

NFS Organizational Equity Strategy

September 2018

Preface

The Native Fish Society exists to cultivate a groundswell of public support needed to revive abundant wild fish populations across the Pacific Northwest. We create this momentum by empowering everyday people to take action on behalf of wild fish, our homewaters, and local communities. We forge lasting relationships to educate, inspire, and mobilize everyone committed to keeping fish and rivers forever wild. This includes work through policy and advocacy efforts, coalition building, conservation campaigns, hosting trainings and gatherings, citizen science monitoring efforts, and through our River Steward and Fellowship Programs. Guided by the best-available science and cultural wisdom, we advocate for the recovery of wild, native fish and promote the stewardship of the habitats that sustain them and us all. Ultimately, we envision a Pacific Northwest abundant in wild fish, free-flowing rivers, and thriving local communities.

During our 2016 organizational strategic planning process, the Native Fish Society's board and staff realized that our majority of white, male fly fisher supporters represented a narrow slice of Pacific Northwest communities and perspectives, limiting our ability to achieve our organizational mission and vision. To serve our deep passion for wild fish, we sought resources to increase the capacity of the NFS staff, board, and volunteers and sharpen the focus for how NFS could intentionally increase the diversity, equity, and inclusiveness of our organization. In 2017, NFS applied for and was awarded a DEI technical advisory grant with the Meyer Memorial Trust to participate in a 2-day DEI training and a 3-day Equity Strategy Session with the Center for Diversity and the Environment. The 2-day training was hosted by the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians and 18 staff, board, volunteers and partners from the Siletz participated. The 3-day Equity Strategy Session was hosted in Central Oregon and 9 staff, board, and volunteers participated.

The following Organizational Equity Strategy distills our rationale for pursuing greater diversity, equity, and inclusiveness at the Native Fish Society and outlines steps for reaching our goals and the Native Fish Society's desired DEI state. We'd like to thank the Meyer Memorial Trust for their generous support and Queta Gonzalez at the Center for Diversity and the Environment for her guidance as we begin this journey as an organization.

WHY A DEI Focus for NFS

It takes dedicated people, with a deep connection to place, to steward special places and species like the Northwest's native fish and homewaters. Coalitions of local people united across difference towards common goals make the most powerful coalitions, by demonstrating the unifying value and need for wild fish and their homewaters. The Native Fish Society cannot create the groundswell of public support needed to revive abundant wild fish if we aren't relevant to everyone. NFS is intent on becoming increasingly effective, innovative and creative by realizing the benefits of diversity, and resilient by increasing engagement across all the Northwest's communities, in the shared endeavor of reviving the keystone species of our region.

NFS DEI Definitions

Diversity: All of the ways we're different, similar, and unique.

Equity: A guarantee of fair treatment, opportunity, access, and advancement, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all.

Inclusion: The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate.

Culture: A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of tacit rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors, and styles of communication.

Benchmark: A benchmark is another word for an organizational standard of performance. Benchmarks are usually described in language stated as an end result or outcome. They help people in organizations identify and describe high quality results or aspirations.

Foundational Benchmarks Years 1-3

I. NFS DEI Vision (Desired State)

The Native Fish Society becomes stronger through its direct actions to further equity, diversity, and inclusion in its culture, relationships, advocacy and programs.

II. Strategy / Organizational Rationale

Current State:

Heightened awareness around the personal and systematic challenges facing people of color, tribal nations, and women.

Heightened awareness of our organizational history and perspectives shaped out of our majority of white, male conservationist community.

Desired State:

Build capacity throughout the organization, leadership and board around racial and gender equity

Revamped lexicon

DEI in organizational DNA (mission, vision, program whys)

Mission includes community

Involvement of stakeholders from communities of color and Tribal Nations

Action Items:

1. Identify and engage current relationships with communities of color, with Tribal Nations as top priority
 - a. Survey staff /members / Fellows / River Stewards to map out existing relationships
 - b. Show up to events and do intentional networking and relationship building understand the community needs, listen, and look for ways of uplifting community priorities and intersections with our work.
 - c. Incorporate inreach with communities of color and Tribal Nations into staff work plans to build new and deepen existing relationships
2. Highlight our new approach and vision
3. Inreach to tribes to learn about their concerns and areas of overlap and commonality.
 - a. (Grand Ronde, Siletz, Round Valley, Yurok, Karuk, Warm Springs, Nez Perce, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians, Nisqually, Yakama, B.C. First Nations within the Skeena watershed)
4. Review mission, vision, program whys through DEI lens; update to include communities
5. Identify the central ideas of NFS and develop lexicon that is inclusive around these ideas
6. Adopt a policy to work with any tribe with or without federal recognition
7. Restart the School of Fish as a vehicle for giving to the communities we want to reach and empower River Stewards/Fellows.

III. Leadership and Accountability

Current State:

100% Staff on board with DEI
100% Board on board with DEI
Staff developing personal why
Org developing DEI why
Developing consensus on desired Org state
Draft Organizational Equity Strategy
No DEI team to chart progress and maintain accountability
Articulated a desire to incorporate DEI within:
Web presence
Email communications
Events
Board Meetings

Desired State:

100% Staff & Board on board with DEI
Staff can articulate personal why
100% Board & Staff can articulate Org DEI why
Consensus on desired DEI state and adoption of organizational equity statement
DEI team that charts progress and maintains accountability
Organizational Equity Strategy adopted by Board of Directors and communicated externally
Include DEI within:
 Web presence
 Email communications
 Strategic Plan
 Work plans
Events

Action Items:

1. Develop personal DEI whys
2. Board presentation / session
3. Develop organizational DEI why and equity statement
4. Incorporate DEI into web presence, email communications, events and board meetings
5. BOD vote agreeing to support DEI work & approval of Organizational Equity Strategy
6. Incorporate DEI into Board of Directors job description
7. Board adopts policies for DEI in board recruitment
8. Annual review and refinement of equity strategy
9. Capacity building to enable staff to lead with racial and gender equity lens.

IV. Infrastructure & Implementation

(resources, budget, change agents, where is it located - working on a 3 year timeline)

Current State:

Leadership: CDE; Executive Director; 1 board member; Fellowship Program Director

Resources: Participants from 2018 strategy session and first training, existing relationships with communities of color, River Stewards, Fellows

Budget: Technical Assistance grant from Meyer Memorial Trust; NFS general operating funds

Desired State:

Leadership: 1 board member; 1 staff member; 1 River Steward; 1 Fellow; Executive Director – role of DEI leadership is to ensure alignment across organization with equity plan during execution, to annually evaluate the equity plan, and to suggest updates/refinements to the equity plan.

Future Resources: Expanded partnerships with NGOs, Tribal Nations (recognized and unrecognized) and communities of color

Budget: Develop organizational budget category specific for continuing education, DEI development and execution of equity strategy

Potential Budget Resources: Meyer Memorial Trust, Spirit Mountain Community Fund, Bullitt Fund, OR Community Fund, Blue Sky Fund, Gray Family Fund

Action Items:

1. Present report to board on this effort/work done to date
2. Make DEI part of required board agenda; staff meetings; RS gatherings; public events
3. Integrate DEI Strategy into work plans and performance reviews
4. Scheduled DEI reflection
5. Branding effort incorporates DEI into discovery and creative process
6. Develop DEI line item in 2019 budget
7. Create DEI team when DEI plan is adopted and standardize meeting schedule

Internal Benchmarks

I. Recruitment

Current state:

Volunteers are a main recruitment approach, through friendships

Watersheds / Skills

Challenge in recruiting across difference

Desired state:

We are being sought out and recruiting from the following communities and they make up a larger portion of our River Stewards, Fellows, Staff, and Board of Directors.

- Women
- Communities of Color

Action Items:

1. Recruit Board member with DEI skills
 - a. POC groups email list
 - b. Environmental POC
 - c. Brian Chou
2. Invite communities of color to events
3. Give to desired communities
 - a. Time, gifts, give power to their voice
 - b. Events, meals, break bread together (hosting and attending)
 - c. Attend events at communities of color
4. Leadership team helps collect and share opportunities with staff, board and program volunteers.
5. Identify and meet with partners who have strong relationships with desired communities
6. Pull threads with existing relationships
7. Women for Wild Fish – pathway and invitation for women onto board, River Steward Program and membership
8. Measure both quantitative and qualitative benchmarks, like the happiness quotient.

II. Development

Current state:

Hosted DEI training with Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians
Hosted DEI Equity Strategy Session with 9 staff, board, and River Stewards
Crafting Equity Strategy
Assembling a DEI team

Desired state:

DEI development integrated into personal work plans with annual evaluation and review
Identification of what we need to be successful: continuing training and mentorship
Receiving funding to operationalize DEI in NFS
Fundraising workplan for DEI

Action Items:

1. Secure funds from MMT for Year 1 DEI capacity building and advisement on operationalizing the organization's equity strategy
2. Contact CDE/other consultants to determine their interest in supporting NFS in DEI work in Year

3. Survey staff and CDE/other consultants to determine what training would be beneficial to DEI journey

III. Advancement

Current state:

Individual skills and capacity with DEI are not part of advancement into leadership positions

Desired state:

DEI skills and capacity an explicit consideration for advancement into leadership positions
DEI skills and capacity an explicit consideration during staff hiring process

Action Items:

1. Board and staff buy-in regarding basic competencies
2. Develop benchmarks for DEI skills and capacity as part of leadership considerations
3. Develop DEI skills and capacity questions for staff interview process
4. Include DEI measures as part of performance reviews

IV. Talent Management

Current state:

Organic Outreach Strategy

River Steward onboarding is a defined process led by River Steward Program staff that does not include DEI

Onboarding staff is an organic process led by a number of staff, does not include DEI

Onboarding board is an organic process led by Executive Director

Handbook for River Stewards does not incorporate DEI

No staff or board handbook

Incentives include Lifetime Achievement Award & River Steward of the Year

Limited resources for gas money, Patagonia clothes at Gatherings, and pro-deals on gear and clothing for River Stewards

Handwritten notes for donors.

Desired state:

Outreach to communities traditionally under-represented in environmental activism

Onboarding is a defined process with an explicit point person (staff or board) that includes the DEI objectives of Native Fish Society

Handbooks for River Stewards, Fellows, Board and Staff that include DEI

Recognition for new partnerships: business/NGO/organizational partner of the year, as well as River Steward of the Year, and Lifetime Accomplishment Award

Smaller incentives to help offset River Steward and partner costs

Handwritten thank yous for donors, board, and volunteers

Action Items:

1. Create defined onboarding process for new staff that include NFS's DEI objectives
2. Revise River Steward Handbook to incorporate DEI
3. Create Board and Staff Handbook and include DEI plan in these
4. Create new recognition for partnerships or award to be presented annually
5. Poll new River Stewards regarding incentives or resources that can better enable their advocacy
6. Encourage handwritten 'thank you's' from staff to board, donors, and volunteers and createntives for certain number per year.

V. Benefits, flexibility, and work-life

Current State:

Flexible work schedule

Unlimited vacation

Health care stipend

Paid sick leave

Retirement contributions and 3% match for simple IRA

Desired State:

Sick leave policy

Annual review of vacation use, how much did you take?

Family leave policy

Policy that welcomes and encourages suggestions on what we're missing

Simple IRA to 401K? Who pays the fee?

Flexible work schedule

Action Items:

1. Develop sick leave policy
2. Develop family leave policy
3. Stated position welcoming suggestions on how we can benefit work/life balance
4. Research IRA vs. 403(b) and transfer to new advising company
5. Incorporate annual review of vacation and assessment of work/life balance into year-end review

VI. Job design, Classification, and Compensation

Current State:

Compensation plan is transparent, performance and market based, and tied back to annual work plans

Jobs designed from strategic plan

Desired State:

Capture more identities in these program positions

Job classification meet all state and federal requirements

Action Items:

1. Review state and federal job classification requirements and ensure that all positions are properly classified

VII. Diversity education and training – leadership development and capacity building

Current State:

DEI education and training as part of one-off grant

Desired State:

DEI education and training part of annual initiative led by DEI core team

Action Items:

1. Develop DEI core team (*see Foundational Benchmarks part IV*)
2. Identify sources of funding, build relationships, and apply when funding opportunities arise
3. Incorporate training and capacity building as part of annual work plans

Appendix I. NFS Organizational History

In 1995, Bill Bakke, a renowned steelhead fly angler and wild fish advocate, and his supporters founded the Native Fish Society in Portland, OR to create a space in culture for the appreciation of and advocacy for the Pacific Northwest's wild, native fish and their homewaters. Bill Bakke has worked in fish conservation for nearly 50 years. He has worked for agencies such as the Columbia River Fisheries Council and the Columbia River InterTribal Fish Commission. He wrote over 100 articles for sporting, news and scientific journals and his work has been noted in numerous books about salmon conservation including *A Common Fate* by Joseph Cone, *Song For The Blue Ocean* by Carl Safina, and *A River Lost* by Blaine Harden. Bill founded several environmental groups aimed at native fish conservation, including Oregon Trout and the Native Fish Society. The organization's founding Board of Directors, comprised of white men, shared Bill's passion for wild, native fish and the need for strong advocacy on their behalf.

The native fish and tributaries of the Columbia River were the original focus of the Native Fish Society with the Deschutes, Metolius, Willamette, Molalla, Sandy, and Clackamas rivers as areas of emphasis. Over time, new members, directors of the board, and volunteers expanded the geographical range of the organization. Bill Bakke focused his wild fish advocacy efforts on the Northwest Power and Planning Council, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the National Marine Fisheries Service by submitting comments and testimony on their fisheries management and hatchery operations plans. Bill led petitions to list Snake River Chinook, Oregon Coastal coho and Columbia River coho under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Jim Myron served as the organization's contract lobbyist in Salem and, working with Bill, helped Oregon adopt the Native Fish Conservation Policy in 2002. This policy's purpose is threefold: 1) prevent the serious depletion of native fish, 2) maintain and restore naturally produced fish in order to provide substantial ecological, economic, and cultural benefits to the citizens of Oregon, and 3) foster and sustain opportunities for fisheries consistent with the conservation of naturally produced fish and responsible use of hatcheries.

As the organization entered the mid-2000s the Board of Directors grew and diversified. Lead by Board Chair Peter Tronquet, the board included female scientists, attorneys, and wild fish advocates like Tammy Mackey, Kaitlin Lovell, Laura Hudson, and Lisa Hansen. The board also welcomed younger members including Jason Koertge, Rob Elam, Jon Kellogg, Scott Baumer, and Spencer Miles as well as longtime wild fish advocates like Chris Conaty, Doug Vaday, Doug Robertson, John Tyler, David Moskowitz, Pat Furrer, and Richard Kennon.

In 2005, Tom Derry joined the NFS staff as Director of Wild Steelhead Funding. Previously, Tom and his wife Connie operated the Kokanee Café in Camp Sherman and helped support local efforts to remove hatchery trout from the Deschutes and Metolius rivers. Having sold his restaurant, Tom and Connie moved to the Molalla River where they soon engaged in local conservation efforts to protect native fish in their new homewaters. Through Tom's development work, many of the Native Fish Society's current members, supporters, and friends were originally Tom and Connie's customers at the Kokanee Cafe, who knew Tom from steelhead fishing in British Columbia, or through his efforts on behalf of his homewaters, the Molalla River.

To involve the community, in 2006 the River Steward Program was created to empower knowledgeable and connected people to work on behalf of wild fish conservation and local communities. Annual River Steward Gatherings were held to bring River Stewards, mostly white, male fly anglers, together and facilitate their relationships with one another, NFS staff, and the best-available science.

River Stewards engaged in a number of local conservation campaigns that benefitted wild, native fish including: protecting the Metolius River from resort development, preventing the expansion of gravel mines in the Molalla River, placing weirs at the outlet of vital wild steelhead spawning tributaries in the lower Deschutes River, participating in the development of spring and fall Chinook Conservation Plans on the Rogue River, dam removal on the Sandy River, and helping secure catch and release regulations for wild winter steelhead in the Umpqua River.

River Stewards also collected data to track the health of their homewaters and native fish. For example, Molalla River Stewards conducted spawning surveys for winter steelhead and collected water temperature information and Salmonberry River Stewards conduct winter steelhead spawning surveys, providing the state with critical information on steelhead health on the Oregon Coast. Our central Oregon Coast River Steward, Paul Engelmeyer, hosted field trips on his homewaters, Ten Mile Creek, to teach participants about the conservation efforts focused on recovering Oregon's wild coastal coho salmon. Spencer Miles, a young River Steward, originally from Tillamook, OR, utilized data and his skills as a software engineer to shed light on the challenges hatchery fish posed to threatened wild salmon and steelhead in Oregon's Sandy River. Spencer's data driven effort sparked a grassroots and legal campaign resulting in a landmark legal ruling and significant on-the-ground hatchery reforms.

In 2010, longtime Board Chair, Peter Tronquet took a new role as Board Treasurer and Rob Elam and Kaitlin Lovell were appointed as the new Co-Chairs of the Board. Both Rob and Kaitlin served in this Co-Chair capacity until 2013. During this time the board also welcomed Julie Keil and Melissa Brown. Rob Elam continued as Board Chair until 2016, when Paul Fortino and Spencer Miles were appointed Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. During this time, Peter and Rob, supported by Spencer, the board, and the staff emphasized and executed a generational transition for the organization. With an unwavering commitment to the mission, younger leadership was encouraged, the River Steward Program was emphasized, and new initiatives were created to connect with a new, younger membership. This era also included a new emphasis on technology, digital advocacy, and growing the organization into California, Washington, and British Columbia.

While all of Native Fish Society's Board of Directors made important contributions, Peter Tronquet's unmatched dedication to the organization, its mission, and his work as a River Steward of the Rogue, Umpqua, and Illinois rivers deserves additional recognition. Peter's thoughtful leadership and consistent support as Board Chair and Treasurer ensured Native Fish Society would grow into the strong and effective advocate for wild, native fish we represent today. Peter worked tirelessly as a River Steward in the Rogue basin, serving as a stakeholder on the Rogue fall and spring Chinook Conservation Plans, the Coastal Management and Conservation Plan, and successfully advocating for wild steelhead catch and release in the Umpqua watershed. On the North Umpqua, Peter Tronquet served on the boards of the North Umpqua

Foundation and the Steamboaters. Today, Peter continues to serve wild, native fish as the Yaquina River Steward from his home in Newport, OR. Peter is without a doubt one of the most important and effective wild fish advocates working today.

In 2011, Mark Sherwood was hired as the River Steward Program Director and the program benefited from a new handbook, presentation, and program outreach materials. Relatively quickly, the program grew beyond the lower Columbia River as 50 River Stewards participated in the program by the end of the year. Annual River Steward Gatherings hosted by the Native Fish Society grew to support increased attendance. These Gatherings provided an opportunity for River Stewards to share the challenges and opportunities in their homewaters, to learn from other River Stewards and staff, and to interact with fisheries biologists and professionals who shared the latest science. River Steward Spencer Miles launched one of the Native Fish Society's most definitive campaigns, Save Sandy Salmon, to reform hatchery practices in Oregon's Sandy River. Bill Bakke shifted to a new role as Science and Conservation Director. River Stewards worked to stop the expansion of the hatchery program on the Klickitat River and helped designate Washington's first Wild Steelhead Gene Bank on the Olympic Peninsula's Sol Duc River.

In 2012, the Native Fish Society hosted a River Steward Gathering on the North Umpqua River where South Umpqua River Steward Stan Petrowski helped launch a campaign to end damaging instream suction dredge mining in Oregon's native fish habitats. By 2012, the River Steward Program had grown to support nearly 60 River Stewards. The Save Sandy Salmon campaign grew from a purely grassroots effort to include a legal strategy to seek relief for the Sandy's native fish and establish a legal precedent to limit the impact of hatchery fish on wild fish across the Northwest. River Steward Peter Donahower served on the Wild Steelhead Gene Bank stakeholder group for the Wind River, to permanently end hatchery steelhead releases in an important stronghold for wild steelhead. A new Crush the Barb angling campaign encouraged anglers to pinch the barbs on their hooks to facilitate successful catch and release. The Native Fish Society hired Tracy Buckner as an Administrative and Development Coordinator.

In 2013, the River Steward Program grew to 70 River Stewards as Jake Crawford, our former Illinois River Steward, was hired to expand the River Steward Program into southern Oregon and northern California. Steve Lent and Peter Donahower helped secure the East Fork Lewis River and the Wind River as Wild Steelhead Gene Banks, curtailing the negative impacts of hatchery steelhead on these streams. The organization successfully advanced policies that protected instream wood from removal and tightened regulations around suction dredge mining. Molalla River Stewards helped with habitat restoration on the North Fork, placing 300 root wads and trees and 480 tons of boulders instream. The Save Sandy Salmon Campaign reached a landmark success, when Oregon's District Court ruled that the Sandy River Hatchery violated federal environmental laws and jeopardized the recovery of wild fish in the Sandy River. The judge's ruling required that no more than 10% of the fish on the spawning grounds can be of hatchery origin. Additionally, threatened wild salmon and steelhead were no longer collected for hatchery broodstock in the Sandy and upper Willamette tributaries. The legal precedent from this case was utilized to reform hatchery programs in the McKenzie, Trinity, Mad, and Puget Sound. River Steward Spencer Miles developed an action alert system that allowed NFS's membership to submit 1,200 comments on a range of wild fish issues, from protecting forage fish species to cleanup at the Hanford Nuclear Site to opposing the development of strip mines in the headwaters of Oregon's Hunter Creek and Pistol River. Peter Donahower, Paul Engelmeier,

Conrad Gowell, and Kyle Smith served as part-time District Coordinators to help support the new River Stewards in their areas.

In 2014, the Native Fish Society's River Steward Program supported a widening geography of conservation campaigns and nearly 80 River Stewards safeguarding 70 watersheds. The organization's first California River Steward, Doug DeRoy, secured protections for 12 populations of threatened wild steelhead on the Mendocino and Sonoma Coast when new "low-flow" closures were adopted by the California Fish and Game Commission. River Stewards secured the North Fork Toutle / Green rivers as a new Wild Steelhead Gene Bank. As part of our campaign to limit suction dredge mining, Oregon's State Scenic Waterways program was revived and local advocates on the Molalla and Chetco rivers worked to advance protections for their native fish. River Stewards and staff protected the Salmonberry River and its wild steelhead from the unlawful reconstruction of the Scenic Railroad during spawning season, eventually calling upon the Governor's office and Oregon State Police to shut down the illegal construction. Shortly thereafter, the Department of State Lands and the Army Corps of Engineers issued cease and desist permits to the Scenic Railroad. To this day, the Scenic Railroad does not operate in the Salmonberry Canyon. In southern Oregon, Hunter Creek River Steward Dave Lacey built a large local coalition to oppose nickel strip mining in the headwaters of Hunter Creek, submitting 600 comments to the Forest Service, winning the support of the Gold Beach City Council for an agreement to forgo selling water to mining operations, and traveling to Washington D.C. to advocate for wild fish with the Oregon congressional delegation on the issue. Michael Moody resigned as Executive Director, and Board President Peter Tronquet served as the interim Executive Director. Jake Crawford transitioned into a new role as River Steward Program Director and Mark Sherwood moved to southern Oregon assuming his new role as Southern Regional Manager. Jason Small supported River Stewards in South Puget Sound as our first District Coordinator in Washington. Our River Steward Gathering was hosted at Westwind Camp on the Oregon Coast and focused on Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Both the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde and Siletz joined and participated, and new relationships were formed.

In 2015, the Native Fish Society supported 85 River Stewards in four states across the Pacific Northwest. Our action alert system leveraged the voices of our membership to submit 2,000 comments to decision makers. State Scenic Waterway Designation protected 28 miles of the Molalla and Chetco rivers from mining, dewatering, and damming thanks to the leadership of local River Stewards. After a stalemate in the legally required work group, a temporary ban on suction dredge mining went into effect at the end of the year, protecting 22,000 miles of salmon and steelhead habitats in Oregon. The Native Fish Society launched a #keepemwet photo contest that helped take the practice of keeping fish in the water during catch and release viral. With over 200 photos submitted, 1,500 likes, and 30,000 # in three months, anglers spread the idea like wildfire. River Stewards and staff helped add two more Wild Steelhead Gene Banks in Washington – the Chinook and Grays rivers. In total, 1,000 sq. miles of Washington watershed were set aside for wild steelhead across the state. In northern California, River Stewards on the Eel River launched the Eel River Headwaters Campaign – a grassroots effort to return wild salmon and steelhead to the habitats above Scott Dam on the upper mainstem Eel River. During the third year of California's crippling drought, River Stewards monitored temperatures above Scott Dam and discovered cold water, which persisted year round – an incredibly important piece of information to help build the case for dam removal. Conrad Gowell joined the Native Fish Society staff as River Steward Program Director. Tom Derry, Director of Wild Steelhead Funding served as

Executive Director in an interim capacity. Thomas Mitchell joined the Native Fish Society Board of Directors, serving as Treasurer. Thomas provided substantial support for the young staff, drawing from his extensive non-profit and financial experience from his work at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

In 2016, the Native Fish Society celebrated its 20th year as an organization and supported 85 River Stewards, safeguarding 174,000 sq. miles of watersheds in Oregon, Idaho, Washington, and California. The Wild Rivers Campaign, led by Hunter Creek River Steward Dave Lacey, achieved remarkable milestones: 500 people at public meetings, 200 business supporters, 40,000 public comments, the creation of the Wild Rivers, Wild Brews Coalition, and bills introduced into the Congressional House and Senate to protect 101,000 acres of public lands from strip mining in the headwaters of the Illinois, Rogue, Smith, Pistol rivers and Hunter Creek through a mineral withdrawal. Ultimately, after three years of grassroots work, a 20-year administrative mineral withdrawal was secured for this area, protecting it from new mining claims. Smith River Steward Sunny Bourdon helped secure 64 miles of Heritage Trout Waters in the South Fork Smith River – the highest honor that can be given to a trout fishery in California. The Eel River Headwaters Campaign took another step forward as River Stewards collected cold-water data and the recognition of federal fisheries agencies that Scott Dam blocked 200 miles of salmon and steelhead habitats in their Recovery Plan for Northern California Coast Steelhead. In Washington, at the urging of River Stewards, staff and partners, both the Nisqually and Elwha rivers were added to the state's network of Wild Steelhead Gene Banks for a total of 2,200 sq. miles of watersheds free of hatchery steelhead. In South Puget Sound, River Stewards partnered with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to study 533 coastal cutthroat trout learning information critical to guide their science-based conservation and management. In central Oregon, Native Fish Society increased its involvement in the Pelton Round Butte Fish Committee to advocate for the benefits to the lower Deschutes watershed and fish health promised by Portland General Electric in the relicensing of their hydropower project. Mark Sherwood transitioned to a new role as Executive Director and Science and Conservation Director, Bill Bakke, retired from the organization.

In 2017, the Native Fish Society supported 90 River Stewards safeguarding nearly 4,000 river miles across the Pacific Northwest. River Steward Stan Petrowski, with help from River Stewards Charles Gehr and Dave Carpenter, succeeded in his efforts to protect Oregon's rivers from suction dredge mining when 22,000 miles of salmon and steelhead habitat were permanently protected through a new bill signed into law by Governor Kate Brown. River Stewards in southern Oregon defended their 101,000 acre mineral withdrawal from repeated threats by Utah Congressman Rob Bishop and helped secure protections for 58,000 acres of the North Fork Smith River in Oregon as the west coast's first Outstanding Resource Water. River Stewards on the Oregon Coast launched a new campaign aimed at cleaning up the mess left by unsustainable clear cuts on steep slopes. Rogue River Stewards and staff defended recovering wild spring Chinook from pressure from fishing interests to restart unsustainable fishing practices. The legal precedent set on the Sandy River, resulted in 1 million fewer hatchery salmon and steelhead planted annually in Oregon and Washington rivers. In California, Eel River Stewards sounded the alarm when PG&E failed to include dam decommissioning among its options to review through its forthcoming relicensing process. Swift response from the Native Fish Society's members and partners kept dam removal on the table. In the Deschutes, River Stewards rallied Governor Kate Brown and her natural resources staff to provide the leadership necessary to improve water quality in the river. Joining together with our partners at Wild Fish Conservancy in the Our Sound, Our Salmon Coalition, Atlantic salmon farming operations were stopped from expanding and now must phase out

by 2025. In British Columbia, our past involvement in a steelhead catch and release study resulted in new best practices for recreational anglers and the expansion of our River Steward Program into Canada. Allison Oliver was hired as our British Columbia Regional Coordinator. Native Fish Society staff and board began exploring the need to increase our understanding and capacity for growing the diversity, inclusion, and equity of our organization. Executive Director, Mark Sherwood and River Steward Program Director Conrad Gowell authored a technical advisory grant to Meyer Memorial Trust for diversity, equity and inclusiveness training and the development of an Organizational Equity Strategy with the Center for Diversity and the Environment. Russell Loeb joined the Native Fish Society Board of Directors as Treasurer. River Steward Doug DeRoy joined the Board of Directors.