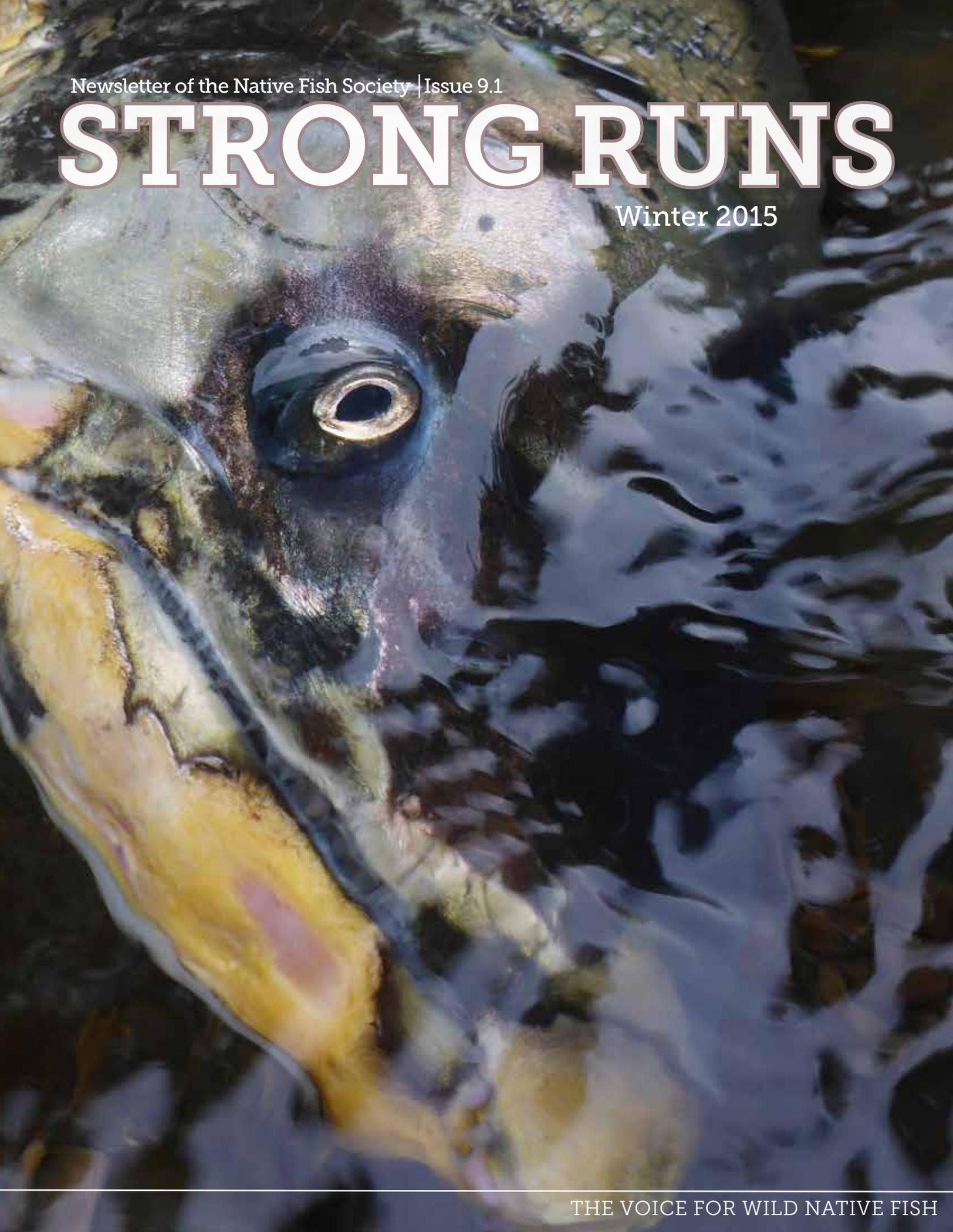


Newsletter of the Native Fish Society | Issue 9.1

STRONG RUNS

Winter 2015



THE VOICE FOR WILD NATIVE FISH



STRONG RUNS

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Native Fish Society is a tax-exempt, non-profit charitable organization.

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A Letter From the Board

WORDS BY
PETER TRONQUET,
BOARD
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&
ROB ELAM,
BOARD CHAIR

(ABOVE)
River Steward
Gathering 2014!

PHOTO:
Duncan Berry,
Salmon River
Steward

AS WE SIT DOWN TO WRITE THIS, WE CAN HEAR THE RAIN FALLING. The salmon sustaining winter lowland rains and mountain snow are falling throughout wild salmon country including, finally, California, which has been in the grasp of a desperate drought. It's a reminder of the diversity of wild salmonids across their range, and Native Fish Society's growing community of grassroots activists who are committed to saving them.

2015 is a year of much promise for NFS. And nothing holds more promise for Native Fish Society's mission of restoring wild fish in their natal streams, than our River Steward Program. While we stay involved with fish recovery on many fronts, and with different strategies, the River Steward program continues to grow in size, expertise and effectiveness. We can't think of a better model for recovering wild fish than local grass roots activists who care passionately about their home rivers. Supporting this program is our primary objective in 2015. NFS now has 80 stewards working in four states. We intend to fill key staff vacancies, with an emphasis on improving the scientific and political literacy of our stewards.

We re-organized the stewards under five experienced regional coordinators this year, who will be conduits to our library of scientific studies and generally provide a guiding hand as needed. For the first time, we have a southern regional manager living in Brookings, Oregon who has come up to speed quickly on the challenges to coastal wild fish populations in southern Oregon and northern California.

We continue to work on our key goals of harvest and hatchery reform. We are particularly concerned about the implementation of Oregon's Coastal

Management Plan approved this year; we are paying close attention to experimental spring Chinook hatchery introductions in Coos and Yaquina bays. We will closely watch the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's implementation of their suite of plans to recover wild Elk River fall Chinook, which the agency described in the Coastal Management Plan as non-viable. Likewise for South Umpqua spring Chinook, a population of only several hundred animals.

Thanks to hard work from River Steward Doug DeRoy, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife improved their system of low flow closures on California's Mendocino Coast, ensuring threatened wild steelhead are protected during prolonged low flows conditions. And we are working range-wide supporting projects from Puget Sound, to the Olympic Peninsula, across Oregon, on California's Smith and Eel rivers and beyond.

Kaitlin Lovell, an NFS Board member for seven years and co-chair for the last three years, resigned in November to pursue the office of Executive Director of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Kaitlin, an attorney, speaks from experience; she has been a tireless advocate for wild fish for many years and understands both the science and legal landscape associated with ESA-listed salmon and steelhead. We thank Kaitlin for her immense contribution to the mission of the Native Fish Society and wish her well as she applies her expertise to reversing the long decline of salmon populations throughout the northwest.

The Board of Directors thanks you all for your continued support. Wishing you the best in the New Year. 



PROTECT OUR RIVERS REJECT THEIR MINES



WORDS BY
DAVE LACEY
HUNTER CREEK
RIVER STEWARD

THE MINING MONSTER THAT THREATENS SOUTHERN OREGON’S public lands seems to be a more serious and long-term foe than previously envisioned.

Since my last report, I traveled to Washington, D.C. with a small, but amazing team of Oregonians to lobby agency heads and congressmen for the protection of Hunter Creek and Pistol River. We talked with key staffers within the Forest Service, BLM, the Council on Environmental Quality as well as Defazio, Merkley and Wyden’s staff members.

Kudos to American Rivers, KS Wild, Geos Institute, Oregon Wild, Native Fish Society and the Larch Company for the productive trip to the capitol.

Last month, Mark Sherwood (NFS), Ann Vileisis (Kalmiopsis Audubon) and I completed 3 outreach events with the League of Women Voters of Curry County. We presented on the ecological uniqueness of the Red Flat area, the destructive history of strip mining and underscored the importance of our region’s sustainable tourism industry, which has grown at 4.6%, even during the recession.

At the last League of Women Voters event in my hometown of Gold Beach, Obie Strickler, a geologist contracted by Red Flat Nickel Corporation, gave his presentation about the company’s “environmentally friendly” test drilling operation. As you might expect, Obie downplayed the threat that open-pit mining would have on the health of the ecosystem, fish and human communities living in Hunter Creek, Pistol River and Gold Beach.

My presentation on this issue continues to focus on the future that we as locals want for our community and how test drilling represents a real and alarming step toward full-scale mining. Ultimately, the communities of Brookings, Gold Beach and Port Orford were very supportive of our position and know that the best time to stop a mine is before it starts!

I truly appreciate the support of Mark, Jake, Peter Tronquet and the rest of the NFS team! We will keep up the fight against this foreign corporate threat to our watersheds. We will never quit. 

To learn more about this issue head to bit.ly/huntercreek

STAFFING UPDATE

THE RIVER STEWARD PROGRAM SAW SOME IN-HOUSE organizational changes this summer. Mark Sherwood, former River Steward Program Director and NFS staff since 2010, moved with his wife to Brookings, Oregon to fulfill their dream of living in a small coastal town in southern Oregon. Jake Crawford, former Illinois River Steward and Southern District Manager, moved to Portland, Oregon to take over as River Steward Program Director and run the program out of the Oregon City office.

We are excited for Mark and his new central location in the southern district, with boundaries running from the Umpqua system south to California’s Russian River. We are happy to retain him in his new role as Southern District Manager.

Native Fish Society is grateful to have such a committed team of staff and we welcome these two into their new roles and locations.

If you live in the southern district and are interested in becoming a River Steward, please contact Mark at mark@nativefishsociety.org, and if you live in the northern half of Oregon, or Washington and western Idaho, please contact Jake at jake@nativefishsociety.org or 503.496.0807.

11 MOST IMPROVED WILD FISH RIVERS 2014



WORDS BY
NATIVE FISH SOCIETY
STAFF, BOARD,
RIVER STEWARDS &
SUPPORTERS

(ABOVE)
John Day River.

PHOTO:
Marty Sheppard,
Sandy River Steward

(NEXT)
Map of 11 Most Improved
Wild Fish Rivers

MAP:
Jake Crawford,
River Steward Program
Director

Data Source: USGS, ESRI

WHILE OFTEN OVERSHADOWED, MANY RIVERS AND WILD FISH POPULATIONS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST are seeing dramatic improvements in their health thanks to the hard work of local groups, tribal communities, River Stewards and agencies. To celebrate these improvements, the Native Fish Society has created our (renamed, revamped and updated) list of the 11 Most Improved Wild Fish Rivers to showcase watersheds and wild, native fish populations that are experiencing a healthy resurgence.

Our list has a particular focus on watersheds that have recently benefitted from habitat restoration, hatchery reform, or regulation changes that support the protection and recovery of self-sustaining populations of wild, native fish. Every Fall, Native Fish Society staff members take a look back on the past year and consult with River Stewards, members, and agency contacts to whittle down the 11 Most Improved Rivers from a growing number of watershed contenders.

After a significant effort from our staff and River Stewards we are very proud to showcase these rivers and the science-based actions of countless organizations, agencies and individuals, many of whom are volunteers, to protect and restore wild, native fish across the region. Not surprisingly, Native Fish Society River Stewards actively work on half of this year's 11 Most Improved Wild Fish Rivers.

Selection criteria for our 11 Most Improved Wild Fish Rivers list includes:

1. A resurgence, or continuation, of self-sustaining populations of wild, native fish.
2. Hatchery reform that incorporates the best available science to minimize the impacts of hatchery fish on wild fish populations.
3. Habitat protections or improvements that will safeguard and rebuild wild, native fish populations into the future.
4. Harvest regulations that maximize spawner abundance and limit the recreational and commercial impacts to wild, native fish.

Let's celebrate the successes on these rivers together and promote the stewardship of all wild, native fish across the Pacific Northwest! 

11 MOST IMPROVED WILD FISH RIVERS 2014

1. Okanogan River – species: sockeye

By **Bill McMillan, Author + Advocate**

1. Improvement: international coordination on flow from dams to benefit wild fish
2. Ongoing Challenges: development of hatchery sockeye programs upstream of Osoyoos Lake; future decisions regarding Columbia/Snake flows from dams

An international collaboration occurred: 1) escapement objectives were increased to better realize the carrying capacity of sockeye spawning and rearing areas; 2) a Fish and Water Management Tool (funded by mitigation from Columbia PUD dams in Washington) began in 2004 with Okanogan basin dam flows altered to improve rearing in Osoyoos Lake and to reduce egg-to-fry losses in limited river spawning areas. Prior average sockeye returns of 30,000 leapt to 236,000 in 2008–2014 (nearly 500,000 in 2014). Almost 90% of this recovery has been wild sockeye from Osoyoos Lake rather than hatchery sockeye at Skaha Lake just upstream.

2. Rogue River – species: fall chinook and winter steelhead

By **Peter Tronquet Rogue River Steward, Board Member**

1. Improvement: dam removal, water quality improvements, habitat restoration
2. Ongoing Challenges: hatchery interactions, development, spring chinook and coho recovery

I am amazed that the upper Rogue River, from Lost Creek dam to Medford, continues to endure. Really more than endure, on the edge of prospering. The community seems to insist on it. Major dams have been replaced by pumps, irrigation barriers on important spawning tributaries will be removed within the next year, riparian restoration projects abound and wild salmon and steelhead swim through urban streams like Bear Creek. The lower river, from Graves Creek to the mouth, is wild and scenic. It has always been the basin jewel. But the upper river can now compete and I am proud of a community that is so committed to improving its home river.

3. East Fork Lewis – species: summer and winter steelhead

By **Steve Lent, Washougal River Steward**

1. Improvement: Wild Steelhead Gene Bank Designation: improved monitoring and angling regulation changes
2. Ongoing Challenges: habitat degradation, high summer water temperatures

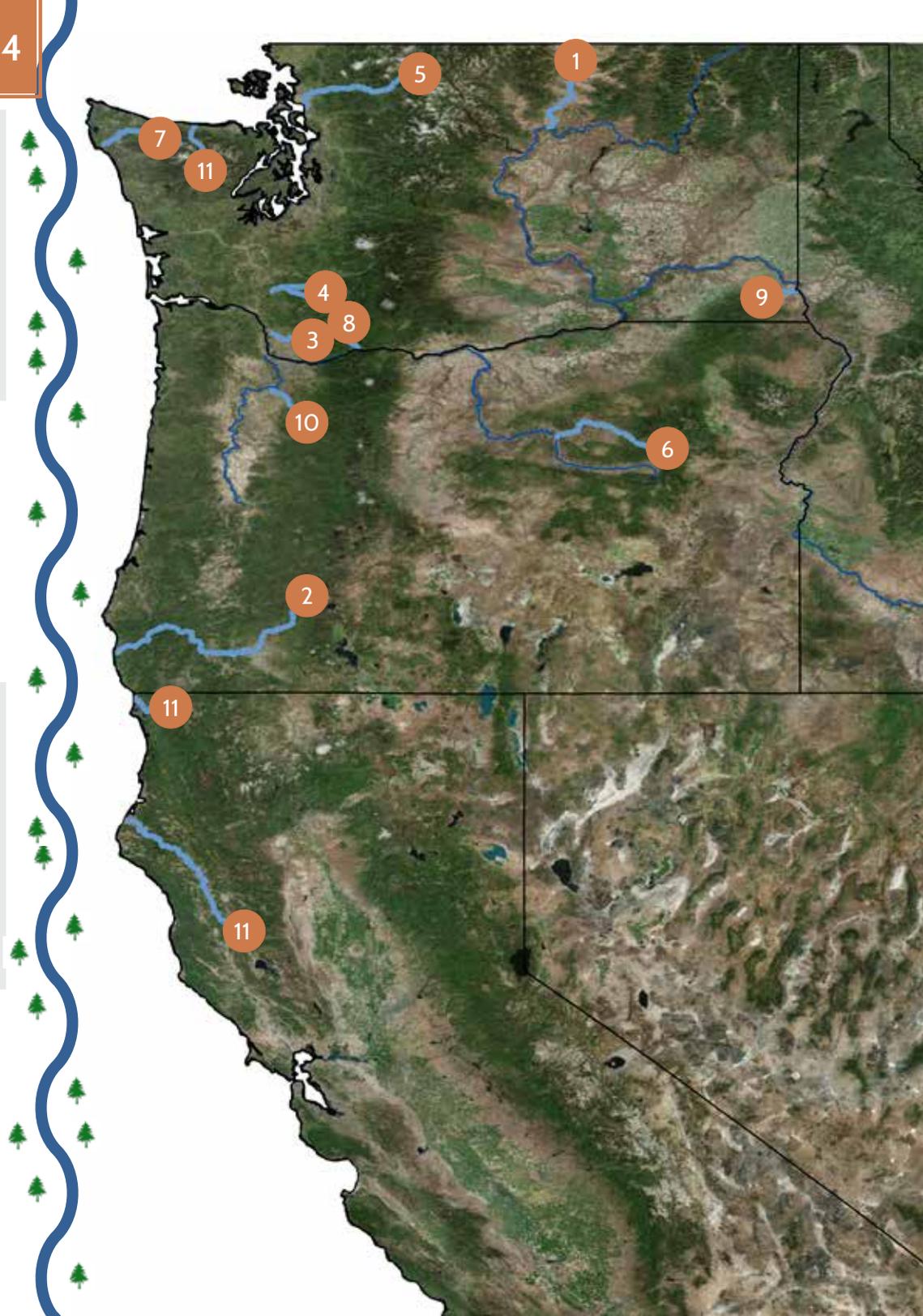
The East Fork of the Lewis River in southwest Washington is home to an historic run of giant, wild steelhead. In the days of yore, 20-plus-pound wild winter steelhead were not unheard of and the river was home to one of the few truly great summer steelhead runs in the lower Columbia River system. The recent, hard-won selection of the East Fork of the Lewis River as both a winter-run and summer-run Gene Bank river eliminates all hatchery plants, protects fish with new angling regulations and provides an all-wild salmonid future for this majestic river.

4. North Fork Toutle / Green River – species: winter steelhead

By **Peter Donahower, Mid-Columbia Regional Coordinator**

1. Improvement: Wild Steelhead Gene Bank Designation
2. Ongoing Challenges: passage/collection of spawning adults at North Fork Toutle Fish Collection Facility, design and function of Sediment Retention Structure, habitat degradation

The May 18, 1980 eruption of Mt St Helens generated massive debris flows that severely impacted the North Fork Toutle and its largest tributary, the Green. An entire generation of rearing smolts and spawning adults were wiped out and habitat in both watersheds was degraded by sediment and debris so extensively that these impacts remain to this day. Remarkably, by the mid-'80s, wild steelhead had begun to recover and by the '90s, the run was entirely composed of naturally produced fish. Gene Bank designation on these rivers ensures that these populations of wild steelhead will continue to recover without competition from hatchery influences.



5. Skagit River – species: winter and summer steelhead, sockeye, pink, chinook, coho, chum, rainbow trout, bull trout, sea-run cutthroat trout

By **Ed Megill & Ken Johnson Skagit River Stewards**

1. Improvement: 12-year moratorium on hatchery winter steelhead plants, habitat restoration
2. Ongoing Challenges: channelization, habitat degradation, harvest of resident rainbow and bull trout

The recent Wild Fish Conservancy lawsuit victory removed Chambers Creek winter steelhead plants on the Skagit for a 12-year moratorium. The Wild and Scenic Skagit has had a record number of pink salmon returning since 2009, 2011 and 2013 providing an excellent nutrient load for juvenile salmonids rearing in the river. Other recent accomplishments include finalizing the Fisher Slough Restoration project, which improved tidal marsh habitat. In 2009, fewer than 17,000 Chinook smolt utilized Fisher Slough, but following restoration, an estimated 39,000 Chinook smolt utilized this critical habitat in 2013. There have been a total of seven Skagit estuarine restoration projects encompassing over 750 acres, and the recent approval of the Barnaby Slough Floodplain Restoration Project will continue to restore major rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids.

6. Middle Fork John Day River – species: spring chinook and summer steelhead

By **Bill Bakke, Director of Science and Conservation, Founder of Native Fish Society**

1. Improvement: habitat restoration
2. Ongoing Challenges: water diversion, habitat degradation

For the past fifteen years the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon have had serious efforts underway in the John Day basin to restore wild native fish populations. Since the John Day River and its tributaries are managed for the protection and restoration of wild fish, the Warm Springs have focused their efforts on restoring spawning and rearing habitat through the purchase of their own properties as well as working with willing landowners on fish restoration projects on their lands. Projects with cooperating landowners include riparian protection and restoration as well as better fish passage and water management activities.

7. Sol Duc River– species: summer and winter steelhead

By **Jake Crawford, River Steward Program Director**

1. Improvement: designated Wild Steelhead Gene Bank
2. Ongoing Challenges: wild steelhead harvest

Washington's Sol Duc River boasts one of the largest populations of wild steelhead in the state. In 2012, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife established it as the first official Wild Steelhead Gene Bank, which began an ongoing departmental process to protect the genetic integrity of the state's most important wild steelhead populations. Prior to the designation, they were impacted by three separate hatchery steelhead programs. These impacts included reduced productivity, fitness and genetic diversity from non-native Skamania and Chambers Creek stock, residualization of hatchery juveniles, and a wild broodstock program which further imperiled depressed early-return wild steelhead populations. Gene Bank designation ended over 25 years of steelhead hatchery plants, protecting one of Washington's best wild winter steelhead rivers in perpetuity.

8. Wind River – species: summer steelhead

By **Peter Donahower, Mid-Columbia Regional Coordinator**

1. Improvement: designated Wild Steelhead Gene Bank, dam removal
2. Ongoing Challenges: Columbia River sport, commercial and tribal harvest

The Wind River hatchery steelhead program was suspended in 1997 and in 1998 naturally produced steelhead in the Lower Columbia Distinct Population Segment received ESA Threatened status. Removal of Hemlock (2009) and Martha Cr (2012) dams on Trout Cr, a major tributary, opened over 15 miles of spawning habitat. Summer steelhead smolt production in recent years has been 30,000 and numbers of returning adult spawners has increased dramatically. Historically, the Wind supported upwards of 2500 adult summer steelhead. Gene Bank designation assures that there will be no re-instituting of any hatchery steelhead programs, winter or summer, and gives this unique population of native, locally adapted steelhead room to continue their recovery.

9. Asotin Creek – species: summer steelhead

By **Keith Stonebraker, Clearwater River Steward**

1. Improvement: habitat restoration, weir exclusion of hatchery fish
2. Ongoing Challenges: Columbia River dams and fishery

Since my childhood, Asotin Creek lacked significant riparian habitat and the only observable shade was in the downtown City Park. Since then, habitat and management improvements by the multi-stakeholder Snake River Salmon Recovery Board have added woody structures to the creek, riparian fencing to segregate livestock, and built a weir to exclude hatchery summer steelhead. Stream temperatures have now cooled, the riparian condition is vibrant, fine sediment levels have dropped, there is less fecal coliform, and the stream now looks close to how it appeared after settlement. In recent years we've seen a run of wild adult summer steelhead peak at 1,400 fish; a major improvement from the estimated several dozen fish that returned prior to the changes.

10. Molalla River – species: winter steelhead, Oregon chub, rainbow and cutthroat trout

By **Tom Derry, Molalla River Steward**

1. Improvement: habitat restoration, fish passage, no hatchery steelhead plants, improved angling regulations, no kill on resident trout or steelhead
2. Ongoing Challenges: habitat degradation, interactions with hatchery spring chinook

Historically, the Molalla River suffered from industrial logging and excessive hatchery programs. In 1998, ODFW fish biologist Bob Hooten put an end to summer and winter steelhead hatchery programs. At the time, fewer than 200 wild winter steelhead remained in the Molalla. Since then NFS has played a major role in the recovery of all native wild fish on the Molalla by stopping gravel mines, improving the City of Molalla's wastewater issues, advancing regulation changes, creating wild steelhead sanctuary water by moving the angling deadline downriver, creel surveys, redd counts and adding nutrients to the river. Currently, the Molalla is being considered for both state and federal Wild and Scenic status. The best news is our wild winter steelhead population has grown into the largest run above Willamette Falls.

11. Honorable Mentions:

We wanted to celebrate the populations of wild, native fish and the improvements to these watersheds in the 11 Most Improved Wild Fish Rivers list, but the ongoing challenges were too significant at this time for them to make the 2014 list. To read the additional narratives on our Honorable Mention Watersheds by River Stewards Dustin Revel and Sunny Bourdon, and author Dylan Tomine, please visit our 11 Most Improved Wild Fish Rivers webpage at nativefishsociety.org.

Eel River – species: fall chinook, winter and summer steelhead

1. Improvements: flow regime improvements, discontinuation of hatchery program
2. Ongoing Challenges: juvenile predation by non-native pike minnow, water withdrawals, sedimentation from past logging, floods and dams

Elwha River – species: summer and fall chinook, coho, sockeye, chum, pink salmon, winter steelhead, cutthroat and bull trout

1. Improvements: largest dam removal in North America
2. Ongoing Challenges: hatchery production from facility built as part of the dam-removal project.

Smith River – species: winter steelhead, coho salmon, cutthroat trout

1. Improvements: habitat restoration, land acquisition
2. Ongoing Challenges: threats from industrial mining, hatchery fall chinook and winter steelhead hatchery programs

SALMONBERRY R.

OFF THE RAILS?



WORDS BY
IAN FERGUSSON,
SALMONBERRY
RIVER STEWARD

(ABOVE)
The Salmonberry River
eats rails for breakfast

PHOTO:
Jordan Carey

(RIGHT)
Ian Fergusson on
the dry side

PHOTO:
Peter Donahower

THE SALMONBERRY CORRIDOR IS A PROPOSED 86 MILE LONG “RAILS AND TRAILS” PROJECT. IF IT COMES TO FRUITION, IT would follow the existing railroad tracks from Tillamook along the coastline through Rockaway and Wheeler, up the Nehalem to the Salmonberry, up the Salmonberry and over the crest of the coast range, and then down into Banks where it would connect with the existing Banks to Vernonia Trail, also a rails to trails conversion. It’s called “rails and trails” rather than “rails to trails” because a trail will run alongside the active rail line on the western end. On the east side, the rail bed will be entirely converted to a trail.

Following the December 2007 storm that destroyed the railroad in the Salmonberry, and the subsequent decision by the Port of Tillamook to not rebuild the rail through the canyon, Cycle Oregon funded a study to examine the feasibility of a rails-trails project. The study was published early in 2013, and the concept planning phase began. Oregon Parks and Recreation and the Department of Forestry led the initial planning. The Oregon Legislature enthusiastically approved the concept and gave the go-ahead for the planning effort. This rare bipartisan kumbaya moment was made possible because they were not asked to fund anything. It is unclear at this point where funding would come from, how much the project would cost, or how long it would take. Project leaders have spoken of it as “multi-generational” development process.

I’ve been following this project from the start and have attended most of the meetings. Obviously the Salmonberry River canyon is my main concern. Most of the public comments that I heard spoke to the wild and remote character of the Salmonberry, and the strong desire to keep it that way. Nevertheless, there are people who envision a paved bicycle trail through the canyon. Business leaders in the small rural communities see the possibility of an economic engine. Others see tourist trains running up and down the Salmonberry.

Tourist trains? Really?

Unfortunately, although the Port of Tillamook seems to be out of the railroad business, the Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad has leased some equipment and the use of the right of way from the Port. The Scenic Railroad has operated tourist trains along the coast for a number of years now. They have extended their lease to include the right of way along the Nehalem River and up the Salmonberry as far as Enright, 5 miles above the mouth.

The Scenic Railroad operates outside the Salmonberry Corridor process, and the planning has to accommodate the railroad's actions. Even so, no one that I spoke to on the project team believed they would actually go up the Salmonberry -- too costly to make the repairs, and too costly to maintain the tracks for the small amount of revenue gained. These skeptics included a former member of the board of the Port of Tillamook, who could not see how the Scenic Railroad could possibly make it work.

We were all taken by surprise in late February 2014 when Native Fish Society member Jeff Wallace called staff member Mark Sherwood and asked if he knew about the railroad construction going on in the Salmonberry. Mark contacted me and I visited the river the next day. Walking upstream I found an excavator crew hard at work a mile upstream repairing a track washout by dropping boulders into the river to shore up the riprap. This was clearly outside the in-stream work window (August 15-September 15). Communication with the Division of State Lands revealed that the Scenic Railroad failed to obtain permits from the Department of State Lands and the United States Army Corps of Engineers for in-stream work.

The Department of State Lands issued Cease and Desist Orders to the Scenic Railroad on March 11th, 18th, and 28th, ordering the end of the removal-fill activity along the Salmonberry River because the unpermitted activity was in or near Essential Salmonid Habitat and it created an imminent and substantial risk of injury, loss or damage to the river. The Scenic Railroad and its construction crews ignored the orders. More fill was dumped and tracks were cleared between March 11th and March 27th.

On March 12th 2014, the Scenic Railroad filed suit in federal court claiming the State had no jurisdiction over the activities because they were engaged in interstate rail commerce. The United States Army Corps of Engineers, which has jurisdiction over the fill activity under the Clean Water Act, issued its own Cease and Desist Order on March 26, 2014. Construction was halted approximately 2 miles upstream of the confluence with the Nehalem River after the Army Corps Cease and Desist Order. On April 18, 2014, the Federal District Court rejected the Scenic Railroad's argument and dismissed the case.

The State had also sought to enforce the Department of State Land's Cease and Desist Orders in state court. Once the federal case was resolved, the state court entered an order prohibiting further work on the tracks. For now, things are quiet. The Scenic Railroad has given no indication what its next move will be.

If it isn't clear already, we don't think permits should be issued that would allow reconstruction as-is. The railroad was built in 1911, and as one can imagine, is lacking in environmental sensitivity. The Salmonberry is

naturally constrained by steep valley walls. To facilitate construction and provide a rail bed bench, the river was constrained further by fill and rip rap at multiple locations. This increased water velocity and limited the opportunity for meanders. The Native Fish Society and I believe the Salmonberry should be allowed to reclaim its entire historic channel.

Meanwhile, an initial draft of the Salmonberry Corridor "rail-trail" concept plan was published. This draft proposed a 10 to 14 foot wide hard surfaced "multi-use" trail through the canyon. This trail would be similar to the Banks-Vernonia Trail and would accommodate hikers, bikers, and equestrians. A coalition of fish groups (Native Fish Society, Northwest Steelheaders, Trout Unlimited, Rainland Flycasters, Wild Salmon Center, and Wild Steelhead Coalition) developed a position statement and comments on the plan. We supported the overall concept of using recreation rather than resource extraction to boost local economic development, but opposed a hard surface trail through the canyon and any rail reconstruction in the canyon. We proposed a primitive foot trail for the entire 17-mile stretch through the Salmonberry watershed.

A second draft was published in September, and in this draft a 4 foot wide soft surface trail was proposed for most of the canyon. We sent in comments again, acknowledging and approving the change, but still expressing some concerns. The primary concern centered around the "rails with trails" along the lower 5 miles of the Salmonberry. If the railroad is rebuilt, the trail would be built alongside the tracks, requiring placement of additional fill on the river side of the tracks. We commented that the railroad bed already encroaches on the river, and that further encroachment to facilitate a trail would be unacceptable.

Our Fish Coalition comment letters are available on the NFS website. The final concept was released for public review in November 2014 and we will continue to work to preserve the wild and remote character of the Salmonberry River. 



FLIRTING IS NOT A COMMITMENT

WORDS BY
BILL BAKKE,
DIRECTOR OF SCIENCE
& CONSERVATION,
FOUNDER

(THIS)
THE DALLES DAM

IN 1947 A DECISION WAS MADE ABOUT SALMON IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER AND ITS MANY TRIBUTARIES. THE ECOLOGICAL CENTER FOR WILD chinook and steelhead in North America would change to accommodate the march of technological progress:

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
Washington

March 6, 1947

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Secretary
FROM: W. W. Garner
SUBJECT: Columbia River Dams or Salmon

"The Northwest and the Departmental Committees have each assumed that the Columbia River fisheries cannot be allowed indefinitely to block the full development of the other resources of the river. If they were to be preserved at any cost, 8 potential projects on the Columbia and 5 on the Snake would have to be abandoned (The Dalles, John Day, Arlington, McNary, Gage Island, Priest Rapids, Rocky Reach and Chelan on the Columbia and Monumental, Little Goose, Granite Point, Asatin and Nez Perce on the Snake)."

"It is difficult precisely to equate these potential benefits (navigation and power production) against the value of the present Columbia River salmon, but all concerned within the Department are agreed that they are the foundation of the ultimate development of the Pacific Northwest and that they considerably outweigh the resulting cost to the commercial fisheries, the Indians, and the sportsmen."

March 13, 1947
Reproduced at the National Archives

"It is, therefore, the conclusion of all concerned that the overall benefits to the Pacific Northwest from a thorough-going development of the Snake and Columbia are such that the present salmon run must be sacrificed."

"This means that the Department's efforts should be directed toward ameliorating the impact of this development upon the injured interests and not toward a vain attempt to hold still the hands of the clock."

Warner W. Gardner, Acting Chairman

Columbia Basin Inter-Agency Coordination Committee
Approved: March 13, 1947

J. G. Krug, Secretary of the Interior

There were more than 11 dams already blocking habitat in the Columbia Basin prior to this announcement but following it the permission was granted to build more than 50 more dams, reducing the salmonid ecosystem to just 40% of its historic size. While the vast abundance of salmon and steelhead in the Columbia were substantially reduced by unregulated harvest and habitat degradation, the impact of the dams introduced the concept of "ameliorating" the impact of development. Today we know it as "mitigation" and money flowed from Congress to transform salmon from wild, abundant and sustainable to a product of hatchery technology.

(OPPOSITE)
BILL BAKKE

PHOTO:
Ken Anderson



By the late 1970s wild salmon were not doing well and late in that decade the National Marine Fisheries Service considered a listing for Snake River salmon as an endangered species. However, the passage of the Northwest Power Act by Congress in 1980 established a policy to operate a reliable power system and protect salmon. The Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Council is composed of two members from each state appointed by the governors of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana.

Even though the Power Act promised to mitigate for the impact of federal hydro dams on salmon, the public initiated petitions to list Columbia Basin salmonids as endangered species beginning with Snake River sockeye and chinook. In the 1990s most wild salmonids in the Columbia Basin were protected by federal law.

The Endangered Species Act and the Power Act increased the spending for salmonid mitigation in the Columbia Basin, for habitat restoration projects and more hatchery construction. Wild salmonids have been reduced to just 2% of their historic abundance, and the goal to increase the salmon runs by 5 million fish (hatchery and wild) by the Power Council has never been achieved. The agencies, including the tribes, had funding of \$682.4 million from the Bonneville Power Administration in 2013 for projects benefiting salmon. Public funding has been a windfall benefit to the fish agencies, amounting to \$13.7 billion since 1978, but wild salmonid recovery has largely languished.

Wild salmon were free for the taking, but now the average cost per hatchery produced salmon that is harvested has been calculated at \$9,298 per fish by the Council’s economic advisory board in 2002.

Every five years the Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Council adopts a new Fish and Wildlife Program for the Columbia River Basin. A new five year version of this Program was recently adopted, so how did wild salmonids fair?

Wild salmon placed! For the first time since the 1982 Fish and Wildlife Program (32 years) wild salmon enter the program on page 80. The Council’s strategy statement (2014) unflinchingly endorses the status quo for wild salmonids in the Columbia River Basin, relying on hatchery mitigation:

Strategy:

“Native wild fish and the ecosystems they rely on must be protected, mitigated, enhanced, and recovered, as they constitute an important, genetically diverse, biological resource for the Basin (in the context of the Council’s mitigation responsibility). Wild fish also provide important opportunities to rebuild and reintroduce populations where donor populations may support this. The Council also recognizes that hatcheries are an important tool for mitigating the hydrosystem’s impact on wild fish and to assist in the rebuilding of certain wild fish populations.”

The Independent Scientific Advisory Board reviewed the last Fish and Wildlife Program (2009) and provided the following comments that would improve the Program’s 2014 amendments: “The current Program is intended to be habitat-based but in reality, relies heavily on artificial production; the amended Program should

be ecosystem-based and fully acknowledge social aspects of the Program that can contribute to its success... there is a need to move away from qualitative goals toward quantitative objectives with specified timelines.”

Key recommendations for a new Fish and Wildlife Program recommended by the Independent Scientific Advisory Board are:

1. The Board believes that the scientific foundation should be modified to more explicitly consider the basis of resilience and adaptability;
2. Establishment of quantitative performance goals both for the biological objectives and restoration strategies is an essential feature of adaptive management and provides measurable thresholds for determining success. The amended Program should include quantitative biological objectives that can be regularly monitored and evaluated as a means to determine whether the Program is on target or in need of change;
3. The Program should be amended to describe techniques for engaging broader public involvement and to explain how socioeconomic engagement will be measured and monitored;
4. A primary conclusion of this review is that continuing to implement the Program on its existing trajectory is highly uncertain to achieve the Council’s biological objectives for the Basin. The Board suggests a revised focus on sustainability with strategies to protect diversity and resilience, and to build adaptability. The ISAB is concerned that artificial propagation is a risky foundation for restoration, and that adaptive management, long considered an integral component of the Program, has not been conducted in the manner originally envisioned.

The Native Fish Society proposed a new approach to mitigation rather than relying on hatcheries to “recover” wild salmonids. By establishing quantitative (measurable) objectives by subbasin for each wild species. Those objectives were in the August 2014 Conservation and Science Report. Briefly they include a spawner abundance objective by species for each subbasin based on an estimate of carrying capacity; nutrient targets from carcasses of naturally spawning salmonids; genetic and life history diversity by species, and no harm to wild salmonids from naturally spawning and rearing hatchery fish.

Unfortunately, the fishery agencies and tribes were not supportive and the Council did not include these recommendations or those of the Independent Scientific Advisory Board in the Fish and Wildlife Program. So the Council flirted with wild fish by giving them a mention on page 80 of the 2014 Program but made no commitment to providing the necessary management objectives to protect and recover wild, native salmonids. For the next five years the Council has agreed to marginalize most wild salmonids in the Columbia above Bonneville Dam, and treat it as a wild salmonid sacrifice zone.



Adipose Adventures

NATIVE FISH SOCIETY
BENEFIT TRAVEL // HOMEWATERS CONSERVATION



WORDS BY
DEREK BOTCHFORD
OWNER &
OPERATOR AT
FRONTIER FARWEST

(RIGHT)
Derek and Tom in
wild chinook country

PHOTOS:
Rob Elam &
Derek Botchford



SINCE I WAS 10 YEARS OLD THERE HAS NOT BEEN ONE TIME in my life when native fish stocks did not need our help wherever I happened to be fishing. I grew up in the Catskill Mountains fishing streams during probably the worst climate for native fish in the history of that region.

The famed rivers had been greatly affected by habitat degradation. At the time the common response was to pump the river systems full of hatchery trout and promote angling through the catching and killing of these fish. It was obvious the brown trout were out competing the wild stocks, and by the time I was in my 20s I rarely saw any of the native fish I had caught as a young child.

Wild fish have always been an important part of my life. Now as an adult and as an outfitter in B.C. who strictly fishes for wild fish I am more concerned than ever. This year was the first in human history where we consumed more farmed fish than wild-caught fish. This is a dubious record that highlights the fact that we have had horrible management of our wild fish stocks, and that the 30-year boom in aquaculture has only succeeded in further masking the decline of wild stocks.

Working with Native Fish Society from here in Canada is an important way to link wild fish issues on a global scale. Our new Adipose Adventures trip for wild Chinook salmon on the northern coast of B.C. is only going to be offered to Native Fish Society members.

Our program is designed to raise money to support the recovery of wild fish, help shift public opinion on hatchery and farmed fish, and underscore the importance of native fish, healthy rivers and clean water. Enriching people's views on the importance of native fish is not just a regional mission but one that needs to be pursued up and down the west coast and beyond. Wild salmon and steelhead have no borders and it is important that wild fish supporters don't either.

Coming from Canada, I understand that our anadromous species need to be managed as a sustainable global resource through tight coordination and the utilization of the best-available science. It is important that wild fish advocates across the globe come together and support each other's causes. With this new partnership between the Native Fish Society and myself I hope to foster the kind of collaborative approach wild fish need to thrive across their Pacific range. 

Interested? Email Tom Derry: tom@nativefishsociety.org



EXPERIENCE THE KINGS OF SUMMER: HOSTED BY TOM DERRY

Swing flies for wild summer chinook on Northern British Columbia's wilderness rivers & the mighty Skeena
7 days fishing / 8 nights all accommodations included
6 guests per group, Native Fish Society members only

Luxury lodging in Smithers, B.C.
2 Luxury Camps (Skeena and Wilderness)
Jet sleds and float plane for wilderness travel
Crabbing and prawning from a custom 28ft ocean boat

Group 1: July 8-16, 2015

July 8 Arrive, travel to Kemano
July 9-13 Fish Kemano
July 13 Evening travel to lodge
July 14-15 Fish Skeena
July 16 Depart lodge

Group 2: July 10-18, 2015

July 10 Arrive, stay at lodge
July 11-12 Fish Skeena
July 12 Evening travel to Kemano
July 13-17 Fish Kemano
July 18 Depart lodge

Price: \$5,800 + \$700 tax deductible donation to support the Native Fish Society's work to protect and restore wild, native fish in their Pacific Northwest homewaters.





PROTECTING OREGON'S SCENIC WATERWAYS

WORDS BY
MARK
SHERWOOD,
SOUTHERN
DISTRICT
MANAGER

(ABOVE)
Molalla River: in
search of wild fish
and scenic water

PHOTO:
Emily Sherwood

(NEXT TOP)
Chetco summer

PHOTO:
Mark Sherwood

OVER THE PAST YEAR, NATIVE FISH SOCIETY STAFF AND RIVER STEWARDS HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH A COALITION OF conservation interests to revitalize Oregon's State Scenic Waterways Act in an effort to expand protections for Oregon's rivers. As you would imagine, nearly all of the state's scenic river corridors, both those currently designated and not, are home to wild, native fish whose habitats would benefit from additional protections.

Originally passed into law in 1970 by a wide 2:1 public vote, Oregon's State Scenic Waterways Act can be seen as a counterpart to the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The federal act currently protects 203 waterways across the country as they flow through federal lands. The state act is designed to strike a balance between protecting the natural resources and scenic diversity of Oregon's waterways while supporting the needs of riverbank property owners. The state act codifies the recreational and aesthetic values of a waterway, by prohibiting hydropower development and certain types of mining activities within the designated reach.

River segments are eligible for designation if they meet the following criteria:

- Free-flowing nature of the waterway;
- Scenic quality, as viewed from the river; and
- Natural and recreational resources, including the ability of the waterway and its setting to sustain recreational use.

Oregon's network of Scenic Waterways currently includes 20 river segments totaling 1,150 miles of the state's most beloved rivers including sections of the John Day, Deschutes, Umpqua and many others. Unfortunately, the state has not designated a new section of river as a Scenic Waterway since 1988. As a result, many of Oregon's finest free flowing rivers and the wild, native fish that inhabit them remain vulnerable to current and future threats.

PROTECTING OREGON'S SCENIC WATERWAYS

Earlier this year, under the direction of the state legislature and Governor Kitzhaber, the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation began a new approach to State Scenic Waterways designation: the agency is now required to review three river segments every biennium for inclusion into the Scenic Waterways program.

As a part of the first group of watersheds under evaluation this year, the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation whittled down 3 finalists from an original list of 217 potential scenic river reaches. The finalists included segments of the Chetco, Molalla and Grand Ronde rivers totaling 56 river miles. Over the course of 2014, Oregon Parks and Recreation staff toured the watersheds, met with local stakeholders and solicited public comments through a series of online surveys and public meetings.

Native Fish Society's River Stewards (John Appleton, Grand Ronde; Tom Derry and Mark Schmidt, Molalla River; Sunny Bourdon, Chetco River) based in each of these watersheds worked with Parks and Recreation staff, NFS staff and local stakeholders to deliver comments in support of the three finalist river segments. Additionally, Native Fish Society members and supporters submitted hundreds of comments in support of designating these three river segments through Native Fish Society's online Action Alert system.

Late in the assessment process, the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation decided to require the explicit support of the County Commissioners in order for each river to advance with a staff recommendation toward State Scenic Waterway designation.

Knowing this could be a difficult sell, especially for the Chetco River in Curry County, NFS Southern District Staff and SW Oregon River Stewards worked with local partners, Wild and

Scenic Rivers and the Kalmiopsis Audubon Society to lobby Curry County Commissioners to support the Chetco River for the next step in the process.

In early November, the Parks and Recreation staff concluded their initial assessment and delivered their recommendation to the Parks and Recreation Commissioners. Receiving both local and County Commissioner support, and meeting all of the eligibility requirements, staff recommended that the Chetco and Molalla Rivers advance to the next step in the process.

Unfortunately, Parks and Recreation staff did not recommend the 29-mile segment of the Upper Grand Ronde continue in the process. Two factors were chief in their decision: significant opposition from private landowners living adjacent to the proposed segment and limited public access, which disqualified the Grand Ronde segment's ability to sustain substantial recreational activity, which is a key part of the eligibility criteria.

Over the next year, staff from Oregon Parks and Recreation will convene local stakeholder groups who will work to assemble the details of a draft management plan for the Molalla and Chetco Rivers. If the staff and local stakeholders succeed in developing a viable draft management plan, those plans will then go before the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commissioners and then Governor Kitzhaber for final approval in early 2016.

Native Fish Society staff thanks our coalition partners, members, and River Stewards who continue to work to expand protections for Oregon's wild rivers and the wild fish that call them home. For updates on this issue visit the Oregon Department of Recreation website and look for Action Alert opportunities this year in our monthly Redd It newsletter.



Bob Clay and Riverwatch rods are offering a 12% discount to any Native Fish Society member who donated \$250 or more to the Native Fish Society's Year End Campaign which runs through January 31, 2015. This is a super generous offer from Bob and if you are considering one of his wonderful cane rods now would be a good time to get one!

Fish with soul next year with a Riverwatch Rod.

(BELOW)
Mark Sherwood

PHOTO:
Ken Anderson



KEEP 'EM WET.



CAMPAIGN + PHOTO CONTEST

This winter, Native Fish Society is launching our “Keep ‘Em Wet” campaign to increase angler awareness about the negative effects of air exposure to wild fish.

Now don’t get us wrong, we’ve all taken fish out of the water to snap a photo, Native Fish Society staff members included. But the more we learn about these issues and take care of the fish we love, the more healthy, wild fish there will be to catch, right!?

Even when anglers are taking precautionary measures, like crushing the barb, prolonged air exposure can make it difficult for fish to recover and there are delayed negative effects that may not be apparent even if the fish seems fine when it swims away.

Studies have shown that the longer a fish is exposed to air after exhausting exercise the higher their mortality rates are (Ferguson and Tufts, 1992; Gale et al., 2011). Even 30 seconds of air exposure reduces a trout’s ability to recover and can provide a significant additional stress even when catch and release fishing (Ferguson and Tufts, 1992). Read the complete studies at the campaign webpage: <http://bit.ly/keepemwet>

So, let’s get creative with the way we photograph our wild fish by keeping them wet and in the water. From January 1 to May 31, 2015, NFS will be holding a photo contest for the best picture of a wild, native fish from the Pacific Northwest with at minimum its gills in the water (see photo on the right).

To enter, email your photograph to mark@nativefishsociety.org and we will post it to our Instagram, Twitter and Facebook accounts with the hashtag #keepemwet. The top three photos with the most likes combined will win prizes!

The first place winner will receive a brand new Gary Anderson Custom 12’0” 7wt Spey Rod donated by NFS Board Treasurer Peter Tronquet. Our two runners up will get to choose between a day of steelhead fishing with Washougal River Steward Steve Lent on the Sandy River and a day of trout fishing with Willamette Valley Regional Coordinator Kyle Smith on the McKenzie River.

The three winning photographs will be published in the Summer 2015 issue of Strong Runs. Let the contest begin, good luck, and Keep ‘Em Wet! 



WORDS BY
JAKE CRAWFORD,
RIVER STEWARD PROGRAM DIRECTOR

(THIS)
A wild steelhead kept wet.

Photo: Marty Sheppard,
Sandy River Steward



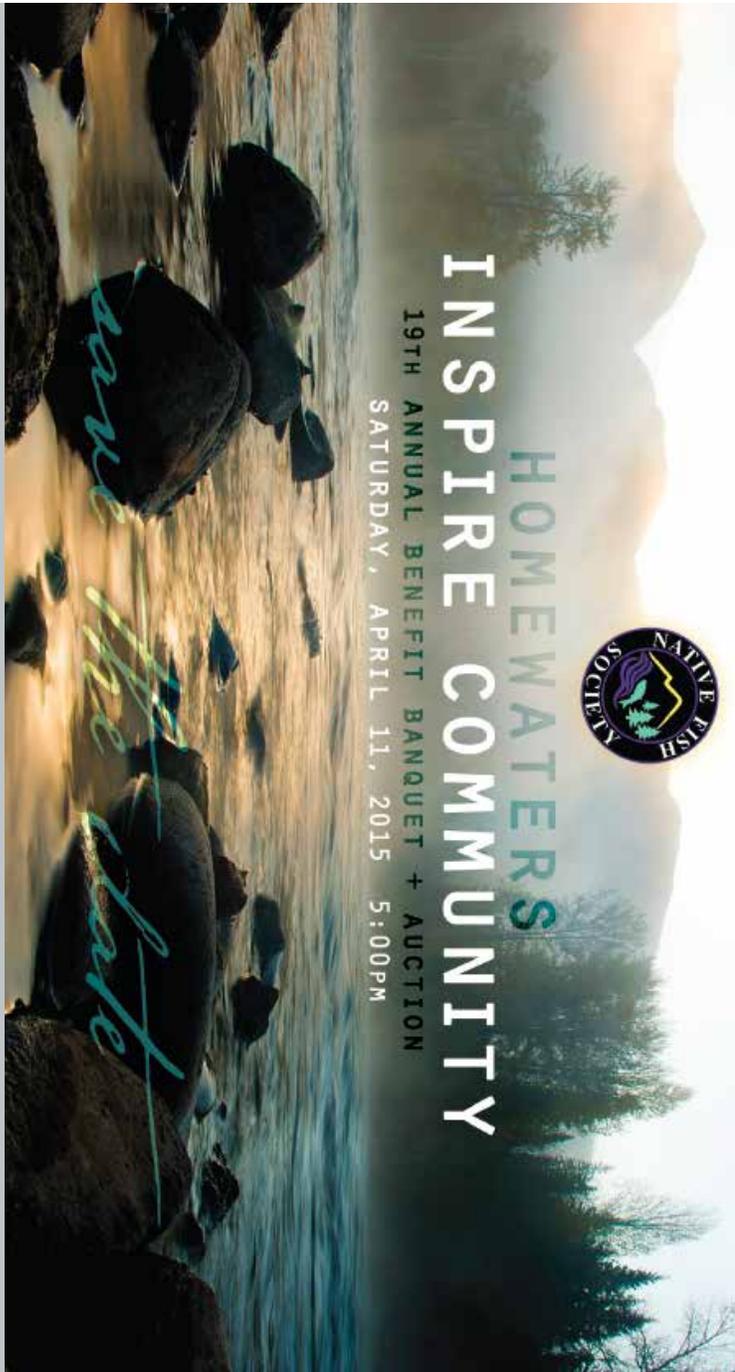
NATIVE FISH SOCIETY
221 Molalla Ave., Suite 100
Oregon City, OR 97045

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(COVER) Wild chinook spawned out success. R.I.P. PHOTO: Conrad Gowell



INSPIRE COMMUNITY

19TH ANNUAL BENEFIT BANQUET + AUCTION
SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2015 5:00PM

RIVER STEWARDS + REGIONAL COORDINATORS

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Christie Adelsberger,
Sprague & Lost | Scotty Evans, Salmon | Steve Light, Lower Deschutes | Hamish Rickett, Pathogens |
| Ryan Allred, Klamath | Ian Fergusonson, Salmonberry | Yancy Lind, Upper Deschutes | Jake Robinson, Coos Bay |
| John Appleton, Grand Ronde | David Gee, Hood | Kent Machintosh, Nestucca | Brent Ross, McKenzie |
| Will Atlas, N. Puget Sound | Charles Gehr, Rogue | Michael Mathis, Snake River | Mark Schmidt, Molalla |
| Bill Bakke, Columbia | Gena Goodman-Campbell,
Upper Deschutes | Lower Hell's Canyon | Marty Sheppard, Sandy |
| Ethan & Wendy Barrow, Trask | Conrad Gowell, North Oregon | John McConaughy,
Washougal | Mia Sheppard, John Day |
| Scott Bauner, Hood, 15 Mile | Coast Regional Coordinator | Crystal McMahon, Sycan | Joyce Sherman, Salmonberry |
| Duncan Berry, Salmon | Ryan Haseman, S. Puget Sound | Matt McQueen, Klickitat | Eric Shoemaker, Necanicum |
| John Bracke, Nestucca | Jeff Hickman, Clackamas | Ed Megill, Skagit | Jason Small, Puget Sound |
| Brice Crayne, N. Santiam | Ty Holloway, N. Umpqua | Chris Menaul, Green/
Duwamish | Regional Coordinator |
| Chris Daughters, McKenzie | Mark Homeyer, Skykomish | Spencer Milles, Nestucca,
Tillamook Bay Rivers | James Smith, Hunter Creek |
| Derek Day, S. Puget Sound | Kellen Igon, Winchuck | Bart Mills, Johnson Creek | Kyle Smith, Willamette Valley
Regional Coordinator |
| Doug DeRoy, Garcia, Gualala
& Navarro | Chris Johnson, Nooksack | Ed Miranda Jr., Wood,
Williamson & 7 Mile Creek | Mart Stangeland, N. Umpqua |
| Tom Derry, Molalla | Ken Johnson, Skagit | David Moryc, Sandy | Sal Steinberg, Van Duzen |
| Peter Donahower, Mid Columbia | Samantha Kannary, Upper
Van Duzen | Jim Myron, Crooked | Keith Stonebraker, Clearwater |
| Regional Coordinator | Jonathan Knapp, Stillaquamish | Scott Nielson, Calapooia | James Thruher, S. Oregon |
| Dane Downing, MF & NE Fel,
Black Butte | Dave Lacey, Hunter Creek | Stan Petrowski, S. Umpqua | Coast, Lower Umpqua |
| Pat Dunham, John Day | Jena Lenke, Salmonberry | Daniel Pierce, Hood | Peter Tronquet, Rogue,
Umpqua & Illinois |
| Paul Engelmeier, Mid Oregon | Steve Lent, Washougal | Dustin Revel, Fel | Walt Weber, Lower Columbia Tribes |
| Coast Regional Coordinator | Bryce Levin, Snohomish | | Cullen Whitehant, N. Santiam |
| | Alan L'Hormedieu, Sandy | | Scott Willison, Stillaquamish |