

Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program

2023-2024 Executive Summary



LEGISLATIVE REPORT

This annual legislative report summarizes the activities and accomplishments of The Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) from October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024. STEP activities are integral to accomplishing Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) fish management objectives. During the 2023-2024 reporting period, statewide STEP volunteer efforts involved 874 youth and 3,438 adult volunteers donating 56,544 hours of time, which is equal to approximately 27 full-time equivalents (FTEs). STEP volunteer efforts in this reporting period were valued at \$2,007,312.00.

The types of projects conducted through STEP reflect the diverse ways that volunteers can assist with fish and habitat management needs throughout Oregon. The issues and priorities within individual watersheds are often unique to those areas and the focus of STEP efforts can vary across the state. Generally, activities can be grouped into four main categories.

STEP volunteer efforts
are valued at
\$2,007,312.00



EDUCATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

65,807 people
participated in STEP
educational activities

These activities include participation in trainings, classes, tours, presentations, workshops, egg to fry classroom projects, and public events.



INVENTORY AND MONITORING

Nearly **289** volunteers
contributed to fish monitoring
and inventory efforts

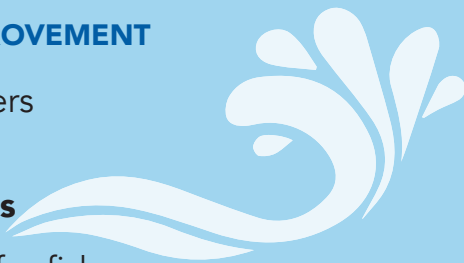
Participants logged **4,669 hours** on **340 projects** statewide, assessing sport fisheries, conducting fish passage inspections and surveying in-stream habitat.



HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

STEP volunteers
improved
320 miles
of waterways for fish

241 participants improved Oregon's fish habitat through fish passage, in-stream, riparian and fish carcass placement projects, and the Keep Oregon Rivers Clean (KORC) program.



FISH CULTURE

4.36 million

Chinook Salmon, Coho Salmon, steelhead, and trout were reared or released by STEP volunteers

These fish were used for enhancement or augmentation purposes. Of these, **2.20 million fish** were fed and cared for by STEP volunteers before release and **15,562 fish** were collected for broodstock.





Volunteers installing the Whittaker Creek trap OSCF volunteers seine for Chinook smolts

Since 1981, **400,210+** volunteers
have contributed more than **4.11** million hours
to approximately **54,362** STEP projects



Outdoor Education at Metolious Pond.

STEP BACKGROUND

The Oregon Legislature established STEP in 1981 as a program within ODFW. Its mission is to “achieve the recovery and sustainability of the state’s native salmon and trout through the education of Oregon’s citizens and their involvement with fish management efforts.” Since then, approximately 400,210 adult and youth volunteers have contributed more than 4.11 million hours to an estimated 54,362 STEP projects.

STEP is funded by a combination of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) grant program and ODFW funds. The program consists of a coordinator and administrative assistant in the ODFW headquarters office in Salem and 11 STEP biologists located throughout the state. The coordinator and assistant divide their time between the STEP program and ODFW’s Fish Restoration and Enhancement Program.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Governor appoints a 9-member STEP Advisory Committee (STAC), which is comprised of citizens representing all of Oregon. The committee meets bi-annually around the state and advises ODFW on policy and the implementation of STEP. The committee administers the STAC Mini-Grant Program, funded through a \$50,000 biennial grant from the ODFW Fish Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) Program. Mini-Grants are available in amounts up to \$2,000 for projects that further the goals of STEP.

The full version of this report is available online at www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/step/ under “Annual Progress Reports” heading.



SALMON & TROUT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

2023-2024 Annual Progress Report



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Background and Summary

This report summarizes the activities and accomplishments of the Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) from October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024. The Oregon Legislature established STEP in 1981 as a program of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) that seeks to “achieve the recovery and sustainability of the state’s native salmon and trout through the education of Oregon’s citizens and their involvement with fish management efforts”. Although this goal will not be achieved by the program acting alone, annual volunteer efforts through STEP to enhance fisheries and restore habitats lend critical support to the management programs of ODFW and contribute to the more extensive statewide efforts toward fish and watershed restoration under the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds.

The role of STEP within ODFW is defined by Oregon Revised Statute (ORS 496.430 through 496.465) and Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR 635-009-0090 through 635-009-0120) specific to the program. Program activities are also guided by broader ODFW fish and habitat management policies including the Native Fish Conservation Policy, Fish Hatchery Management Policy, and the Fish Health Management Policy. These policies establish direction for the broader ODFW fish and habitat management efforts that include STEP, provide support for a wide range of STEP activities, and set biological impact thresholds. The policies also allow STEP to work with other ODFW programs for which STEP can provide important volunteer and educational support.

The types of projects conducted through STEP reflect the diverse ways that volunteers can assist with fish and habitat management needs throughout Oregon. The issues and priorities within individual watersheds are often unique to those areas and the focus of STEP efforts can vary across the state. Generally, activities can be grouped into four main categories:

- **Education and Program Development** informs the public about the STEP Program, Oregon’s salmon and trout resources, and their habitats. Projects include classroom incubators (also known as the “Fish Eggs-to-Fry Program”), presentations, classes, volunteer training, tours, displays, printed materials, equipment, construction, and maintenance.
- **Inventory and Monitoring activities** characterize fish populations and their habitats. Projects include stream and riparian habitat surveys, and other methods used to study, monitor or inventory fish life history, presence, distribution, or abundance.
- **Habitat Improvement activities** enhance, restore, and protect habitat for native stocks of salmon, steelhead, and trout. Projects include the placement of large woody debris in streams, riparian protection and restoration, fish passage improvement and fish carcass placement for stream nutrient enrichment. This category also includes aesthetic improvements to lakes and streams achieved through the Keep Oregon’s Rivers Clean (KORC) fishing line and tackle recycling program.
- **Fish Culture activities** produce fish to supplement natural fish production, augment fisheries, or, in the case of the classroom egg incubation program, provide educational opportunities. This category also includes fish rescued, transplanted, or reintroduced.
- **Fishing Access and Opportunity** - The 25-year Angling Enhancement Plan was adopted in February of 2010 to outline strategies for providing diverse, stable, and productive angling opportunities and facilitate an increase in angling participation. Because of its strong connection to the volunteer base, and the local needs and interests, STEP is used to directly address recreational fishing priorities; specifically, opportunity, access, and mentoring. While the focus is on youth anglers and families it also provides direct and indirect benefits to all anglers.

STEP is funded by a combination of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) grant program and ODFW funds (75 percent federal with 25 percent state match). The program consists of a coordinator and administrative assistant, located in the ODFW headquarters office in Salem, and 11 STEP biologists. Staff divides their time between the STEP program and the Restoration and Enhancement Program. STEP is implemented in the field by eleven staff located throughout the state who spend either all or part of their time serving as a STEP Biologist (SFR funds the equivalent of 10.17 full-time employees, eight staff are fully funded by SFR and five are partially funded).

In addition, program oversight is provided by the nine-member STEP Advisory Committee (STAC) comprised of citizens appointed by the Governor. The committee advises the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) and ODFW on policy and the implementation of STEP. The committee also administers the STAC Mini-Grant Program, funded through a \$50,000 biennial grant from the ODFW Fish Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) Program. The Mini-Grants are available in amounts up to \$2,000 for projects that further the goals of STEP and are reviewed for approval by STAC at their meetings. From October 2023 to September 2024, two in-person STAC meetings were held at various locations across the state.

Within each watershed management district, the STEP biologist fills several roles including fish and habitat biologist, educator, outreach specialist, community or technical advisor, and lead for volunteer management. The program works with a variety of individuals, groups and organizations including adult and youth volunteers, angling and conservation interests, watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, private landowners, schools, individual students, and other state, federal and local government agencies. Through STEP, these individuals and organizations work with ODFW to conduct community-based watershed restoration and species recovery efforts throughout Oregon.

Introduction

STEP biologists and volunteers conduct a variety of activities that help develop the program and educate the public about Oregon's fish resources. These include:

- Presentations to groups, teaching classes, conducting tours, and holding workshops.
- Hosting displays or booths at fairs and festivals, and preparing written materials such as articles, news releases, websites, brochures, and STEP publications.
- Training STEP volunteers or project cooperators with the technical skills that allow them to conduct or assist with projects.
- Maintaining or constructing equipment or facilities.
- Assisting with program administration and other activities.
- Providing digital content including livestreams and videos.
- Volunteers assist ODFW in conducting a variety of inventory, monitoring, and evaluation projects to provide information on Oregon's salmon, steelhead and trout, their habitats, and associated fisheries.

The major types of activities conducted through STEP are:

- Angler or creel surveys.
- Fish passage or culvert inspections.
- Fish population or distribution survey or monitoring.
- Fish life history or other investigations.
- Stream and other aquatic habitat surveys.
- Miscellaneous monitoring activities (e.g., water quality monitoring)

To conduct these surveys, volunteers become skilled in sampling methods and learn a wide variety of fish or fishery sampling techniques, including adult and juvenile fish traps, electro-fishing gear, seines, gill nets, trap nets, snorkeling, hook and line, radio telemetry, and creel surveys.

Each year, volunteers conduct or assist with numerous habitat improvement projects on private and public lands throughout Oregon. These include efforts to improve or restore:

- Fish passage.
- In-stream habitat.
- Riparian, off-channel, wetland, or floodplain habitat.
- Stream nutrients through fish carcass placement.
- Aesthetic qualities through the Keep Oregon's Rivers Clean program.

Although the stream nutrient enrichment program is not strictly a STEP activity, many carcass placement projects rely heavily on the manual labor of STEP volunteers, as access to sites can be poor and carcasses must be placed in a manner that simulates natural distribution and conditions. Carcass placement occurs in streams where populations of spawning anadromous salmonids are well below historic levels.

STEP is in a unique position in that it can bring all aspects of restoration under one program. These include pre and post project monitoring, technical guidance, equipment, labor, outreach, and access to funding.

The Keep Oregon's Rivers Clean (KORC) program was created to collect and recycle discarded angling line and tackle. Currently, over 100 stations have been installed and are being maintained by volunteers within the fish districts.

STEP volunteers conduct or assist with all stages of fish propagation, including collecting and spawning adult fish, incubating eggs, and rearing, acclimating, and releasing juvenile fish. STEP volunteers often work in conjunction with ODFW fish hatcheries at one or more of the stages in the fish production cycle. In a few locations where there are no ODFW hatchery programs due to lack of facilities or hatchery capacity, STEP volunteers operate facilities that perform the entire rearing cycle from broodstock collection to release. In both cases, STEP propagation efforts are guided by ODFW management objectives, and are consistent with the guidelines, practices, and protocols outlined by hatchery management policy.

Because STEP fish culture projects are an integral part of ODFW fish management programs, oversight of STEP propagation activities occur in a variety of ways. Initially, STEP propagation proposals go through an approval process at the local, regional, and Fish Division levels within ODFW to ensure the projects will meet fish management objectives and are consistent with policies regarding potential impact to native fish populations. Specific legal limitations regarding STEP also exist to ensure that projects comply with other applicable goals, policies, rules, and plans, and limit the duration and size of projects.

STEP propagation projects operate on three to five-year cycles depending on the type of project and fish species involved. Once the cycle is complete, the project must be reviewed through a formal renewal process. In addition, STEP propagation projects that rear and release more than 100,000 fish must receive authorization from the Commission. Presentation of the project at a Commission meeting also serves as an opportunity for public comment. Public comment during the propagation project review process can also be submitted directly to staff or can be provided when the project is presented for review by STAC at a regularly scheduled STAC meeting. If public interest warrants, ODFW may choose to hold additional public meetings to present and discuss projects under review.

The importance of STEP fish culture efforts to Oregon's fish resources has provided program activities some legal protections such as not having to obtain water rights for approved STEP projects. STEP biologists work closely with volunteers to ensure a facility complies with the applicable operating and reporting requirements for ODFW fish hatchery facilities and those of STEP. The program biologists also help carry out

the project logistically, work with other ODFW staff to coordinate cooperative propagation efforts and provide technical assistance.

STEP fish propagation facilities are funded, built, operated, and maintained by the volunteers with ODFW assistance and oversight.

The purpose of STEP fish propagation programs is to rehabilitate or supplement populations of naturally produced salmon and trout or augment fisheries with hatchery fish. Thousands of volunteers have assisted Oregon's fisheries through their involvement in STEP and their donation of money, materials, equipment, and countless hours of time and labor. Without these efforts, ODFW's propagation ability would be greatly diminished in many areas.

Many projects have more than one single purpose and often serve as educational opportunities to increase public understanding and stewardship of Oregon's fish resources and the aquatic environment.

STEP fish culture projects are generally grouped into the following types:

- Classroom egg incubation program projects that release unfed fry, also known as the "Fish Eggs-to-Fry" program.
- Stream hatch-box projects that release unfed fry.
- Fish rearing projects. All activities included here involve feeding and caring for fish.
- Projects that acclimate fish before release.
- Projects that collect adult broodstock.
- Miscellaneous activities including volunteer help at ODFW hatcheries for maintenance, broodstock collection, spawning, marking, stocking, and other duties, and salvage of wild fish

Summary of Current Efforts

The following summarizes some key accomplishments of the program during 2023-2024:

Approximately 65,807 people participated in STEP training, classes, tours, presentations, or workshops, or visited STEP activities or displays at public events (Table 1). These activities involved nearly 1,454 youth and adult volunteers. This includes 777 individual Fish Eggs-to-Fry classroom projects that reached approximately 36,072 individuals.

Over 289 volunteers contributed nearly 4,669 hours on 340 projects to inventory and monitor fish populations in streams and rivers across the state (Table 2).

Nearly 320 miles of waterways were improved for fish use by 244 volunteers through fish passage, in-stream, riparian and fish carcass placement projects and the Keep Oregon River's Clean program (Table 3).

STEP volunteers assisted with 55 activities to help maintain fishing and boating sites across the state, providing 734 hours of volunteer service. (Table 4)

STEP volunteers assisted with releasing of nearly 2.42 million Chinook Salmon, Coho Salmon, steelhead and trout for enhancement or augmentation purposes. 2.09 million of these fish were reared (fed and cared for) before release, and 15,562 broodstock fish were collected (Table 5). Approximately 116,000 fish were released from educational classroom incubators used in the Egg to Fry program.

The agency continues to implement the 25-Year Angling Enhancement Plan. Major accomplishments by STEP include continuing to improve access to local angling sites and fishing events and trainings.

This reporting period still reflects some continued reductions in activities due to COVID-19 related health and safety restrictions. Restrictions resulted in the cancellation of some events and non-essential projects. For essential projects, staff took a more involved role as the size of volunteer work parties were limited. This resulted in a decline in both volunteer involvement in projects and public participation in educational activities compared to pre-pandemic years. Even with these reductions, volunteers continued to make substantial contributions to continue the core missions and projects of STEP and ODFW.

Highlights of the 2023-2024 statewide volunteer efforts include:

- 874 youth and 3,438 adult volunteers participated in STEP activities.
- Volunteers participated in 1,711 projects across the state and their efforts totaled 56,544 hours of volunteer time. This is equivalent to approximately 27 full time employees.
- Using the estimated amount of \$35.50 per hour for volunteer time, the value of STEP volunteer hours was over \$2,007,312.00.

For this report, each STEP biologist provided a narrative that describes their district and an overview of activities in that district for each of the four main program components (education and program development, inventory and monitoring, habitat improvement, and fish culture).

- The appendices include the following program information:
- Appendix 1. A list of the current STAC members
- Appendix 2. A list of the current STEP biologists

Tables and Figures

EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Table 1.

Education and development activities, participation, and volunteer effort by STEP district, 2023-2024. Figures in parentheses indicate the number of Fish Eggs-to-Fry classroom incubator projects.

EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT TOTALS						
STEP District	Activities	Participants	Volunteers		Adults	Adult Hours
			Youth	Youth Hours		
Coos-Coquille	25 (15)	1,865	4	12	41	144
Eastern Oregon	35 (77)	3,206	1	24	85	1,119
Lower Rogue	15 (6)	6,087	22	288	160	1,747
Mid-Coast	94 (59)	3,169	120	1,210	223	2,163
Mid-Willamette	69 (193)	20,476	2	35	204	1,400
North Coast	7 (10)	880	0	0	27	96
North Willamette	22 (248)	17,446	4	12	475	2,786
Umpqua	16 (14)	1,922	0	0	25	160
Upper Rogue	2 (59)	3,475	0	0	15	93
South Willamette	51 (96)	7,272	0	0	37	220
STAC	2	9	0	0	9	288
Total	338 (777)	65,807	153	1,581	1,301	10,216

INVENTORY AND MONITORING

Table 2.

STEP inventory and monitoring activities, miles affected and surveyed and volunteer effort, 2023-2024.

INVENTORY AND MONITORING								
				Volunteers				
STEP District	Activities	Miles Affected	Miles Surveyed	Youth	Youth Hours	Adults	Adult Hours	TOTAL HRS
Coos-Coquille	7	12	12	2	8	13	52	60
Eastern Oregon	19	42	42	0	0	57	586	586
Lower Rogue	26	94	94	0	0	88	1,431	1,431
Mid-Coast	12	0	0	24	144	54	1,571	1,715
Mid-Willamette	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Coast	4	14	14	0	0	13	228	228
North Willamette	1	6	6	0	0	0	0	0
Umpqua	56	25	25	0	0	13	236	236
Upper Rogue	212	36	36	0	0	18	379	379
South Willamette	3	6	6	0	0	7	34	34
Total	340	235	235	26	152	263	4,517	4,669

HABITAT RESTORATION

Table 3.

Habitat restoration activities, miles affected and restored and volunteer effort by STEP district, 2023-2024.

HABITAT								
STEP District	Activities	Miles	Acres	Volunteers				TOTAL HRS
				Youth	Youth Hours	Adults	Adult Hours	
Coos-Coquille	40	39	0	1	6	25	211	217
Eastern Oregon	30	6	15	0	0	11	1,058	1,058
Lower Rogue	13	19	0	0	0	7	125	125
Mid-Coast	37	121	6	0	0	34	141	141
Mid-Willamette	11	13	0	0	0	63	505	505
North Coast	2	77	6	6	12	10	65	77
North Willamette	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Umpqua	13	16	0	0	0	17	126	126
Upper Rogue	30	27	0	0	0	46	198	198
South Willamette	12	2	5	0	0	21	112	112
Total	188	320	32	7	18	234	2,541	2,559

FISHING IMPROVEMENTS

Table 4.

Fishing access and improvement effort by STEP district, 2023-2024.

FISHING IMPROVEMENTS						
STEP District	Activities	Volunteers				TOTAL HRS
		Youth	Youth Hours	Adults	Adult Hours	
Coos-Coquille	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern Oregon	1	0	0	1	531	531
Lower Rogue	7	0	0	9	103	103
Mid-Coast	1	0	0	1	2	2
Mid-Willamette	15	0	0	10	20	20
North Coast	1	0	0	10	33	33
North Willamette	0	0	0	0	0	0
Umpqua	0	0	0	0	0	0
Upper Rogue	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Willamette	30	0	0	6	45	45
Total	55	0	0	37	734	734

FISH CULTURE

Table 5.

Fish culture activities and volunteer effort by STEP district, 2023-2024. Figures in parentheses indicate the number of Fish Eggs-to-Fry classroom incubator projects. This table reflects the number of fish reared and released at STEP hatcheries, acclimation sites, and from classroom incubation projects.

FISH CULTURE					
	Number of Fish				
STEP District	Activities	Broodstock Collected	Reared	Released	Eggs to Fry Eggs
Tenmile/Coos/Coquille	11 (15)	6,544	892,372	1,362,250	2,250
Eastern Oregon	10 (77)	0	0	15,000	11,550
Lower Rogue	3 (6)	300	101,470	83,336	900
Mid-Coast	8 (59)	5,326	256,628	106,908	8,850
Mid-Willamette	2 (193)	0	0	4,700	28,950
North Willamette	10 (248)	1,887	375,000	375,000	37,200
South Willamette	5 (96)	0	0	33,240	14,400
Umpqua	8 (14)	384	106,500	110,770	2,100
Upper Rogue	7 (59)	543	40,904	70,964	8,850
North Coast	16 (10)	578	318,370	262,513	1,500
Total	777	15,562	2,091,244	2,424,681	116,550

Northwest Region

NORTH WILLAMETTE STEP

Buddy Phibbs, STEP Biologist

Ben Walczak, District Fish Biologist

Michael Hayworth, Assistant District Fish Biologist

The North Willamette STEP area covers the Department's North Willamette Watershed District (NWWWD), and with the Portland metropolitan area inside its boundaries, has the largest population of any STEP district in Oregon. The large angling population presents the district with the challenge of meeting the varied needs of a broad and changing demographic. There are also numerous fish management constraints associated with conservation and recovery of native fish species and species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The district mission is to provide ongoing and improving angling opportunities, improvements to habitat for fish and wildlife, and a continuing contribution to the quality of life that people in this area have come to enjoy and expect.

The district covers waters from the eastern slopes of the coast range east to Mt. Hood, and from the city of Clatskanie south to Salem. The larger river basins in the district include the Columbia, Willamette, Sandy, Clackamas, Tualatin, Molalla, Yamhill, and Pudding and their many tributaries. The varied landscape includes farmland, urban areas, forestlands, mountains, and wetlands. Fish species include salmon, steelhead, trout, and sturgeon, among others. There is also a wide diversity of warm water angling opportunities with several species of warm water game fish present in the district.

Population growth along with the associated development and urban sprawl, and the ever-changing constituency continue to place considerable strain on natural resources. District staff strives to maintain a balance between fish and wildlife protections, continued opportunities for fishing, hunting, or outdoor viewing enjoyment, while meeting the new demands on the resources associated with rapid population growth and development.

In 2023-24, the STEP position was largely unfilled, due a job rotation by the STEP Biologist in another program, and a budget shortfall that resulted in the position being held open for an extended period. As a result, activities and events ran and supported by the program were limited and this report reflects that lack of staffing. On 5/15/2024 Buddy Phibbs was hired as the district's new STEP Biologist. Since then, Buddy has been working closely with members of the public along with both district and nearby hatchery employees to understand the STEP program and how it serves the NWWWD.

EDUCATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

FAMILY FISHING EVENTS

This year North Willamette STEP volunteers led three Family Fishing Events. Two events took place in April, one at Sheridan Pond in Sheridan and another at Trojan Pond in Ranier. The third Family Fishing Event was in May at St. Louis Ponds in Gervais. All three events were a success thanks our dedicated volunteers along with district staff that donated their time.

FREE FISHING EVENTS

The North Willamette STEP program helped coordinate two fishing events that were conducted during Free Fishing Days. One event was at Small Fry Lake in Estacada, where nearly two hundred anglers enjoyed great fishing. We partnered with the United States Forest Service, Trout Unlimited, and Portland General Electric to make this event possible. Another Free Fishing event was hosted at Commonwealth Lake in Portland which attracted 130 anglers and was made possible by partnering with the Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District (THPRD).

OTHER FISHING EVENTS

Additional fishing events were conducted at Canby Pond, Huddleston Pond, Sheridan Pond, West Salish Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, and St. Louis Ponds. These events continued previous efforts of getting thousands of local youth and adults actively involved and educated about the fishing opportunities that surround them. Many of these events were also held in partnership with other organizations, including the Get Hooked Foundation, I'm Hooked Inc., Rods and Reels in Need, and the Association of Northwest Steelheaders (ANWS). Under the guidance of the STEP Biologist, volunteer groups, ODFW Angler Education Instructors, and members of the angling community aided in teaching youth about fishing, handling their catch and selecting the right equipment.



Get Hooked Foundation hosting an event for Centro Youth Development at Henry Hagg Lake

FISH EGGS-TO-FRY PROGRAM

The North Willamette STEP has been a leader in the Eggs-to-Fry program for several years and continued to see interest and growth in the classroom incubator program in 2023-2024. Participation was high, with a record 173 classrooms raising spring Chinook Salmon in the fall, and 75 classrooms raising rainbow trout in the winter. These incubation projects hatched eggs and released thousands of unfed salmon and trout fry into a dozen different STEP-approved lakes, ponds, and streams within the district. Several local chapters of the Association of Northwest Steelheaders, Trout Unlimited, the local OSU Extension Service (4-H), CREST,

the National Wildlife Federation, Oregon Zoo, and Reed College sponsored classroom incubation projects in schools around the greater Portland Metro Area. With the tremendous popularity of the program, its success would not be possible without the dedication of the many volunteers donating many hours of time.



Fish Eggs to Fry Delivery Team

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

USED FISHING LINE AND TACKLE COLLECTION

North Willamette STEP continues to maintain Keep Oregon Rivers Clean (KORC) stations along rivers, lakes, and ponds in the district. These line and tackle collection stations can be found on the Sandy River, Clackamas River, Blue Lake Park, The Columbia Slough, Commonwealth Pond, Bethany Lake, Herman Creek, St. Louis Ponds, Canby Pond, Salish Ponds, Benson Lake, Promontory Park at North Fork Reservoir, the Columbia River at Rooster Rock State Park and Dalton Point Park, Henry Hagg Lake, and the Scappoose Bay Marina. Most are maintained through volunteer efforts and by staff at parks where they are located. NWWD STEP is also seeking new opportunities to place KORC stations in additional popular fishing spots within the district.

FISH CULTURE

FISH ACCLIMATION PROJECTS

Acclimation facilities have been a key component of fish release strategies in the district for several years and operation of these facilities is an important function of STEP. Releases from acclimation sites are intended to coincide with hatchery production and provide increased angling opportunities on the Willamette, Clackamas, Sandy, and Molalla rivers.

Since the spring of 2013, an acclimation pond has been functioning on Trout Creek near its confluence with the Molalla River. Daily operation of this facility is performed entirely by volunteers from the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) and the Association of Northwest Steelheaders. During March and April of 2024, 100,000 Chinook Salmon smolts were acclimated and released from the facility to improve runs that have been struggling in recent years.

The Foster Creek Acclimation Facility continued to be a productive site for STEP. Nearly 25,000 summer steelhead smolts and 50,000 winter steelhead smolts from the Foster acclimation pond during the spring of 2024. With the guidance of NWWD District staff, volunteers assisted with maintenance and feeding at this facility. Anglers have seen a very productive fishery develop in this section of the Clackamas River in recent years, likely due to these smolt releases.

The Clear Creek Acclimation Facility was completed and put into production in spring of 2009, and the McLoughlin Chapter of the Association of Northwest Steelheaders have provided essential support, performing daily feeding and maintenance duties. No smolts were acclimated at this facility in 2024.

The Eagle Creek Acclimation Facility, located at Eagle Fern Park on Eagle Creek, was completed, and put into production in early 2010. With funding from an R&E Program grant provided through the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation, this facility was built from the ground up on the banks of Eagle Creek a few miles up from the confluence with the Clackamas River. Before the acclimation season in 2023, a large tree fell on the pond and severely damaged it, and no smolts were acclimated there since.

The Bull Run River Acclimation Facility saw its 13th year of production in 2024 at the site of the decommissioned PGE Bull Run Powerhouse. Releases of spring Chinook Salmon from this acclimation site are part of a District strategy to address problems involving stray rates of Sandy Hatchery spring Chinook Salmon by giving the salmon a return destination away from the wild fish in the Upper Sandy Basin. The effort is proving to be successful as returns to the lower river have improved while stray rates have decreased. All spring Chinook Salmon smolts in the Sandy River are now released at this acclimation site instead of at Sandy Hatchery, so management of this facility by volunteers is critical. The site at Bull Run saw 200,000 spring Chinook Salmon smolts released in the spring of 2024, with the help of volunteers from the Sandy Chapter of the Association of Northwest Steelheaders.

WINTER STEELHEAD BROODSTOCK COLLECTION

The collection of wild winter steelhead broodstock on the Clackamas and Sandy rivers was completed with assistance from the Northwest Steelheaders, individual volunteers, and local fishing guides, as well as landowners who allowed access to the river through their property. This project is instrumental in District fish management goals to integrate wild steelhead into hatchery programs and would not happen without the help of these volunteers contributing their time, in addition to significant financial contribution from operation of powerboats to access the fishery.

SCHOOLS AND GROUPS THAT WORK WITH THE NORTH WILLAMETTE STEP

The following is a list of schools, school districts, organizations, agencies, and other groups that work with STEP. Due to the large number of participants, it is possible that some groups were inadvertently left off this list. Please contact (503) 947-6211 if your program has been left off this list.

Education	Education
Ainsworth Elementary School, Portland	Mountain View Middle School, Newberg
Alberta Rider Elementary School, Tigard	Mt. Hood Community College, Gresham
Alice Ott Middle School, Portland	Mt. Tabor Middle School, Portland
Alliance Charter Academy, Oregon City	Nancy Ryles Elementary School, Beaverton
Alpha High School, Gresham	New Urban High School, Oak Grove
Amity Elementary School, Amity	Newby Elementary, McMinnville
Archbishop Howard School, Portland	Oak Creek Elementary School, Lake Oswego
Archer Glenn Elementary School, Sherwood	Ockley Green Middle School, Portland
Ardenwald Elementary, Milwaukie	Ogden Middle School, Oregon City
Arleta Elementary School, Portland	Oregon Episcopal School Opal Charter School, Portland
Astor School, Portland	Oregon State University 4-H Extension Service
Banks Elementary School, Banks	Oregon Trail Academy, Boring
Barnes Elementary School, Beaverton	Orenco Elementary School, Hillsboro
Beaver Acres Elementary School, Beaverton	Otto Peterson Elementary School, Scappoose
Beavercreek Elementary School, Beavercreek	Paul L Patterson Elementary School, Hillsboro
Beverly Cleary School, Portland	Pioneer Special School, Portland
Bilquist Elementary School, Milwaukie	Pleasant Valley School, Gresham
Boeckman Creek Elementary School, Wilsonville	Portland Waldorf School, Milwaukie
Bolton Primary School, West Linn	Powell Valley Grade School, Gresham
Bonny Slope Elementary School, Portland	Poynter Middle School, Hillsboro
Boones Ferry Primary School, Wilsonville	Quatama Elementary School, Hillsboro
Boring Middle School, Boring	Rachel Carson Environmental Middle School
Bridlemile Elementary School, Portland	Raleigh Hills Elementary School, Portland
Buckman Elementary School, Portland	Raleigh Park Elementary School, Portland
Butler Creek Elementary, Gresham	Redland Elementary, Oregon City
Cesar Chavez K-8, Portland	Reed College, Portland
Candy Lane Elementary School, Milwaukie	Renaissance School of Science, Portland
Carden Cascade Academy, Hillsboro	Rex Putnam High School, Milwaukie
Carus Elementary School, Oregon City	Reynolds High School, Troutdale
Catlin Gabel School, Portland	Reynolds Middle School, Fairview
Cedar Oak Park Primary School, West Linn	Ridgewood Elementary School, Portland
Centennial High School, Gresham	River Mill Elementary School, Estacada
Charles F. Tigard Elementary, Tigard	Riverdale Grade School, Portland
Chehalem Elementary School, Beaverton	Riverside Elementary School, Milwaukie
Christ the King Catholic School, Milwaukie	Rock Creek Middle School, Happy Valley
City View Charter School, Hillsboro	Ron Russell Middle School, Portland
Clackamas High School, Clackamas	Roosevelt High School, Portland
Clackamas River Elementary School, Estacada	Rosa Parks Elementary, Portland
Clarkes Elementary School, Mulino	Rosedale Elementary School, Hillsboro
Clear Creek Middle School, Gresham	Sabin-Schellenberg Center, Portland
Colton Middle School, Colton	Sacramento Elementary, Portland
Columbia City Elementary School, Columbia City	Salish Ponds Elementary School, Fairview

Cooper Mountain Elementary School, Beaverton	Sam Barlow High School, Gresham
Cornelius Elementary School, Cornelius	Sandy Grade School, Sandy
Creative Science School, Portland	Sauvie Island Academy, Portland
CREST, Wilsonville	Scappoose High School, Scappoose
David Douglas High School, Portland	Scholls Heights Elementary School, Beaverton
De La Salle North Catholic High School, Portland	Sheridan High School, Sheridan
Deep Creek Elementary School, Damascus	Sexton Mountain Elementary School, Beaverton
Deer Creek Elementary School, Tigard	Sitton Elementary School, Portland
Earl Boyles Elementary School, Portland	Skyline Elementary School, Portland
Early Learning Community School	South Meadows Middle School, Hillsboro
East Gresham Elementary, Gresham	Southwest Charter School, Portland
East Sylvan Middle School, Portland	Spring Mountain Elementary School, Happy Valley
Echo Shaw Elementary School, Cornelius	Springwater Environmental Sciences School, Or. City
Emerson School, Portland	St. John Fisher School, Portland
Estacada High School, Estacada	St. Paul Elementary School, St. Paul
Estacada Junior High School, Estacada	St. Rose School, Portland
Ewing Young Elementary School, Newberg	St. Thomas Moore School, Portland
Farmington View Elementary School, Hillsboro	Stafford Primary School, West Linn
Faubion Elementary School, Portland	Stoller Middle School, Portland
Faulconer-Chapman School, Sheridan	Sunnyside Elementary School, Clackamas
Fir Grove Elementary School, Beaverton	Sunnyside Environmental School, Portland
Firwood Elementary School, Sandy	Sunstone Montessori, Portland
Five Oaks Middle School, Beaverton	North Plains Elementary School, North Plains
Floyd Light Middle School, Portland	Sweetbriar Elementary School, Troutdale
Forest Grove High School, Forest Grove	Terra Linda Elementary School, Portland
Forest Hills Lutheran Christian School, Cornelius	Thomas R Fowler Middle School, Tigard
Forest Park Elementary School, Portland	Tom McCall Upper Elementary School, Forest Grove
Franklin High School, Portland	Trillium Creek Primary School, West Linn
Free Orchards Elementary School, Cornelius	Trost Elementary School, Canby
Gaffney Lane Elementary School, Oregon City	Troutdale Elementary School, Troutdale
Gilbert Heights Elementary School, Portland	Tualatin Elementary, Tualatin
Gladstone High School, Gladstone	Tualatin Valley Academy, Hillsboro
Gordon Russell Middle School, Gresham	Valley Catholic Elementary School, Beaverton
Greenway Elementary School, Beaverton	Verne Duncan Elementary School, Happy Valley
Gresham High School, Gresham	View Acres School, Milwaukie
Groner Elementary School, Hillsboro	Walt Morey Middle School, Troutdale
Grout Elementary School, Portland	Welches Elementary School, Welches
H.B. Lee Elementary School	West Linn High School, West Linn
H.B. Lee Middle School, Portland	West Sylvan Middle School, Portland
Happy Valley Elementary School, Happy Valley	West Tualatin Valley Elementary School, Portland
Harvey Clarke Elementary School, Forest Grove	West Union Elementary School, Hillsboro
Helensview School, Portland	Westgate Christian School, Portland
Heritage Christian School, Hillsboro	Westridge Elementary School, Lake Oswego
Hillsboro Online Academy, Hillsboro	Whitford Middle School, Beaverton

Hogan Cedars Elementary School, Gresham	Willamette Primary School, West Linn
Holy Trinity Catholic School, Beaverton	Winterhaven School, Portland
Imlay Elementary School, Hillsboro	Witch Hazel Elementary School, Hillsboro
Indian Hills Elementary School, Aloha	Witchhaven School, Portland
Inza R Wood Middle School, Wilsonville	Inza R Wood Middle School, Wilsonville
Jackson Middle School, Portland	Woodland Elementary School, Fairview
Jacob Wismer Elementary School, Portland	Organizations
Joseph Gale Elementary School, Forest Grove	Coastal Conservation Alliance
Kinnaman Elementary School, Aloha	Get Hooked, Inc
Knight Elementary School, Canby	McLoughlin Chapter Assoc. of NW Steelheaders
Kraxberger Middle School, Gladstone	Molalla Chapter Assoc. of NW Steelheaders
Ladd Acres Elementary School, Hillsboro	Newberg Chapter Assoc. of NW Steelheaders
LaSalle Catholic Preparatory School, Milwaukie	NODR
Lee Elementary School, Portland	NW Flyfishers
Lenox Elementary School, Portland	Sandy Chapter Assoc. of NW Steelheaders
Lent Elementary School, Portland	SOLV
Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School, Damascus	Tualatin Valley Chapter Assoc. of NW Steelheaders
Lewis Elementary School, Portland	Government
Life Christian School, Aloha	City of Fairview
Lillies Pad Learning	City of Portland Water Bureau
Lincoln High School, Portland	Clackamas County Parks
Lincoln Street Elementary School, Hillsboro	Clackamas River Basin Council
Linwood Elementary School, Milwaukie	Clean Water Services
Lowrie Primary School, Wilsonville	Johnson Creek Watershed Council
Mabel Rush Elementary School, Newberg	Metro Parks
Many Nations Academy at the Native American Youth and Family Center, Portland	National Wildlife Federation
MCA Public Charter School	Oregon State Parks
Meadow Park Middle School, Beaverton	Oregon Zoo
Meek Pro Tech High School	Project YESS
Miller Education Center, Portland	Sandy River Basin Council
Milwaukie High School, Milwaukie	The Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde
Minter Bridge Elementary School, Hillsboro	Tualatin Hills Parks & Recreation
MITCH Charter School, Tualatin	Tualatin River Basin Council
Molalla Elementary, Molalla	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Molalla River Academy, Molalla	U.S. Forest Service
Molalla River Middle School, Molalla	Weyerhaeuser Timber Company
	W Verne McKinney Elementary School, Hillsboro

MID-WILLAMETTE STEP

Reed Fischer, STEP Biologist

Alex Farrand, Assistant District Fish Biologist

Elise Kelley, District Fish Biologist

The Mid-Willamette STEP District is a geographically diverse area in the South Willamette Watershed District reaching across the Willamette Valley from the crest of the Coast Range east to the crest of the Cascades. The Willamette River travels the length as it flows from McKenzie River confluence downstream to the agricultural lands north of Salem. Within this area, three major river systems flow from the western slopes of the Cascades into the Willamette (North Santiam, South Santiam, and Calapooia). Another five (Glen/Gibson, Rickreall, Luckiamute, Marys, and Long Tom) drain the eastern slopes of the Coast Range. The district is also one of the most populated regions of Oregon. Salem, Eugene, Corvallis, and Albany are the larger urban areas, but several smaller cities, towns, and rural communities are scattered throughout. The natural resource concerns that have accompanied the area's historical land uses of timber harvest and agriculture have been complicated by the challenges posed by urbanization.

Despite the growing human population and resulting changes to the landscape, the Willamette River Basin continues to support a diversity of fish. Native among these include spring Chinook Salmon, winter steelhead, rainbow trout and cutthroat trout. Several salmonid species have also been introduced including fall Chinook Salmon, Coho Salmon, and summer steelhead. Although the focus of STEP efforts in this area is upon the native salmonids, the program through its educational, monitoring, and habitat efforts also provides benefits to the basin's many other native fish.

A failure to recognize the importance of the watershed rather than just stream health has led to the degradation and loss of aquatic habitats across Oregon. In this area, one of the results has been federal listings under the ESA of the Mid Willamette's two native stocks of salmon and steelhead. In response, the State of Oregon and its citizens have initiated a comprehensive and cooperative community-based approach to watershed restoration under the Oregon Plan.

Although all ODFW programs have an important role in this effort, STEP finds itself uniquely situated in that its responsibilities include many of the major components of the Oregon Plan. Most importantly, the foundation of STEP is community involvement with these activities. The focus of STEP in this District has been therefore to involve area groups, schools, and individuals in all aspects of ODFW's local fish management efforts.

Because the area's population is large and still growing, STEP must emphasize outreach and education in the Mid-Willamette basin. This is achieved in-part through direct community involvement with many ODFW activities but particularly monitoring and inventory efforts and educational programs. Adult and youth participation with these projects demonstrates that communities can assist with the more technical needs of fish recovery and provides the "hands on" experience that fosters stewardship by providing increased awareness of these species. Of special interest have been new inventories on waters that are considered "at risk" and for which little or no fishery information exists. The data gathered has been essential to habitat protection and restoration efforts throughout the basin, especially those in the agricultural and urban areas.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In 2023-2024, the STEP Biologist continued to deliver presentations on fish resources, management challenges, and ODFW volunteer opportunities to a diverse range of audiences. These included students, teachers, educational organizations, angler and conservation groups, universities, Watershed Councils, and various federal, state, and local agencies. STEP collaborates with eight watershed councils, offering general information, technical support for habitat, inventory, and fish passage projects, and helping with volunteer training and the development of restoration action plans. The STEP Biologist also provides technical assistance to numerous agencies and organizations on fish-related issues, such as road repairs, culvert replacements, and habitat restoration efforts throughout Linn, Lane, Benton, and Polk Counties. The STEP Biologist remains actively involved in several technical teams, including those of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Region 3, Long Tom Watershed Council, Calapooia Watershed Council, and Luckiamute Watershed Council.

In 2023-2024, the STEP Biologist participated in in-person site visits, offering assistance to the Luckiamute Watershed Council, City of Keizer, City of Salem, City of Corvallis, Mary's River Watershed Council, and the Natural Resources Conservation District with fish passage projects. Additionally, the STEP Biologist took part in virtual site visits to review projects proposed for the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Fund, and OWEB funding.

FISH DISSECTIONS

Another immensely popular program gaining momentum and interest in 2023-2024 was fish dissection at local elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as at summer camps and adult training events. This year, STEP provided adult female steelhead and adult Chinook for students to dissect. These fish, leftover from hatchery spawning, provided a valuable opportunity to explore various aspects of fish conservation in the Willamette Valley. The dissections were a huge success, sparking engaging discussions on salmon biology and conservation. Dissecting real adult fish offered students a hands-on learning experience that deepened their understanding of these vital species. This is a great way to recycle otherwise discarded specimens and introduce students to the awe and scale of species they get to work with.

For many students, this was their only opportunity to do a dissection on an actual animal rather than a plastic model or virtual program. The STEP Biologist provided valuable information on fish biology, including how fish hear, see, detect odors, and regulate their bodies in both fresh and saltwater environments, as well as similarities between fish and human biology. Additionally, the STEP Biologist facilitated dissections of adult salmon or steelhead carcasses at Family Science Night events. The STEP program and volunteers successfully hosted 18 fish dissections at Mid-Willamette District schools and 6 dissections at outdoor schools. For many university students attempting to gain volunteer hours for their program requirements, dissections have been an extremely fun and pragmatic way to gain work experience in natural resources management.

The STEP Biologist sits on the Linn-Benton Salmon Watch Steering Committee. The Committee meets year-round to plan for Salmon Watch field trips in September, October, and November. Students from Fifth and Sixth grade travel to rivers where salmon are spawning to learn about water quality, macroinvertebrates, riparian areas, and salmon biology.

In addition to being on the steering committee, the STEP Biologist trains volunteers and teachers, as well as participating in several field trips each year.

FISHING EVENTS

2023-2024 was a huge year for fishing events in the Mid-Willamette District. STEP has prioritized the instruction of fishing not just to youth, but also University Groups, wounded warrior programs, and first-time adult anglers. We hosted 35 angler education events at our youth ponds, reaching over 2,000 new anglers in our area. These events would not have been possible without the robust partnerships between STEP and ODFW's Angler Education Program, the Mid Valley Chapter of the Association of Northwest Steelheaders, as well as ODFW employees, interns, and volunteers.

Each year, STEP organizes and supports a variety of specialized events in the district that promote community involvement and outdoor education. Notable events include the Timber-Linn Fishing Derby, which offers a fun, family-oriented introduction to fishing for over 300 kids, and OSU Forest GO Day, an event aimed at improving outdoor access for non-English-speaking families, with activities designed to be welcoming and inclusive to over 500 kids. STEP also partners with multiple outdoor school camps, providing support for hands-on educational experiences that focus on fish biology, ecological stewardship, and habitat conservation. These events help foster connections between local communities and natural resources, while encouraging environmental stewardship in future generations.

This year, STEP partnered with the Oregon State Penitentiary Staff with support from the Association of Northwest Steelheaders to host a two-day fishing event in the visitors yard of the Oregon State Penitentiary. The event gave incarcerated fathers a chance to bond with their families through a unique fishing experience. A 1500-gallon pond, stocked with 240 live bluegill, was set up in the visiting yard, allowing over 80 children to catch their first fish. Alongside fishing, kids enjoyed activities like holding tadpoles, meeting a crayfish, and creating fish prints. Each child received a brand-new fishing pole to take home, paid for by the penitentiary, encouraging them to continue fishing. All bluegill were later released into local ponds, ensuring they thrived in their natural habitat. This event helped strengthen family connections and introduced the joy of outdoor activities in an unexpected setting.



Youth fishing event with Smokey the Bear and Herman the Sturgeon.

Inventory and Monitoring

FISH POPULATIONS AND THEIR HABITAT IN STREAMS

STEP led the district's small stream sampling effort with fish population surveys in the Mid-Willamette District. These efforts involve STEP Volunteers, students from local schools, and District area landowners using stationary traps, seine nets, electrofishing, hook & line sampling methods as well as snorkel and spawning surveys to capture or observe fish. The primary intent of these projects is to document the presence of native fish in waters where little or no fish information exists and to get a sense of relative abundance and fish health. However, additional benefits come from raised awareness for the "little brown fishes" in the area and educational opportunities for students. There has been an increased effort to detect

and document lamprey at all life stages in the district. Information on fish presence has in-turn been used by cities, counties, watershed councils, and state and federal agencies to develop habitat restoration and protection plans as well as to identify individual project opportunities. The data gathered from sampling and surveys will be used in the future to plan habitat restoration projects.

In 2023-2024, STEP coordinated volunteers to assist with various fish sampling efforts across the district. This included larval lamprey surveys in creeks near Salem and Corvallis, with help from students at Philomath and Crescent Valley High Schools. Additionally, students from Oregon State University and Willamette University participated in multiple creek surveys on their campuses, contributing to important data collection efforts.

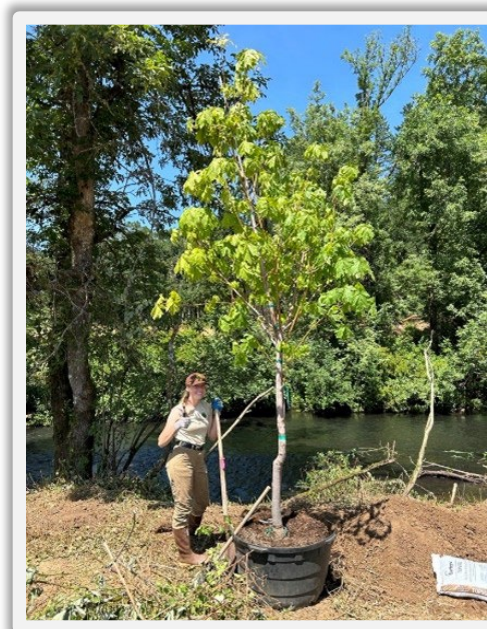
STEP also expanded its efforts to the high lakes of the district, conducting hook-and-line, snorkel, and habitat surveys in remote alpine areas. Volunteers joined STEP Biologists and district staff on hikes into the high lakes basin to assess wild and stocked fish populations. These surveys not only provided critical information on fish presence, abundance, and habitat conditions but also engaged participants in hands-on conservation work in a unique and challenging environment. This work will guide future management decisions for the high lakes ecosystem and promote sustainable fish populations in these remote areas.

Habitat Improvement

PARTNERSHIPS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

There has been a renewed sense of excitement utilizing small scale, locally focused, restoration efforts in the Mid-Willamette basin. Because much of the land in the Mid-Willamette basin is privately owned, restoration efforts rely heavily on the cooperative participation of private landowners. In addition to efforts with other state, local and federal agencies, STEP works closely with watershed councils, industry, individuals, and the more traditional landowner assistance agencies to conduct stream nutrient enrichment, in-stream and riparian habitat, and fish passage restoration projects.

Throughout 2023-2024, the STEP Biologist continued to assist landowners across the district with technical advice and grant support for fish habitat restoration and fish passage improvement projects. The STEP Biologist worked alongside agencies like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and local Watershed Councils (Calapooia, Luckiamute, North Santiam, South Santiam, Long Tom, and Mary's River) to enhance habitat and improve fish passage. A key focus this year was expanding the role of local schools in small-scale riparian restoration efforts. Students from various schools across the district were actively involved in planting projects and other hands-on restoration tasks, directly contributing to local conservation efforts. Additionally, youth group volunteers were engaged to support restoration work on private lands, helping to enhance riparian areas and strengthen community ties to conservation. The STEP Biologist attended 8 site visits, providing technical advice and helping to coordinate volunteer efforts that made a tangible impact on local fish habitat. lessons on invasive species control, human impacts on rivers, and how restoration biology works.



Tree Planting

Grants have been approved to support the planting of native plants in critical riparian habitats throughout the district. These projects will focus on restoring streamside ecosystems to improve water quality, stabilize stream banks, and provide shade essential for maintaining cooler water temperatures for salmonids and other aquatic species. Volunteers will play a key role in these efforts, working alongside STEP staff and partner organizations to enhance these vital habitats. These collaborative planting efforts not only strengthen riparian areas but also foster community engagement in local conservation initiatives.

The STEP Biologist administers the Riparian Lands Tax Incentive Program (RLTIP) for the Mid-Willamette District.

CARCASS PLACEMENT

The placement of salmon and steelhead carcasses into area streams for nutrient enrichment is accomplished only through the efforts of volunteers and has become one of the more popular STEP activities. During the 2024 season, due to a rule change in fish anesthetic use during spawning by the FDA, ODFW was unable to place carcasses into Willamette Valley Basin Rivers. To replicate historic abundance and distribution, carcasses were previously placed in rivers and streams. In 2023-2024, salmon carcasses normally available for distribution, were limited only to those that had not received any kind of anesthetic that is required for spawning them at hatchery facilities.

Salmon carcasses from the Foster Fish Collection Facility were out planted to the South Santiam River as well as Soda Fork creek. During Foster Fish Collection Facility efforts, 5 STEP volunteers assisted with the carcass enrichment efforts. Despite the new restrictions imposed on this program we still managed to place around 200 carcasses in the South Santiam basin from unmedicated fish over roughly 8 miles of critical spawning habitat. It is our sincerest hope that this program will be able to continue in the future as a vital conservation lifeline for the endangered Chinook species of the Willamette Valley.

USED FISHING LINE AND TACKLE COLLECTION

Keep Oregon's Rivers Clean (KORC) Fishing Line Collection Stations

Since 2004, volunteers in the Mid-Willamette STEP District have maintained a series of fishing line collection stations. The stations are located across the Willamette valley on the North Santiam River at Stayton Boat Ramp, John Neal Park, North Santiam Park, Fishermen's Bend, and Mill City Boat Ramp. On the South Santiam River, collection stations are located at Waterloo Park (2), Wiley Park, Sunnyside Park, and Foster Reservoir. There is also a line collection station at Walling and EE Wilson Ponds, as well as Crystal Lake Boat Ramp and Michaels Landing both in Corvallis.

During 2023-2024, the STEP Biologist continued to work with KORC volunteers to monitor and maintain the line tube collection stations. As a result, 2 boxes of fishing line were sent to Berkely to be recycled into fish habitat structures. The program has added 4 new locations in 2023-2024 at Willamette River boat ramp locations,

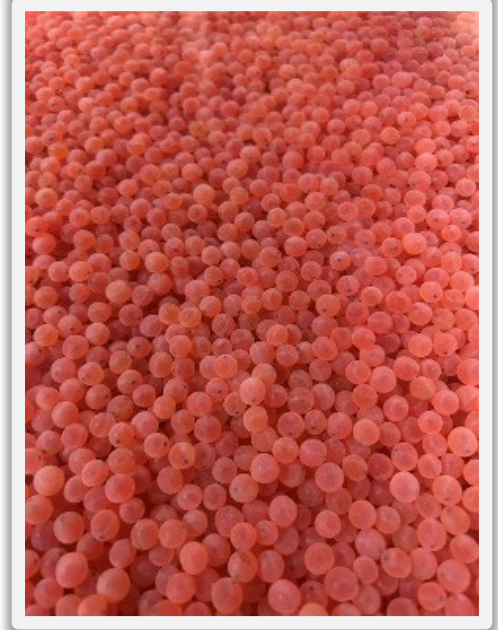


Carcass placement

valley fishing ponds, and on the north Santiam.

Fish Culture

ODFW fish propagation programs in the Mid-Willamette basin have evolved greatly over the last two decades. With greater emphasis now placed upon the restoration and conservation of the basin's wild fish resources and the current federal listings of upper Willamette spring Chinook Salmon and winter steelhead under the Endangered Species Act, the STEP District's fish culture program looks much different from that of the 1980's. Concern surrounding the potential impacts of introduced fry upon native populations, and the primary need for habitat enhancement in those streams identified as deficient in natural production, have changed the focus of the program's efforts. We have several exciting pilot programs in the district to increase the interest in fish culture and increase our flexibility to stock location across the district. Most notably we are including the Oregon State Penitentiary as a location that will begin to raise fish for our local fishing ponds.



Chinook Salmon Eggs

FISH EGGS-TO-FRY PROGRAM

The Egg-to-Fry Classroom Program within the District is for educational purposes only and is not intended to contribute to fish production goals. However, as an educational program, it is without a doubt one of the most successful and cost-effective ways to teach many students about salmon and trout biology. In addition, students and adults participating in the program come away from the experience with a respect and appreciation for salmon and trout, and for their habitat. In the mid-Willamette STEP District, schools with students from kindergarten to high school and from urban and rural areas participate in the program.

The program had significant expansion in the 2023-2024 season. We added a total of 25 new participating classrooms to the program. As always providing this program to as diverse of a population as possible is a priority. The program also has a tank in a Salem area hospital, 2 state penitentiaries, a juvenile penitentiary, local city government building, and outreach center for adults. The goal of the program is to include as many different age groups as possible to spread interest in salmon recovery as far as possible. This has put tanks in several school libraries in addition to classrooms. This program reaches almost 9,000 students in the district.

For the 2023-24 Chinook Salmon and rainbow trout Egg to Fry, volunteers were once again able to assist the STEP Biologist with transporting salmon and trout eggs to District schools. Eggs are delivered to each classroom by ODFW staff or volunteers. A brief presentation helps to prepare the students for the project and convey the importance of their effort. STEP volunteers, ODFW HQ, and members of the ODFW's Angler Education Instructors, provide invaluable assistance with the classroom egg incubation program. These volunteers have recruited and "adopted" several schools in their local areas for which they provide information and incubation equipment, lend technical expertise, and assist during field trips to the release sites.

Spring Chinook Salmon fry were released into the Willamette, North Santiam, South Santiam, and Calapooia River Basins wherever the fish were historically present. Rainbow Trout are released at several selected locations scattered throughout the Willamette Valley including reservoirs and many local, isolated ponds. The

fry-stocking program in the ponds has had surprising success. Not only does the fry stocking in ponds encourage future development of fish at those locations, it also increases interest in students fishing those ponds, increases their participation in angler education activities, and emboldens them as steward of the resources they helped to take care of. Many of the students that participate in eggs to fry will also have the chance to attend one of our angler education events.

HIGH LAKES STOCKING

Volunteers played a crucial role in maintaining one of ODFW's most cherished legacy programs during the 2023-2024 season: the stocking of high lakes with brook and rainbow trout. This effort involved dedicated individuals hiking alongside STEP Biologists and district staff into remote alpine locations to manually stock fish, ensuring access to unique and challenging fishing opportunities in Oregon's high country. Habitat surveys help STEP track the use of high lakes as fisheries and identify any biological or population changes linked to invasive species encroachment or climate change impacts.

The program is not only a vital part of ODFW's mission to support recreational fishing but also an important tradition that fosters a deep connection to Oregon's wilderness.

High lakes stocking has long been a favorite among anglers seeking solitude and adventure in backcountry environments, offering a rare chance to fish in pristine and scenic settings. Beyond its recreational value, the program helps maintain balanced aquatic ecosystems by introducing fish in a controlled and sustainable manner. For many volunteers and staff, this program represents the perfect blend of conservation, recreation, and legacy—a cornerstone of ODFW's commitment to preserving outdoor traditions for future generations.

SCHOOLS AND GROUPS THAT WORK WITH THE MID-WILLAMETTE STEP

The following is a list of schools, school districts, organizations, agencies, and other groups that work with STEP. Due to the large number of participants, it is possible that some groups were inadvertently left off this list. Please contact (503) 947-6211 if your program has been left off this list.

Albany Options School	Luckiamute Valley Charter School
Abiqua Academy	Maintenance shop city of Keizer
Adams Elementary School	Mark Twain Elementary
Alternative School - College Hill	McKay High School
Ash Creek Elementary School Room 129	Monmouth Elementary
Auburn Elementary	Monroe Grade School
Aumsville Elementary	Monroe High School
Battle Creek Memory Care	Mt Angel Middle School
Bellfountain Home School Group	North Albany Elementary School
Bessie Coleman Elementary	North Salem Environmental Learning Center
Bethany Charter School	North Salem High School
Butte Creek School	Oak Grove School
Calapooia Middle School	Oak Heights
Capital Christian School	Optimum Learning Environments Charter School
Cascade High School	Oregon School for the Deaf
Cascade Junior High	Oregon State Correctional Institution (OSCI)
Centennial Elementary	Oregon State Penitentiary
Central High School	Peedee Middle school
Cheldelin Middle School	Philomath Elementary School
City of Keizer	Pratum Elementary School

Clear Lake Elementary	Maintenance shop city of Keizer
Cloverdale Elementary School	Mark Twain Elementary
College Hill-Urban Farm	McKay High School
Community Roots School in Silverton	Monmouth Elementary
Corvallis Waldorf School	Monroe Grade School
Early College High School	Monroe High School
Englewood Elementary School	Queen of Peace Catholic School
Franklin School	Salem Heights
Garfield Elementary School	Salem-Keizer EDGE Online
Hallman Elementary	Schirle Elementary School
Harritt Elementary School	Scio Middle School
Heritage School	Seven Oak Middle School
Homeschool Co-op	South Albany High School
Independence Elementary School	South Salem High School
Jefferson Elementary School	Sprague High School
Kalapuya Elementary School	St Joseph School
Keizer Elementary	Stayton High School
Kings Valley Charter School	Stayton Intermediate/ Middle School
Lacomb School	Sumpter Elementary School
Lamb Elementary	Sustainable Plants Science & Technology Career Technical Education Center
Letitia Carson Elementary	Talmadge Middle School
Lincoln Elementary School	Timber Ridge School
Linn Benton Juvenile Detention Center	Turner Elementary
Livingstone Adventist Academy	Western Christian School
Whitworth Elementary	Government
Willamette Valley Christian School	Army Corps of Engineers
Willamina Elementary School	Benton County Soil & Water Conservation District
Willamina High School	City of Albany
Willamina Middle High School	City of Corvallis
Organizations	City of Keizer
Calapooia Watershed Council	City of Salem
Environmental Assessment Services	Department of Corrections
Greenbelt Land Trust	Oregon Department of Forestry
Luckiamute Watershed Council	Oregon State Penitentiary
Marys River Watershed Council	US Fish & Wildlife Service
Mid-Valley Anglers	US Forest Service
Northwest Steelheaders Salem Chapter	US Geological Survey
Outdoor school	Universities
Salmon Watch	Oregon State University
South Santiam Watershed Council	University of Oregon
University Fishing Clubs	Western Oregon University
Wounded Warriors Program	Willamette University

SOUTH-WILLAMETTE STEP

Martyne Reesman, STEP Biologist

Jeremy Romer, Assistant District Fish Biologist

Jeff Ziller, District Fish Biologist

The South Willamette STEP District coordinates volunteer efforts to maintain, protect, restore, and evaluate native populations and habitats of salmon and trout within the headwaters of the Willamette River. Spanning the Willamette Valley from the Coast Range to the Cascade Mountains, the District encompasses the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan areas, the third largest population area in the state. The major watersheds in the district are the Coast Fork Willamette, McKenzie, and Middle Fork Willamette rivers.

Spring Chinook Salmon are the only anadromous salmonid native to the area, although a small winter steelhead run has been established in the Middle Fork Willamette River. Resident and fluvial populations of Rainbow, Cutthroat, and Bull trout are also found within the district. Spring Chinook Salmon and Bull Trout are federally listed as “Threatened” under the Endangered Species Act.

Hatchery spring Chinook Salmon, Summer Steelhead, and Rainbow Trout are released in various streams and rivers within the district. In addition, Rainbow, Cutthroat, and Brook trout are released into several high lakes in the Cascade Mountain Range which provide unique, and often remote, fisheries.

In addition to salmon and trout, STEP activities regularly monitor other native fish species and provide education opportunities for local schools, groups and individuals. Native sculpins, dace, shiners, suckers, stickleback, and other non-game fish species have been incorporated into sampling projects and educational outreach. Projects that are designed to benefit salmon and trout also benefit resident brook lamprey and anadromous Pacific Lamprey, which are a culturally and economically important species to indigenous peoples.

ODFW staff in the South Willamette District take a collaborative approach to resource management. Implementation of the STEP program in the South Willamette is shared between the STEP Biologist and other district staff. Staff believes that assigning the STEP responsibilities broadly among all members allows greater flexibility and more effective integration of STEP activities throughout all fish management activities. Additionally, many STEP activities would not be possible without collective partnerships with other programs in ODFW. We would like to recognize the staff at Leaburg Hatchery, McKenzie Hatchery, Willamette Hatchery, South Santiam hatcheries, and Dexter Ponds for their dedication to working with STEP. Their support and assistance are vital to the success of many projects each year.

Our STEP volunteer base draws largely from local organizations, including Cascade Family Flyfishers, McKenzie Flyfishers, Coastal Conservation Association, McKenzie River Guides Association, Backcountry Horsemen of Oregon, Eugene Trail Runners, Scouts of America, and the three local watershed councils, and from the community at-large that are unaffiliated with any group.

Additionally, STEP staff work with industrial timber companies on a variety of habitat evaluation and improvement projects within the district. ODFW staff regularly attend meetings and make presentations to organizations, schools, universities, and other agencies to facilitate the free flow of information, as well as answer questions, solicit ideas for new STEP projects, and recruit additional STEP volunteers.

INTERNSHIP

We were contacted by Connected Lane County (CLC) Elevate Program who inquired about hosting a summer intern. CLC pairs high school students from underserved communities with industry partners for job shadows and summer internships. We were paired with a wonderful student (Ella) that is looking forward to a career as a civil engineer, where she hopes to find ways to bring fresh clean water to countries that are struggling with water quality and quantity. Ella volunteered with STEP for five weeks, her help was indispensable in planning for high lakes backpack stocking, Chinook Salmon spawning ground surveys, Carmen-Smith Brook Trout removal and Cutthroat trout sampling, trout stocking, Leaburg Adult Fish Sorter and mounds of paperwork. We miss her thoroughness, attention to detail and positive attitude, but we know she is going on to great things. Ella's internship was fully funded by CLC. We are looking forward to hosting another student intern in 2025



CLC Intern working the Leaburg Fish Sorter

EDUCATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The STEP Biologist served on the Salmon Watch Steering Committee in-partnership with the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council, which provides experiential environmental education to over 1,000 local students each year through the Salmon Watch© program. The Committee consists of representatives from the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Eugene Water and Electric Board, local school districts and other area organizations.

In addition to Salmon Watch, STEP staff support the MFWWC by serving on their Youth Education Committee. This committee is comprised of representatives similar to Salmon Watch however it focuses on the development and expansion of place-based environmental education programs and is being implemented in many underserved rural schools.

STEP staff continue to provide technical assistance to McKenzie River Discovery



Whittaker Creek Salmon Watch event

Center in their efforts to restore and repair the old McKenzie Hatchery rearing pond and surrounding property. STEP staff have been involved during the planning and design of pond restoration, culvert replacement, placement of fishing platforms and walkways, and gravity fed water supply for the pond. The sediment removal, walkway construction and water supply have all been constructed and, with a few more completed tasks, this ADA accessible pond will be used for community fishing events. We placed four White Sturgeon and several trophy rainbow trout in the fishing pond during the spring and they are doing well.

STEP staff served on the Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) Carmen-Smith Fish Working Group, along with other partners from USFWS and NOAA. The purpose of this group is to find temporary solutions to address the lack of required passage for Bull Trout and Spring Chinook Salmon at Trail Bridge Dam. . In addition to providing technical assistance, staff provided radio telemetry equipment and personnel to assist EWEB with capture, radio tagging and transporting adult Spring Chinook Salmon above Trail Bridge Dam. Staff and volunteers angled for Bull Trout below Trail Bridge Dam, caught Bull Trout were scanned for a PIT tag, if there was no tag present one was inserted into the dorsal sinus of the fish and biological data was collected. Bull Trout were then transported above Trail Bridge Dam and released into the reservoir.

YOUTH FISHING EVENTS

STEP staff and volunteers hosted three Family Fishing events including one at Row River Nature Park in Cottage Grove and two at Alton Baker Park in Eugene. These events were open to the public. We also hosted a small private event for the Non-Profit organization H.O.N.E.Y. (Honoring Our New Ethnic Youth). At another event, we provided fish and had an informational table (and fishing rod repair station) at the River Road Park and Recreation District's annual fishing derby which they held in their swimming pool. This was a free event for the everyone, and they even had a free community breakfast! We saw many youth catch their first fish this year which is always very rewarding to our staff and volunteers!



H.O.N.E.Y Fishing event at Cleawox Lake

SALMON WATCH

Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council coordinates the Salmon Watch field trips in the South Willamette Watershed. November 2023 was filled with Salmon Watch field trips to Whittaker Creek where 4th – 11th grade students from Eugene, Creswell, Cottage Grove and Pleasant Hill learned about Fall Chinook Salmon life history, habits, and habitats. September of 2024, Springfield area schools usually have field trips to Carmen Smith Spawning Channel, but due to the Boulder Creek Fire and its proximity to the spawning channel the MFWWC made the decision to host Salmon Watch at Elijah Bristow State Park (EBSP) for the first week. Although salmon were not present at EBSP it provided the perfect opportunity to talk about why salmon are not there, implemented habitat work and potential restoration plans that will benefit a multitude of species (including salmon). The remaining weeks were held at Carmen Smith Spawning Channel where students had a great time learning about Spring Chinook Salmon and river ecology. Several schools had the opportunity to see not only spawning Chinook Salmon but also spawning Bull Trout!

TROUT OR TREAT

STEP biologists, Leaburg and McKenzie hatcheries, and McKenzie River Discovery Center joined forces to host a family Halloween event at Leaburg Hatchery and across the lake at McKenzie River Discovery Center. We had fishy games, Leaburg Fire and Rescue, a free raffle, and yes, loads of candy. The brainchild for the event was Ashley Hatleberg (Leaburg Hatchery), and we all agreed that this was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the upriver community. We received donations from Cabela's, Adventures North West and ODFW Angler Education Program. Everyone had a GREAT time; it was totally "off-the-hook".



Trout or Treat attendees

EGGS TO FRY PROGRAM

Seven of the schools that participated in the Eggs to Fry Program requested an in-class presentation about salmon life cycles. The STEP Biologist developed a PowerPoint presentation and happily presented information about the Eggs to Fry Program and salmon life cycles to students ranging from kindergarten to high school.

OUTDOOR LEARNING

Placed-based learning is an excellent way to engage with students of all ages and, in South Willamette, we often collaborate with partner organizations and schools to accomplish this goal. The STEP biologist taught lessons in fish anatomy and biology, fish passage, and of course fish surveying techniques.



Forest Field Days

We participated at 11 Forest Field Days at Bauman Tree Farm near Veneta, it is organized by Forest, Today and Forever which is a Non-Profit organization that began teaching forestry education in 1985. Since 2008, Bauman Tree Farm has been hosting field trips on their 672-acre working tree farm. Students who attend day camp learn about a variety of topics including fish passage, in-stream habitat requirements, wildland firefighting, water quality, wildlife and habitats, tree farm cultivation, and forest practices.

At Pleasant Hill outdoor school, we led fish anatomy demonstrations for about 75 sixth grade students. Students were paired up to learn proper dissection techniques, dissect trout, and gain knowledge of trout biology. During the dissection the students were pleasantly surprised to find that fish don't stink. Special thanks to Leaburg Hatchery for providing the students with beautiful rainbow trout.

Working with Springfield Utility Board (SUB) Water and Energy Learning Lab (WELL) Project and MFWWC we led about 30 Springfield area students in conducting fish surveys, fish dissections, nature walks, and removing salmon and steelhead from the Leaburg Dam fish trap. SUB and their WELL Project focuses on supporting science education through field research (fish surveys, habitat surveys, and removing invasive species) and water quality testing within the watershed. Students also learned how to perform water quality tests on individually owned wells. Well testing is a free service offered to households within the Middle Fork Willamette watershed. We conducted fish surveys in the tributaries of the Middle Fork Willamette River where students learned first-hand how backpack electrofishing and minnow traps are used to sample fish in different habitats. At the end of the school year, the program was capped off with the Watershed Olympics where students from four middle schools competed against each other in the categories of water quality, plant identification, fish biology and identification, and macro-invertebrate biology and identification. Additionally, returning high school students had the opportunity to work at the Leaburg Dam fish ladder trap. Students manually removed fish from the trap, placed hatchery Chinook Salmon in a holding tank and passed wild Chinook Salmon upstream to continue their spawning run.



Electrofishing with students at Lost Creek

We led a fish dissection using our stuffed salmon model for about 20 students at Jasper Mountain Residential School. In 1982 Jasper Mountain School opened their doors and they have been working tirelessly since then to bring hope and healing to traumatized children and their families. They enhance the physical, emotional and spiritual health for them all the while providing a safe place for children to learn and live.

We worked with the MFWWC and Sheldon High School Forestry & Natural Resources Program to conduct fish surveys at the Willamette Confluence Property. The students compared catch rates between a beach seine and a backpack electrofisher to learn about the two fish capture techniques. The Forestry & Natural Resources Program is modeled after the Forestry Program at Umpqua Community College and Wildland Fire Management Program at Lane Community College where students can earn a red card of wildland firefighting after completing their coursework. The program allows students to have real-world experiences in Natural Resources.



Sheldon High School Forestry & Natural Resources Program with a largescale sucker.

We provided a fishy opportunity for Connected Lane County Natural Resources Outreach Program/Tour. STEP staff and a volunteer spent the afternoon with 80 high school students at Elijah Bristow State Park, we talked about fish, fish identification and careers with ODFW.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

STEP biologists gave a variety of presentations to diverse audiences and participated in several community events including:

1. Scouts of America – PowerPoint presentations
 - Troop 100 - Fishing Merit Badge presentation
 - Troop 12 - High Lakes Backpack Stocking – A Volunteer Opportunity
2. Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council monthly “Science on Tap” meeting
 - “How to Create a Salmon Friendly Yard”
3. Girl Scouts of America – STEM Day
 - Careers with ODFW and “Are You Strong Enough to Carry 1pound of Fish?”
4. WREN (Willamette Resources and Educational Network) – “Wetland Wander Walk”
 - Salmon Watch for adults on the Upper McKenzie River
5. Bridgeway House alternative school
 - Salmon Biology
6. Lakeridge Retirement Community – PowerPoint presentation for residents
 - a. “Fishes of the Upper Willamette Watershed”
7. McKenzie River Trust – “Nature Your Way”
 - Hands-on learning about fish and fishing for adults with different abilities and those who haven’t felt safe or welcome in outdoor spaces.
8. River Road Park and Recreation – Annual Fishing and Community Breakfast
 - a. Public Event – ODFW/STEP information table and fishing rod repair
9. Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council – Arbor Day Celebration
 - a. Public Event – Volunteer opportunities and fish friendly gardening
10. Friends of Rasor Park, volunteer group – Rasor Park Festival
 - Hands-on learning about macro-invertebrates in the Willamette River taught by a volunteer.

FUNDS AWARDED FOR ACCESS AND EDUCATION IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SOUTH WILLAMETTE WATERSHED

DISTRICT

\$1726.46 STAC mini-grant was awarded to Cascade Family Flyfishers (CFF) to purchase hand and power tools to remove invasive species and restore aquatic habitats. Among the tools purchased the best by far was for a rake-zilla, it’s a large rake that is used for removing aquatic weeds. The CFF has been using these tools diligently working at Row River Nature Park, Cottage Grove and McKenzie River Discovery Center, Vida.

\$2000.00 STAC mini-grant was awarded to South Willamette STEP to make much needed repairs to our fish stocking raft. The stocking raft is operated by volunteers from the McKenzie Guides Association who we have been partnering with to stock the McKenzie River for over 70 years. The guides are very appreciative of the repairs which have made the raft more maneuverable and safer for volunteers and fish.

INVENTORY AND MONITORING

LEABURG FISH SORTER

In 2020, District staff facilitated the design and installation of an adult fish sorter on the left-bank fish ladder above Leaburg Dam using an Alaskan steep-pass fish ladder and a watered “tilt table”. The sorter was designed to collect McKenzie Hatchery broodstock and remove hatchery fish from the river, and to allow wild Chinook Salmon to pass upstream with minimal exposure to handling stress. This project was funded under contract from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Additionally, we were able to hire four seasonal staff to operate the sorter seven days a week during the peak of the run. Our seasonal staff trained and worked with volunteers who were happy to see (but not touch) adult Chinook Salmon.

Staff and volunteers used the fish sorter to pass 698 unmarked Spring Chinook Salmon and collect 775 hatchery Spring Chinook Salmon for McKenzie Hatchery broodstock. Additionally, 3 Bull Trout and 2,359 steelhead were passed at the sorter. Before Bull Trout were passed upstream, we collected a genetic sample, measured and recorded condition, then inserted a PIT (Passive Integrated Transponder) tag into their dorsal sinus.

BULL TROUT EDNA SURVEYS

In 2022, we met with members of McKenzie Fly Fishers (MFF) to discuss and plan eDNA sampling for Bull Trout and Brook Trout in the South Willamette Watershed. The MFF conducted sampling at 7 sites in the McKenzie and Middle Fork Willamette basins as well as in Horn Creek in the North Santiam Basin. Preliminary results did not yield any surprises in the upper Willamette tributaries, and we were pleased to find no brook trout eDNA in Horn Creek, a potential reintroduction site for Bull Trout.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

PARTNERSHIPS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

STEP staff provided technical input to partner agencies and non-governmental organizations on potential fish benefits from several proposed restoration projects and land acquisitions.

The STEP Biologist provided technical assistance in the form of biological feedback on restoration and monitoring (post restoration) to the Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council (Perkins Creek Culvert replacement), MFWWC and State Parks (Elijah Bristow Floodplain Restoration), and McKenzie Watershed Council (Finn Rock, Gate Creek, South Fork McKenzie Phase II restoration projects). The STEP Biologist also provided technical assistance to private landowners regarding small restoration projects as well as the McKenzie River Discovery Center Pond restoration.

INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL

STEP biologist and volunteers from Cascade Family Flyfishers worked to remove invasive blackberries and Eurasian Water Milfoil from Row River Nature Park Pond (RRNPP) in Cottage Grove, and at McKenzie River Discovery Center. We hold a family fishing event at RRNPP every April and this work opened many more spots for anglers to safely access fish in the pond. This park and pond are heavily utilized by the residents of

Cottage Grove, as it is located within the city limits and is easily accessible for all people. The McKenzie River Discovery Center is still in-development and hopefully will open to the public in 2025.

INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL

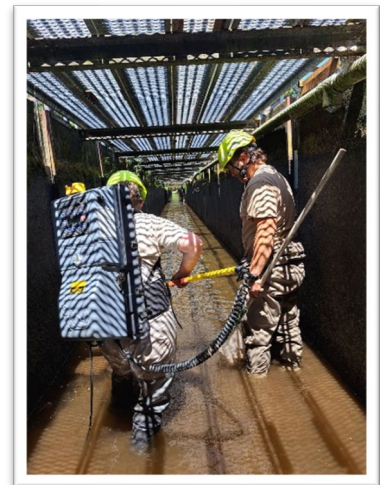
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FISH CARCASS PLACEMENT

Due to circumstances beyond our control, we were unable to acquire fish for nutrient enrichment this year.

FISH SALVAGE

Leaburg Fish Hatchery was temporarily de-watered in May 2024. The STEP biologist, Leaburg Hatchery staff and a volunteer participated in removing of as many aquatic species as possible from the hatchery's aquatic habitats (show pond, intake channel which flows throughout the hatchery, and the outflow channel to the McKenzie River). We removed White Sturgeon, rainbow and cutthroat trout, and many more native fish, mussel and amphibian species from the show pond, intake and outflow channels. We utilized angling techniques, hand-removal, seining, and backpack electrofishing to remove as many individuals as possible. We transported four White Sturgeon and several trophy sized rainbow trout to the McKenzie River Discovery Center Pond. Volunteers with the MRDC have had a wonderful time caring for the sturgeon and trout.



Fish Salvage

KEEP OREGON RIVERS CLEAN (KORC) FISHING LINE COLLECTION STATIONS

Beginning in 2020, volunteers from fishing groups, Scouts of America and members of the public concerned with litter have installed and maintained 18 fishing line collection stations. We are always looking to add more stations. Our 18 stations are located:

McKenzie River:

Armitage x2, Hendricks Wayside and Leaburg x2

Willamette River:

Beltline Boat Landing

Middle Fork Willamette River:

Alton Baker Park x3, Clearwater Park, Hemlock, Pengra Landing, Dexter Dam x3, Lowell Covered Bridge and Greenwaters Park.

Fish Culture

FISH EGGS-TO-FRY PROGRAM

Approximately 9,600 spring Chinook Salmon eggs were incubated in aquariums in 96 different classrooms as part of the South Willamette Eggs-to Fry Program. All unfed fry were released during December, primarily in the Alton Baker Canoe Canal which is part of the Willamette River in Eugene. McKenzie schools released their fish near Blue River in the McKenzie River.

McKENZIE RIVER RAFT STOCKING

For the past 74 years, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has used volunteers to distribute hatchery trout evenly along the stocked segments of the McKenzie River.

STEP staff coordinate this program with the McKenzie River Guides Association (MRGA) who release trout from our customized fish stocking raft. As far as we know, this is the only stocking program of its kind in Oregon. This year we released 75,770 legal sized Rainbow Trout into the McKenzie River which was a slight decrease from 2023.



Raft Stocking

HIGH CASCADE LAKES BACKPACK STOCKING

This popular program provides an opportunity for volunteers to transport and release fingerling trout into high lakes of the Cascade Mountains using their own backpacks. This program heavily supports ODFW's mission statement and the agency's R3 Mission for recruiting, retaining, and reactivating volunteers. We work collaboratively with the USFS and this year we had to skip several of our very popular lakes due to safety concerns resulting from wildfires from the 2022 season.



High Lakes Backpack Stocking

In 2024, we conducted high lakes stocking utilizing volunteers and what amazing volunteers they were! We stocked 49 lakes with about 33,240 Brook and Rainbow trout. We had a diverse group of volunteers that helped us accomplish our goals this year including residents of Oakridge, Girl Scouts of Oregon and SW Washington, Scouts of America, Cabela's, Eugene Trail Runners, Pacific Crest Trail Association, and of course many families and individuals.

SCHOOLS AND GROUPS THAT WORK WITH THE UPPER-WILLAMETTE STEP

The following is a partial list of schools, school districts, organizations, agencies, and other groups that work with STEP. Due to the large number of participants, it is possible that some groups were inadvertently left off this list. Please contact (503) 947-6211 if your program has been left off this list.

<i>Education</i>	<i>Education cont.</i>
Adams Elementary School, Eugene	Thurston Elementary School, Springfield
Agnes Stewart Middle School, Springfield	University of Oregon
Arts & Technology Academy at Jefferson, Eugene	Willagillespie, Eugene
Awbrey Park Elementary School, Eugene	Willamette High School, Eugene
Bailey Hill Instructional Center, Eugene	Yujin Gakuen Elementary School, Eugene
Buena Vista Elementary School, Eugene	<i>Organizations</i>
Bridgeway House, Eugene	American Fisheries Society
Camas Ridge Elementary School, Eugene	Arc of Lane County
Cascade Middle School, Eugene	Cascade Family Flyfishers
Centennial Elementary School, Springfield	Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council
Cesar E. Chavez Elementary School, Eugene	Coastal Conservation Association
Charlemagne at Fox Hollow Elementary School, Eugene	Connected Lane County
Chinese Immersion School, Eugene	Emerald Empire Chapter ANWS
Coburg Community Charter School, Eugene	Girl Scouts of Oregon & Southwest Washington
Corridor Elementary School, Eugene	McKenzie Flyfishers
Cottage Grove High School, Cottage Grove	McKenzie River Guides Association
Early College & Career Options High School, Eugene	McKenzie River Trust
Edgewood Elementary, Eugene	McKenzie Watershed Council
Edison Elementary School, Eugene	Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council
Family School, Eugene	Oregon Environmental Literacy Program
Gateway Elementary, Eugene	Scouts of America
Holt Elementary School, Eugene	The Nature Conservancy
Howard Elementary School, Eugene	Travel Lane County
Jasper Mountain School, Jasper	Weyerhaeuser Company
Kalapuya High School, Eugene	World Salmon Council
Lane Community College	Other entities
Laurel Elementary School, Junction City	Bureau of Land Management
Lowell Elementary, Lowell	City of Eugene
McCornack Elementary School, Eugene	City of Springfield
McKenzie Middle School, Blue River	Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Meadow View Elementary School, Eugene	Eugene Water & Electric Board
Oakhill School, Eugene	Lane County
Oakridge Elementary School, Oakridge	Lane County CTE
Oregon State University	Lane County ESD
Pleasant Hill Elementary, Pleasant Hill	Nez Perce Tribe
Pleasant Hill High School, Pleasant Hill	Oregon State Parks Department
Prairie Mountain School, Eugene	Oregon State Police
Ridgeline Montessori, Eugene	Springfield Utility Board
Ridgeview Elementary School, Springfield	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
River Road El Camino Del Rio Elementary School, Eugene	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Shasta Middle School, Eugene	U.S. Forest Service
South Eugene High School, Eugene	Willamalane Park & Recreation District

NORTH COAST STEP

Kyle Wilson, STEP Biologist

Mike Sinnott, Assistant District Fish Biologist

Robert Bradley, District Fish Biologist

The North Coast STEP area includes the coastal basins extending from Neskowin Creek north to the Columbia River, and from the Lower Columbia River tributaries to Hunt Creek. The North Coast STEP District covers all of Tillamook and Clatsop Counties, and portions of Columbia, Washington, Yamhill, and Polk Counties. This area holds 15 major river systems and over 2,600 stream miles.

All District fish management staff work with STEP volunteers, but the STEP Biologist has primary responsibility for administering, coordinating, and reporting program activities. Projects are identified and guided by local fish management and hatchery needs with a focus on outreach, habitat restoration, and fish propagation efforts.

Volunteer groups in the area have a high interest in fish culture programs. STEP volunteers operate two fish rearing facilities and one acclimation pond, collect wild broodstock, and they provide key support to several ODFW hatcheries. There are two high schools in the district with hatchery programs. Students in these programs also provide support assisting at ODFW hatcheries, the Stream Enrichment Program, and monitoring. The area also has a growing classroom egg incubation program involving students from seven school districts. Staff works closely with several watershed councils, educators, angling groups, and civic organizations throughout the district.

EDUCATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

SALMON WATCH

The STEP Biologist position participated in 2 Salmon Watch Events with Vernonia and Tillamook Schools. There were a combined 260 participants with these events. Multiple resource agencies and environmental non-profits participated. STEP Biologist provides Coho Salmon carcasses for dissection in addition to visual aids for instruction on salmon biology, life history, habitat requirements, and resource management. Following dissections, carcasses are used in the Stream Enrichment Program as identified under Objective 8 in Habitat Section. SFR funding directly supports the STEP Biologist personnel and S&S on this grant, which provides technical assistance and direct involvement. SFR funds are used to purchase materials associated with this program.

AQUATIC EDUCATION and Outreach

Neakahnie junior high school offers a summer enrichment program for students to be involved with over their summer break. The STEP biologist and Wildlife biologist teamed up to host a class for the students to attend. Students were able to learn about salmon/steelhead biology and lifecycle with the observation and dissection of male and female steelhead. The Wildlife presentation was aided with furs and skulls from animals present in the region. A total of 32 students attended this class.

The Step biologist took part in the annual Salmon Festival in Vernonia this year. The event is held along Rock Creek which is a popular spot to view salmon spawning activity. The salmon did not disappoint, and many were viewed in the stream throughout the day. The biologist had a booth set up along the creek and was able to offer information pertaining to salmon life cycle. There was also an interactive casting game that was set up and enjoyed by many kids and families. In total, about 100 kids and adults visited the booth.

FISH EGGS-TO-FRY PROGRAM

This past year, the STEP biologist worked with 11 schools in the North Coast STEP District. The STEP biologist administers the application process for teachers, writes emails, meets with teachers, schedules associated meetings/trainings, and field trips or classroom presentations. The STEP biologist provides tank sets and Egg to Fry supplies to classrooms and may assist with assembling the incubator, providing educational materials to teachers, coordinating egg deliveries with volunteers, or delivering eggs. The STEP Biologist may spend time with the class instructing students in aquatic ecology, and leading class activities using kits purchased with SFR funds, leading a dissection, or assisting with the fry release. Students may be provided with educational materials (coloring books, stickers, and course materials) purchased with SFR Funds. Funds may be used to purchase aquariums, chillers, or related hardware for the project.

Winter Steelhead - Eggs were provided to 4 schools, and The Tillamook Forest Center. Eggs came from Big Creek, N. Fork Nehalem and Trask Hatcheries. Resulting unfed fry were released into Big Creek, Jones Creek, and Nehalem River in accordance with Hatchery HGMP's.

Fall Chinook - Eggs from Trask and Cedar Hatcheries were provided to 4 schools. Resulting unfed fry were released into the Necanicum and Nestucca Rivers in accordance with the Hatchery HGM's.

Spring Chinook – Eggs from Trask Hatchery were provided to 2 public libraries, 1 school, and the Tillamook Forest Center. Resulting unfed fry were released into local streams in accordance with Hatchery HGMP.

IMPROVEMENTS TO ACCESS AND FACILITIES

During this report period the following grants were awarded to improve access and facilities in the North Coast District:

- \$2000.00 From STAC for the purchase of stream enrichment totes for use on the North Coast.
- \$1700.00 From North Coast Salmon Steelhead Enhancement Fund. This was added to the STAC funds for the purchase of Stream Enrichment totes.

Routine maintenance continues annually on fish ladders, fishing access sites, docks, boat ramps, and boat slides. Access site and ramps maintenance included brush clearing and removal (mostly weed eating). The boat slide maintenance included replacement of broken or rotten wood supports or runners, and control of undermining on existing structures as needed. Fish ladders maintenance included removal of wood and logs. Dock maintenance included some weed eating and a transition ramp replacement. USFWS funds are used for staff time and travel or routine maintenance, not any new ground disturbance on these maintenance projects.

INVENTORY AND MONITORING

SPAWNING AND TEMPERATURE MONITORING

The Salmonberry Monitoring Project continues to provide valuable data through winter steelhead spawning surveys and temperature and macroinvertebrate monitoring on the Salmonberry River. This information is utilized by ODFW and many other resource groups and agencies. Headed by Ian Fergusson, the Salmonberry STEP Monitoring Project has utilized volunteers from AmeriCorps, Clark-Skamania Flyfishers, Native Fish Society, Northwest Steelheaders, Oregon Trout, Sierra Club, and Trout Unlimited since 1993 to carry out these monitoring projects. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the number of volunteers used in this project was reduced. 13 volunteers from the Salmonberry STEP Monitoring Project donated 228 hours last year conducting spawning ground surveys and temperature monitoring on 12 miles of stream.

The North Coast STEP Biologist assisted with data collection for the following projects:

Chinook Salmon DNA Sampling (ODFW).

Spring Chinook Salmon Spawning Grounds Surveys.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

STREAM NUTRIENT ENRICHMENT

As part of the ODFW stream nutrient enrichment program the STEP Biologist and other NCWD staff assisted in the distribution of 13,761 salmonid carcasses into 77 miles of North Coast rivers and streams from the Little Nestucca to the lower Columbia River tributaries to benefit salmonids and other species. Nine students from the Astoria High School Fisheries Class, 6 from Warrenton High School Fisheries Class, and 14 volunteers from Association of Northwest Steelheaders Tualatin Chapter assisted with some of these placements donating a total of 124 hours.



Volunteers placing fish carcasses.

FISH CULTURE

VOLUNTEER HATCHERY PROGRAMS

The Tillamook Anglers continue to operate Whiskey Creek STEP Hatchery and reared 106,625 spring Chinook Salmon smolts for release into the Trask River. During the 2023-24 return season the Tillamook Anglers processed 522 surplus salmon for the Oregon Food Bank. The Nestucca Anglers also continue to operate Rhoades Pond and released 92,400 fall Chinook Salmon smolts into Three Rivers and the Nestucca River. The Nestucca Anglers volunteers donated 2975 hours and the Tillamook Anglers donated 2461 hours towards hatchery operations and miscellaneous events.

Wild Winter Steelhead Broodstock Collection Programs continue on the Nestucca, North Fork Nehalem, and Wilson Rivers. These programs collected 408 fish for use as broodstock by ODFW hatcheries. For the wild fall Chinook Salmon on the Nestucca River 28 fish were collected by anglers with remaining fish coming from the Cedar Cr. Hatchery trap. The Tillamook Basin wild Coho Salmon program collected 58 fish by means of angling, trap, or tangle net for use as broodstock. 49 fish were collected on the North Fork Nehalem via angling or trap. STEP provides management oversight, technical assistance, and direct involvement to these programs.

HIGH SCHOOL HATCHERIES

Astoria High School's hatchery program released 500 Coho Salmon as pre-smolts into Young's Bay, and 17,764 fall Chinook Salmon pre-smolts into Youngs Bay. Warrenton High School's program released 2,089 Coho Salmon, 187 winter steelhead pre-smolts, and 1,533 fall Chinook Salmon pre-smolts into the Skipanon River.

SCHOOLS AND GROUPS THAT WORK WITH NORTH COAST STEP

The following is a list of schools, school districts, organizations, agencies, and other groups that work with STEP. Due to the large number of participants, it is possible that some groups were inadvertently left off this list. Please contact (503) 947-6211 if your program has been left off this list.

Education	Organizations
Astoria High School, Astoria	Lower Nehalem Watershed Council
Broadway Middle School, Seaside	Necanicum Watershed Council
East Elementary School, Tillamook	Nestucca Anglers
Garibaldi Grade School, Garibaldi	Nestucca Watershed Council
Hilda Lahti Elementary School, Astoria	Nicolai-Wickiup Watershed Council
Jewell Elementary School, Seaside	North Coast Chapter ANWS
Lewis & Clark Elementary School, Astoria	Rainland Fly Casters
Mist Elementary School, Mist	Rockaway Lions Club
Neah-Kah-Nie Middle School, Rockaway Beach	Skipanon Watershed Council
Nehalem Elementary School, Nehalem	Tillamook Anglers
Neskowin Valley School, Neskowin	Tillamook Estuaries Partnership
Seaside Heights Elementary School, Seaside	Tillamook Forest Center
Tillamook High School, Tillamook	Tualatin Valley Chapter ANWS
Vernonia Schools, Vernonia	Twin Rocks Friends Camp
Warrenton High School, Warrenton	WarHF, Inc
Wilson River School	Youngs Bay Watershed Council
Organizations	Government
CREST	Oregon Department of Forestry
Ecola Creek Watershed Council	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

MID-COAST STEP

Christine Clapp, STEP Biologist

Dylan O’Keefe, Assistant District Fish Biologist

John Spangler, District Fish Biologist

The Mid Coast STEP District covers coastal watersheds from the Salmon River and Cascade Head to Tahkenitch Lake, extending from headwater streams on the western slope of the Coast Range to their estuaries. This includes the Salmon, Siletz, Yaquina, Alsea, and Siuslaw rivers. Direct ocean tributaries including the Yachats River and Beaver, Big, Tenmile, and Cummins Creeks also support Mid Coast salmonid populations. Siltcoos and Tahkenitch Lakes are two large coastal lakes in the southern Mid Coast that are especially important for Oregon coast Coho Salmon. In addition to Coho Salmon, Mid Coast waters support populations of spring and fall Chinook Salmon, summer and winter steelhead, Chum Salmon, cutthroat trout, and other native non-game fishes. The Siletz River is home to the only native population of summer steelhead that originates in the Oregon coast range.

Christine Clapp has lead responsibility for STEP program activities on the Mid Coast. The Mid Coast program works with volunteer groups, landowners, local schools, non-profit organizations, private industry, watershed councils, and state and federal agencies on a variety of projects focused on education, fisheries management, watershed conservation, fish production, and angler education. Mid Coast volunteer groups include Florence STEP, the Longview Hills Fishing Club, Central Coast Fly Fishers, Depoe Bay Salmon Enhancement Commission, Alsea Sportsman’s Association, Association of Northwest Steelheaders (ANWS, Emerald Empire Chapter), Oregon State University’s Fish and Wildlife Department, Mount Hood Community College, Oregon Coast Community College, Boy and Girl Scouts of America, the Angell Job Corps, and others.

Education and outreach are the core of the Mid Coast Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program. Mid Coast STEP also assists with fish population monitoring through the operation of four fish traps and helps with habitat restoration and access projects. The Mid Coast District also includes the Salmon Enhancement Commission’s Coho Salmon STEP Program in Depoe Bay, one of the oldest STEP propagation programs in the state. Fish culture programs continue to attract many passionate volunteers to Mid Coast STEP. The Depoe Bay Salmon Enhancement Commission operates a small community-driven Coho Salmon project in Depoe Bay, and Florence STEP and the Emerald Empire Chapter of the ANWS both operate winter steelhead propagation programs in the Siuslaw Basin that provide harvest opportunities in the district.

EDUCATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

FISH EGGS-TO-FRY PROGRAM

In 2024, the Egg to Fry Program was active throughout the Mid Coast District in pre-K, elementary, middle, and high schools in Lincoln City, Newport, Eddyville, Toledo, Siletz, Waldport, Alsea, Florence, Mapleton and Crow. Libraries in Lincoln City, Newport, Toledo, Waldport and Florence also participated in multiple rounds of the program. The Mid Coast District offers 3 rounds of the program with Fall Chinook eggs in January and winter steelhead in February and April. The Mid Coast Program offers an introductory classroom presentation about Pacific Salmon and their life cycles with egg delivery, as well as a volunteer/teacher guide for weekly discussions about the current developmental stage and various aspects of salmonid life history. Fry release field trips are provided by staff and volunteers with learning stations where students explore fish biology, macroinvertebrates, water quality, habitat, riparian ecology, beavers, wildlife, watersheds, restoration,

angler education, and hatcheries (depending on location and station leaders). Field trips include 4-8 learning stations per trip and accommodate 20-120 students/day. Staff and experienced STEP volunteers train classroom and field assistants, deliver and maintain equipment, transport eggs, lead presentations and field trips, and coordinate with hatchery staff.

In 2012, the Lincoln County School District adopted the Egg to Fry Program as part of their Ocean Literacy Initiative and designated it as core curriculum for all Lincoln County third graders. As a result, every 3rd grader in Lincoln County participates in the program, with home school opportunities offered at local libraries. In addition to school-aged students, the Egg to Fry Program reaches people of all ages at library locations with fry release trips offered to the public.

Mid Coast STEP also loans two Egg-to-Fry libraries to teachers throughout the year, rotating between schools during Egg to Fry season. Each library has a dozen salmon and watershed focused children's books to enrich the program's classroom experience, prepare students for field trips, and provide materials for Egg to Fry research projects.

FAMILY FISHING

Volunteers and staff led 4 family fishing events on the Mid Coast at Olalla Reservoir, Eckman Lake, Devils Lake, and Cleawox Lake. Mid Coast STEP also managed three youth angling libraries in Lincoln City, Newport, and South Beach where youth can check out fishing equipment for up to two weeks free of charge. In addition, volunteers led backyard bass and lure making activities at family fishing, field trip, National Night Out, Welcome the Salmon Home, and Back to School events.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Mid Coast STEP continues to operate the aquatic science reference library containing books about fish biology and ecology, watershed function, stream hydrology and ecology, and fish and macroinvertebrate identification that are available for community education programs. Resources are also available to volunteers who are interested in learning more about freshwater science and salmonids. This year Mid Coast STEP volunteers hosted educational booths for Waldport's Beachcomber Days and the National Night Out in Newport. STEP volunteers also gave presentations to the Central Coast Fly Fishers and Florence STEP. STEP staff and volunteers attend resource fairs and community events to recruit volunteers, provide career development information, and educate the public.



Students sampling macroinvertebrates

INVENTORY AND MONITORING

POPULATION MONITORING

Volunteers helped monitor fish populations at several fish traps including South Fork Schooner Creek in the Siletz Basin, and Letz and Whittaker creeks in the Siuslaw Basin. As needed, staff coordinate, train and assist volunteers in fish trap operations including correct fish handling, species and gender identification, accurate data recording, and safety procedures. Trap operations provide essential information on fish returns and stray rates for District management, and volunteers spawn fish at the Whittaker Creek trap for the Siuslaw winter steelhead hatchery program.

SALMON RIVER HATCHERY

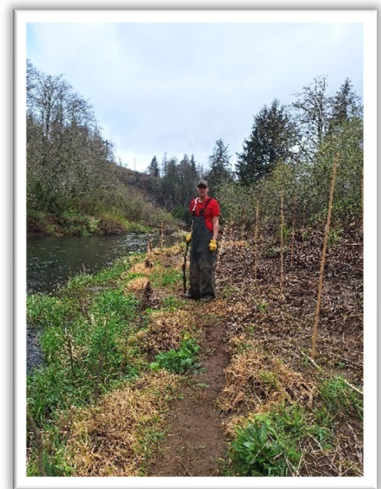
Volunteers assisted ODFW staff with the adult fish trap at Salmon River Hatchery this fall. Volunteers helped process hatchery fish for donation to food share organizations and assist with spawning operations.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

The STEP Biologist continued to manage the Riparian Lands Tax Incentive Program for the Mid Coast, checking compliance of properties, and enrolling new landowners in the program to protect their riparian habitat for the benefit of fish and wildlife. The STEP biologist also completed site visits and monitoring reports for restoration projects funded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. STEP volunteers assisted the Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District with willow planting activities at Salmon River Hatchery and planted cedar trees on private property to improve riparian habitat.

Mid Coast STEP volunteers also operated SOLV and KORC trash and monofilament line recycling stations. Longview Hills Fishing Club volunteers organized litter patrols at popular beaches, fishing sites, and a problematic section of Highway 101 in Newport. Volunteers also assisted the Northwest Oregon Restoration Partnership by collecting seeds for their native plant propagation program.



Planting willows at Salmon River Hatchery

NUTRIENT ENRICHMENT

Winter and summer steelhead, Chinook Salmon, and a few hatchery Coho Salmon were placed in approximately 100 river miles of the Mid Coast District this year including the Salmon, Siletz, Yaquina, Alsea, and Siuslaw river basins.

FISH CULTURE

BROODSTOCK COLLECTION

Volunteer anglers assisted with winter steelhead angler-caught broodstock collection programs on the Siletz and Alsea rivers. Trap caught fish were also collected from adult fish traps at Siletz Falls and North Fork Alsea

Hatchery by staff between December and May. Adult fish from both rivers were spawned at the Alsea Hatchery, and their offspring will be released as smolts next spring.

ODFW staff provided coordination, technical support, and assistance to about 50 volunteers from the Florence STEP Group and Emerald Empire Chapter of ANWS who operate the Siuslaw River winter steelhead hatchery program each year. Volunteers ran adult traps and spawned fish for the upper and lower basin releases. For the lower basin releases at Whittaker and Green creeks (85,000 smolts), ODFW staff and volunteers transported eggs and milt collected by volunteers at the Whittaker fish trap to the Alsea Hatchery for fertilization and incubation.

Hatchery staff then transported those eyed eggs to Roaring River Hatchery for rearing. For the upper basin release at Letz Creek (15,000 smolts), volunteers collect, spawn, fertilize, incubate, and rear fish to smolt stage all at the project site.

FISH ACCLIMATION PROJECTS

Volunteers assisted with several winter steelhead smolt acclimation projects on the Mid Coast. Trapping and acclimation sites are located at Whittaker Creek, Green Creek, Letz Creek, and Palmer Creek. The Florence STEP group acclimated winter steelhead smolts at Green Creek and Whittaker Creek this past May. The Emerald Empire Chapter of the Association of Northwest Steelheaders also acclimated and released winter steelhead smolts from the Letz Creek STEP facility in the spring.



Volunteers install the Whittaker Creek Fish Trap

NORTH DEPOE BAY CREEK

The Depoe Bay Salmon Enhancement Commission continued to operate a Coho Salmon hatch-box program that receives 20,000 eyed eggs from the Trask Hatchery each year. Eggs incubate in two hatch-boxes along North Depoe Bay Creek before volunteers transport the fry to a net pen in North Depoe Bay Reservoir and feed them until the fin-clipping event in July. After fin-clipping, volunteers release juvenile Coho Salmon into the reservoir at large where they rear over-winter and emigrate from the reservoir volitionally in the spring. The Depoe Bay community supports this program, and youth from the Neighbors for Kids after-school program assist with feeding, monitoring and fin clipping in July, along with many other adult and youth volunteers who attend the annual fin clipping event.

SILETZ TRIBE WINTER STEELHEAD PROGRAM

The Siletz Tribe released winter steelhead into Little Rock Creek this year and returning adults were captured in a trap and distributed to tribal members. This program provides a fish release and acclimation site lower in the Siletz Basin, encourages cultural food practices, and provides a volunteer opportunity for Siletz tribal members as well as the public.

SCHOOLS AND GROUPS THAT WORK WITH MID COAST STEP

The following is a list of schools, school districts, organizations, agencies, and other groups that work with STEP. Due to the large number of participants, it is possible that some groups were inadvertently left off this list. Please contact (503) 947-6211 if your program has been left off this list.

<i>Education</i>	<i>Organizations</i>
Crestview Heights Elementary, Waldport	Camp Florence
Eddyville Charter School, Eddyville	Central Coast Fly Fishers
Florence School District Stream Team	Community Services Consortium
Mt. Hood Community College	Depoe Bay Salmon Enhancement Commission
Neighbors for Kids, Depoe Bay	Driftwood Library
Newport High School, Newport	Emerald Empire Chapter ANWS
Nye Beach Montessori School, Newport	Florence STEP Group
Oceanspray After School Program, Newport	Longview Hills Fishing Club
Oregon Coast Community College	Mid Coast Watershed Council
Oregon State University	Newport Library
Sam Case Elementary, Newport	Salmon Drift Creek Watershed Council
Siletz Valley School, Siletz	Salmon Watch
Siuslaw Elementary School, Florence	SOLVE
Taft Elementary School, Lincoln City	Starker Forests
Taft High School, Lincoln City	
Toledo Elementary School, Toledo	
Waldport High School, Waldport	<i>Government</i>
Western Oregon University	Benton County
Yaquina View Elementary School, Newport	Bureau of Land Management
	Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
	Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
<i>Organizations</i>	Lane County
Albany Chapter ANWS	Lincoln County
Alsea Sportsman's Association	Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District
Alsea Watershed Council	NOAA
Angell Job Corps	Oregon Department of Forestry
Baptist Church of Waldport	Oregon Parks & Recreation Department

SOUTHWEST REGION

UMPQUA STEP

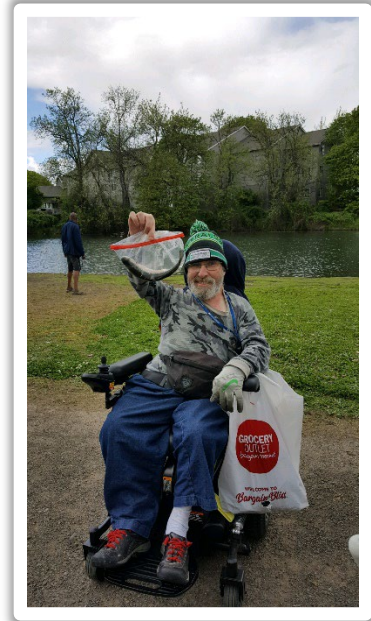
Levi Simmons, STEP Biologist

Evan Leonetti, Acting District Fish Biologist

The Umpqua Watershed and STEP area encompasses Douglas County and extends from Diamond Lake in the high Cascades to the Pacific Coast at Reedsport. Douglas County is the fifth largest county in the state. The Umpqua watershed drains 3.2 million acres of land and is the second largest coastal watershed in Oregon. About 90 percent of the land is forested and approximately 51 percent is publicly owned. The area is home to more than 110,000 people with Roseburg having the largest population of more than 20,000.

The Umpqua Basin supports runs of Coho Salmon, spring and fall Chinook Salmon, and winter and summer steelhead. Trout angling opportunities include rainbow trout, tiger trout, brown trout, and brook trout various Cascade lakes. Several reservoirs are stocked with trout and support warm-water fisheries. STEP volunteer opportunities are focused on education, high lakes stocking, and harvest augmentation programs (winter steelhead, Coho Salmon, and fall Chinook Salmon).

The Umpqua Watershed had another successful year with volunteers donating over 7,000 hours. The program completed and/or developed 26 projects this year and reached over 2,200 people with its public outreach efforts alone. Below are highlights for the four main STEP categories.



Successful angler

EDUCATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The Umpqua STEP biologist position was vacant for a portion of the year while the current biologist was on rotation, resulting in a minor reduction in programs through the summer. Still, the Umpqua STEP Biologist held several educational and outreach events this year. This year 16 educational events were held, primarily focused on youth. Approximately 175 adults and 1,400 youth were reached during in-person educational activities.

GLIDE FORESTRY TOUR

Around 430 students participated in presentations over three days on invasive species, the effects of fire on aquatic systems, habitat requirements, aquatic food webs, and organism life cycles. Station instructors included representatives from agencies such as Douglas Forest Protection, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Douglas County, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Oregon State University.

EASTWOOD EDUCATION EVENTS

Eastwood Elementary reared and released 500 winter steelhead this year. This was accompanied in lessons on aquatic ecology, life cycles, and habitat requirements for anadromous salmonids. Additionally, Eastwood Elementary hosted two full days of educational opportunities for local students at their “Camp Eastwood” event. The STEP biologist participated in the event by presenting integrated lessons on salmon life cycles, marine derived nutrients, and food webs to around 220 students. This lesson was designed to synergize with the lessons learned during the rearing exercise.

TSALILA FESTIVAL

The STEP biologist participated in the Tsalila Festival events over three days and taught around 240 students about angling principles. Students were taught about different gear used for angling and participated in a game designed to teach casting techniques. Partnering organizations include the City of Reedsport, the Umpqua Discovery Center, and U.S. Forest Service.

FISH EGGS TO FRY CLASSROOM INCUBATORS

Due to the timing of the current STEP Biologist job rotation, the number of classes hosting the Fish-Eggs-to-Fry Program was reduced this year. Still, The Partnership for Umpqua Rivers assisted in facilitating the Egg-to-Fry Program to teach students about native salmonids and their life cycles, habitat requirements and conservation. A total of 9 classrooms reared 1,200 eggs with most receiving in-class lessons and participating in field trips to liberate unfed fry.



Classroom Egg to Fry tank

FOODBANK SUBSISTENCE

The Umpqua STEP Biologist worked with the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, volunteer groups, and foodbanks to reduce the number of hatchery fish on the spawning grounds while supplying the local community with food-grade salmon and steelhead. Excess hatchery-origin Coho Salmon and winter steelhead were relatively abundant this year, resulting in 286 fish being donated to the local foodbanks. This program has been a benefit for those in need in the community as well as facilitating cooperation between agencies.

INVENTORY AND MONITORING

The STEP Biologist coordinated volunteers and ODFW staff in monitoring steelhead, Coho Salmon and fall Chinook Salmon at various trapping locations. This data is used during angling regulation proposal reviews as well as propagation proposals.

COW CREEK COHO SALMON

Volunteers, Douglas County, and STEP monitored returns of adult Coho Salmon to the base of Galesville Dam. Information from the returns fish help inform management of the fishery. Around 800 Coho Salmon adults and jacks were processed this year.

ADULT SALMON MONITORING

Volunteers assisted the Department in monitoring wild steelhead populations in Canyon Creek. Volunteers enumerated and passed wild winter steelhead and removed hatchery fish. This information is used by the ODFW to monitor the hatchery winter steelhead program in the South Umpqua.

SOUTH UMPQUA WINTER STEELHEAD ACCLIMATION TIMING STUDY

Volunteers assisted the Umpqua STEP Biologist with the South Umpqua Winter Steelhead Acclimation Timing Study by collecting snouts from stations and anglers. This year we collected what is expected to be the last year of significant coded-wire tags, with some smaller numbers expected to follow in coming years. This information will be used to better inform management strategies for optimal return to anglers while maintaining a healthy fishery.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

CARCASS PLACEMENT

Gardiner-Reedsport-Winchester-Bay STEP participated in the nutrient enrichment program by placing Chinook Salmon carcasses from fall Chinook Salmon spawning events into the North Fork of the Smith River. As a part of the South Umpqua Coho Salmon program, hatchery Coho Salmon were placed by volunteers into areas of upper Cow Creek. Volunteers also assisted with placing hatchery winter steelhead carcasses in the Canyon Creek drainage.

SMALL WOODY DEBRIS PLACEMENT

Oregon Coastal Anglers volunteers, with the assistance of local students, completed a small woody debris placement project. The materials for this program were donated by the local community. The materials consisted of used Christmas trees that would have otherwise ended up being placed in a landfill. This project was designed to enhance the habitat restoration project previously completed in Camp Creek by ODFW, Bureau of Land Management and the Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers

FISH CULTURE

There are six salmon/steelhead/trout hatchery programs in the Umpqua and volunteers are involved in all of them. Volunteers play an important role in the lower Umpqua fall Chinook Salmon program, as well as the South Umpqua Coho Salmon and winter steelhead programs. Volunteers hosted the Canyonville acclimation site, where steelhead are acclimated for two iterations of around two weeks. Gardiner-Reedsport-Winchester-Bay STEP volunteers collected brood, spawned, reared, acclimated, and released fall Chinook Salmon.

ACCLIMATION AND RELEASE

Winter steelhead acclimation and releases took place this year at Canyon Creek and Seven Feather Acclimation sites. These events contribute to winter steelhead angling opportunities in the basin and provide a great educational experience for local students and adults. An educational event at Canyonville was held this year. Around 90,000 winter steelhead were acclimated and released this year.

The Eastwood Elementary School “hatchery” resumed operations this year. This year, we were able to return to rearing local winter steelhead. Students and adults fed the fish seven days a week and monitored the fish’s growth and condition. These fish were later stocked into a local lake.

The Gardiner-Reedsport-Winchester-Bay STEP group successfully released around 40,000 fall Chinook Salmon pre-smolts as well as 51,000 smolts this year. Unfortunately, an act of vandalism caused the loss of around 18,000 fish being reared at the STEP hatchery, which otherwise was on track to be the groups most successful season in the past decade.



Fin Clipping

HIGH LAKES FISH STOCKING

With the help of the Oregon Equestrian Trails group, high elevation lakes were stocked with rainbow trout from the Wizard Falls hatchery. Volunteers successfully stocked eight lakes with around 9,500 trout this year by backpack and horseback.



High Lakes Stocking

SCHOOLS AND GROUPS THAT WORK WITH UMPQUA STEP

The following is a partial list of schools, school districts, organizations, agencies, and other groups that work with STEP. Due to the large number of participants, it is possible that some groups were inadvertently left off this list. Please contact (503) 947-6211 if your program has been left off this list.

<i>Education</i>	<i>Government</i>
Brockway Elementary, Winston	Douglas County
Canyonville Elementary School, Canyonville	Oregon Parks and Recreation
Cobb Street School, Roseburg	Oregon State Police
Eastwood Elementary School, Roseburg	NOAA
Fremont Middle School, Roseburg	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Fullerton IV Elementary School, Roseburg	United States Forest Service
Glendale Elementary School, Glendale	Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians
Geneva Academy, Roseburg	
Glide Elementary School, Glide	<i>Organizations</i>
Highland Elementary School, Reedsport	Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers
Hucrest Elementary School, Roseburg	Smith River Watershed Council
McGovern Elementary School, Winston	Gardiner-Reedsport-Winchester Bay STEP
Melrose Elementary School, Roseburg	Umpqua Fishermen's Association
Myrtle Creek Elementary, Myrtle Creek	Oregon Equestrian Trails
Oregon State University	Umpqua Fisheries Enhancement Derby
Riddle Elementary School, Riddle	Umpqua Guides Association
St. Paul Lutheran School, Roseburg	Umpqua Valley Flyfishers
Tri-City Elementary School, Myrtle Creek	Steamboaters
Umpqua Community College, Winchester	The Bowman Family
Winchester Elementary School, Winchester	Florence STEP
	Sportsman's Warehouse
<i>Government</i>	Oregon Coast Anglers
Bureau of Land Management	STEAM
City of Roseburg	Project Healing Waters
City of Canyonville	

COOS, COQUILLE, AND TENMILE STEP

Gary Vonderohe, STEP Biologist

Morgan Davies, STEP Biologist

Chris Claire, Assistant District Fish Biologist

Mike Gray, District Fish Biologist

The Coos, Coquille and Tenmile STEP area is located on the southern Oregon coast and is recognized as having been the birth-place of STEP over forty years ago. The area is bordered on the north and east by the Umpqua Basin and by the New, Sixes and Elk Basins to the south. The area holds three major watersheds, the Tenmile, Coos, Coquille, and several smaller streams that flow directly to the ocean. Both the Coos and the Coquille watersheds have long inter-tidal reaches and large estuaries, while the Tenmile is dominated by several large freshwater lakes.

The area program emphasizes citizen involvement with efforts to protect and enhance salmon, steelhead, and trout. Early in the development of STEP, education and outreach became a significant part of the local program, as it was recognized that educating the public and particularly area youth would be important toward achieving the long-term goals of STEP in general. Education through involvement increases awareness of the needs of native fish through habitat recovery and protection efforts. In addition to outreach activities, habitat restoration has been an important part of STEP with the initial habitat projects having taken place before the program was formally established. Large numbers of volunteers continue to be involved in the area's extensive fish culture program that includes broodstock development, spawning, egg incubation, rearing, and acclimation projects.

EDUCATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

COQUILLE HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL HATCHERY

The Coquille High School biology students, teachers and volunteers invest about 340 hours of the school year to ensure the survival and growth into pre-smolts of 5,000 fall Chinook Salmon eggs. The process helps students understand the basic needs for salmonids to live and grow within the artificial environment through direct hands-on work at the hatchery. Work and lessons are expanded to include discussions on the natural limiting factors affecting the wild and hatchery salmon stocks in the nearby creek, local watershed, and ocean environments.

MORGAN CREEK STEP HATCHERY

At Morgan Creek STEP Hatchery fifth graders from North Bend and Coos Bay schools learn the role the local salmon hatcheries play to enhance the fishery while having the chance to participate in hands-on activities that help them understand the benefits of a healthy ecosystem, salmon life-cycle, and habitat conservation.

In the fall, school classes observe, learn, and participate in the entirety of the spawning process. In groups of five, students rotate through five stations where they learn each step of the spawning protocol from experienced volunteers and biologists, as well as leadership, teamwork, and engagement skills.

NOBLE CREEK STEP HATCHERY

Fifth-graders from North Bend and Coos Bay schools came to Noble Creek STEP Hatchery to help and learn the protocols, safety, and responsibilities involved in spawning hatchery Chinook Salmon. The STEP Biologist also taught these students about the salmon life cycles and the importance of quality fish habitat.

MILLICOMA INTERPRETIVE CENTER

The Millicoma Interpretive Center continues to be a popular place for student groups and the public to come and learn more about the life histories of salmon and steelhead and habitat through “hands-on” activities. Groups are involved with the collection of broodstock, spawning, egg and fry care, fin-marking, and identifying stream habitat. Through these activities students learn the importance of habitat conservation.

FAMILY FISHING EVENTS

The annual Empire Lake Family Fun Day was held at the end of April in the city of Coos Bay. As part of the event over 4,000 Rainbow Trout were stocked into the lake and participating children learn fishing skills and are loaned a fishing pole equipped to catch the recently stocked trout. Lunch was provided to all participants by a local business. There were also many other family friendly activities available that day.

This year we saw the return of the Eel Lake Free Fishing Day event at Tugman State Park in early June. Volunteers from the Eel/Tenmile STEP group and Lower Umpqua Flycasters helped put on this fishing clinic which provided kids opportunities to learn fish identification, knot tying, casting of spinning rods and fly rods, water safety, and a final stop to catch rainbow trout in the lake. All kids participating also left with a new fishing rod or tackle box.

The STEP Biologist worked with the Coos Bay Fire Department to facilitate the stocking of legal sized Rainbow Trout into portable fire suppression ponds for children to catch as part of the Coos Bay Fourth of July celebration at Mingus Park.

MONITORING

The most important monitoring operation that volunteers are involved with each year is the fall Chinook Salmon recruitment surveys that are conducted in the Coos and Coquille River estuaries. In the Coos River Basin volunteers have a target release of two-million Chinook Salmon juveniles annually. With the large numbers of fish released, an evaluation of the impacts on wild Chinook Salmon is needed. One way to measure the impacts is to monitor the growth and abundance of Chinook Salmon in the estuary.

With the number of juvenile Chinook Salmon collected in the Coos Basin, the STEP Biologist has been estimating the total number of juvenile Chinook Salmon in the basin using a mark/recapture estimate. This monitoring begins in the spring and continues through the fall of the year. Volunteers in the STEP program play a key role with assistance conducting surveys for this long-term monitoring project.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

FISH CARCASS PLACEMENT

Salmon carcasses were again placed in numerous district streams during the report period. ODFW staff and volunteers placed over 5800 salmonid carcasses and over 200 steelhead carcasses into 6 different streams. These carcasses were from fish returning to Coos Basin STEP facilities.

INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL

Starting in 2020 ODFW staff and volunteers have dedicated significant time during the summer months to smallmouth bass removal in the Coquille Basin. The main method of removal has been boat mounted electro-fishing.



Invasive Smallmouth Bass removal

FISH CULTURE

Large numbers of volunteer hours continue to come from the extensive fish cultural programs in the District. There are four spawning, four egg-incubation, four rearing, and fourteen acclimation projects in the District.

BROODSTOCK COLLECTION

Broodstock collection and development programs in the district continue to be a success overall. Volunteers involved in the collection of naturally produced salmon and steelhead for incorporation into hatchery programs donated a significant amount of time. Due to low flows in many streams, volunteers have also helped the STEP biologist collect returning hatchery fish that could not quite swim into facilities. The collection of naturally and hatchery produced salmonids is always very labor intensive.

FRY RELEASES

The District STEP Biologist coordinated the collection and distribution of salmon eggs from ODFW hatcheries or STEP incubation facilities to volunteers.



Volunteers collect Chinook Salmon

PRE-SMOLT RELEASES

Large numbers of Chinook Salmon pre-smolts are released in the Coos River Basin. The premise behind the releases is the recognized limitation of spawning habitat in the Coos Watershed that is available for Chinook Salmon. Spawning habitat in the Coos River began to be compromised in 1887 when the practice of splash-damming rivers started.

Splash-damming was a process by which logging companies ran logs down the rivers during freshet events with the use of a large dam that was removed at a designated time. Prior to running logs down the river, logs and rocks that provided critical stream habitat were removed. This activity removed the river gravel that Chinook Salmon needed for spawning. The Chinook Salmon pre-smolt program in the Coos addresses the limited spawning habitat by producing large numbers of juveniles to utilize the Coos estuary. Coastal fall Chinook Salmon rear almost extensively in coastal estuaries and the Coos estuary is the largest in Oregon. Just over 1,500,000 Chinook Salmon pre-smolts were released into the Coos Basin in the spring of 2024. Most of the Chinook Salmon that were released in the Coos River Basin in the spring of 2024 were fin clipped. The addition of the auto-mark trailer was a significant help in achieving the near 100% fin-marking rate. The auto-mark trailer marked nearly all the Chinook Salmon at Noble Creek STEP Hatchery and Morgan Creek STEP Hatchery.

Since 2007, Chinook Salmon have been released into the Fourth Creek Reservoir as part of a cooperative partnership with the Coquille Indian Tribe. This year these fish were reared at Millicoma Interpretive Center and then acclimated in an alcove of the reservoir. A blocking weir was constructed to prevent the juvenile Chinook Salmon from entering the reservoir proper. The acclimation this year was a success. The fish held and fed well in the rearing area then left the reservoir in a timely manner.

FISH EGGS-TO-FRY PROGRAM

Fifteen classroom incubators were operated at twelve different schools, and one at the Coquille Indian Tribal office. During delivery of the eggs STEP Biologists give a brief introduction to salmon ecology and life history. Teachers talked to the students about the release of the salmon fry into nearby streams and learned about the habitat needed for fry to grow, migrate to the bays and ocean, as well as the perils that salmon encounter throughout their lifecycle and the returning journey to the spawning grounds. These lessons further impart resource ownership to the children.

REARING AND ACCLIMATION

STEP volunteers operated a total of fourteen rearing or acclimation projects during the report period. Acclimation sites continue to be improved with each passing year. These projects take a considerable amount of volunteer and staff time along with financial resources to operate.



Collecting Eggs

SCHOOLS AND GROUPS THAT WORK WITH COOS, COQUILLE, & TENMILE STEP

The following is a list of schools, school districts, organizations, agencies, and other groups that work with STEP during 2022-23. Due to the large number of participants, it is possible that some groups were inadvertently left off this list. Please contact (503) 947-6211 if your program has been left off this list.

Education	Organizations
Blossom Gulch Elementary School, Coos Bay	Coos River STEP, Coos Bay
Coos Bay School District	Coos County STEP Commission, Coos Bay
Riverview Christian School	Coquille River STEP, Coquille
Coquille Valley Elementary School, Coquille	Eel-Tenmile STEP, Lakeside
Harbor Middle School, Bandon	South Coast Anglers STEP, Coos Bay
Hillcrest Elementary School, North Bend	Coquille Watershed Association
Lighthouse School, Coos Bay	Coos Watershed Association
Lincoln Elementary School, Coquille	
Madison Elementary School, Coos Bay	
Millicoma Intermediate School, Coos Bay	
Myrtlecrest Elementary School, Myrtle Point	
North Bay Elementary School, North Bend	
Oregon Institute of Marine Biology	
Powers Elementary School, Powers	
Sunset Middle School, Coos Bay	

LOWER ROGUE STEP

John Weber, STEP Biologist

Laura Green, Assistant District Fish Biologist

Steve Mazur, District Fish Biologist

The Lower Rogue Watershed District is part of the Rogue Watershed District. The Lower Rogue Watershed District includes coastal basins from Four Mile Creek south to the California border. New River, Elk and Sixes Rivers, Euchre Creek, Rogue River, and other miscellaneous coastal tributaries are included in this district.

The focus of the STEP program within the District is to utilize volunteer resources to accomplish management objectives. The STEP Biologist works primarily with local clubs, landowners, timber companies, watershed councils, educators, and school groups. Many volunteers that engage in STEP activities in this watershed district belong to one of two local STEP groups: Oregon South Coast Fisherman (OSCF) or Curry Anadromous Fishermen (CAF).

The groups consist primarily of retired individuals interested in performing meaningful work that will help restore and maintain fish populations within local watersheds.

The CAF's primary focus is aquaculture and education while the OSCF's focus is on population monitoring, broodstock collection, and habitat restoration. All groups consider fishery education a high priority and often cooperate with other local entities to accomplish common objectives.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted the Rogue Fall Chinook Species Management Unit (SMU) Conservation Plan and Rogue-South Coast Multi-Species Conservation and Management Plan (RSP). The Plans set conservation criteria and desired status goals for salmonid population in the Rogue Watershed. These Plans were developed by ODFW in collaboration with multiple government agencies and a public advisory committee. Many of the monitoring projects that STEP volunteers participate in (within the Lower Rogue Watershed District) are defined management strategies embedded in the Plans. The culmination of the Plans has focused the STEP groups on fishery management in the District.

Volunteers participated in projects associated with fish culture, habitat restoration, and population monitoring. Fish culture and population monitoring comprise most of the volunteer effort.

EDUCATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Program outreach news releases were written for local newspapers, radio, and TV stations. The objective was to recruit volunteer involvement, inform the public of project results, and give volunteers recognition for their accomplishments.

The Lower Rogue STEP Biologist attended numerous meetings with the public and STEP group volunteers in small groups by appointment only. These meetings were scheduled to maintain the basic fish culture, monitoring, and safety requirements of essential Lower Rogue STEP activities.

The board members of the Curry Anadromous Fisherman and Oregon South Coast Fisherman made numerous commitments to promote their club and the STEP program. Multiple press releases, website/social media enhancements, bi-monthly radio broadcasts and informational newsletters were made to support the projects and program. This was a planned strategy discussed at monthly meetings.

AZALEA FESTIVAL

The Oregon South Coast Fisherman and STEP biologist conducted the annual portable fishing ponds at the Brookings Azalea Festival. The group has hosted the fishing event since 1989. Approximately 130 children participated this year. The event includes displays of various ongoing STEP projects which creates a great atmosphere to recruit young anglers and volunteers.

CURRY COUNTY STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Curry County high school students received \$3000 in scholarships from a local STEP group. CAF awards \$1000 to each of the three Curry County high schools annually. Students provide essays that detail their future interests. Priority is given to students interested in fisheries or a related natural resource field and community involvement.

REEL FISH DAY

The Lower Rogue STEP and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department sponsored Reel Fish Days. The angler education day is for Curry County schools that participate in the egg to fry program. In April, seven 3rd grade classes participated in the event at Arizona Beach State Park.

Volunteers taught casting, line tying, and hook baiting. An aquatic education curriculum was presented once the core skills of angling were taught. Youth fished with assistance from volunteer instructors in Arizona Pond which was stocked with trout prior to the event.

Participants were given the option to keep or release their fish. Students that chose to retain their catch were taught the responsibility of packaging and cleaning their fish for a meal.



Reel Fish Days

INDIAN CREEK RUMMAGE SALE

Indian Creek Hatchery volunteers organized a community rummage sale to raise funds for the hatchery. The community donated miscellaneous items for the sale. Volunteers raised \$6000.00 for the hatchery and recruited volunteers for the program.

CURRY COUNTY NON-PROFIT VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT FAIR

Volunteer with Curry Anadromous Fisherman sponsored booth at the Gold Beach library during a non-profit volunteer recruitment fair. The Indian Creek Hatchery theme turned out to be a popular booth and numerous volunteers were recruited to help at the hatchery.

NATURE'S COASTAL HOLIDAY

Oregon Southcoast Fisherman (OSCF) sponsor a light display for Nature's Coastal Holiday in Brookings. The Christmas lights are displayed on a 45-minute walk around Azalea Park that consists of over 2,000,000 lights. The OSCF donate volunteer hours within a 5 to 9 pm schedule that runs from Nov 25th – Dec 27th. Volunteers man a booth and provide tour information. In addition, the group uses this effort to recruit volunteers for future STEP projects.



South Coast Fisherman light display

Slam'n Salmon Fishing Derby

OSCF Fishermen and a local youth fishing club sponsored the Slam'n Salmon Fishing Derby over the 4th of July weekend. The event was held for multiple ocean species and had numerous categories to win prizes. The funds raised went toward Brooking Harbor High School Youth Angling Club to purchase licenses, gear and field trip supplies. Volunteers with OSCF assisted youth anglers in weigh-ins, angler education, and organization of derby. There were stations for fish identification, gear rigging, fly tying and other fishing related activities. The relationship with the OSCF and the youth fishing club has developed while collaborating on stewardship projects such as Reel Fish Days. This project brings together high school anglers and seasoned fisherman to teach elementary youth the art of fishing. This effort shows how STEP angler outreach has helped both clubs develop more diverse anglers in a community.

IMPROVED SOUTH COAST ANGLER ACCESS

Oregon South Coast Fisherman (OSCF) maintained an access agreement with a Chetco River front landowner. The area has been a popular access point for local area anglers for many years. Since 2001, OSCF have been involved with the cleaning and maintenance of the area. This opportunity may not have been possible without the OSCF's positive history working with the landowner. The gate is opened during fishing season for access. Annually, OSCF spend funds to improve and maintain multiple access locations on the Chetco River.

The Lower Rogue STEP biologist purchased new signs to replace existing signage for Arizona Pond and miscellaneous river access point. Most angler access signage in the district is outdated and were damaged from weather exposure. Volunteers with Curry Anadromous purchased hardware and supplied labor to complete the project.

INVENTORY AND MONITORING

CHETCO RIVER SCALE SAMPLING

The STEP Biologist and Oregon South Coast Fishermen volunteers assisted in a fall Chinook Salmon scale sampling effort conducted on the Chetco River. The sampling effort is planned to improve data on age and hatchery/wild composition estimates for the Chetco River. The volunteers used drift boats and covered the mainstem reaches while ODFW staff sampled in the tributaries. During the 2023 brood year volunteers and staff collected 125 samples.

CHETCO RIVER ESTUARY SEINING

The STEP Biologist and OSCF volunteers completed their 33rd year seining Chinook Salmon smolts in the Chetco River estuary. The project consists of volunteers setting a juvenile beach seine at select stations bi-weekly from June through September.

These index surveys characterize abundance and development of native fall Chinook Salmon smolts. In addition, the data is used to indicate when hatchery Chinook Salmon smolt should be released to have the least impact on native fish utilizing the estuary.

ROGUE SPRING CHINOOK SCALE COLLECTION

Lower Rogue volunteer anglers collected scales from Rogue spring Chinook. This effort is to collect scales from springers shortly after entering fresh water. The scales will be used in ODFW scale lab to better understand what the edge of the scales look like before they start breaking down and resorbing. These scales will be compared to the annual collection that determine hatchery/wild and age composition. Most of the scales are collected months later from dead fish on the spawning grounds.

WINCHUCK RIVER SCREW TRAP

The STEP Biologist and OSCF volunteers operated a downstream migrant trap just upstream of the Winchuck River estuary. The OSCF have operated the trap for the past 20 years, doing work that would otherwise be unaccomplished under current district staffing levels. The data obtained from this project is used by ODFW staff to assist in managing fall Chinook Salmon.

The 2024 Winchuck River trapping season concluded with 57 days of trap operation and an estimated 65,584 fall Chinook Salmon migrated past the smolt trap site.

Satellite Tagged Chetco Winter Steelhead

Staff from the Rogue Watershed placed 10 satellite tags on winter steelhead kelts from the Chetco and Rogue River. The Lower Rogue STEP biologist organized an effort to have local volunteer angler catch steelhead using the Chetco angler broodstock program network. With assistance of a few skilled anglers 5 healthy kelts were tagged. The kelts were released into the Winchuck estuary with most fish surviving the first few months. The volunteers involved look forward to the information collected from this effort.

HUNTLEY PARK SEINING

The Huntley Park Seining Project represents a continuation of a 49-year adult salmonid monitoring database. This project is conducted annually from July through October at Huntley Park on the lower Rogue River. The Huntley Park project is a high priority to the District and harvest managers. The Huntley Park data is used to monitor stock abundance, age composition and hatchery/wild ratio of summer steelhead, Coho Salmon, and fall Chinook Salmon. Later in the season, wild fall Chinook Salmon broodstock are collected for the Indian Creek Hatchery STEP facility. Several STEP and local volunteers participate every year, rain or shine.

CHETCO FISH SNOUT RECOVERY STATIONS

During the fall, two snout recovery stations were deployed to several Chetco River boat ramps. Volunteers solicited prizes for raffle to anglers that donated tagged snouts. Each station has cards available for anglers to fill out to include with the snout. If the card is filled out correctly and the snout has a tag the angler will be entered into drawings that will be conducted at the end of the season. Volunteers collected 78 snouts in 2023.

ROGUE FISH SNOUT RECOVERY STATION

The STEP Biologist and CAF volunteers monitored snout collection stations at various access points on the Lower Rogue. These stations were deployed throughout the Spring and fall Chinook Salmon season. The

stations received over 44 snouts and were well received by anglers as an effort to collect valuable harvest data on Indian Creek Hatchery and the Rogue spring Chinook Salmon hatchery program.

SOUTH COAST SPAWNING GROUND SURVEYS

Spawning ground surveys are vital forecasting tools for estimating fall Chinook Salmon runs in coastal streams. The Lower Rogue District is responsible for regularly surveying 27 separate surveys every 7-10 days throughout the spawning season. In certain conditions, consistently completing this on time every week can be a real challenge with district staff. Some of the more remote surveys that require greater travel time are especially hard to keep up with. For the 2023- 2024 fall Chinook Salmon spawning season, several members of the Lower Rogue Watershed Council volunteered their time to assist with surveying some of these more remote surveys. ODFW held several training sessions tailored to each survey to be sure the volunteers felt comfortable with the standardized sampling protocol. The volunteers were supplied with gear and were set loose to survey their assigned streams. Upon completion, the survey data was reported to the Assistant District Fish Biologist weekly where it was then reviewed and entered into the master database.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

STREAM ENRICHMENT

Volunteers with the Curry Anadromous Fishermen and the Oregon South Coast Fishermen assisted ODFW with placement of fall Chinook Salmon carcasses. Fall Chinook Salmon carcasses from Elk River Hatchery and Indian Creek STEP Hatchery were distributed in the Chetco River, Euchre and Brush Creeks and lower Rogue River tributaries.

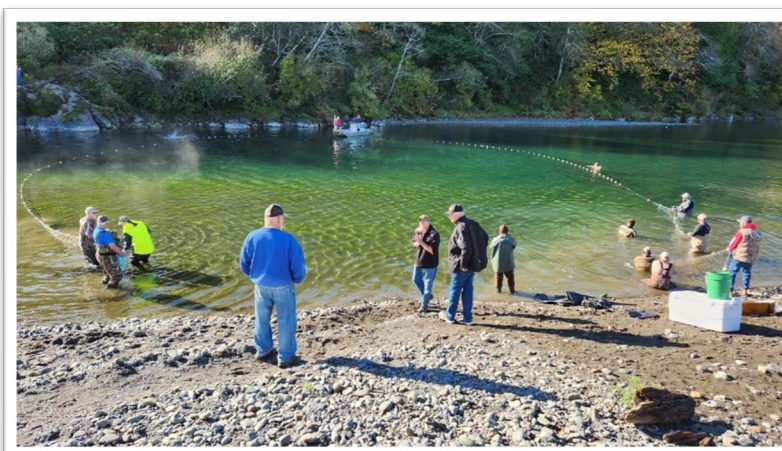
FISH SALVAGE

Oregon South Coast Fishermen volunteers salvaged stranded Chetco River fall Chinook Salmon juveniles from off-channel pools. Volunteers located pools that were no longer connected to the river and that had a high risk of dewatering over the summer months. Many fish salvaged were Chinook Salmon, some juvenile winter steelhead was observed in the catch.

FISH CULTURE

CHETCO RIVER BROODSTOCK COLLECTION

Volunteers and fishing guides assisted ODFW staff in collecting broodstock for the Chetco River hatchery programs. Chinook Salmon and steelhead were collected and transported to Elk River Hatchery.



Chetco Broodstock Collection

CHETCO CHROMER CHALLENGE

Members of the OSCF held the 5th annual Chetco Chromer Challenge. The Challenge was sponsored to increase participation in the annual angler steelhead broodstock effort. The group held a kickoff party at Chetco River Brewery to sign anglers up for the four week derby event. Throughout the derby anglers submitted pictures of the broodstock being deposited into the holding pens along the river. The pictures were used as raffle tickets for various prizes. The Chromer Challenge ended with 47 fish being donated for broodstock and an awards party at the brewery.

INDIAN CREEK STEP HATCHERY (LOWER ROGUE)

Wild Lower Rogue fall Chinook Salmon broodstock are collected, transported, and spawned at the Indian Creek Hatchery STEP facility. The resulting offspring are incorporated into a smolt program for supplementation of Lower Rogue Chinook Salmon stock. Fall Chinook Salmon are marked and reared to smolts by volunteers, and the full sized smolts are released into the Rogue River estuary in the late summer. In addition, coded wire tagging was canceled for the brood-year over concerns that taggers could not maintain adequate social distancing.

SCHOOLS AND GROUPS THAT WORK WITH LOWER ROGUE STEP

The following is a list of schools, school districts, organizations, agencies, and other groups that work with STEP. Due to the large number of participants, it is possible that some groups were inadvertently left off this list. Please contact (503) 947-6211 if your program has been left off this list.

Education	Organizations
Azalea Middle School, Brookings	I'm Hooked, Inc
Brookings Harbor Christian School, Brookings	KCIW Curry Coast Community Radio, Brookings
Brookings-Harbor High School, Brookings	KURY Radio, Brookings
Driftwood School, Port Orford	Lower Rogue Watershed Council, Gold Beach
Gold Beach High School, Gold Beach	Oregon South Coast Fishermen, Brookings
Kalmiopsis Elementary School, Brookings	Oregon Stewardship, Medford
Klamath Outdoor Science School, Klamath Falls	Port Orford Ocean Resource Team, Port Orford
Pacific High School, Port Orford	South Coast Watershed Council, Gold Beach
Riley Creek School, Gold Beach	Government
Organizations	City of Brookings
Curry Anadromous Fishermen, Gold Beach	Curry County
Curry Citizens for Public Lane Access, Gold Beach	Port of Brookings
Curry Sportfishing Association, Gold Beach	Port of Gold Beach

UPPER ROGUE STEP

Monica Magdaleno, STEP Biologist

Dan Van Dyke, District Fish Biologist

Frank Drake, Assistant District Fish Biologist

The Upper Rogue STEP District includes most of the Rogue Watershed, extending from the headwaters near Crater Lake downstream to Mule Creek near the community of Marial. Primary tributaries include Big Butte Creek, Little Butte Creek, Elk Creek, Bear Creek, Evans Creek, Grave Creek, the Applegate River, and the Illinois River. The Rogue Watershed has the largest human population of any coastal watershed in Oregon. Approximately 400,000 people live in the district, posing challenges for fish and wildlife resources but also providing many schools, service clubs, sportsman's clubs, and volunteers to assist in various STEP projects that educate citizens and improve fish habitat throughout the basin.

The diversity of fish species native to the Rogue is narrow, but the river has and continues to produce large numbers of salmon and steelhead. One species, the Coho Salmon, is listed as "Threatened" under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

The 2023-2024 saw an increase in participation with the Fish Eggs to Fry program with 41 schools participating across Jackson and Josephine Counties. Large community events in the fall of 2024 started to regain a following and some events had their largest turnouts ever. Great highlights still included acclimation of winter steelhead smolts in the Middle Rogue, with the successful net pen implementation on Jump off Joe Creek being one of the most intricate



Volunteers netting fish at Cole Rivers Hatchery outfall

and sought out volunteer projects. Monitoring efforts with winter upstream migrant hoop traps and spring outmigrant fry traps accounted for a substantial amount of volunteer hours of direct monitoring. Several projects in the winter and summer of 2024 continued to support the Rogue South Coast Multi-Species Conservation and Management Plan (RSP), including angler creel interviews, steelhead spawning surveys, and self-reporting angler logbooks. The volunteer operation of an adult weir near Cole Rivers Hatchery supported reductions in the proportion of hatchery origin spawners (pHOS) of spring Chinook Salmon, and a several weeklong pikeminnow angling derby addressed management actions called for in the Rogue Spring Chinook Conservation Plan. Carcass tosses, habitat projects, increased presence at community outreach events, and the fish eggs to fry program are all projects where the STEP biologist is making efforts to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into the Upper Rogue STEP.

SMALL STREAM, URBAN STREAM, INTERMITTENT STREAM PROJECTS

The Small Stream, Urban Stream, Intermittent Stream Project of monitoring and outreach continued to be a focal point of the STEP program in the Rogue Valley. This effort is aimed at the following: creating awareness of the fish resources using these streams, promote stewardship and protect habitat, gain additional fish distribution information, and develop interest and support for restoration actions on individual streams. The small stream, urban stream, and intermittent stream awareness theme is present in nearly every outreach event, monitoring activity, and habitat restoration undertaking that the Upper Rogue STEP coordinates and participates in. STEP also functions as a community advisor, with examples this year including proposing restoration planting projects for the City of Medford to increase shading in a cemented section of Lone Pine Creek. This would reduce drastic water temperature changes in known summer steelhead habitat.

Volunteers operate upstream migrant hoop traps to survey for fish use during winter. A total of 45 streams have been sampled with hoop traps since the start of the project in 2005. Many streams have been re-sampled following improvements to fish passage downstream such as Lazy Creek, Larson Creek, Anderson Creek, and Jones Creek. The trap data and restoration opportunities are communicated to the public through a variety of techniques including presentations, newspaper articles, and landowner mailings. The Upper Rogue District STEP biologist coordinates all aspects of the project: identifying sites; maintaining hoop traps; recruiting and training volunteers; writing brief summaries of survey results; and working to publicize the results within the community. The Siskiyou Field Institute (SFI) allowed ODFW to conduct over-winter hoop trapping on an unnamed tributary to Deer Cr. Six volunteers participated in trap installation, checks, and removal. Four of the volunteers are also SFI employees. A trap was installed on February 17, 2024, and trapped for 27 nights. One juvenile steelhead was captured on March 15, 2024, which was the final day of trapping. A total of 45 volunteer hours were donated to ODFW and the observation of steelhead on this stream increased the known distribution of the species by approximately ¼ mile. As a result of the documentation of fish use, the stream will be proposed as Essential Salmonid Habitat with the Department of State Lands and increase legal protections. ODFW is continuing partnership with SFI by conducting a large wood habitat project because of the trapping activities. This fall the large wood project was successfully completed, and staff are continuing to monitor these placements during winter flows.

FISH EGGS-TO-FRY PROGRAM: CLASSROOM INCUBATORS

In the Upper Rogue District, the Fish Eggs-to-Fry Program focuses on raising spring Chinook Salmon from the eyed-eggs stage to button-up fry. The fall of 2024 saw a return to teacher interest in classroom incubators.

Being one of the flagship educational programs offered through ODFW, an increase in school participation is a top priority to the Upper Rogue District. Several Title 1 schools are in Jackson and Josephine County and extra effort is being made to get more of these public schools involved through offering volunteer and equipment support. Over half of the schools participating in this program fall under the Title 1 category. A surprising number of rural Jackson County Schools participate in the program, but more effort is needed in Josephine County to bring those schools (particularly those in the Three Rivers District) into the program. Medford School District is also a top priority with numerous Title 1 schools on the docket for the coming year. Volunteer onboarding with Medford School District is one of the challenges the STEP biologist must

overcome with STEP volunteers to get them cleared to enter these schools, which requires an additional background check and sign up with the District. Some volunteers were not allowed to enter some classrooms in the Three Rivers District as that additional background check and screening was necessary even to drop off equipment and eggs. This year STEP saw a decrease in participation with schools in this district due to the additional security steps for the teachers and volunteers.

The Fish Eggs to Fry program continues to act as a springboard for many other programs such as Salmon Watch, salmon dissections, Stream Scene, the Small Stream, Urban Stream, Intermittent Stream Program, and Angler Education in the Rogue Valley. The STEP biologist routinely shares opportunities, videos, anecdotes, and partner organization resources to teachers through this program. Additionally, all teachers have been outfitted with native species of the Rogue posters, river restoration continuum posters, and egg stage displays. The Upper Rogue STEP biologist continued to bring volunteers up to speed to help deliver better presentations to schools upon delivery day (of eggs), as well as offering new teachers a step by step on setting up their aquariums and troubleshooting any issues with equipment.

BEAR CREEK SALMON FESTIVAL AT NORTH MOUNTAIN PARK, ASHLAND

This event was the 17th annual Bear Creek Salmon Festival at North Mountain Park in Ashland.

Typically, 300 to 400 people attend this event, being the largest outreach event STEP participates in, but this year's turn out brought over 1,000 people and 27 different vendors. This event is a great opportunity to educate the local community about the salmon life cycle, environmental stewardship and community. STEP volunteers



helped set up the 400-gallon mobile aquarium and the Watchable Wildlife display that had two fall Chinook and two summer steelhead. A huge positive of this event was being able to point to the Chinook in the tank and explain that these fish are migrating up Bear Creek to spawn right now. This was a wonderful segway to additional discussion about our native fish and their habitat in the area.

SALMON WATCH

The STEP Biologist coordinated delivery of 46 fish carcasses for dissections with volunteer instructors, other district staff, and Cole Rivers Hatchery in September and October 2024. During these fieldtrips information was presented on the salmon life cycle, leading fish dissections and stressing the importance of healthy habitats on the Rogue River.

Dia del Niño

The STEP Biologist and District Fish Biologist participated in the Day of the Child outreach event organized by UNETE, a farmworker advocacy organization in the Rogue Valley. The event was well-attended and had several local community activists such as Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN), City of Medford Fire

Department, ACCESS Mobile Food Bank, and Pollinator Project Rogue Valley. This resulted in significant interaction with the community and was an opportunity to increase the diversity of the angling public in time for the Free Fishing Weekend in June. This celebration is to recognize the rights of children around the world. As of 2023 there were about 43 million children that were displaced or refugees.

ROGUE PIKEMINNOW ROUNDUP

Encouragement of angler caught mortality of non-local Pikeminnow was called for as Management Action 9.4 in the Rogue Spring Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan of 2007 and Comprehensive Review of 2018. This was the 6th year of the Rogue Pikeminnow Roundup, which is a several weeklong derby where participants catch non-local Pikeminnow and enter their catch via online submissions or weigh their catch in-person at 2 check stations operated by volunteers. Online submissions were also a major portion of the contest. Gift cards, passes, and other prizes were donated by Blackbird Shopping Center of Medford, Sportsman's Warehouse of Medford, Bradbury's Gun & Tackle, U-Save Gas & Tackle, Rogue Fly Shop, Sawyer Station, and Josephine County Parks Department. Fish were

donated to Wildlife Images Rehabilitation Center, who also generously allowed their facility to operate a check station and assist volunteers. Flyers and posters were distributed to local businesses and boat ramps throughout Jackson and Josephine Counties. Care was taken to craft public talking points that also emphasized the need to conserve Klamath Small-Scale Suckers (a look alike species), to only harvest Pikeminnow in the Rogue, and tips on locating and catching fish. One participant brought in over 69 pounds of pikeminnow and had the largest fish at 20 inches! The big fish for youth came in at 20 inches! This program continues to grow in popularity and results.

PROJECT TECHNICAL ADVISING

The STEP biologist assisted district staff with planning a planting project along Lone Pine Creek with the City of Medford and a new housing development. STEP purchased about 150 native plants for this project and will utilize volunteers and North Medford High School students to assist with planting and monitoring. The plan consists of planting native trees and shrubs along a cemented section of Lone Pine Creek that is known to have summer steelhead. Previous water temperature monitoring projects, conducted by North Medford High School students, showed drastic temperature changes above and below this section of the creek. Goals of this project would be to increase shading, decrease temperatures during the summer in know native fish habitat, and provide educational opportunities to the local community and schools.



Pikeminnow check station

Inventory and Monitoring

In 2005, ODFW implemented a program of increased monitoring and outreach on small streams, urban streams, and intermittent streams of the Rogue Watershed. A key component is surveying for the relative abundance and occupancy of salmon and trout using hoop traps during the winter high flow periods. The information is collected to inform the public about the importance of these small streams as refuge for salmonids during winter storms. To date, 45 streams have been sampled. In spring of 2018, STEP began expanding its monitoring efforts to also include more outmigrant fry trapping on mostly summer steelhead streams. Traditionally, outmigrant fry-trapping had occurred on streams impacted by irrigation withdrawals or unscreened diversions. These trap and haul efforts still occur on some streams and the Upper Rogue STEP biologist and volunteers are always on the lookout for another opportunity.

Monitoring fisheries and collecting creel data on local fisheries is also a great way to utilize volunteer resources. STEP did angler creel and collection of trout genetics on the Upper Rogue with the assistance from volunteers.

HOOP TRAPS

Rogue's Holy Water Trout fishery and the development of a logbook program in the upper Rogue and Applegate has been a focus of the Upper Rogue STEP's fishery monitoring program this past year. Additionally, STEP did angler creel.

This year two streams were trapped using two hoop traps. These sites were Bummer Creek (Merlin) and an unnamed tributary of Deer Creek (Selma).

Bummer Creek trap was run for 27 days between February and March. It was checked by 5 volunteers a total of 39 times and juvenile trout, steelhead, and Coho Salmon. These initial results prompted further investigation of current anadromous fish use on Bummer Creek, a tributary of the Jump-Off-Joe sub-basin.

The unnamed tributary of Deer Creek is on the Siskiyou Field Institute (SFI) property, and they allowed ODFW to conduct over-winter hoop trapping. Six volunteers participated in trap installation, checks, and removal. Four of the volunteers are also SFI employees. A trap was installed on February 17, 2024, and trapped for 27 nights. One juvenile steelhead was captured on March 15, 2024, which was the day the trap was removed for the season. The observation of steelhead on this stream increased the known distribution of the species by approximately ¼ mile and this stream will be proposed as Essential Salmonid Habitat with the Department of State Lands and increase legal protections. ODFW is continuing partnership with SFI by conducting a large wood habitat project because of the trapping activities.

OUT-MIGRANT FRY TRAPPING

STEP's trapping efforts consisted of monitoring Morris Creek, Galls Creek, Fruitdale Creek and Sam's Creek to look at fish production during ongoing drought conditions. The data collected will help illustrate what the general trend of outmigration is on each respective creek before and after restoration projects may be implemented.

During the spring of 2024, 8 STEP volunteers contributed approximately 308 hours to outmigrant fry trapping on 4 streams, from April through June. Southern Oregon again experienced drought conditions for most of the winter but did have a wet spring and early summer. Trapping observations in 2020-2022 on these small streams indicated the need for continued fish passage improvements on streams of the Middle Rogue.

Galls Creek is likely one of the top six producers of summer steelhead, as identified by Fred Everest in the 1970's. Despite the challenges of passage under the Interstate-5 culvert at its mouth, the stream produces a quite a few fish. Galls Creek trap operated for 90 nights between May and June and was checked by volunteers 34 times. Total emigrant catch was 1 cutthroat trout smolt, 2,685 trout fry, and 60 steelhead.

Trapping on Sams Creek was fair this year, with a total of 122 trout fry, 14 steelhead fry, 13 coho smolts, and 2 speckled dace trapped over 52 nights.

Fruitdale Creek has artificially augmented flow during the April-October irrigation season which does not always prompt juvenile fish to emigrate at the same time as surrounding tributaries of similar drainage area. A significant fish passage barrier is located near the mouth of Fruitdale Creek and is currently on the list for improvements. The trap was run for 62 nights from May through June and checked 23 times. Total emigrants catch was 77 trout fry and 1 steelhead fry.

This was the first year a fry trap was setup on Morris Creek, and there is not much fish distribution information about this creek. There are concerns with a potential culvert being a barrier downstream of the trap. A total of 20 trout fry were tallied over 65 trap days and 24 checks by volunteers. At this trapping site, volunteers were instructed to take a water temperature measurement during each visit. The lowest recording was 8 degrees Celsius, and the highest reading was 16 degrees Celsius. Even with the ambient temperature exceeding 80 degrees Fahrenheit the creek maintained relatively cool temperatures. Given the low numbers tallied, the culvert could be an impassible barrier part of the year and could limit fish access to optimal habitat conditions. The STEP biologist and volunteers will continue monitoring at this site and address any passage issues that could lead to improvements.

HOLY WATER VOLUNTEER CREEL:

The Holy Water Trout fishery is a 0.75-mile stretch of the Rogue River between the Cole Rivers Fish Hatchery blocker dam and William L. Jess Dam (Lost Creek Lake). This stretch of water is stocked with triploid rainbow trout and has minimal natural production. This section of the Rogue River has received the moniker of the "Holy Water" for the famed larger rainbow trout that it produces. The Rogue Flyfishers (RFF) have contributed to monitoring, creel, and propagation activities with STEP on this popular fishery. The RFF have operated voluntary angler creel reporting stations to evaluate catch per unit effort, angler demographics, and recovery of tagged fish information. Volunteers continue monitoring efforts alongside STEP as this is an ongoing enhancement project.

DEVELOPMENT OF SUMMER STEELHEAD GUIDE LOGBOOK:

In the development of the RSP, a need for monitoring the early run component of the Rogue's summer Steelhead population was identified. Historical Gold Ray Dam records correlated well with returning numbers of hatchery and wild fish to Cole Rivers Hatchery. With the dam removal at Gold Ray, the summer steelhead logbooks were created and given to anglers to record their catches through September 15th. Considerable effort has been put in to build relationships with anglers and guides to meet management goals outlined in the RSP. A total of 34 anglers were given logbooks, but a reoccurring issue is trying to track down each logbook given out. The STEP biologist and other district staff are working together to improve this system to increase data along with participation from the angling community. Along with the logbooks, the STEP biologist conducted summer steelhead creel checks at popular boat ramps.

STEELHEAD SPAWNING GROUND SURVEYS

Additional monitoring efforts to contribute to the goals of the RSP, the STEP biologist annually conducts winter steelhead spawning ground surveys. Two spawning ground surveys are conducted on Jump off Joe

Creek and Quartz Creek to help monitor pHOS (percent hatchery origin on spawning grounds) which is needed for the winter steelhead acclimation project expansions in the Middle Rogue. Additional surveys and protocols are being explored to help meet the pHOS goals and monitoring requirements of the RSP.

Additional spawning surveys are also conducted on the North and South Forks of Little Butte Creek to document activity of spring Chinook Salmon in the upper portions of the tributary to the Rogue River. This information helps inform district management activities.

BEAR CREEK SUMMER FISH DISTRIBUTION SURVEYS

Volunteers performed spot checks for fish presence in Bear Creek in various locations between Ashland and the Rogue River. This is an important opportunity as it is a way to measure the progress of habitat protection and restoration in the urbanized watershed. Volunteers assisted STEP and other district staff using one person sein nets and electrofishers in designated stream reaches. Two volunteers assisted district staff with surveying 10 different reaches of Bear Creek. Everyone was given a one-person seine and spent 10-20 minutes taking passes with the net. Certain reaches had 70-100% native species while the dewatered and lower sections of Bear Creek had 12-29% native fish present. Water temperatures were also collected at each stream reach and even in lower sections being surveyed later in the day, still produced cool temperatures.

Habitat Improvement

RIPARIAN RESTORATION

A small unnamed tributary at Blue Heron Park was severely burned during the September 2020 Alameda Drive fire. The STEP biologist and district staff visited this restoration site to cut back invasive plants and take count of native plants. Watering efforts continued throughout the summer as yearly maintenance of this site is needed, especially during the warmer months. The STEP biologist was approached by Plant Oregon to collaborate on maintaining several restoration sites along the Bear Creek Greenway.

STREAM NUTRIENT ENRICHMENT

During the 2023/2024 winter volunteers participated in placing 4,000 pounds of coho carcasses. 18 volunteers from the Middle Rogue Steelheaders and Southern Oregon Fly Fishers worked together to place carcasses along 4 miles of tributaries to the Middle Rogue.



Carcass toss event.

TEMPORARY FISH PASSAGE IMPROVEMENTS

Anderson Creek: IN 2019, a temporary wooden fish ladder was constructed by a member of the Southern Oregon Flyfishers with support from the Upper Rogue STEP biologist and district staff. This site has been continually maintained by volunteers who help repair plywood boards, remove debris, and adjusting sandbags to keep water flowing through the ladder. Passage improvements have been recorded from hoop trap operations upstream of the ladder.

SF Big Butte: A fish ladder was constructed to allow for fish passage, but it currently does not meet passage requirements. STEP volunteers do spot checks and take photos of current conditions to ensure there is

enough water in the ladder for passage. This year, volunteers did 11 different checks and spent around 2 hours per trip.

Fish Culture

EMERGENCY FISH SALVAGE

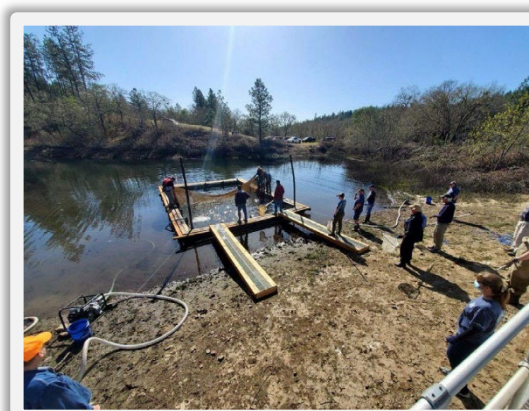
Emergency fish salvages occur throughout the Upper Rogue District every year. Many of the tributaries of the Rogue, Applegate, and Illinois Rivers are impacted by irrigation withdrawals and others seasonally dry up. The STEP biologist and volunteers prioritize creeks that see the most impacts from anthropogenic effects, especially near culverts that rapidly become isolated. District staff and STEP continuously work with Grants Pass Irrigation District (GPID) to coordinate salvage operations around the time pools would become isolated. Two creeks that are greatly impacted by the shut off from GPID are Savage and Fruitdale Creek. The STEP biologist, district staff, and volunteers spent several days performing spot checks at multiple locations and using hand seines to remove trout/steelhead from stranded pools. A total of 800 native species from Pacific Lamprey to Coho, were successfully relocated to the mainstem Rogue during STEP's and the districts salvaging efforts. Spot checks on known creeks that strand fish started in June when the ambient temperatures started to increase. During one of these checks on West Fork Trail Creek, the STEP biologist spotted a Western Pond Turtle. This information and photos were given to the Non-Big Game Conservation Biologist, and this marked the first sighting of pond turtles since 2001.



Fish Salvage Volunteer

WINTER STEELHEAD SMOLT ACCLIMATION-MIDDLE ROGUE

This spring marked the ninth year for acclimating winter steelhead smolts in the Grants Pass area. Acclimating smolts is critical for maximizing harvest opportunities for adult hatchery winter steelhead in the Rogue basin. These smolts are held in various locations within the Rogue basin for 7-10 days and are fed by volunteers daily. Within the upper Rogue, there are three different locations utilized for holding the smolts before being released into the mainstem. To successfully acclimate and release up to 35,000 smolts, the upper Rogue STEP program heavily relies on contributions from local volunteer groups, such as the Middle Rogue Steelheaders.



Winter steelhead acclimation net pen

This release site requires the help of over 20 volunteers as smolts are netted out of the holding area, loaded into a hatchery truck, and driven downstream to the release site. A total of three truck loads were needed to transport the 7,500 steelhead smolts without causing stress or mortality. This site received two different

“batches” of fish within the month of April, totaling to 15,000 smolts successfully being acclimated and released. Over 40 volunteers contributed to the success of this year’s acclimation project.

ROGUE SPRING CHINOOK BROODSTOCK COLLECTION AND PHOS REDUCTION AT COLE RIVERS HATCHERY

With the implementation of Management Strategy 9.5 of the Rogue Spring Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan, the main priority of this volunteer project’s is to minimize risk from hatchery fish on naturally produced spring Chinook Salmon. In years with small returns to the hatchery, this trap and volunteer support heavily contributes to the broodstock quota. This was the 8th year STEP volunteers assisted with the construction, operation, and takedown during smolt releases and the end of the trapping season. There was a total of 94 unique volunteers who contributed 200 hours to ensure the success of this project. Volunteers were tasked to stand in the trap hand netting fish, standing on the hatchery truck, data recording and communicating with one another for each load of the hatchery truck. A total of 569 hatchery spring Chinook and summer steelhead adults were removed from the trap. The Upper Rogue STEP volunteers have contributed heavily to this project and assist the district with meeting management goals.

Schools and Groups that work with the Upper Rogue STEP

The following is a list of schools, school districts, organizations, agencies, and other groups that worked with STEP in 2022/2023. Due to the large number of participants, it is possible that some groups were inadvertently left off this list. Please contact 541-826-8774 if your program has been left off this list.

<i>Education</i>	<i>Organizations</i>
Bellview Elementary, Ashland	Applegate Partnership Watershed Council
Helman Elementary, Ashland	Crater Bass
TRAILS Outdoor School- Ashland	Southern Oregon Women Outdoors
Madrone Trail Charter School, Central Point	Coastal Conservation Association
Sams Valley Elementary, Central Point	Oregon State Extension Service
Jewett Elementary, Central Point	Rogue River Watershed Council
Central Point Elementary, Central Point	Middle Rogue Steelheaders
Vineyard Christian School- Grants Pass	Rogue Flyfishers
Crater Lake Academy, Eagle Point	Southern Oregon Flyfishers
Patrick Elementary School, Gold Hill	Grants Pass Irrigation District
Lake Creek Learning Center, Lake Creek	Medford Irrigation District
The Valley School, Medford	Rogue River Valley Irrigation District
Logos Charter School, Medford	Talent Irrigation District
Abraham Lincoln Elementary, Medford	Save the Phoenix Wetlands
Kennedy Elementary, Medford	North Mountain Park Nature Center
Orchard Hill Elementary, Medford	Southern Oregon Bassmasters
St. Mary’s School (high school), Medford	
Roosevelt Elementary, Medford	<i>Government</i>
Wilson Elementary, Medford	Ashland Parks & Recreation Department
Jackson Elementary, Medford	Bureau of Land Management – Grants Pass
Lone Pine Elementary School, Medford	BLM/Forest Service - Medford Interagency Office

Oak Grove Elementary, Medford	City of Ashland
Griffin Creek Elementary, Medford	City of Central Point
Cascade Christian High School, Medford	City of Medford
South Medford High School, Medford	Medford Water Commission
Phoenix Elementary, Phoenix	Jackson County Parks
Prospect Charter School, Prospect	Josephine County Parks
Ruch Outdoor School, Jacksonville	City of Gold Hill
Shady Cove Elementary, Shady Cove	City of Grants Pass
Talent Elementary, Talent	City of Phoenix
Table Rock Elementary, White City	City of Talent
Allen Dale Elementary, Grants Pass	Rogue Valley Council of Governments
Grants Pass High School, Grants Pass	Rogue Valley Sewer Services
Comet Academy- Gold Hill	
Manzanita Elementary, Grants Pass	
Rogue River High School, Grants Pass	
Sunny Wolf Charter School, Wolf Creek	
Fleming Middle School- Grants Pass	
St Anne School- Grants Pass	
Fruitdale Elementary- Grants Pass	

EAST REGION

EASTERN OREGON STEP

Jennifer Luke, STEP Biologist

Eastern Oregon District Biologists

The Eastern Oregon STEP program is administered by the ODFW High Desert and Northeast regions. These regions together cover the entire state east of the Cascades. This area includes the following major watersheds: Deschutes, Klamath, Malheur, Malheur, Lake, John Day, Umatilla, Grande Ronde, and Owyhee.

The STEP Biologist and local volunteers work with ODFW districts and hatcheries to identify specific projects requiring volunteer recruitment, supervision, or training. Project definition and direction come from the individual fish management districts and are based on the annual needs.

The STEP program focuses its efforts on monitoring trout populations, conducting aquatic education programs, stocking trout and salmon, and restoring fish habitat.

Volunteers assist with a variety of surveys including electro-fishing, trap netting, spawning surveys, snorkel surveys, hook and line surveys and zooplankton sampling. ODFW fish biologists utilize information gathered from these surveys to evaluate, monitor fish species, and meet fish management objectives.

Activities involving schools, teacher education, and public education about fish populations and their habitats are a high priority for the Eastern Oregon STEP district. STEP volunteers share their knowledge of both fishing and conservation and their involvement fosters the next generation of conscientious anglers and conservationists.

EDUCATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

KOKANEE KARNIVAL YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAM

Kokanee Karnival Youth Education Program continues to be a popular education program for Deschutes, Jefferson and Crook County elementary students. It is an annual program and began in 1998. This program includes classroom activities as well as field trips to learn about salmon, trout, and their habitat. Students may also tour a hatchery and attend a spring fishing clinic.

During the 2023-2024 school year 310 students participated in the “Comprehensive” Kokanee Karnival Program in which teachers signed up for classroom activities such as raising trout (Fish Eggs to Fry), basic trout biology class (dissection) and Angler Education. They also participate in field trips to an ODFW fish hatchery and observe kokanee salmon spawning in the Metolius and Upper Deschutes rivers. The final field trip is the Shevlin Pond angling clinic. Volunteers from Central Oregon Flyfishers and Sunriver Anglers contributed 850 hours hosting these fishing clinics and aquatic investigation field trips for fifth graders.

Partners for the Kokanee Karnival Youth Education Program include STEP, Central Oregon Flyfishers, Sunriver Anglers, and the Deschutes National Forest. The STEP Biologist serves on the Kokanee Karnival Steering Committee, coordinates portions of the program, and provides training, technical assistance, and volunteer recruitment. The partners hope to grow the program and increase volunteer participation.

In 2023-2024, the STEP Biologist prepared activities and materials for the Trout Dissections, Fish Eggs-to-Fry, Angler Education and Kokanee Karnival classroom presentations.

METOLIUS POND: YOUTH ANGLING POND AND CHINOOK SALMON ACCLIMATION

The ODFW owned Metolius Pond, a STEP Youth Angling Education Site, is used for stream study, angling and smolt acclimation. On site, there is an ADA accessible path, volunteer host site, gravel parking area, ADA parking available, picnic tables and restroom. The small half- acre pond opened to youth angling for its seventh season in 2024.

The shallow creek, the springs and the meadow provide an excellent location for students to perform stream studies. In October, hundreds of kokanee salmon spawn in the creek. Local school students from Black Butte School can walk to the site, where they conduct water quality sampling, stream studies, and fly-fishing lessons. As part of the Kokanee Karnival Program, Redmond and Terrebonne schools participate in an aquatic investigation during the kokanee spawning season.

The goal of this site is to provide access to a safe and easy place for families to fish. The pond has been great success and this year it provided fishing opportunity for many children and families.

It also provides safe access to a unique area where Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program volunteers can continue to conduct field trips and expand fisheries and watershed education programs. For example, the

Central Oregon Flyfishers Club, with the support of STEP, hosted their annual fly-fishing camp for youth at the Metolius Pond. The Flyfishing Collaborative also hosted an event for foster children at Metolius Pond.

Metolius Pond is also used to acclimate Chinook Salmon smolts as part of the Salmon Reintroduction Program in the Metolius River. In 2018, as part of a trial, 2,000 Chinook Salmon smolts were acclimated in net pens. The 2018 trial acclimation was successful and many of the acclimated smolts were later detected at the Round Butte Dam Selective Water Withdrawal Facility. This year 4,000 smolts were acclimated in the pond with very little mortality during acclimation.

The STEP Biologist oversees operations at Metolius pond, including supervision of the volunteer host who resides at the site from May through October.

OUTREACH EVENTS

The STEP Biologist participated in salmon and trout related outreach activities for students of all ages. The STEP Biologist presented information or provided materials for events sponsored by the following events: COF fly-fishing kids workshop at Metolius Pond, Kokanee Karnival Streamside Field trips, Trout Unlimited Stream Ecology field trips, Steelhead Biology classes (dissections), and presentations at fishing club meetings.



Youth field trip

INVENTORY AND MONITORING

EAST, PAULINA, LAVA LAKE INVASIVE TUI AND BLUE CHUB CONTROL AND MONITORING

Trout populations in three popular fishing destinations will deteriorate if invasive chub go unchecked. Unfortunately, these lakes cannot be treated with rotenone due to thermal springs and/or sheer size of these waterbodies. As part of a partnership between ODFW-STEP, fishing clubs and resort owners, a chub control plan was developed in 2010. The Restoration and Enhancement program awarded grant funds to Oregon State University Cascades to support the chub removal project and high lakes. The STEP Biologist, OSU Fish & Wildlife students, and volunteers remove chub with large fyke nets. In 2024, the chub were removed from East and Lava Lakes during spring and summer when chub spawn in shoal areas. In 2024, the STEP Biologist managed the chub removal and monitoring operation in East Lake. Lava Lake resort owner and the STEP Biologist oversaw the chub removal operation at Lava Lake.

Sampling of trout from these lakes determine condition factors and relative weights. Trout sampling results from East Lake show trout continue to remain fair to good condition compared to very poor conditions observed prior to removal in 2010. Approximately 12,000 lbs of spawning chub were removed from East Lake this year. East and Paulina Lakes continue to be very popular with anglers in 2024, however due to two years of low water in East Lake, and the inability for anglers to launch large boats, angling pressure has been much less in 2023-2024.

In 2024, Lava Lake's water quality improved with fewer algae blooms and increased recharge from the aquifer. Trout populations also improved. We hope to continue chub removal work on East, Paulina and Lava Lakes to restore these trout fisheries.

CROOKED RIVER REDBAND TROUT ANNUAL POPULATION ESTIMATE

ODFW district biologists, with the help of volunteers, sample redband trout and whitefish below Bowman Dam on the Crooked River. This seven-mile stretch of river can be a very productive trout fishery, and angling is popular year-round. The survey is conducted annually because the population is prone to decline due to water flows and potentially gas bubble disease. The sampling effort takes 5 days, and each day at least 3 biologists and 3 volunteers are necessary to complete the survey. During sampling, fish are stunned and netted so biologists can mark for recapture, record size, condition, and abundance. Volunteers assist with all aspects of the survey, but primary duties are to release marked fish above the sampling area. The population assessment estimates the number of redband trout and mountain whitefish greater than 8-inches long per river mile. The information gathered is provided to the public.

CRANE PRAIRIE RESERVOIR HATCHERY REDBAND TROUT DIET STUDY

ODFW District stocks hatchery redband trout annually in Crane Prairie Reservoir. Due to ESA listed spotted frog in the area, biologists are examining diets of hatchery trout to evaluate potential trout predation on the frog. Thirty volunteers angled and caught trout for ODFW, and district biologists collected and processed trout stomachs for diet analysis. Trout carcasses were donated to High Desert Museum to provide food for eagles and otters in captivity. The final report will be available in 2025.

SPAWNING GROUND SURVEYS – UPPER DESCHUTES & METOLIUS RIVERS

Volunteers are paired with biologists and trained to identify redband and bull trout redds. Redband spawning ground surveys are conducted from December through May in the Metolius River. Upper Deschutes River (starting at the headwaters) surveys are conducted in May. In the fall, bull trout redd surveys are conducted in six tributaries of the Metolius. Volunteers assist biologists with these surveys, and it provides valuable information about local native trout populations.

CHINOOK AND STEELHEAD SMOLT ACCLIMATION- REINTRODUCTION ABOVE PELTON DAM

Volunteers assisted ODFW biologists with smolt acclimation in Whychus, Crooked and Metolius basins. As part of the reintroduction effort of Chinook and steelhead above Pelton/Round Butte dams, smolts are acclimated at four different STEP sites. Volunteers assisted with feeding, recording data, transporting and releasing smolts. Volunteers also assisted with PIT tagging smolts in order to evaluate survival and migration to the selective water withdrawal at Pelton Dam.

FISH CULTURE

HIGH LAKES FISH STOCKING

Sixty volunteers backpacked trout into three high Cascade fishing lakes: Doris Lake, Blow Lake, and Lucky Lake. Altogether, these lakes received 15,000 trout fingerlings. Each volunteer carried 25-40 pounds of water and fish to each lake. This supplemental trout stocking will provide a fishery for anglers willing to hike to these lake destinations. Sampling conducted in 2024, showed good to excellent trout growth in all three lakes, with sampled fish ranging from in length from 8-15 inches.

FISH EGGS-TO-FRY

Classrooms from all over Eastern Oregon, including Bend, Klamath Falls, Madras, Culver, Hines, John Day, Umatilla, Halfway, Ontario and Condon raised trout in classroom incubators and used STEP publications (*Fish Eggs to Fry* and *The Educator's Resource Guide for Hatching Salmon in the Classroom*). The STEP Biologist coordinated the classroom trout incubator projects. All Rainbow Trout were released in local ponds or reservoirs. Steelhead trout were released in the upper Crooked River basin.

SCHOOLS AND GROUPS THAT WORK WITH EASTERN OREGON STEP

The following is a list of schools, school districts, organizations, agencies, and other groups that work with STEP. Due to the large number of participants, it is possible that some groups were inadvertently left off this list. Please contact (503) 947-6211 if your program has been left off this list.



Classroom Fish Eggs to Fry

Education	Education
May Roberts Elementary, Ontario	Three Rivers School, Sunriver
Seven Peaks School, Bend	Silver Rail Elementary School, Bend
Hines Elementary, Hines	Saint Francis of Assisi School, Bend
Black Butte School, Camp Sherman	Sherman Elementary School, Grass Valley
Central Christian School, Redmond	Sisters Elementary School, Sisters
Chiloquin Junior & Senior High School, Chiloquin	Terrebonne Community School, Terrebonne
Condon Elementary School, Condon	Triad School, Klamath Falls
Crook County Middle School, Prineville	Vern Patrick Elementary School, Redmond
Culver High School, Culver	Grande Ronde Academy -LaGrande
Dayville School, Dayville	Enterprise Elementary - Enterprise
Brixner Elementary, Klamath	Union High School - Union
Pinehurst Library, Klamath	Dufur School - Dufur
Henley Elementary School, Klamath Falls	
Pine Eagle School, Halfway	Organizations
High Lakes Elementary School, Bend	Central Oregon Flyfishers, Bend
Trinity Lutheran School, Bend	Klamath County Fly Casters, Klamath Falls
Cascade Academy, Bend	Sunriver Anglers, Sunriver
John Tuck Elementary School, Redmond	Sunriver Resort, Sunriver
Lava Ridge Elementary School, Bend	YMCA of Klamath Falls
Pelican Elementary School, Klamath Falls	Government
Pine Ridge Elementary School, Bend	Sherman County
Ponderosa Middle School, Klamath Falls	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services

STEP ADMINISTRATION

Marty Olson, STEP/R&E Program Coordinator

Sara Hart, STEP/R&E Program Assistant

Mike Gauvin, Recreational Fisheries Program Manager

This reporting period saw minimal personnel changes for the program. Steve Emerson was on a Job Rotation for 6 months but was still able to provide limited assistance to the program. Sara Hart joined the program in January of 2024. The North Coast, Upper Rogue and North Willamette all hired new STEP Biologists in the spring of 2024.

EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Salmon Trout Advisory Committee (STAC) held two meetings:

- March 21st, in person meeting in Salem, OR.
- October 3rd & 4th, in person meeting in Newport, OR.

During this report period, one new member of the STAC was appointed to their first term. The nine STAC members are appointed by the Governor to represent the volunteer community in specific geographic areas of Oregon.

More information about STEP and the STAC board and meetings can be found on the STEP webpage located at <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/step/>.



Salmon & Trout Advisory Committee Board Members, Steve Janego and Roger Lindquist, on Field Tour to Salmon River Hatchery

Appendices

APPENDIX 1:

SALMON AND TROUT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (STAC)



Member	Region	Term	Term Expires
Michael Calhoun	North Coast	First Term	June 30, 2027
Jessica Eubank	Mid-Coast	First Term	May 20, 2026
Dave Grosjacques	Umpqua	Second Term	June 3, 2026
Mindie Wilson	Tenmile, Coos, Coquille	First Term	March 4, 2028
Roger Lindquist	Lower Rogue	First Term	June 30, 2025
Carl Cole	Upper Rogue	Second Term	June 3, 2026
Morgan Parks	North Willamette	Second Term	April 24, 2027
Rachel Ellison	South Willamette	First Term	May 26, 2026
Steve Janego	Eastern Oregon	Second Term	June 30, 2025

A maximum length-of-service policy of two 4-year terms was implemented in 1996.

List current as of December 12, 2024.

APPENDIX 2:



Statewide

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Tenmile, Coos and Coquille STEP

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Lower Rogue STEP

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Upper Rogue STEP

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North Willamette STEP

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Mid-Willamette STEP

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South Willamette STEP

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Eastern Oregon STEP

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List is current as of December 12, 2024.

