

Programs and Accomplishments (2015 through 2019)

The Rogue River Watershed Council (RRWC) is a non-profit whose mission is stewardship of the Rogue River. The organization was formed in 2015 when four smaller councils that had been operating in portions of the middle and upper Rogue River watershed for nearly 20 years merged. That merger was the first of its kind in Oregon, was intended to improve the collective effectiveness and efficiency of the four original councils at achieving their (and our) mission, and has clearly yielded benefits.

We have improved our organizational structure and daily operations while working to expand educational and outreach efforts that encourage those who live here to work together for the betterment of our natural environment and lives. Our improvements are strengthening habitat restoration, water quality, and aquatic monitoring programs initiated by our predecessor watershed councils. RRWC has become better able to help communities and landowners maintain the special qualities of the watershed we all value and is now addressing another challenge of the merger: broadening our base of supporters to match the scale of the restoration, monitoring, and community engagement activities before us.

RRWC hopes that you will support our efforts to keep our watershed the wonderful place it is today. These efforts emphasize helping landowners plan, implement, and monitor common-sense watershed improvements, particularly in priority areas where the benefits to water quality, wildlife, and watershed health are anticipated to be greatest. Following are brief descriptions of projects completed or in process:

Habitat Restoration

- RRWC has helped restore fish passage by **removing artificial barriers** on **Evans Creek**, on **Wagner Creek** near Talent, on **Salt Creek** near the community of Lake Creek, on **Jones Creek** near Grants Pass, and most recently the Smith-Myer-Roper diversion dam on **Ashland Creek**. A video summarizing the benefits to streamside landowners and to fish from a project we and partners have recently completed on Wagner Creek can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABVBd6FQnjc>.
- RRWC worked with the City of Eagle Point on **Little Butte Creek** near Highway 62 to **restore flow to a side channel, stabilize an eroding bank** (while also providing valuable cover for salmon, trout, lamprey, and other native fish species), and **replace several acres of blackberry with trees and shrubs** like willow, dogwood, cottonwood, alder, and pine.
- RRWC is working with private landowners to plan and implement **additional fish passage improvements on Salt Creek** and **instream and near-stream habitat improvements on nearly a mile of South Fork Little Butte Creek**, both of which are important to Coho Salmon and steelhead streams, near Lake Creek.
- More fish passage, habitat restoration, and riparian forest rehabilitation projects are in development.



Photo by Open Rivers Fund

Water Quality

- RRWC has active **water quality improvement projects** with the City of Talent and Jackson SWCD on **Wagner Creek**, City of Phoenix on **Bear Creek**, Mountain Meadows on **Kitchen Creek**, the City of Eagle Point along **Little Butte Creek**, and on **Sugarpine and Bitter Lick** creeks.
- RRWC recently helped the **City of Grants Pass** and **Medford Water Commission** complete plans designed to protect the quality of their source water and a plan to address streamside forests along Bear Creek with **Rogue Valley Council of Governments**.

Aquatic Monitoring

- Monitoring helps “close the loop” and verify the value of our projects. RRWC is helping to **monitor water quality in Bear, Little Butte, and Elk Creeks**.
- **We are monitoring stream conditions and counting fish** in multiple streams across our watershed as part of a citizen monitoring program that has expanded beyond its original territory near Grants Pass. Much of this effort is focused in areas where our projects should yield beneficial changes to native fish.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **Our work is enabled by community outreach**, led by RRWC’s professional staff, and often reinforced by local volunteers.
- RRWC engages in **social media**, maintains **an informative website** (www.rogueriverwc.org) and conducts **educational hikes/tours** to places like Rainie Falls, Big Butte Springs, Takelma Gorge, and Denman Wildlife Area.
- The organization distributes monthly updates of our activities via email and produces a **semi-annual newsletter** (*The Confluence*) as well as periodic public **reports on our accomplishments**.
- We host a **Celebrate the Rogue!** dinner and auction each autumn to fundraise and increase awareness of our programs.
- RRWC worked with local volunteers, businesses, and other partners to organize two watershed-related festivals in 2019: **Festival on the Rogue** in Shady Cove and **Fish Migration Day** in Grants Pass.
- We have coordinated multiple **fish tosses** (semi-natural food web augmentation of salmon and steelhead streams) with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on Rogue River tributaries like Elk, Big Butte, and Little Butte creeks.
- RRWC helps local partners coordinate an annual public event on Bear Creek, participates in the Bear Creek Salmon Festival, and helps organize a cleanup on the Upper Rogue (from Trail to Gold Hill).
- RRWC is **communicating with landowners in geographic priority areas** like Little Butte, Grave, Elk, and Bear Creeks to increase interest in our programs and to develop beneficial riparian and habitat restoration projects.



For more information on RRWC and the work we do, please check out our website at <http://www.rogueriverwc.org> or visit the Rogue River Watershed Council page on Facebook.