

Fall/Winter 2018

# The Confluence

Newsletter of the Rogue River Watershed Council

## Second Annual “Celebrate the Rogue!” a Big Success

Fall is always a busy time of year for Rogue River Watershed Council: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board grant proposals are due; the in-water work period draws to a close; and we sponsor, co-sponsor, or participate in at least three major outreach events (Bear Creek Fall Fest, Rogue River Cleanup, Bear Creek Salmon Festival). But perhaps the most visible, rewarding, fun (and exhausting!) activity is our “Celebrate the Rogue!” annual dinner and fundraiser. 2018 marked our second year for the event and it clearly is getting bigger and better! More people, more auction items, more funds raised!

Held at the Inn at the Commons in Medford, the event included a social hour, live music, dinner, and silent and live auctions. The annual “Celebrate the Rogue!” event affords RRWC supporters, friends, partners, volunteers, board, and staff an opportunity to celebrate the important work being done by the organization, raise money for this important work, and have a lot of fun while doing so.

Live music was added this year; people enjoyed listening to the high-energy bluegrass music of Eight Dollar Mountain while socializing and placing bids on over 70 silent auction items donated from various generous area businesses and individuals. Bidders competed for artwork, gift baskets, hand-tied flies, area wines (lots of area wine!), gift certificates (for everything from pizza to furniture to bed and breakfast stays), and much more.

Another addition to the event this year was a live auction of eight marquee items. Lodging and dining packages, guided fishing trips, and a year of home-baked (by RRWC staff!) desserts generated some spirited, competitive bidding. We also added a paddle raiser (aka “fund a need”), where participants could pledge money (\$25 per mile) to help send a Coho Salmon up the Rogue River and Elk Creek.

The event finale featured opera singer/fisheries biologist Gino Lucchetti leading a sing-along of the “Rogue River Song.”



### Inside This Issue

Second Annual Celebrate the Rogue! Event ....	1
Notes from Exec. Director & Chair .....	2
Celebrate the Rogue! Event Sponsors .....	3
Snorkeling with Brian .....	3
Elk Creek Floodplain Enhancement .....	4
Pesticide Stewardship Partners .....	4
Salt Creek Fish Passage .....	5
Under the Surface .....	5
Species Spotlight .....	6
Smith-Myer-Roper Fish Passage .....	6
Meet our Newest Staff Member .....	7
Off the Resource Shelf .....	7
Photos from Celebrate the Rogue! .....	8


Many individuals were involved in planning and staffing the event. Thanks are due to Shawn Clark, Stan Dean, Tyler Duncan, Paula Trudeau, Chad Woodward, Rogue River Watershed Council board members and staff. Special thanks go to Southern Oregon University Biology Club students Amanda Huffman, Kenneth Karter, Nick Mantheakis, and Max McClarnon, for their help with the silent auction; Jonas Parker for his entertaining turn as emcee/auctioneer; artist Marilyn Hurst, who donated the use of her artwork for the event poster; Eight Dollar Mountain; Gino Lucchetti; Patricia Rogers and staff at Inn at the Commons; event sponsors (see page 3); and of course, the wonderful attendees and bidders who made the night extra special!



## The Confluence Fall/Winter 2018

### GET IN TOUCH:

89 Alder Street  
Central Point, OR 97502  
Phone: 541-423-6158  
E-mail: [info@rogueriverwc.org](mailto:info@rogueriverwc.org)  
Web: [www.rogueriverwc.org](http://www.rogueriverwc.org)

 <https://www.facebook.com/RogueRiverWatershedCouncil/>

### RRWC STAFF:

Brian Barr, Executive Director  
Anna Johnson, Administrative Asst.  
Alexis Brickner, Project Manager  
Donna Chickering, Program Manager  
John Speece, Project Manager

### RRWC DIRECTORS:

Bob Jones, Chair  
Terry Ruitter, Vice Chair  
Ray Tharp, Secretary  
Bela Toledo, Treasurer  
Tom Dover  
Keith Emerson  
Dave Grosjacques  
Bob Hunter  
Chuck Huntington  
Jack Williams

*RRWC's mission: Stewardship of the Rogue River watershed through restoration, education, and community involvement.*

*RRWC is tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and a recognized watershed council. Watershed councils were authorized by the Oregon Legislature in 1995 to promote and implement voluntary cooperative conservation actions.*

## Notes from the Executive Director's Desk

It isn't often that I take the time to sit down, relax, and reflect a little bit on what Rogue River Watershed Council has done. I seem to be overly occupied with where we are and where we are trying to go.

But Celebrate The Rogue! forces me to slow down a little and connect the "where we've been" with the "where we are going." And looking back helps me realize that three years ago we had

- just built up to a staff of four (we're now at five and staring at adding a sixth in the next 12 months);
- an annual operating budget of around \$500,000 and now we're about to approve a budget of \$941,000;
- very few relationships with local community members and governments but in 2018 we received donations from 126 individual donors and 113 businesses, are working on projects with City of Grants Pass, Medford Water Commission, City of Eagle Point, and City of Ashland, with several more projects in development with other municipalities;
- organized just one local event, but this year we organized a World Fish Migration Day celebration in Grants Pass and Celebrate the Rogue! in Medford, co-organized Festival on the Rogue in Shady Cove and Bear Creek Fall Fest in Medford, and co-sponsored the Bear Creek Salmon Festival in Ashland.

We are still striving to engage more landowners and develop more habitat restoration and water quality improvement projects in our focal areas. Soon-to-be-completed planning projects focusing on water quality, source water protection, and Coho Salmon habitat improvement will give the staff here direction to build out our action plan over the next five years. The burden then rests with our competent staff on turning the direction from those plans into landowner relationships, funding, and completed projects.

And, if we're successful in this regard, my sincere hope is that we hear positive feedback from our partners and that the snorkeling update (see page 3) in 2021 states that "we saw way more Coho Salmon, Rainbow Trout, and Speckled Dace this year than we did back in 2018!"

## ...and from the Board Chair

WOW, 2018 is almost gone and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Celebrate the Rogue!" event is in the books! For those of you who were able to attend, I hope you had a great time; for those of you who missed it, we hope to see you at next year's event. THANK YOU to all of our sponsors, partners, volunteers, and supporters as you made this event a huge success. With your financial support, the Rogue River Watershed Council will continue to improve water quality, restore habitat, and provide education and outreach in the watershed council area in 2019. For those of you unable to attend the October festivities and who would like to make a donation, please visit our website, [www.rogueriverwc.org](http://www.rogueriverwc.org). An investment in our environment will yield substantial returns in the future!



Photo by Justin Clifton

## Thank you to our 2018 *Celebrate the Rogue!* event sponsors:



Plant Oregon

Jacobson, Thierolf & Dickey, P.C.



L&S Rock Products



## Snorkeling with Brian

By Brian Barr

I know Jay Doyno gets to write an article for *The Confluence* every issue called “Under the Surface,” but when is the last time Jay was actually under the water?

I don’t know the answer to that question, but I can tell you that Lance Wyss from The Freshwater Trust, Michaela Hanson from Camas Land Use Consulting, and I spent hours snorkeling Sugarpine and South Fork Little Butte Creeks in the latter part of September.

Yes, the water was chilly. And yes, the visibility in South Fork Little Butte Creek left a bit to be desired. But boy oh boy did we see some fish!

It’s amazing just how much more you see (and the behavior you get to see) when you get down on the fish’s level. Speckled Dace dancing around a few Rainbow Trout and a constructed log jam in the Little Butte system. Twenty or so juvenile Coho Salmon sharing (at a distance) a pool with a 10 to 12 inch Cutthroat Trout in Sugarpine. Reticulate Sculpin hopping along the cobble and boulders on the bottom of the creek while Redside Shiners swim over top in a loose shoal.

Of course, you want to be careful to stay on the right side of the “careful observer” line (and avoid being on the “disruptive aquatic-mayhem creator” side). And you should pick your timing and creeks appropriately to avoid being in the stream with spawning fish.

I highly recommend renting a wet or dry suit for a day, dusting off your mask and snorkel, and crawling along the bottom of a small creek or swimming in a larger creek or the Rogue itself and take in the sights. I can guarantee that with a little patience, some sharpening of the senses, and a little tolerance of being cold, you will learn something important about these critters.

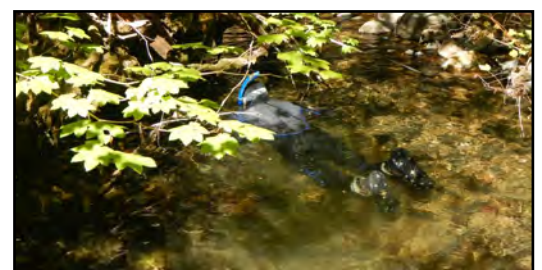
Here is a quick rundown of what we saw in the two creeks we visited:

### South Fork Little Butte Creek

- Coho Salmon
- Rainbow Trout
- Speckled Dace
- Redside Shiner
- Klamath Smallscale Sucker
- Reticulate Sculpin

### Sugarpine Creek

- Coho Salmon
- Rainbow Trout
- Cutthroat Trout
- Redside Shiner
- Reticulate Sculpin



## RRWC PROJECT PREVIEW

## *Elk Creek Floodplain and Side-Channel Enhancement Project*

Elk Creek, a large tributary to the upper Rogue River, provides habitat for Coho Salmon, Chinook Salmon, steelhead, Cutthroat Trout, Pacific Lamprey, and other native aquatic species. Various past land management actions have resulted in degraded aquatic habitat conditions in the creek. We are planning to reconnect Elk Creek and its floodplain, create complex habitat in side channels and on the floodplain, and increase inundation frequency of off-channel habitats—all with the primary goal of improving rearing conditions for juvenile salmonids.

We are partnering with the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to remove a 500-foot-long earthen berm on the creek's west bank and add large wood to the floodplain and two side channels on the east side of the creek.

Berm removal will reconnect the creek with its floodplain, encourage channel meander, and allow juvenile fish to access the currently disconnected floodplain and the refuge habitat it provides during high flow events. Adding large wood to two side channels will encourage development of complex habitat, create cover, and slow water during high-flow events. Large wood placement will also create a more stable channel in this reach. Finally, strategic rootwad placement in the second side channel will create scour pools, which will provide over-summering habitat for juvenile salmonids. We have been working with Cascade Stream Solutions

on designing this project while working on a grant proposal to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board this fall. Additional support will come from partnering agencies, ACOE and BLM. We hope to have this project funded and permitted for the 2019 in-water work period.



## RRWC PROJECT UPDATE

## *Pesticide Stewardship Partners*

by Gordon Jones, PhD

On September 20<sup>th</sup> a group of more than 50 farmers, gardeners, wine grape growers, orchardists, and landscape professionals met at the Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center (SOREC) for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Integrated Pest Management Festival. The IPM Festival is a keystone educational event of the Middle Rogue Pesticide Stewardship Partnership, which includes Rogue River Watershed Council, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, Rogue Valley Sewer Services, Oregon Department of Forestry, OSU-SOREC, and many others, with support from the Oregon Department of Agriculture and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. The partnership works to promote voluntary adoption of best pest management practices to protect surface water quality in the Bear Creek drainage.

The IPM Festival program included a report on recent pesticide detections in tributaries of Bear Creek—several herbicides, one insecticide, and one fungicide have been detected thus far in 2018, all with detections below EPA thresholds for water quality degradation. The program also included an overview of the principles of integrated pest management presented by SOREC entomologist, Rick Hilton; a presentation on the movement of pesticides in the environment by OSU Extension Toxicologist, Jeff Jenkins; and a discussion with Jeff Isler, ODA Pesticide Investigator for Southwest Oregon. After lunch, breakout sessions for homeowners, wine grape growers and orchardists, and pasture managers allowed for more focused discussions of pest management. There was also an outdoor demonstration to evaluate the spray distribution pattern from an orchard sprayer, and the day wrapped up with a visit to a restoration site on Neil Creek implemented by The Freshwater Trust and a tour of Valley View Orchard and Longwalk Vineyard.

Keep an eye out for next year's Integrated Pest Management Festival and other Middle Rogue PSP events. For more information visit [www.jswcd.org](http://www.jswcd.org) or [www.extension.oregonstate.edu/sorec](http://www.extension.oregonstate.edu/sorec).

*Gordon Jones is Assistant Professor of Practice at the Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center of Oregon State University.*

RRWC PROJECT PROFILE

# Salt Creek Fish Passage

This past summer we worked with a private landowner on Salt Creek to remove the need for two seasonal push-up dams, both of which were on the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife’s Statewide Priority List and the local Rogue Basin Priority List for fish passage projects. Salt Creek is a cool-water tributary to Little Butte Creek and just one of a few major producers of Endangered Species Act-listed Coho Salmon in the Rogue Basin. It also contains healthy populations of fall Chinook Salmon, steelhead, and resident Cutthroat Trout. Spring fed, Salt Creek maintains cold water temperatures throughout the summer months providing essential over-summering habitat for both Coho Salmon and steelhead. By removing the seasonal push-up dams, which were in place from April though October for irrigation purposes, we opened up 0.6 miles of rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids.



To complete this project, we worked with watershed restoration contractor Northwest Watershed Restoration to install a new, more efficient irrigation system. This entailed installing a concrete inlet structure on the bank at each diversion site, new gates to control flow, and pipes for fish passage to newly lowered fish screens. A 500-foot stretch of open ditch was also re-profiled and piped to reduce head losses. This project was only the beginning of fish passage improvements we have planned on Salt Creek. In the coming years, we hope to remove two to four additional push-up dams and replace them with efficient irrigation systems similar to this one.



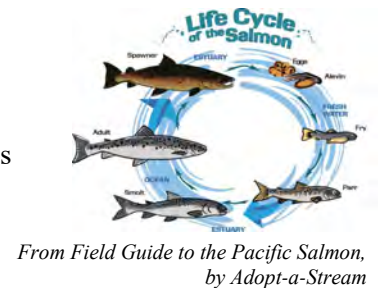
## UNDER THE SURFACE

### *Mystery Migrations (and the Politics of Fear)*

by Jay Doino

This just in: Trump White House fears RRWC newsletter and growing readership – rebukes talk of nature, collaboration; slashes production to biannual schedule.

What’s this mean? That you only hear from me twice per year. Still too much? Complain to management. You wanna get me fired? You can’t get me fired.



Alright then. Half-pounders. You won’t find them at Carl’s Jr. and they don’t come with fries. “Half-pounder” describes a unique life stage exhibited by many (most?) Rogue steelhead. You already know young steelhead head to sea to feed and grow. However, several months after ocean entry, things get weird. In August, still immature steelhead do a 180, heading back upriver where they reside until late winter/early spring of the following year. Only then do they 180 again and return to sea – without spawning (that’s about a year later). And it’s during this interim freshwater period that we call them half-pounders. This behavior is energy costly, risky, and seemingly defeats the purpose of ocean-aimed migration in the first place. It does explain the generally smaller size of adult spawners resulting from less ocean-residence time and more calories burned migrating.

Why do steelhead do this? I’ve heard various theories, my own most credible, but we just don’t know. Occurring only (primarily, that is) in the Rogue, Klamath, and Eel Rivers, half-pounder life histories are truly unique. In the end, the why of it doesn’t matter. What does matter, is that we appreciate our steelhead as the grand and quirky animals they evolved to be. Well, that, and your vote in November.

*Jay Doino is a fisheries biologist who has been working in the Rogue Basin since 1999. And no, we can’t fire him.*

## SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

## Maples of the Riparian Zone

By Alexis Larsen

Fall in the Rogue Valley brings warm sunny days and cool clear nights—perfect weather for encouraging leaves to change colors as our trees go dormant for the winter. Probably the most celebrated of tree species in the fall is the maple. If you were lucky enough to get out along a creek or river this past month you surely noticed several maple species turning yellow and red: the majestic bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) and the more demure but fiery vine maple (*Acer circinatum*). Both of these maple species are common in our local riparian zones and are found throughout western Oregon from the Cascades to the coast.



The species name for bigleaf maple, *macrophyllum*, translates literally to big leaf, a testament to the face-sized leaves found on this sizeable tree. Big leaf maples are often covered in moss and draped in old man's beard lichen (*Usnea* species) making them appear as green giants in the forest. Bigleaf maples can reach 100 feet towards the sky with a spread of up 50 feet, making it a significant source of shade for the riparian zone and adjacent creek. A tree of this size has a proportionate root system, which holds soil together and prevents streambank erosion. Historically, bigleaf maples played an important cultural role for Native Americans making their homes in the Pacific Northwest. The trees provided fiber for ropes and baskets, storage areas for food, and bark that was used to help treat tuberculosis.

The vine maple is much smaller, growing to only 10-15 feet. This multi-trunked, shade-loving tree is found in the understory and is often seen with branches extended out over a babbling creek, providing shade and bank stability, much like its aforementioned cousin. Vine maple was also used by Native Americans for basketmaking and carving into household utensils.

*Alexis Larsen is Rogue River Watershed Council's fish passage project manager and resident botanical expert.*

## RRWC PROJECT PREVIEW

### Smith-Myer-Roper Fish Passage Project

Our fish passage program has been developing another small removal project similar to the Beeson-Robison dam, our 2017 fish passage project on Wagner Creek. The Smith-Myer-Roper (SMR) Diversion Dam, located on Ashland Creek, is a high-priority fish passage barrier that limits access to nearly two miles of spawning and rearing habitat for adult and juvenile migrating salmonids. Ashland Creek, a tributary to Bear Creek, is fed by snowmelt from Mount Ashland, making it one of a few perennial tributaries to Bear Creek maintaining suitable water temperatures for year-round salmonid rearing. The SMR dam exists to feed an irrigation ditch for active water rights certificate holders and we are working with these water users, as well as a technical team, to develop a win-win project that will meet fish passage and land management goals.



Our goal is to remove the existing dam structure and replace it with a re-profiled stream channel made of boulders and engineered streambed material. We will also install a new concrete diversion headworks and gate at the upstream end of the re-profiled stream channel to permit water diversion for irrigation. This new system will provide a mechanism to measure the flow being diverted to the irrigation ditch. We are currently seeking funding for this project, submitting grant proposals to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Patagonia, and Schwemm Family Foundation. This winter we will begin the arduous permitting process with the hope that funding and permits will be approved for the 2019 in-water work period: June 15 - September 15.

## Meet our Newest Staff Member



John Speece joined the Rogue River Watershed Council staff in August as our water quality project manager. John is no stranger to watershed council work or southwest Oregon. His last job was as the Middle Deschutes Watershed Council Coordinator and Tri-County CREP Planner in Central Oregon, where he was responsible for developing and implementing restoration projects on farms and ranches to improve water quality and wildlife habitat, creating and delivering environmental education to Central Oregon youth, and managing grants to support those activities. This is a return to the Rogue Valley after being away for nine years. John attended Southern Oregon University majoring in environmental studies and Oregon State University for a Master in Natural Resources. In his spare time you can find him skiing, hiking, or in his garden outside Talent, Oregon.



### OFF THE RESOURCE SHELF

## What to Expect after Paradise

Over 80 people perished in the Camp Fire in Paradise; over 18,000 structures, mostly homes, were destroyed. If the Klondike, Miller, and Peninger Fires didn't get your attention this past summer, surely the massive blaze in Butte County, California has. Many of you are probably wondering, "Could this happen here?" In a word, yes. Southwest Oregon has the highest risk of wildfire in the state. Fire danger levels are low right now, but with longer, hotter, and drier summers on the way, NOW is the perfect time to get yourself and your property prepared to deal with this increased risk. Here are some sites that will help you become informed, plan ahead, and take action!



- Would you like to be notified when there's a serious fire in your neighborhood? Sign up for the Jackson-Josephine Citizen Alert Notification System to receive notifications about emergencies in both your residential and work areas via telephone, text, or email:

<http://www.co.josephine.or.us/alert>

<https://jacksoncountyor.org/emergency/Resources/Citizen-Alert>

- The [Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer](https://oregonexplorer.info/topics/wildfire-risk) is designed to educate users about wildfire prevention and mitigation resources. You can get an overview of the fire history of any location in Oregon and print out a wildfire risk map of your neighborhood. It will even generate a report for you that highlights the wildfire risk in your watershed!

<https://oregonexplorer.info/topics/wildfire-risk>

- Are you interested in participating in an [online learning module](https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/By-topic/Wildfire/Firewise-USA/Online-learning-opportunities/Online-courses) on fire basics, fire history, and how homes burn? This module is part of the Firewise program and can be completed in 30 minutes.

<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/By-topic/Wildfire/Firewise-USA/Online-learning-opportunities/Online-courses>

- The [Firewise](https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/By-topic/Wildfire/Firewise-USA) site has much more to offer as well; in fact, it's an absolute panoply of helpful, instructive resources.

<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/By-topic/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>

- [Oregon Ready Set Go!](http://www.oregonrsg.org) provides step-by-step guidelines for family emergency planning and preparation.

<http://www.oregonrsg.org>

## *Support Our Work!*

### **Make a Donation**

All donations are greatly appreciated, put to good use, and are tax-deductible. Donate online at <http://www.rogue riverwc.org/get-involved/donate/>.

### **Bottle Drop Redemption**

Open a Bottle Drop account at an Oregon Redemption Center, drop off your cans and bottles, then transfer your donation to RRWC [online](#).

### **Fred Meyers Rewards**

Help RRWC earn donations by shopping with your Fred Meyer Rewards Card. Link your card to us at <https://www.fredmeyer.com/topic/community-rewards-4>. Search for us by name.

### **AmazonSmile**

Online shoppers can go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), click on your account and select RRWC as your charity of choice at no cost to you.

## *More Photos from Celebrate the Rogue!*

