

Spring 2007

Connect to Coast Coho Plan

The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds Outreach Team has launched "The Coho Connection" to provide information about the programs, projects and people implementing the Oregon Coast Coho Conservation Plan.

Just as the coho plan builds on the successes of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, this newsletter intends to build on the communications efforts that have informed people about the Oregon Plan during the past 10 years.

The Coho Connection will be distributed at least twice a year with special bulletins as needed. We welcome your comments--see the back page for contact information.



The Coho Connection

East Fork Humbug Creek project provides habitat for coho

Coho and chinook salmon, steelhead, cutthroat trout and lamprey will all benefit from an extensive stream restoration project that began two years ago on East Fork Humbug Creek near Cannon Beach.

Since the summer of 2005, eighty pieces of large wood have been placed in the river, three bridges constructed, two fish friendly culverts installed and approximately three acres of riparian area planted with tree seedlings. This fish passage, riparian and in-stream habitat restoration project has opened more than five miles of essential habitat to salmon, enhanced one mile of salmon habitat with placement of large wood and improved riparian habitat by planting conifer and hardwood trees along a mile and a half of river at a cost of more than \$700,000. The conifer seedlings planted within the riparian area improve stream shading and will provide future large wood for the stream.

This project will increase adult salmon spawning and juvenile salmon rearing and winter refuge habitat.

Large wood in the stream promotes gravel accumulation for spawning and increases the amount and complexity of

stream habitat available for fish. Increased complexity of stream habitat provides cover for juveniles seeking protection from predators and strong winter currents and also benefits the food chain by trapping organic materials such as leaves and spawned out salmon carcasses.

(continued on page 4)



The Roscoe Steel Bridge was installed over an unnamed tributary to East Humbug Creek during the summer of 2005.

State of Oregon Coho Conservation Plan

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife prepared the Oregon Coast Coho Conservation Plan in association with numerous state and federal natural resource agencies.

This joint effort resulted in a State of Oregon Conservation Plan.

This Plan represents an important step forward for the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds through implementation of the Native Fish Conservation Policy (NFCP). It gives Oregon the ability to implement a successful conservation program across the coast coho Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU).

The Oregon Coast Coho Conservation Plan's purpose is to ensure the continued viability of the Oregon Coast Coho ESU and to achieve a desired status that provides substantial ecological and societal benefits.

The Conservation Plan does not propose new land-use regulations, but maintains existing regulatory programs, and enhances support for non-regulatory cooperative conservation.

A key element of the Plan is to provide a higher and more effective level of support to local conservation groups and private landowners on stream restoration projects throughout the state. The Oregon Plan, a volunteer-driven initiative, relies on these partnerships and cooperation from landowners to be successful.



“The Oregon Plan makes it clear that saving salmon is everybody’s responsibility.”
Jay Nicholas,
ODFW biologist



Jay Nicholas was inducted into the 2006 Wild Salmon Hall of Fame.

Elements of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. This uniquely Oregon approach to restoring native fish populations and developing healthy watersheds consists of four key elements.

Voluntary restoration actions
It takes local knowledge of problems and a local sense of ownership to achieve solutions.

Coordinated state and federal agency and tribal actions

These agencies are responsible for water quality, water quantity, and a wide variety of habitat protection, alteration, and restoration activities, as well as fishery harvest management and production of hatchery fish.

Monitoring watershed health, water quality and salmon recovery to document existing conditions, track changes, and determine the impact of pro-

grams and actions.

Strong scientific oversight by the Independent Multidisciplinary Science Team, an independent panel of scientists who evaluate the plan’s effectiveness, identify needed changes, and guide research investments

For more information, visit the recently redesigned home page of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds at: www.oregon.gov/OPSW.

Oregon Plan: 10 years and going strong

With implementation of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, former Governor John Kitzhaber emphasized that every natural resource agency shared responsibility for saving salmon. These agencies work collaboratively and through their individual programs to advance the goals of the Oregon Plan.

In the past 10 years, The Ore-

gon Plan is responsible for more than 8,000 restoration projects on private, state, federal and tribal lands that have improved water quality and quantity and enhanced habitat for fish. Oregonians have planted trees and installed fences along more than 3,700 miles of streams and rivers, and made more than 3,100

miles of stream accessible to fish. Nearly 7,650 miles of roads have been improved to reduce sediment and alleviate problems that threaten salmon streams. Total funding for restoration and protection projects have exceeded \$93 million.

(continued on page 4)

Nicholas sees Oregon Plan grow and prosper

Jay Nicholas, a biologist with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, knows the Oregon Plan. He has seen it develop from concept to idea, from an idea to a plan and from a plan to on - the - ground restoration work that is saving salmon and preserving watersheds.

“I have been on board since the first meeting when it was decided that I was going to

work for Governor Kitzhaber and write the conservation plan,” said Nicholas.

According to Nicholas, the plan now in its 10th year provides an overall umbrella for Oregon’s watershed conservation efforts.

“The plan makes it clear that saving salmon is everybody’s responsibility,” Nicholas said. “Before 1997 and the Oregon Plan, saving salmon was the

responsibility of ODFW.”

Nicholas was honored for his commitment to saving salmon by being inducted into the 2006 Wild Salmon Hall of Fame. The 4th annual event acknowledged accomplishments in wild salmon recovery.

Nicholas was selected for his 30 years of work supporting the future of wild salmon -

(continued on page 4)

Habitat strategy involves landowners in stream restoration

“We want to demonstrate to landowners that working farms and forests are compatible with fish recovery and in the long run everyone benefits,” said ODFW Program Manager Kelly Moore.

During the development of the State of Oregon Coastal Coho Conservation Plan, the Habitat Strategy was created as a way to engage private landowners and request their participation and cooperation in developing stream restoration projects. This strategy is not a new government proposal, but an extension of the Oregon Plan, a volunteer-driven initiative committed to restoring native fish populations and developing healthy watersheds.

The strategy will focus new resources on restoration and aquatic habitats to improve winter survival for coho salmon juveniles. It will provide technical support and incentives for participation in conservation actions that benefit coho salmon on agricultural lands, rural residential properties, family farms, woodlands and appropriate private timberlands. The strategy will improve vegetation along streams and increase areas where stream channels join the floodplain.

“These will be more ambitious and bigger projects that will have more impact on land use and more benefit for fish,” said Moore. Moore said that projects will be focused in streams that were altered or channelized into a trench and efforts will be made to reconnect the floodplain.

Projects are more complex

“These are long-term stream projects that involve a whole sequence of events,” said Moore.

They could include fencing to keep cattle away from a river at critical times, planting willows along the river, adding logs and boulders in streams to provide structure and allowing other wildlife, such as beaver, to assist with creating habitat for coho salmon.

“We are not looking for a short-term fix,” said Moore. “The intent is to reset some of the streams to a productive status in potentially productive locations.”

Existing relationships are key to success

The Habitat Strategy involves an extensive outreach program to involve landowners in projects that will benefit coastal coho. A “how to” book will provide details on the types of projects, highlight examples of successful projects and include funding incentives and information about the permitting process. In addition to the book, an attention grabbing one page flyer will be produced and used when personal contacts are made with landowners. Landowners who participated in past projects will receive technical materials they can use when talking to other landowners during a speakers bureau. “It is really important that the selling of this program comes locally,” said Moore. “There was concern that this was another new and different government program, but it is not. We want to imbed our messages into existing relationships and build on those relationships.” Kelly Moore works at the Corvallis Research Lab and his number is (541) 757-4263 ext 223 or kelly.moore@oregonstate.edu.



Kelly Moore works at the Corvallis Research Lab.

State of Oregon Coho Conservation Plan

Timeline

- **Fall 2003: Coastal Coho Assessment started**
- **May 2005: Coastal Coho Assessment completed**
- **June 2004: Coastal Coho Stakeholder Team's first meeting**
- **September 2006: Coastal Coho Stakeholder Team's last meeting (20 meetings total)**
- **October 2006: Public draft Coast Coho Conservation Plan released**
- **November 2006: Four town hall meetings held within the ESU**
- **January 2007: Governor sends letter endorsing the plan to all natural resource agency directors and boards or commissions**
- **January 2007: ODFW staff briefs Commission on the public draft of the plan**
- **March 2007: ODFW Commission approves the plan**

Group coordinates coho plan outreach

An informal group has begun coordinating outreach efforts related to the Coast Coho Plan.

The group consists of representatives of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board; Oregon's Forestry, Agriculture and Fish & Wildlife state agencies; Oregon State University Extension; the Governor's Natural Resources Office; and the Oregon Forest Resources Institute.

The group plans to develop materials jointly and to coordinate outreach methods and events. Coordinating the group are OWEB staff members Monte Turner (503-986-0195) and Miriam Hulst (503-986-0026). The group functions under the umbrella of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds Outreach Team and meets immediately following the Outreach Team's every-other-month meeting. The next meetings are September 18 in Salem.

THE COHO CONNECTION

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We welcome your feedback and comments.

The additional organic materials supply essential nutrients and food sources for the aquatic insects that fish eat, and for the riparian vegetation, which is important for good water quality.

In addition to the fish passage, riparian, and in-stream habitat components, surplus salmon carcasses from Nehalem Hatchery are being distributed yearly throughout the project area to re-create natural processes and jump start the healing process.

This large multi-year project is a cooperative effort among Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife habitat restoration biologists Troy Goby, Jane Butterfield and Dave Plawman; the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council; landowner Longview Fibre Company; and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

“Our goal is to restore and enhance aquatic and riparian habitat diversity and improve passage for adult and juvenile salmonids and other aquatic species,” said Goby. “It continues to be a very involved project that relies on cooperation from all the partners to achieve our desired outcomes.”



A bridge is constructed over a tributary of the East Fork Humbug Creek.

Nicholas sees Oregon Plan grow and prosper

(continued from page 2)

From compiling a scientific monograph about every chinook stock on the Oregon coast, to writing the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. He also wrote and illustrated a children's book about salmon that has been placed in every fifth-grade classroom in Oregon, with proceeds donated to the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps.



Oregon Plan: 10 years

(continued from page 2)

Salmon hatch in freshwater, swim to the sea to grow and mature, then return to freshwater to reproduce. They battle strong currents, waterfalls, constructed dams, predators and other obstacles to reach their hatching place. Here they release eggs, spawn and die shortly after.

“Salmon, aside from being an icon and part of the Pacific Northwest culture, depend on having an unbroken chain from the mountains to the ocean,” said Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Biologist Jay Nicholas.

To keep that chain from being broken, watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts work with landowners on stream restoration projects throughout the state. The Oregon Plan, a volunteer-driven initiative, relies on these partnerships and cooperation from landowners to be successful.

“The leadership on the ground and having councils, districts and landowners all on board results in better cooperation and better projects,” said Nicholas.