HOMEWATERS



ANNUAL REPORT | 2020



RISE UP FOR WILD IN 2020, OUR NATIVE FISH SOCIETY SUPPORTED:

4.300 MILES OF NEW WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS AND IOI.000 ACRES OF PUBLIC LANDS IN OREGON FOR PERMANENT PROTECTION FROM STRIP MINING THROUGH FEDERAL LEGISLATION

400 MILES OF SALMON, STEELHEAD AND LAMPREY HABITAT OPENING UP AS A RESULT OF GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY AND INDIGENOUS LEADERS TO ADVANCE DAM REMOVAL ON THE KLAMATH RIVER IN 2023

240 HOURS

SPENT BY RIVER STEWARDS AND VOLUNTEERS TRAINING, ENGAGING COMMUNITY MEMBERS, AND CONDUCTING SPAWNING SURVEYS FOR COHO SALMON AND WILD STEELHEAD ON THE FREE-FLOWING WHITE SALMON RIVER

30 LOGS PLACED IN AN ENGINEERED LOGJAM HELPED PROTECT KEY COLD WATER REARING HABITAT CRITICAL FOR SUPPORTING AN ESTIMATED 8,000 JUVENILE SALMON AND STEELHEAD IN THE MOLALLA RIVER

4 MAJOR TRIBUTARIES

OF THE WILLAMETTE RIVER. THAT SUPPORT NATIVE FISH AND OUR COMMUNITIES. WILL BENEFIT FROM VOLITIONAL FISH PASSAGE AND IMPROVED WATER QUANTITY AND QUALITY RESULTING FROM OUR LEGAL VICTORY ADDRESSING THE ARMY CORPS' HARMFUL DAM OPERATIONS

12,000 MILES OF THREATENED SALMON AND STEELHEAD HABITAT IN WASHINGTON WERE PROTECTED PERMANENTLY FROM SUCTION DREDGE MINING

88 PEOPLE

ACROSS THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST TO ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF THEIR HOMEWATERS AS RIVER STEWARDS AND LEVERAGED THE TALENTS AND SKILLS OF 18 NATIVE FISH FELLOWS TO ENHANCE OUR 36 ACTIVE CONSERVATION CAMPAIGNS

650 PARTICIPANTS

IN 9 VIRTUAL LUNCH AND LEARN EVENTS FEATURING 5 RIVER STEWARDS. I FELLOW AND 2 PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION ON WILD FISH ISSUES



RISE UP FOR WILD REVIVAL

MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MARK SHERWOOD

During 2020, our backyard rivers and native fish were lifelines for our communities. They served as safe outdoor meeting places for friends and family, places to relax, and places to reconnect with the wild. When so many of us faced unprecedented wildfires last summer, our homewaters played an essential role in putting out the flames and protecting our communities. Our reflection on 2020 starts with deep gratitude for our homewaters and the innumerable ways they supported native fish and us all during a formidable year.

As we explored locally we also witnessed that our homewaters and wild fish are being challenged by drought, pollution, fish barriers, and unsustainable fisheries management that demands our collective action. To respond to this need, we're growing our groundswell of wild fish activists and the support systems that empower their advocacy and projects. To grow and support our River Steward community, in 2020 and early 2021 we added two River Steward Program staff, Kirk Blaine as our Southern Oregon Regional Coordinator based in Roseburg, Oregon and Liz Perkin as our Northern Oregon Regional Coordinator based in Portland.

These new staffers work directly with our 88 grassroots River Stewards to address the needs of wild fish in our homewaters. To enhance these conservation efforts, 17 Native Fish Fellows donated hundreds of hours of their skilled labor to benefit native fish. Our Women for Wild Fish Initiative brought new perspectives and passion to our work by engaging more than 1,000 women who signed NFS Action Alerts, shared knowledge, and led on-the-ground projects to benefit native fish.

At the Native Fish Society, we do our best work advocating for wild fish when you're deeply involved - when we elevate your passion and knowledge and then focus our collective advocacy on decision-makers that can make change happen. Through the voices and actions of grassroots advocates, we're cultivating the groundswell of public support needed to revive abundant wild fish, free-flowing rivers, and thriving local communities.

To all of our friends, donors, and volunteers, we cannot thank you enough for your ongoing commitment and generosity. You make our work possible. We also want to encourage you to join us. Pull on your waders and get out in the field. Speak up for wild fish in front of decision makers. This is a critical time for our homewaters, native fish, and the habitats that sustain us all. Let's rise up together for our homewaters and native fish.

Wild Matters,

Mah Shal

Mark Sherwood, Executive Director

THE VOICE FOR WILD REVIVAL



Wild Fish For All: Builds Strong Partnerships

ReWild the Willamette Major Victory!

In 2020, we saw the power of partnerships in action as we secured several major victories in our efforts to turn the tide for wild fish in the Willamette basin. For the past four years, NFS has pursued both legal and grassroots strategies to address the greatest impediment— thirteen federally-operated dams—to recovering the Willamette's threatened winter Steelhead and Spring Chinook Salmon. We knew that we would need not only the law and science on our side, but a grassroots groundswell speaking out on behalf of wild fish with a unified message of recovery.

Together with our partners Advocates for the West, WildEarth Guardians, and the Northwest Environmental Defense Center, we won a resounding legal victory against the Army Corps for failing to comply with the agency's obligation under the Endangered Species Act to improve fish passage and water quality in the basin. This success wouldn't have been realized without the talents, expertise, and contributions that these partners consistently brought to this effort over the past three years.

Alongside this important legal victory, we secured key federal directives for Army Corps operations in the Willamette Basin with the Water Resources and Development Act of 2020. This major piece of legislation directs Army Corps operations around the nation. Working with Dave Thomas, our McKenzie River Steward, and the 13 partners of the Willamette Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Coalition, which NFS helped form in 2018, we rallied grassroots support and advocated for Willamette wild fish needs. The result was the inclusion of two key provisions in the legislation. The first, directs the Corps to establish protected flows for fish and to prioritize the release of water stored behind the dams to meet fish flow needs during drought years. The second, directs the Corps to submit a report on how Congress can remove hydropower production at Willamette dams - a crucial step toward better volitional passage for outmigrating, young fish. We'd like to thank in particular our two key partners in this legislative advocacy effort - WaterWatch of Oregon and WildEarth Guardians!

With these partnerships, we are beginning to set a new course for the Willamette Basin and its wild fish. We know that there is much yet to be done, but we're making major strides by working together.

(TOP) Upper Willamette Spring Chinook, Photo: Dave Herasimtschuk, Freshwaters Illustrated

(BOTTOM) Partnerships for the win: Northwest Environmental Advocates, NEDC, WildEarth Guardians and Native Fish Society staffers.



Wild Fish for All: Inspires Dedicated Volunteers

A fter decades of local advocacy, Condit Dam was removed from Washington's White Salmon River in 2014 reconnecting its wild salmon and steelhead with 33 miles of habitat after a century of total obstruction. However, as the years went along after dam removal, a fundamental question remained: how are the wild fish doing in this free-flowing watershed, managed in the absence of hatchery fish? Starting in 2020, J. Michelle Swope, our Washington Regional Coordinator, worked with dozens of amazing volunteers including River Stewards Chelsey Betterley, Ben Leyva, and Dan Peirce and longtime member Felton Jenkins, as well as biologists from Friends of the White Salmon, the Yakama Nation, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to conduct on the ground spawning surveys for Salmon and Steelhead. This collective project has built great partnerships that will furnish data to understand how wild fish recover in a free-flowing river. It also helps volunteers develop their personal knowledge of the river - an essential component of grassroots advocacy.

In the Molalla River, River Stewards Terre Rogers and Tom Derry worked with Steve Trask and Associates to protect vital cold water habitat for juvenile Salmon, Steelhead, and Trout. During summer months, the mainstem Molalla River reaches temperatures over 70F, which are harmful to its coldwater native fish. During low summer flows a series of side channel areas disconnect from the mainstem river and stay a chilly 50F thanks to several underground springs. To protect these critical areas for juvenile fish, our River Stewards teamed up with local landowners, Port Blakey Lumber Company—which donated 80 logs—the City of Molalla, the Zephyr Foundation, and the Trout and Salmon Foundation to place logs at the entrance of the side channel to prevent the mainstem river from capturing this vital cold water refuge during future high water events. Completed in the fall of 2020, the project has withstood high winter flows and provides refuge for an estimated 8,000 juvenile salmon and steelhead during the current drought.

In southern Oregon, Rogue River Steward Charles Gehr advocated for wild Salmon and Steelhead in the Rogue River during a year-long virtual stakeholder process convened by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for the development of the Rogue and South Coast Multi-Species Conservation and Management Plan. This plan will direct fisheries, hatchery management, and conservation actions for Winter and Summer Steelhead, Cutthroat Trout and Coho Salmon in the Rogue and southern Oregon coastal streams until 2034. Importantly, Charles's advocacy has helped to secure a catch-and-release option for the wild Winter Steelhead fishery, which has the potential to increase protections for these fish while collecting data critical to understanding their health.

(ABOVE) A chilly day conducting a wild steelhead spawning survey on Washington's White Salmon River with volunteers (left to right) Maya Nabipoor, Chelsey Betterley, Hamish Stevenson, Dan Peirce.

Wild Fish For All: Supports Diverse Voices

On October 23, indigenous leaders with the Yurok, Karuk, Klamath, and Hoopa Valley tribes were supported by activists and conservation groups for a day of action for the Klamath River. The goal of the tens of thousands of participants was to get the attention of Berkshire Hathaway Chair Warren Buffet and ensure that his company PacifiCorp—which owns the lower Klamath Dams—would commit to dam removal. NFS Staff and River Stewards showed their support by contributing to the overwhelming groundswell of activism on social media, on the Klamath River, and highlighting the demonstrations that took place at Berkshire Hathaway offices around the United States.

Three weeks later, Berkshire Hathaway Chair Warren Buffet issued the following statement, "I recognize the importance of Klamath dam removal and river restoration for tribal people in the Klamath Basin. We appreciate and respect our tribal partners for their collaboration in forging an agreement that delivers an exceptional outcome for the river, as well as future generations. Working together from this historic moment, we can complete the project and remove these dams."

We're deeply grateful to all of our community members who supported tribal leadership during this important day of action. Thanks to your support, the largest river restoration project in history is still on track and scheduled to begin in 2023!

In 2020, Native Fish Society also launched our Wild Fish For All Scholarship to elevate diverse voices and break down barriers to racial and gender diversity in fisheries conservation. One student is selected each year as our Wild Fish For All Scholar and NFS provides the winner with a \$1,000 scholarship to put toward college tuition, fees, housing, and books. The top five applicants receive a one-year membership to the Native Fish Society. Our first scholarship recipient was University of California, Davis Ph.D. candidate Michelle Pepping, who is working on a genetic analysis of wild Summer Steelhead in the North Umpqua to better understand their adaptive advantages.

To learn more about Michelle, her research, and the scholarship, visit nativefishsociety.org/getinvolved/wild-fish-for-all-scholarship.

(TOP) Leaders from the Yurok Tribe stage a protest during a visit from PacifiCorp to the lower Klamath. Photo: Mahlija Florendo

(MIDDLE) Toxic algae collects in the reservoir above Copco II. Photo: Karuk Tribe

(BOTTOM) NFS River Steward Matt Lund and Executive Director Mark Sherwood supporting the Klamath Day of Action on the Klamath River. Photo: Joe Curren





MORE ABUNDANT WILD FISH

Wild Fish For All: Turns Science into Action

Spring Chinook Salmon are miraculous fish. These kings of king salmon return to their homewaters in spring (hence their Sname) and ride the final high flows of the rainy season to deep emerald pools where they rest for months and slowly mature for their fall spawning season. Likewise, Summer Steelhead enter freshwater in late spring and summer, months before spawning, making long migrations high into their watersheds. Perhaps even more miraculous, the latest research suggests that the unique genetic adaptation that triggers a Spring Chinook Salmon and Summer Steelhead's early return to freshwater happened only once in history—some two million years ago. For coastal Spring Chinook Salmon and Summer Steelhead, this emerging scientific fact could finally mean a change management paradigm that has led to their decline.

Utilizing this ground breaking science, NFS River Stewards on the Oregon Coast, NFS Staff, and partners from the Center for Biological Diversity and Umpqua Watersheds submitted a petition in 2019 to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to protect Oregon Coastal Spring Chinook salmon under the Endangered Species Act. This action prompted an end to the harvest of wild Spring Chinook salmon in the mainstem Umpqua River to protect the fewer than 100 wild Spring Chinook returning to the South Umpqua. In April of 2020, National Marine Fisheries Service completed their 90 day review of our Endangered Species Act petition and determined that it warranted moving to the next step—a one-year review. We anticipate a final determination from NMFS in the summer of 2021. Thanks to your generosity, we're giving these fish a voice and working toward their restoration.

In Northern California, fisheries biologist and Native Fish Fellow Samantha Kannry utilized genetic analysis of steelhead in the Eel River watershed to advance the protection and recovery of these remarkable fish. In 2020, she published the findings of her work, including several notable discoveries: the Van Duzen River's Summer Steelhead are a unique and independent population; Summer Steelhead inhabited the upper Eel River prior to construction of Scott Dam; and both summer and winter genetic markers persist in the resident population. The findings suggest that, when Scott Dam is removed, the resident trout population above the dam would likely be a suitable source for naturally restarting both Winter and Summer Steelhead populations in this portion of the watershed.

(ABOVE) Oregon Coastal Spring Chinook hold in deep emerald pools. Photo: Duncan Berry

Wild Fish For All: Builds on Shared Knowledge

Sharing knowledge about native fish, advocacy, and conservation tools is vital to scaling solutions to revive abundant wild fish. Typically, our community of volunteers, members, and staff meet together in person at trainings and gatherings, but, like so many in-person activities, virtual alternatives needed to be found during 2020 due to the pandemic. Thankfully, our staff and community of volunteers launched a Lunch and Learn format, which offered volunteers, members, and staff a virtual gathering place for an hour during lunch to present their work and discuss opportunities to act for wild fish. Since the pandemic began, 650 people have virtually attended the nine NFS Lunch and Learn events.

The first NFS Lunch and Learn was hosted by Little Deschutes River Steward, Jodi Wilmoth, to share about her project utilizing environmental DNA, or eDNA, sampling to locate threatened Bull Trout in the little Deschutes watershed. In partnership with Women for Wild Fish, Jodi led volunteers during the summer and fall of 2020 to hike into remote reaches of the Deschutes Basin to collect water samples, which were sent to a lab and analyzed for the presence of Bull Trout DNA. Habitats found to support populations of Bull Trout will then be given additional protections, especially for the cold and clean water these fish require.

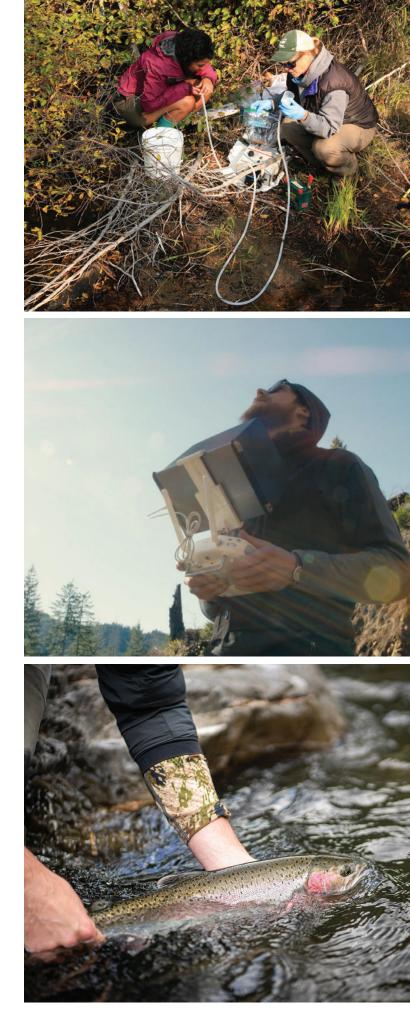
Later in the year, our Native Fish Fellow Nicholas Wagner hosted a Lunch and Learn session about his project utilizing drones and aerial imagery to protect threatened wild Coho Salmon in Oregon's coastal rainforest. Nick surveyed two landslides in the Tillamook State Forest by drone and created 3D models to measure the amount of sediment that was delivered to streams below. Nick's work has been a key part of the NFS Landslides to Logjams campaign and our ongoing legal case with the Oregon Department of Forestry focused on addressing the impacts of landslides generated from steep slope logging on threatened Oregon Coast Coho Salmon.

Another notable Lunch and Learn featured former River Steward Program Director Jake Crawford presenting on his volunteer work to expand Essential Salmonid Habitat (ESH) designated waterways in Oregon. These ESH habitats are defined as habitats critical for the spawning and rearing of oceangoing native fish species like Steelhead, Salmon and Coastal Cutthroat Trout. During Jake's time on the NFS Staff, he was pivotal in helping secure a ban on suction dredge mining in all 20,000+ river miles of ESH in Oregon. Through Jake's work in 2020, additional streams were added to the ESH list of protected streams and folks learned about how they can work to add more streams to this designation.

You can check out the Native Fish Society's YouTube channel and view these and all of our Lunch and Learn presentations!

(TOP) Jodi and a volunteer sample for Bull Trout.

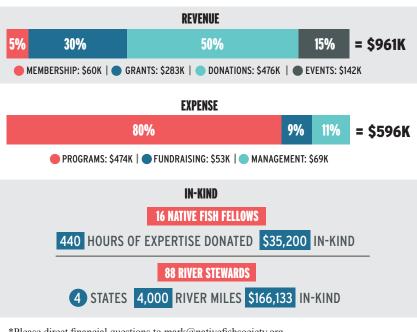
(MIDDLE) Nick Wagner flies his drone in Oregon's Coast Range. (BOTTOM) Prohibitions of suction dredge mining in Essential Salmonid Habitat protect fish like this wild summer steelhead. Photo: Marcus Mattioli





Revenue, Expense & In-Kind for Fiscal Year 2020

Financial results for fiscal year ending December 31, 2020



*Please direct financial questions to mark@nativefishsociety.org.

Crazy Norwegians

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Aanen Trelstad

THANK YOU MEMBE

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(COVER) A Wild Steelhead Climbs Deadline Fall on the North Umpgua River. Photo: Loren Irving

2020 Annual Report Designed + Edited by Mark Sherwood

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