



SALMON TROUT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM



SALMON TROUT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT for 1997

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This project was partially financed with funds obtained through the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We report on the activities and accomplishments achieved from October 1, 1996, through September 30, 1997, during the implementation of the Salmon Trout Enhancement Program (STEP). The Salmon Trout Enhancement Program involved citizens in activities that enhanced salmon, trout and other fish resources of the state. Trained volunteers worked with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) personnel on projects to rehabilitate and enhance salmon, trout and other fish populations and their habitat. Projects also served as education opportunities to increase understanding by the public of Oregon's aquatic resources and the environment.

STEP projects focused on characterizing fish populations and their habitat in streams, improving habitat, and culturing fish to supplement natural production. Citizen volunteers helped collect information on fish populations and habitat by conducting physical and biological stream surveys. They also assisted with projects to enhance fish passage, and fish spawning and rearing habitat. Finally, citizen volunteers contributed significant effort to ODFW programs to develop broodstock, incubate eggs, and rear fish to enhance populations of naturally produced salmon and trout.

The Salmon Trout Enhancement Program Public Advisory Committee (STAC) recognized eight key issues directed towards STAC involvement. Those are: outreach to industry, local government and other agencies, funding, roles and responsibilities of STAC, structural organization of STAC, recruitment of STAC, selection of STAC members, performance of STAC, and training for STAC members. Alternates were selected for 10 of the 13 STAC positions.

The STEP biologists participated in the ODFW Volunteer Council working groups to discuss volunteer management within the STEP program and interacted with ODFW Volunteer Coordinators to discuss their program activities. This semi-annual exchange of ideas is a valuable learning experience.

The following narrative describes highlights of activities generated by volunteers in each ODFW region and STEP district.

Highlights of results of our work in 10 STEP districts are identified in the Summary of STEP Participation Appendix Table 1. A complete district report is available for review upon request from each district STEP biologist. Appendix Table 2. provides STEP biologist contact information and Appendix Figure 1 identifies the STEP district boundaries.

Columbia Region

North Coast District

Astoria and Warrenton High Schools maintained ongoing aquaculture programs including operating fish hatcheries. The schools raise and release fall chinook and coho juveniles into Youngs Bay. Astoria High School students conducted spawning surveys on Cullaby and Abercombie creeks. Tillamook High School has an aquaculture class that selected Edwards Creek to monitor water quality. Thirteen schools have classroom incubators. A videotape lending library was developed and made available to schools, sportsman's groups and other interested parties. The collection includes about 75 tapes and is heavily used by schools.

Numerous Watershed Councils have formed throughout the district. The Governor has designated Watershed Councils as a prime tool to implement the Oregon Plan. The Oregon Plan was developed as the state response to the potential Threatened and Endangered listing of coho salmon. The plan has been accepted as a recovery plan by the federal government and relies heavily on volunteers for implementation. This will require a strong working relationship between STEP and Watershed Councils.

Oregon Trout volunteers participated in a variety of activities in the Salmonberry River. They monitored subsurface oxygen concentrations, conducted fall chinook and steelhead spawning surveys with over 60 volunteers, sampled macroinvertebrates and maintained a series of thermographs.

As part of an ongoing study, volunteer anglers tagged 123 sturgeon in Tillamook and Nehalem bays.

The Pals of Patterson Creek placed downstream migrant traps in Patterson and Jacoby creeks, tributaries of Tillamook Bay. Volunteers have interacted with the Tillamook Bay National Estuary Program on water quality monitoring and several projects.

Numerous habitat improvement projects were conducted throughout the district. The Izaak Walton League planted trees in the upper Nehalem basin and The Pals of Patterson Creek planted trees along Patterson and Jacoby creeks. The Oregon Department of Forestry coordinated a large habitat project on the South Fork of the Wilson River in 1995, which was damaged by a flood in the winter of 1996. With funding from Federal Energy Management Agency, volunteers spent time cabling boulders and large woody debris in the damaged project area.

The operation of Whiskey Creek Hatchery continues to be a large commitment for local volunteers who raised and released about 112,000 spring chinook smolts and presmolts into the Wilson and Trask rivers. In addition, net pens for acclimation have been set up for spring chinook in the lower Trask and Wilson rivers. An above-ground portable raceway was used to acclimate summer steelhead, winter steelhead and spring chinook on the lower Wilson River. A recently constructed in-ground acclimation pond on the lower Wilson River was heavily damaged by the 1996 flood and is currently being repaired.

Hatchbox operations have stabilized at a lower level than in past years and probably will not increase unless appropriate new broodstocks can be developed. Volunteer anglers captured 43 wild winter steelhead from the Wilson River for a wild broodstock program. Between 40,000 and 50,000 smolts are being reared for a spring 1998 release.

Volunteers assisted in operating traps on the North Fork Nehalem River and at Fishhawk Lake.

Lower Columbia District

The Portland Metropolitan area provides many opportunities to set up public information and demonstration displays. STEP displays were set up at seven different functions throughout the year and visited by thousands of individuals.

Volunteer spawning surveys were conducted on South Fork Scappoose Creek, Suter Creek, Beaver Creek, and Tryon Creek.

A stream enrichment project was completed in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service by placing 400 adult coho carcasses in Still Creek, a tributary of the Sandy River.

Fish passage was restored above the Highway 26 culvert passing a tributary of Tickle Creek near the town of Sandy. This was a cooperative project with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), the Private Industry Council and students from Sandy High School. ODOT and LongView Fibre Tree Farm provided materials.

Students, scouts and local citizen volunteers along Beaver and Fanno creeks conducted two Earth Day stream cleanup projects.

Volunteers completed two bank stabilization projects and five riparian planting projects throughout the district.

A Stream Enhancement Initiative project was completed on Delph Creek. LongView Fiber Tree Farm donated logs, equipment and an operator to help build several instream habitat structures.

Unfed fry releases from streamside hatchboxes have been reduced due to concerns for genetic integrity of indigenous species and efforts being directed into habitat restoration, acclimation and rearing of juvenile fish.

The Northwest Steelheaders have donated approximately \$13,400 towards classroom incubation projects in schools around the Portland Metro area.

Volunteers were involved in four acclimation projects throughout the Lower Willamette Fish District. The acclimation facilities handled more than 200,000 salmon and steelhead smolts. The sites included Portland Harbor, Clackamas Cove, and Cassidy's Pond adjacent to the Clackamas River. The February flood seriously damaged several acclimation sites and equipment. Volunteers assisted in salvage and repair of acclimation equipment.

Mt. Hood Community College continued their aquaculture fish rearing and education research project raising 10,000 rainbow trout from eggs to adults.

Northeast and High Desert Regions (Eastern Oregon)

The Eastern Oregon STEP district has worked with ODFW district fish managers and regional administrators to develop an efficient planning and program implementation process in an attempt to effectively administer the STEP program in the vast expanses of Eastern Oregon.

On January 1, 1997, a second Eastern Oregon STEP position was filled through a temporary job rotation assignment. The new position is funded through September 1999. The second position was established to allow for completion of STEP program development projects.

Approximately 60 questionnaires were mailed to Eastern Oregon STEP educators who had received training in past Watershed Education workshops. Thirty-four responses were received and the information provided indicates a continued high degree of activity in watershed education through the use of the STREAM SCENE, WATERSHEDS, WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE.

Fifty-six classroom incubator projects were coordinated and supported by the Central Oregon Flyfishers in Bend and the Klamath Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

This year's Kokanee Karnival was sponsored by the Eastern Oregon STEP program, Fall River Hatchery staff, Central Oregon Flyfishers, Sunriver Anglers, Central Oregon Llama Association and the Deschutes National Forest. Six elementary schools participated in the Kokanee Karnival that connects schools receiving eggs for classroom incubators with wild fish spawning in a stream. Students toured three stations on Browns Creek and watched fish stocking operations with a helicopter and llamas. Angler education instruction was provided to students and each class performed a community service project. Donors and sponsors contributed \$7,100 and 610 hours to this highly successful program.

A pilot program to introduce fish dissection to students was developed this year. We reached 180 students in six schools to discuss anatomy, fish adaptation, genetics, life history and angling. The program was very popular and next year we will train volunteers to teach the class.

A draft of Why Wild? A Primer in Fish Genetics was completed and distributed for field-testing. A two-page STEP Program information flyer, STEP.....Into Action was completed.

A tour was made in conjunction with seven biologists from the Canadian Salmonid Enhancement Program to share information between the two programs. Five days were spent conducting aquatic inventories.

Fish population surveys were conducted in the Goose Lake basin, the North Fork Crooked River and in the John Day basin.

Volunteers assisted with spawning surveys for bull trout in the Deschutes and Southeast districts and summer steelhead surveys in the Ochoco district.

Riparian fencing continues to be an important habitat improvement project in most areas of Eastern Oregon.

District requests for volunteer assistance with fin clipping activities are increasing with implementation of the Wild Fish Management Policy and volunteers are participating.

Northwest Region

Upper Willamette/Siuslaw District

Participated as a business partner for the third year with Willamette High School on the Certificate of Advanced Mastery Program.

Instream habitat surveys were less frequently undertaken this past year due to high water and continued flooding of streams. Surveys have been changed to include photo documentation during high water and limited surveying between high water events to identify how structures change and adapt over the year.

Culvert inspections are currently the most widespread activity for volunteers. Inspectors locate culverts and evaluate them for upstream and downstream fish passage by juvenile and adult fish. The data are entered into a database and the information given to the landowners. As problem culverts are identified landowners are notified and solutions offered. We have had wonderful compliance to date on culverts in need of repair. We have been able to re-open several additional miles of habitat for cutthroat trout in streams that had been blocked to fish passage for many years.

Chickahominy Creek experienced an event of 7 inches of rainfall in less than 24-hours this past winter and several miles of bank were lost as a result. A large-scale streambank stabilization project was undertaken within the lower mile and a half. Roaming cattle from adjacent lands are also being fenced out of this property by the landowner. This section of Chickahominy Creek is being established as a learning site for other residents in the Wildcat Watershed. This particular site is being set aside for fish and wildlife through the Riparian Tax Incentive Program.

Four landowners, the Albany Chapter of the Association of Northwest Steelheaders and Willamette High School students working on Certificates of Mastery are building a skills lab,

trails, and tree bridges to develop a hands-on learning site on Miller Creek.

Letz Creek volunteers successfully spawned, incubated, reared, fin clipped, and released a group of winter steelhead smolts in April 1997 from wild stock collected in the lower Siletz River tributaries.

Winter steelhead were collected in the lower Siuslaw River this past year and spawned at Munsel Creek by Florence STEP volunteers. Eyed eggs were transferred to Letz Creek for hatching, finclipping and rearing to smolt. Winter steelhead currently at Letz Creek are growing and on schedule for release in March/April 1998.

Mid Willamette District

Expanded volunteer involvement with cutthroat trout investigations through seining in the mainstem Willamette River and the construction and operation of fish traps in tributaries. Traps were maintained and operated by landowners, high school students, watershed council volunteers, employees at Hewlett Packard and Northwest Steelheaders from the Albany and Chehalem Valley chapters. Volunteers from the Albany Chapter of the Steelheaders constructed six traps for use during the 1997/98 field season.

Spawning surveys for winter steelhead in the Coast Range and for kokanee in tributaries to Green Peter Reservoir.

Continued cooperation with the Campbell Group on Wiley Creek instream habitat enhancement.

Two creative stream restoration projects on agricultural land along Muddy Creek, a tributary of the Marys River. Both projects involved the removal of dikes and plugging of channels constructed to drain farmlands in an effort to restore stream flows to the original channels.

Culverts were replaced and fish passage restored of tributaries of the Marys River and South Yamhill River.

Classroom egg incubation projects are extremely popular among area schools.

Newport District

The STEP district continued to work with the Mid-Coast educator's natural resource agencies, local government and timber companies

to create a Coast Range Natural Resource Education Organization to promote and develop natural resource based educational programs and develop a resource center in the Alsea School District.

The STEP biologist trained participants in two community development programs: "Jobs in the Woods" and "Hire the Fisher".

Presentations on salmon and watersheds were made by the STEP biologist at an Oregon Trout "Salmon Watch" program for local high schools on the Yaquina River.

Oregon Parks and Recreation continued to operate a steelhead aquarium exhibit at the Alsea Bay Interpretive Center in Waldport.

Spawning surveys for coho salmon were conducted by Depoe Bay volunteers on North and South Depoe Bay creeks. The Yachats River was surveyed for fall chinook.

The Central Coast Northwest Steelheaders and the Hebo U.S. Forest Service continued to trap and monitor steelhead and coho populations on the South Fork of Schooner Creek in the Siletz basin.

Estuary seining was conducted in the Siletz, Alsea and Yaquina basins to monitor chinook smolt run timing and abundance.

Mid-Coast Salmon Restoration projects were completed in Elk and Cedar creeks on the Siletz River.

Five hundred conifers were planted along the riparian area of Tenmile Creek by volunteers from the Tenmile Association, Audubon Society, Angel Job Corps and local volunteers.

The STEP district participated in the Mid-Coast Watershed Council and the Siuslaw Watershed Council in assessment of local watershed conditions, implementing best management practices, developing restoration projects and informing and educating landowners and citizens.

The Central Coast Northwest Steelheaders, Georgia-Pacific employees and Newport area volunteers constructed a steelhead acclimation facility on Palmer Creek, a tributary to the lower Siletz River.

The Florence STEP group completed habitat projects in Hadsall Creek and the North Fork Siuslaw River.

Southwest Region

Umpqua District

The Umpqua Fishwatch Program continued this year with 12 volunteers acting as a deterrent to poaching by conducting car patrols and camping in travel trailers at key sites on Steamboat Creek and the South Umpqua River. Volunteers attended a workshop given by Oregon State Police and ODFW on how to deal with the public and suggested methods of patrolling the area.

The proceedings of the Searun Cutthroat Symposium were published this fall and over 300 copies were distributed.

The fish district free fishing day activities were coordinated.

Volunteers and personnel from the USFS, USFWS and the BLM surveyed 81 reaches of stream to inventory spawning coho salmon. Two volunteers coordinated the coho spawning survey program that involved 66 surveyors.

Habitat improvement projects were conducted on Windy Creek near Glendale and on Deer Creek near Roseburg. Both of these projects will serve as demonstration models for future projects.

Fish culture activities are very popular in the district. They include brood stock collection, spawning, carcass disposal, egg incubation, rearing and fish transportation. A total of 42 volunteers spent 376 hours and drove 3,650 miles to stock 13 lakes with 23,736 brook trout fingerlings.

Upper Rogue District

Volunteers participated in presence/absence stream surveys to determine the distribution of fish in streams that flowed through potential timber sale sites. The Oregon Department of Forestry will utilize this information when planning timber sales in fish bearing streams.

Implementation of the Oregon Plan was a high priority with time spent coordinating with Watershed Councils.

Volunteers were involved with numerous tree-planting projects in riparian zones throughout the upper Rogue basin.

Habitat restoration projects were conducted on West Fork Trail Creek, West Fork Elk Creek and Taylor Creek.

Volunteers assisted biologists to determine distribution of salmonids throughout the Rogue basin.

Three summer steelhead rehabilitation hatchbox projects were continued during this contract period.

Fifty-eight Rogue Valley schools participated in 111 classroom incubator projects. Due to Endangered Species Act concerns we will only offer spring chinook salmon eggs to teachers with classroom incubators in 1998.

The Rogue River Guides Association completed the fifth year of a five-year net pen acclimation project for Rogue spring chinook. The intent of the program is to slow down the upstream movement of returning adult spring chinook so they are more available to anglers.

Coos District

Six weeks were spent constructing a fishway over a series of falls on Fall Creek, a tributary of the South Fork Coos River. This was the largest habitat project conducted by volunteers in the district since the program began. No native salmonids were present above the falls so the fishway made available several miles of excellent spawning and rearing habitat.

Flood damage to the Millicoma Interpretive Center has been repaired. The recently constructed incubation room allows visitors to view a variety of eggs at different developmental stages throughout most of the winter months.

Stream surveys for adults were conducted on 12 streams to inventory adult populations, to evaluate habitat structures, to evaluate fish culture programs or to conduct spawning surveys. Adult spawning ground surveys were reduced from the previous two years due to time constraints.

Stream surveys for juveniles were conducted to inventory juvenile distribution and abundance, to establish baseline information before and after habitat restoration or to determine mean fork length of juvenile fall chinook at ocean entrance in the Coos and Coquille estuaries. Mean fork length is the indication of abundance and carrying capacity in the estuary.

A total of 10 stream enhancement projects were conducted on eight streams.

Riparian planting and fencing projects in the Coos and Coquille basins has involved numerous volunteers. Over 40 volunteers planted 300 trees at three locations along the Coos River.

The STEP biologist provided fish culture assistance to volunteers throughout the district who were involved with fish egg incubation, fish rearing, hatchbox operations and acclimation facilities.

Volunteers now operate nine steelhead acclimation ponds in the district and release 226,000 steelhead smolts annually.

South Coast District

STEP projects on the south coast are primarily focusing on broodstock collection of fall chinook to rehabilitate lower Rogue tributaries and supplementation in the Chetco River.

Volunteer help was utilized to conduct abundance index surveys of juvenile fall chinook in Hunter and Euchre creeks, and the Pistol, Chetco, and Winchuck rivers.

Three volunteers from the Port Orford Watershed Council set up and operated a downstream migrant trap on the South Fork of Hubbard Creek.

Aquatic Habitat Inventory surveys were conducted by a three person crew of Youth Conservation Corps workers on 10 miles of stream in Euchre, Hubbard, Floras and Willow creeks.

Two volunteers from the Chetco Watershed Council were trained to process Aquatic Inventory data.

The highest profile habitat project was in Jack Creek, a Chetco River tributary and was supported and guided by the Chetco Watershed Council. This is a bioengineering project that required a tremendous amount of resources from many groups. Most of the bank stabilization was done by the County Corrections Crew and volunteers on Siskiyou Salmon Weekend. Hire the Fishers planted 1,000 conifers.

A work party of Oregon South Coast Fishermen cleaned out debris and repositioned a dislodged deflector log at the Jack Creek Fish Ladder.

Other major South Coast habitat projects were completed on the following streams:

- Deep Creek - jump pool maintenance by replacing a failed gabion structure.

- Deep Creek - created three log weirs to increase stream complexity by creating plunge pools.
- Hamilton Creek - added woody debris to increase habitat complexity.
- Euchre Creek - Students planted over 300 Douglas fir trees.
- Elk River - mainstem fencing project.
- Winchuck River - Christmas tree placement to provide brushy cover for salmonids rearing the estuary.

Volunteers assisted with broodstock collection activities on the Chetco River and the lower Rogue River for fall Chinook and assisted with collection of winter steelhead on the Chetco River.

Fall chinook and winter steelhead broodstock were collected from the Chetco River and transported to Elk River Hatchery to be incorporated into a smolt program to supplement sport fisheries.

Fall Chinook collected in the lower Rogue River were transported to Indian Creek STEP facility and the resulting offspring were incorporated into a smolt program for rehabilitation of the depressed lower Rogue stock.

This year, 22,170 eggs were supplied from Bandon Hatchery to a hatchbox in the Floras/New River basin. This program will continue for three years (a single coho life cycle).

Appendix Table 1.

Summary of STEP Participation
(October 1996 through September 1997)

Category/Activity	Number of Projects	Number of People	Hours Donated	Miles Surveyed	\$ Donated	\$ ODFW
Youth/Education						
Habitat Improvement	37	1,140	10,099	7	29,777	22,260
Stream Surveys	57	1,123	8,117	87	15,571	1,100
Training Classes	61	1,707	3,235	0	7,256	2,651
Egg Incubation	478	6,424	33,479	0	1,030	905
Broodstock Collect	8	430	2,010	0	720	420
Rearing	9	1,010	6,958	0	1,850	825
Acclimation	2	23	80	0	0	0
Information Ext.	127	2,950	2,014	0	680	200
Recruitment	21	941	964	0	380	375
Miscellaneous	16	421	1,879	0	173	50
Spawn/Fin Clip/Stock	6	149	590	0	491	102
Subtotal	822	16,318	69,425	94	57,928	28,888
General Public						
Habitat Improvement	123	1,086	12,419	2	120,182	22,517
Stream Surveys	136	724	11,355	564	13,023	8,388
Training Classes	50	275	1,046	0	400	1,661
Egg Incubation	63	552	7,518	0	2,411	240
Broodstock Collect	22	680	10,487	0	12,545	2,460
Rearing	22	1,674	18,384	0	28,501	6,300
Acclimation	35	403	3,993	0	38,049	10,989
Information Ext.	330	5,887	7,722	0	8,530	4,639
Recruitment	51	902	2,172	0	510	0
Miscellaneous	86	545	6,830	200	13,252	825
Spawn/Fin Clip/Stock	44	356	3,477	0	6,428	22
Subtotal	962	13,084	85,403	766	243,831	58,041
Total	1,784	29,402	154,828	861	301,759	86,929

Appendix Table 2.

**OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
SALMON TROUT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM
STEP Biologists**

Phone	Biologist	Code
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657-2000, ext. 235 FAX 657-2095 e-mail	Dick Caldwell STEP Biologist 17330 SE Evelyn Street Clackamas, OR 97015-9512 Use Col. R. Research e-mail # odfwcrr@teleport.com	07
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** **Patty Bowers is on a temporary assignment updating STEP Program materials.
Ken Cannon is the Acting STEP Biologist**