

Missing Link – A Service Learning Project

Final Report for the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund From: Darek Staab, Serving as Project Manager for Trout Unlimited (TU)

TU has partnered with the Deschutes National Forest (DNF) and Caldera Arts (Caldera) to improve large woody debris habitat in Link Creek. We constructed 20 new log structures from 65 trees, which will improve spawning and rearing habitat for the full length of Link Creek above Suttle Lake and the full Metolius River system. We have successfully completed the majority of implementation for the project, as we intended in our Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund proposal.

Accomplishments during our grant:

- We successfully engaged 201 students in the project, 10 educators, 17 teachers, 9 mentors and 22 volunteers. Together we planted 525 plants at the restored access points, with 65 logs placed at 20 sites for improved salmon and trout habitat. We engaged a diversity of Caldera students and local schools from the region.
- During our grant term, we led 7 field trips to Link Creek and Suttle Lake, sharing the project with local schools from Sisters and Camp Sherman. We created a virtual field trip for Caldera, sharing the video and leading a discussion with middle and high school students from the program. In addition, we led volunteer days for Caldera and TU, engaging adults in planting along the creek and sharing goals for the project.
- We completed implementation for planting and finishing work, adding 525 native plants into the access sites to help restore cover, protect water quality, and enhance food and shelter over time. Key sites were protected with restoration signs and woody debris. We integrated two youth crew days to share techniques and project background. We coordinated 2 volunteer planting days for TU members/stewards and Caldera staff and stewards. Total volunteers were 22 with 3 key sites targeted for volunteers that can return and check on the site and conditions.
- We created an online piece about the project, shared through TU's website nationally: www.tu.org/magazine/conservation/from-the-field/the-missing-link-for-the-metolius
- We will continue to engage Caldera youth in the project and monitoring results in 2022 and beyond utilizing matching funds. Final implementation is adding interpretive signs with support from the USFWS Partners Program as match. We will be working with DNF and Caldera staff in 2022 to design the signs and determine placement sites.

We appreciate the support from the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund.

Sincerely,

