

# Minutes of the Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) Advisory Committee (STAC)



**Date:** March 25, 2011  
**Time:** 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
**Location:** ODFW North Coast Watershed District Office  
 4907 Third Street  
 Tillamook, Oregon 97141

<b>Type of Meeting:</b>	Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program Advisory Committee
<b>STAC Members in Attendance:</b>	Mike Brochu, Leslie Wade, Gary Enoch, Richard Heap, Pat Gefre, Norm Ritchie, Doug Ray, Lin Howell, Tom Petersen, Armand Pena, Sean Hastie
<b>Not in Attendance:</b>	Sammie Mosley, Dave Dunahay
<b>ODFW Staff:</b>	Rhine Messmer, Kevin Herkamp, Tami Owen, Erik Moberly, Ron Rehn, Christine Clapp, Tom Rumreich, Jeff Fulop, Gary Vonderohe, Chris Knudsen
<b>Public:</b>	Tracy Crews, Jerry Doves, Aaron Miller, Russ Patterson, Tom Marlin, Robyn Richmond

## Agenda

Initial Agenda Items:

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*Friday, March 25, 2011*

- Call to Order & Introductions
- Agenda Approval, Approval of January 2011 Meeting Minutes
- Administrative Updates
- Area STEP Reports
- North and Mid-Coast District Updates
- Public Comment
- Review Renewals for Astoria and Warrenton HS STEP Propagation Proposals
- Volunteer Recognitions
- STAC Mini-Grant Application Review
- Regulation Revision Process Update
- STAC Member Duties and Responsibilities
- STEP Brochure
- Public Comment
- STAC Recommendations to the Department
- Assignments & Agenda and Field Trip Ideas for Next Meeting

*Saturday, March 26, 2011 - STEP Conference at Twin Rocks Friends Camp*

## Call to Order, Introductions, and Agenda Approval

Mike Brochu, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and introductions were made. Leslie Wade took the minutes for Debbi Farrell, who is on assignment to the Director's office. Chair Brochu presented today's agenda for review. S. Hastie asked about assignments for tomorrow's

conference. It will be covered under general business. Agenda approved.

## Approval of January 2011 Meeting Minutes

The previous meeting's minutes were approved.

### Administrative Updates

- R. Heap asked for an update to the agency budget as it relates to the STEP Budget.
- Chair Brochu asked K. Herkamp for updates to selling surplus fish from STEP facilities. K. Herkamp stated that logistics are difficult. It is not worth pursuing because there are not enough fish to make it worthwhile. There may be enough fish at the Coos facilities in the future but it would depend on the amount fish that can be captured at the same time while still green.
- K. Herkamp gave update to three R&E grants:
  1. Mini-grant proposal was the same as last time.
  2. Fish food grant request is an increase from last biennium, just to maintain current production. He has requested funds for full production and to cover increased costs. Can we buy in-state feed? Not now, no vendors. R&E has asked ODFW to look into working with OSU or other partners to get the Warrenton plant restarted. K. Herkamp stated that the ODFW Role is not to start new businesses and he will discuss that with the R&E board. K. Herkamp asked for STAC members to go to R&E meeting, especially those with fish feed requests, to build relationships.
  3. Proposal from propagation section. Includes funds for a marking trailer for fish ID section, not STEP, but should free up capacity for So. Coast STEP facilities. K. Herkamp wants to know if we want to send letter of support. The next R&E meeting is April 28-29 in Troutdale. STAC is on the agenda (afternoon of the 28<sup>th</sup>) to provide background on all three grant requests.
- R. Messmer gave an update on the overall agency budget. SFR (sport fish restoration) program excise tax on fishing supplies, etc. Every year the state receives funding, an apportionment from the USFWS. The grants developed under the SFR program use 25% state match and 75% federal SFR dollars. ODFW is expecting a 10% decrease due in part to the gulf oil spill and that fishing revenue nationwide is down. Reserve funds are available to make up the difference next year but will be exhausted if the downturn in federal funding continues. STEP is a high priority for SFR funds. He expects budgets will stay constant for FY 2012. The STEP Program is a priority since it has such a high return rate on investment because of volunteer efforts. State matching funds may be short in the future so we might be looking at using volunteer hours as match. This would free up some state match that could be used for other higher priority projects, but would not be feasible unless we see an upturn in the amount of federal funding since federal funds would be backfilled to replace state funds. The North Coast budgeted for increase in S&S but didn't come through, so we plan to get some funds from R&E to match with federal SFR dollars to bring their budget back to where it should have been with the allocated increase. R&E funds are needed since all state funds are currently allocated. I&E is looking at a database to track hours. 63 FTEs in volunteer hours. Dbase can be used to direct volunteers to their interests, help with recruiting volunteers. STEP meets all priorities for ODFW. Good annual report that highlights the efforts.

R. Heap asked about the need to tap in-kind match for this year. R. Messmer confirmed that is not needed this year, just to track hours as you have done in the past. It is still important to know what hours we have documented in order to look at match potential. If we implement any in-kind match requirement for STEP we will coordinate closely with the STEP Coordinator and all STEP biologists and STAC to ensure that the reporting does not detract from volunteer

participation. R. Heap recommended recording volunteer hours but south coast volunteers not interested in entering their own hours worked. R. Heap recommended each district to appoint a timekeeper to keep track of hours instead of requiring volunteers to do it. R. Messmer stated that they would design a way to do it and get approval for our process from USFWS prior to initiating any volunteer hour timekeeping. S. Hastie asked if we were currently using volunteer hours matching funds. R. Messmer said not now but may in future because of cuts in funding, but there would still need to be federal dollars to backfill. Currently, this is not the case. Using in-kind match could be a way to keep from cutting the STEP program P. Gefre asked if there was an existing form to keep track of volunteer hours. K. Herkamp said yes, but it doesn't meet the need to keep track for matching funds. We have time to work out the details before we need it. Not just new form but how it is handled and who keeps track of hours. Some other programs already do this (keep track of hours for matching funds) so we don't have to start from scratch (angler ED is an example).

P. Gefre wanted better understanding – what would it look like to track hours? Sign in and out? May not work at Rhodes Pond when people coming in and out when feeding fry. K. Herkamp said that we will not need to track every hour of the current volunteer time as match but will need to record enough hours to meet the 25% level in the grant (about 3 FTE or 5% of our total recorded volunteer hours).

L. Howell asked if we need to track individuals and the hours they work. Jackson Bottom has several hundred volunteers (a nightmare to track individual hours). Suggest a group accounting. R. Messmer said that SFR funds (USFWS) has specific requirement for obtaining in-kind match and he will ask for specifics of what information we need to provide. Hopefully we will be able to accommodate specific programs.

Pena said they have five volunteer groups, sometimes have a hard time getting volunteers to fill out forms. STEP bio needs to implement. K. Herkamp said they already discussed with STEP biologists. Every district is different. May be able to track only some volunteers to reach the required 25% match. If this is what is required to fund STEP biologists, they will find a way. Focus effort on easiest hours to record. R. Messmer said they don't want this to dissuade volunteers.

Russ Patterson - Tillamook Anglers run a volunteer hatchery at Whiskey Creek. All volunteer feeders record hours worked each day on a Code of Volunteer Service form (CVS). But there is a fin clipping day coming up and he doesn't know how to record those hours (1,000s of hours on those fin clipping days) He is the hatchery manager and will keep track of the number of volunteers and the hours worked but not the numbers worked by each volunteer. K. Herkamp said he doesn't expect a sheet for each volunteer in that case, but they should work with R. Rehn to figure out the best way.

T. Owens asked what's in it for the volunteer - what do they get out of it? R. Heap answered that by recording hours, the volunteers can offset the money usually paid for supplies, so more money is available.

Chair Brochu said we should make it easy so we don't discourage volunteers. We should ask STEP biologists to see what problems may be out there.

T. Petersen said they have team leaders to record hours and also keep track of miles. Their club reimburses some miles. This is one way to use the information. P. Gefre said this is important and want to put on a future agenda to discuss further. We should get suggestions from STEP

biologists to further the discussion.

## Area STEP Reports

STAC Members reported on activities in their areas.

### Leslie Wade – Upper Willamette

Erik Moberly did not move, still STEP biologist in Springfield. He is working part time so not much to report. The district is planning family fishing events, brook trout eradication, etc.

### Tom Petersen – Mid Coast

The new class of school kids – 8<sup>th</sup> graders – participating in stream cleanup. Participation was great, 7-8 agencies involved including the City, Water Conservation Bureau. Kids had a great time. The Port of Florence benefitted with the kids chopping broom and planting trees. The Egg to Fry program starts this week. The chiller is up and running. The STEP biologist wanted the chiller but T. Petersen wants to use frozen bottles because it requires participation.

### Lin Howell – Lower Willamette

He has been working with S. Hastie on the STEP conference. Went steelhead fishing & caught a female to be used for broodstock. He praised Tami Owen for her help with the meeting.

### Norm Ritchie – Lower Willamette

He handed out his report, the highlight of which is the report on the native fish conserve policy. It is a coastal, multi-species plan, on how to deal with fertilized eggs & fish production. Mark Chilcote published a paper on the impact of hatchery fish on natural production – not much difference between native fish and out of basin. Ed Bowles will be at the STEP Conference and will talk about hatchery fish on spawning beds and how to minimize impacts. The ODFW budget will be heard in Salem. Natural resource budgets are declining. Budget information is available online.

### Pat Gefre – North Coast

Broodstock collection for the Nestucca steelhead program is going good. Early fishing has been good, although high water in March slowed things down. There is a Rhodes Pond cleanup tomorrow; fin clipping on June 18. Usually get 100-150 volunteers. The Forest Service has reopened Hebo Lake, rebuilt fishing areas and deepened the lake. They hope that trout will now overwinter and there will be more oxygen in the summer for them to survive. ~4,000 stocked. Kids are having a great time. It takes about 20 minutes to limit.

### Armand Pena – Coos, Coquille & Tenmile

Spawning has been going very well and they have met their objectives. Coos, Millicoma Tenmile = very satisfying. At Morgan Creek, they installed wrap-around decking. Although the area is privately owned, other STEP groups can use the facilities. Armand attended a meeting on Marine Reserves as a proponent of the one at Cape Arago. It is just outside the jetty. The Port of Coos Bay voted to reject the reserve.

### Mike Brochu – Umpqua

In January and February they held enhancement derbies to raise money to enhance fishery in Umpqua. Not sure how much \$ raised but went well. He is now working with steelhead acclimation, getting broodstock. High water has slowed down broodstock but there is still time to collect more fish. The Umpqua Fisherman's Association arranged a meeting with STEP and District biologists, and volunteers, to discuss steelhead. The hatchery run is down and guides

are complaining. ODFW explained to the public about reduced production but things should turn around. Lonnie Johnson (R&E) attended so he could see students, volunteers, how they are using fish food. He didn't have a problem funding fish food but said R&E doesn't want to buy it from out of country. Some students involved in fish releases are handicapped but some facilities are not accessible (gravel parking lots). They need safe access at the Canyonville Acclimation site. It is not conducive to wheelchairs. Mike is concerned about safety and liability to ODFW and Umpqua Fisherman's Association.

#### Doug Ray – North Coast

He recently spent a day with Ron Rehn visiting Warrenton & Astoria High Schools. He is coordinating with Michele Long (OWEB coordinator). They spent some time putting steelhead carcasses in streams. Seaside Heights Elementary school wants to start a coho program on a creek outside the school.

#### Gary Enoch – Upper Rogue

Cole Rivers Hatchery had the earliest steelhead return to date; don't know why. Perhaps the fish are making the trip quicker now because of some of the dam removal, but not sure. Higher than normal turbidity in Upper Rogue/Grants Pass area. The sediment may be from Gold Ray Dam. Hopefully spawning will improve with better gravels. They installed a trap in Brooks Creek, a tributary to the Illinois. The watershed council will monitor. Hopefully this is the beginning of a long-term relationship. At this time they are predicting a lower-than-normal Chinook run in the Rogue but a higher steelhead hatchery returns to Cole Rivers (hopefully recycle fish to improve fishing). Not sure about wild stock.

#### Richard Heap – Lower Rogue

The Curry Anadromous fish facility at Indian Creek is running great. The pump we bought them is working great (the previous problem has been solved and this is a big improvement). Oregon south coast scale sample collection is going great. G. Enoch asked if it was because of more effort or more fish. R. Heap said both. Ocean fishing down so more fish returning and larger fish. After the tsunami, volunteers (local fishing groups) helped with port cleanup. Among other things, volunteers collected Styrofoam, which could be a problem if consumed by fish and birds. Volunteers made a difference. Richard provided updates on the ocean salmon season. NOAA may reduce catch to protect the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales. This prey species set-aside is the first time this would happen for a prey species. This is an ecosystem approach, required by the council now. Much more complicated than simply fishing season. Council has no jurisdiction over a lot of the ecosystem, nor has NOAA.

#### Sean Hastie- Mid Willamette

He has been working on the STEP conference. He also attended a beaver conference with D. Ray in Canyonville. People from Scotland and around the nation attended. He thinks ODFW should educate kids about beavers; Oregon after all is the beaver state and don't have a curriculum. R. Messmer said there is a beaver working group. G. Enoch said every year he has a group of AP students who learn about beavers. Freshwater trust eliminated all their education programs, salmon watch included. There is a rumor that the extension service – master watershed program – may take over salmon watch. K. Herkamp said that this is true but may only be at the 80% level.

## North and Mid-Coast District Updates

*North Coast Watershed District Update by Chris Knutson*

- Multi-species Conservation Plan for coastal species (i.e., coastal spring Chinook, chum, steelhead, cutthroat).
- 2011 North Coast Fall Fisheries: Fall Chinook trends are generally improving in Nehalem, Tillamook, and Nestucca; stable for Necanicum. Generally less restrictive fishing regulations in 2011 for Fall Chinook.
- North Fork Nehalem Hatchery winter steelhead issues: This is a long-term hatchery stock (domesticated), with a narrow return window. The fish travel quickly through the fishery and have a high stray rate. The district is working on ways to maximize harvest.

P. Gefre commented that a river fishery would be better than one at tidewater (for the general public) because more people can participate because it does not require a boat.

*North Coast STEP Program Update by Ron Rehn*

- The wild winter steelhead broodstock collection program is going well. To date they have collected 44 pairs from the Nestucca, 50+ pairs from the Wilson. (A STAC mini-grant funded the broodstock boxes they are using.)
- Loren's Pond Enhancement Project addresses 25-year angling plan. The pond is close to the community, which is good for families. It is right on the river so anglers can start simple and work their way up. The pond was constructed from an old, off-channel area. It previously had steep banks and blackberries. The department stocks catchable trout in the spring (water quality problems in summer). Trask Hatchery also releases excess fry here. The district used an R&E grant to improve the parking area, construct an ADA fishing platform, add fishing access sites, and improve trails to get access to fishing areas around the pond.
- A habitat enhancement pilot project on the Nehalem will add small wood to the estuary. Each year they intend to place three wood structures (small trees bound into clumps). Although they are expected to flush out each year, they will improve the estuary habitat. The idea came from the Nehalem working group. Use tidal areas because they are owned by the state.
- Rhoades Pond restoration project: This STEP Hatchery on the Nestucca produces 100,000 Fall Chinook from a plastic lined pond. The plastic was damaged by a flood, and the outfall is deteriorating. The district wants to line the pond with concrete. They will submit an R&E grant in June, and hopefully do the work in 2012. It will be expensive but will be a long-term solution.
- Whiskey Creek Hatchery propagation program: The program is going good. Clipping day coming up on April 9. Over 300 volunteers are expected to clip 100,000 fingerlings in just a few hours. Rhoades Pond will receive fish later in year. Cleanup day this weekend. Over 200 volunteers are expected to clip 100,000 fish at that pond.
- Outreach events for this year include the Clean Water Festival, family fishing events, etc.

*Mid Coast STEP Program Update by Christine Clapp*

- She reported that she worked on an ADA trail this morning.
- Big Creek Reservoir fishing day is coming up. As we know, volunteers are the life-blood of STEP. They help with smolt stocking, kids fishing events, fin clipping days, the Fish eggs to fry program, etc. She sent out a questionnaire and didn't get any back. Lots of volunteers already putting in many hours but she wants to reach out to others (i.e., teachers, students, colleges, etc). Wants to have volunteers available to go to schools to teach about stream ecology, habitat, etc.
- Fish dissections at schools or in the field, a way to use surplus fish that are being used for carcass surveys. Also use surplus fish for food banks.

- A program to raise worms for bait: red wigglers for free fishing days. She plans to use them on April 16 at Olalla Reservoir. The plan was to get compost units into classroom, but there were problems with allergies. So now they want to get high schools to build units that can function outside.
- Free fishing events are scheduled for - Olalla Pond, Eckman Lake, Big Creek Reservoir, Thissel Pond, Cleawox Lake, Salmon River Hatchery, and the Siletz Tribal Pond. There are not a lot of kid's fishing opportunities on Tribal lands. She is working with tribal biologists to increase opportunities.
- Oregon Coast Quest Program at Beverley Beach. She will be presenting salmon lifecycle information, habitat restoration, etc.
- The Mid-coast STEP currently has 25 classroom incubators with an additional 25 in Florence.
- Habitat improvement – looking for more opportunities for volunteers. Funded by OWEB grant to do large wood structures.
- Fish Culture: they are raising coho at North Depoe Bay and will be fin clipping them as well. They may be able to expand the Alsea broodstock collection to improve genetics.

### **Public Comment**

No public comment at this time.

### **STEP Propagation Project Proposals**

#### **STEP Propagation Project Renewals for Astoria and Warrenton High Schools**

R. Rehn provided overview. L. Howell commented that the teachers do a great job, especially the one in Astoria HS (Lee Cain?). They have used R&E grants to build a multi-aspect program (not just fish husbandry but stream surveys, etc.) He said the program provides enough education and training to prepare students to become ODFW employees.

Question from public: how much ODFW funding is use to support these projects? R. Rehn said that no ODFW funds are used. The feed is donated and a grant is used to fund the rest of the project. When the grant runs out, the hatchery would still be there, but other aspects at Astoria would go away. The grant funds the teacher's salary so that he can teach the multi-aspects of the program. Jerry Doves (the public) has some ideas on how to fund it after grant runs out. R. Heap asked who works at Warrenton HS. Henry Balensifer is the person who resurrected this project. Project would not be there if not for Henry. And the community provides support as well. R. Heap pointed out that these programs raise more than fish; they provide knowledgeable students involved in the resource. Production is not the issue.

Public comments – Jerry Doves commented on the STEP program. The program started with hatch boxes 30 years ago. “Gung-ho fisherman” then, with Rick Klumph in the lead. The STEP program turned them from outlaws (who just kept fish) to participants.

G. Enoch supported R. Heap and L. Howell's comments on importance of education. D. Ray mentioned that Astoria is one of only a few high schools to which Google has donated laptops.

*Public Comment:* No additional public comment at this time.

Motion: STAC Review/Recommendations to Agency: R. Heap motioned that we recommend that the Astoria and Warrenton programs be recommended to continue. L. Howell seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

## Volunteer Recognitions

These will be done tomorrow at the STEP conference, however, R. Heap recommended we recognize those volunteers who were present. Jerry Doves president of Tillamook Anglers and Russell Paterson is the hatchery guy here and was a past STAC member.

## STAC Mini-Grant Application Review

K. Herkamp asked everyone to check on bolded numbers to see if monies can be returned (so we can provide it to others). \$2,000 will go back into the grant fund from the conference as seed money for the next conference. (Even if we don't make money in the auction, we will still have money to turn back.)

The committee reviewed the following grant applications. The committee agreed to review all applications prior to determining approval.

## Regulations Revision Process Update

R. Messmer presented. N. Ritchie stated that doing this in two commission meetings is a good idea. If the first filter for these is district staff, with no public review, it may give a perception of bias, that a change would not get a proper review. R. Messmer is sensitive to this and would be sure that staff do not reject a revision because of personal bias. R. Messmer would head up a committee with folks from across the state, including state police. Attention will be put on areas where there has been conflict. T. Petersen asked when they were going to reschedule the June meeting. R. Messmer said they had a phone conference call to take care of the business. T. Petersen said he hadn't heard about the change and knew people who have questions on the coho opener. They will be at conference tomorrow. R. Messmer wants to know if he is on the right track. N. Ritchie said that it appeared to be OK, except for the first step. R. Heap agreed with N. Ritchie's concern.

## General Business

- STAC Member Duties and Responsibilities – R. Heap made revisions. K. Herkamp sent it out before meeting, wants it approved ASAP because there will be three openings by September and this should be on the web site for prospective folks to see.

Motion: G. Enoch moved to approve. The motion was seconded and the STAC Member Duties and Responsibilities was approved by the committee 12-0.

- STEP brochure – K. Herkamp working with I&E to create a brochure of “What is STEP” is still pending.
- STEP Conference – K. Herkamp provided committee members with two handouts of what's going on at the conference tomorrow. N. Ritchie commended K. Herkamp for making sure funds are available for the next conference as well as a process on how to plan and execute the next one. N. Ritchie also commended S. Hastie for all his work. K. Herkamp suggested moving to a 2-year planning cycle so the committee would have more time to get it planned. K. Herkamp wants to have another meeting of the conference committee for debriefing and to plan for next conference. D. Ray commented that if the conference was not held during spring break, we would have more attendees. So if we plan farther ahead, should avoid it.
- K. Herkamp asked for a letter of support to R&E from STAC for the three grant requests.

Motion: R. Heap moved to request Chair Brochu write a letter of support. The motion was seconded and it was approved by the committee 12-0.

## STAC Recommendations to the Department

Chair Brochu suggested we tell ODFW that we don't want to "backfill" ODFW budget with mini-grants. R. Heap said grants should be to support STEP groups and STEP budgets.

S. Hastie suggested we discuss filling vacant, and soon-to-be vacant, STAC positions. K. Herkamp wants to do this ASAP. He tried to start process in January but with the new Governor and his staff the recruitment had to be postponed until they were up and running. He is working on an announcement to those areas with vacancies and the announcements should be out in early April. K. Herkamp will work with area STEP and District biologists.

R. Heap suggested we tell ODFW how important STEP is to the agency and how valuable matching funds are to ODFW. Chair Brochu asked S. Hastie to work on it and Chair Brochu will work with him. R. Heap volunteered to write the letter.

Motion: R. Heap moved to appoint himself to write the letter. The motion was seconded and it was approved by the committee 12-0.

## Assignments, Agenda & Field Trip Ideas for Next Meeting

We will be reviewing propagation projects during the next meeting. This will take a long time thus it was suggested that we do this on Saturday instead of a field trip. P. Gefre stated that he cannot attend on Saturday so wants to review the propagation proposals on Friday. K. Herkamp offered to condense the agenda to cover all business on Friday. L. Wade will work with district staff on ideas for possible field trips.

Trip suggestions: delta pond, cedar creek, rafting

Future Agenda Items:

Volunteer Tracking Database and tracking of volunteer hours

Follow Up:

For Mike – how to deal with handicap students when facility is not designed for ADA access?

On Mini-Grant Application

1. Need to spell out criteria for match, in dollars and in time, Explain what each type is.
2. Clarify that in-kind is only for time related to that specific task not everything they do as normal duties.
3. Add statement to go through STAC member before submitting.

## Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.