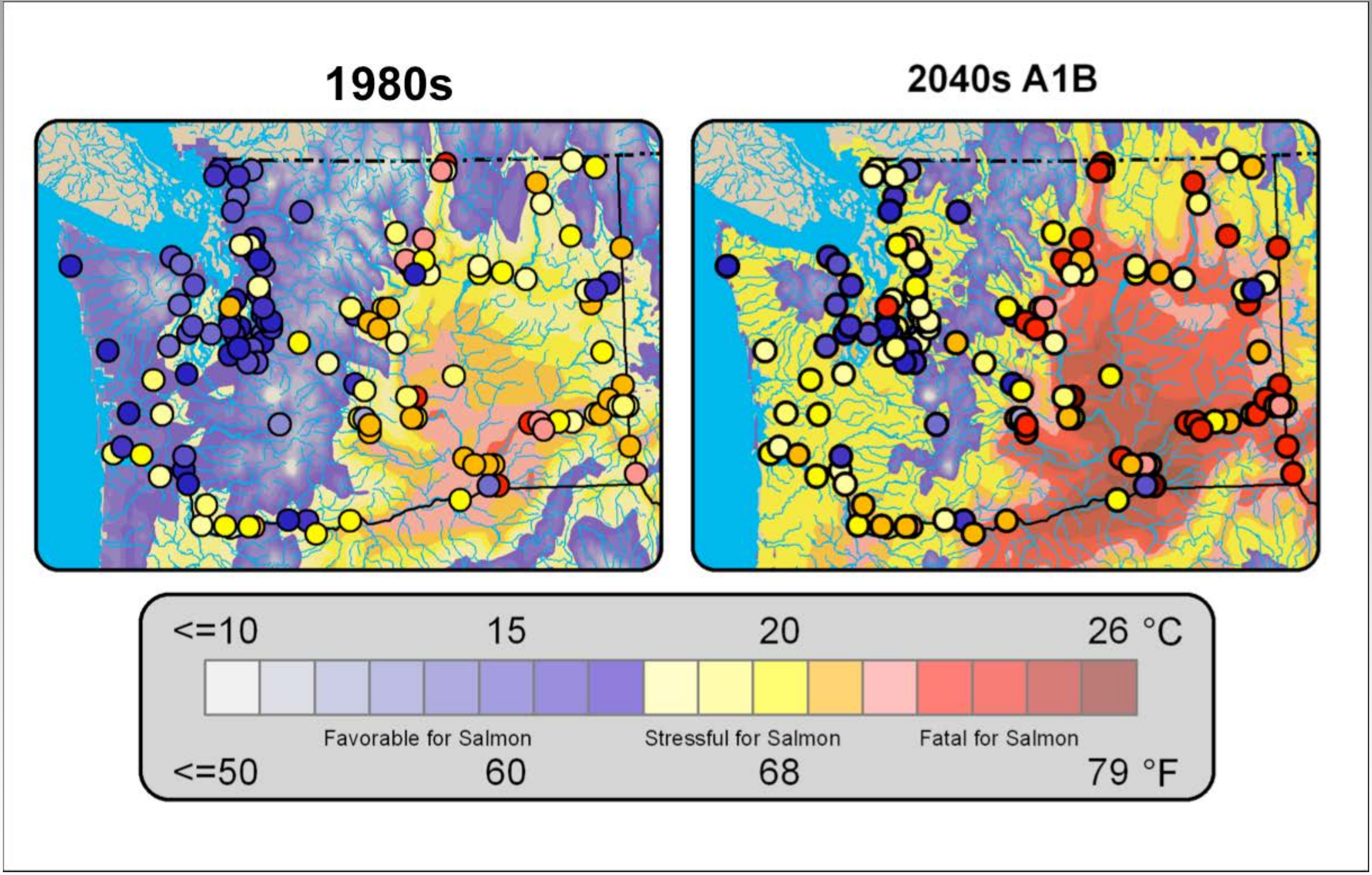
Unstoppable Climate Change?



CLIMATE CHANGE DOOMSDAY?

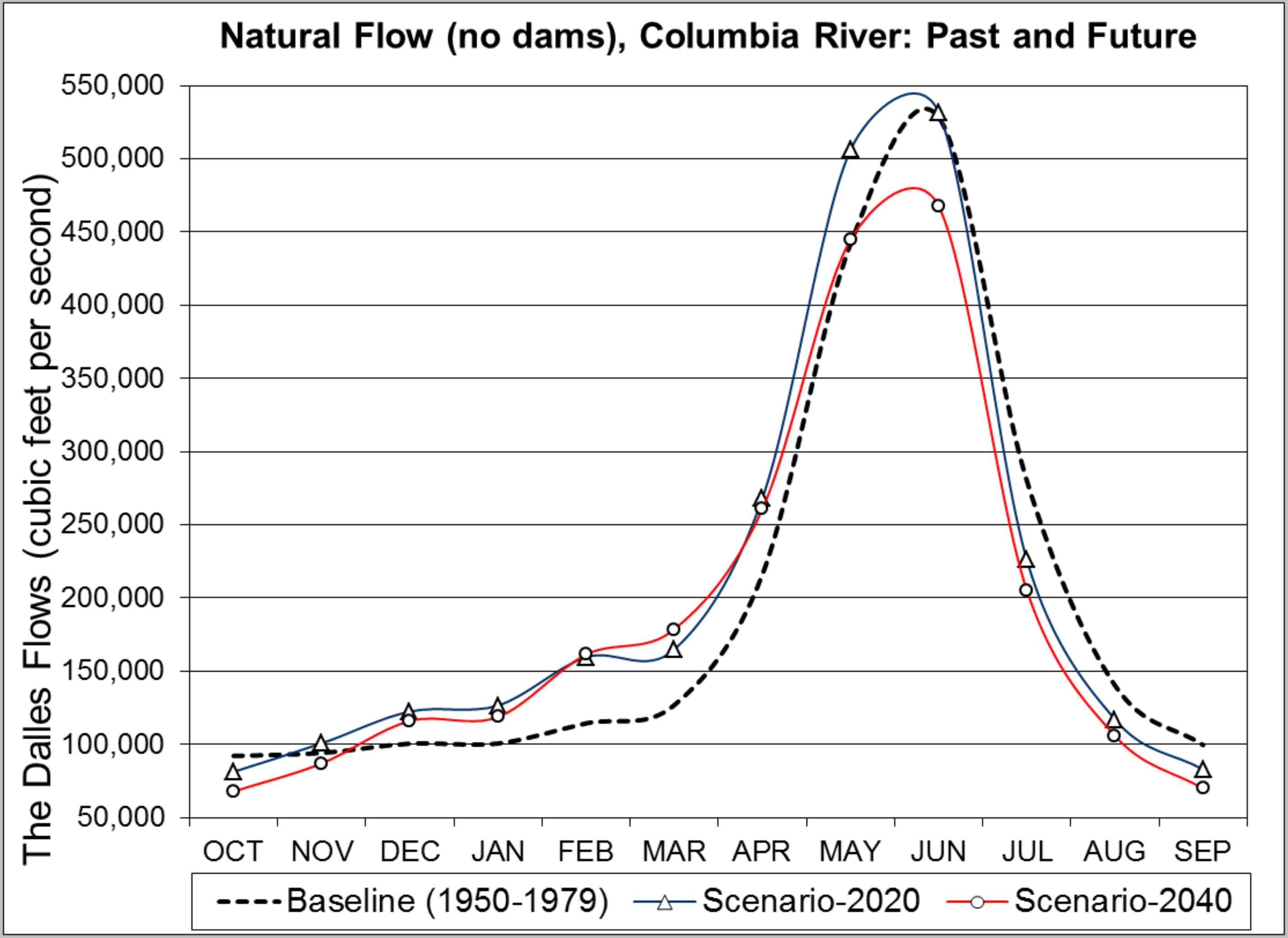
Dr. James Hansen, NASA: http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/jun2007/2007-06-01-01.asp

Future PNW Climate



Source: Mantua et.al. (2010)
(http://cses.washington.edu/cig/res/ae/aekeyfindings.shtml)

Future PNW River Timing

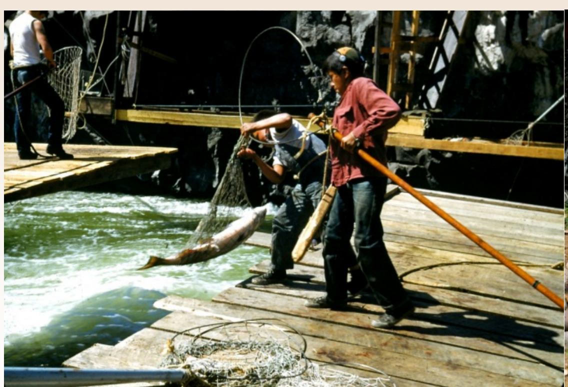


Data source: UW-Climate Impacts Group (www.cses.washington.edu/cig)

WHY IT MATTERS…

Tribes…Salmon…Climate C.

- Traditional tribal diets were highly rich in salmon.
- PNW tribal populations were in sharp decline for over 100 years. Now they are rebounding – hence their need for more traditional foods.
- Shifting water resources will be difficult for many tribal communities, given their current water-use infrastructure.
- Salmon are a major part of PNW tribal religion and culture.



What Can be Done?

- More **Flexibility** and **Adaptability** built in our ecosystems and economies. Prepare society for increased weather variability and extremes.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Use more "green" energy (wind, solar) and less oil. **Absorb excess** greenhouse gas emissions from atmosphere.
- Promote natural water storage via Watershed, Riparian, Floodplain restoration. Small ponds absorb 20-50% more CO_2 than trees alone (www.agu.org/pubs/crossref/2008/2006GB002854.shtml)
- **Reforestation**...Economic incentive - carbon sequestration credits ("cap & trade"). (www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/local/articles/1207tribal-climate1207.html),(www.tribalclimate.org)
- "Carbon Sequestration" using Ultramafic (i.e., special volcanic) rocks (http://pubs.usgs.gov/ds/414) and Methane sequestration (*new idea*).
- Improve Columbia basin Water Forecasting to help Federal hydro operations: ENSO condition and flood control. (http://cses.washington.edu/cig/outreach/workshopfiles/vanc2008/index.html) Use alternative hydro operations - for earlier refill, enhance natural river flow.
- Maintain climate reporting stations ("coop" sites). Restore closed stations.
- Very bad climate change scenarios may not be inevitable. Don't panic!

Protect our Future…

What are your questions?

(Thank you very much for your time!)

Thank you to: David Graves, CRITFC's GIS Specialist, and Laura Gephart, Watershed Programs Coordinator. Research is partly supported by a 2009 EPA Indian Environmental General Assistance Program Grant and 2009 NOAA-PCSRP Watershed-Climate Change Grant.