

STEPPIN' OUT

Florence Salmon & Trout Enhancement Newsletter

A message from our President Ron Caputo

The mission of STEP is to restore fish populations to historic levels. Are we making a difference? I can't say we've done much in the last few years to help increase natural fish production. Doing in-stream habitat work is about the only thing we can do to help restore fish runs to their historic levels. We certainly have no control over ocean conditions, so that leaves only the spawning and rearing areas that we can work on.

What can we do? We can be responsible citizens of the world and take care of the environment we live in. Yes we must recycle, cut down on our use of chemicals we use to solve every little inconvenience in our lives and help find a solution for replacing our pollution causing energy sources. We must help stop pollution of our air and water.

Many different things were tried in the past to boost fish runs. **ODF&W** tried adding hatchery fish to boost fish returns. They found out that adding more fish to our streams suppressed the wild stocks so much that they reached the edge of extinction. Now hatchery fish are only used to add fish for us sport fishermen to catch. Our steelhead program is designed to raise fish only for the sports catch, The Siuslaw doesn't have a lot of wild fish because our streams here are not very good rearing areas for Steelhead. Our Siuslaw streams are a lot better suited for Coho rearing.

In past years our **STEP** club did a lot of in-stream restoration. We cabled Boulders and large pieces of wood to the streambed rock so high water events would not blow them out every year. Adding boulders and large woody debris help catch gravel for spawning and cause deep plunge pools to form. Once again **ODF&W** decided that cable was not environmentally acceptable and stopped the use of it in most projects. Now the only stream restoration projects have to use full-grown trees. The trees are placed with $\frac{3}{4}$ of them on land and only $\frac{1}{4}$ in the streambed. In our area these projects are usually undertaken by the **US Forest Service**, which use helicopters to place the trees.

The greatest thing we're doing in **STEP** is our work helping kids to learn about fish by providing field trips to our traps. Our classrooms aquariums help educate the kids about the life cycle of fish. We must continue to support the stream team class and other organizations that work on stream restoration. The Siuslaw Watershed Council leads the way in fish stream restoration by replacing culverts and sponsorship of major restoration projects. They also work in the areas of water monitoring, invasive species control and streamside tree planting. Can one person make a difference? **YES**. If we each do a little it all adds up to help solve another part of the problem. If we all do our part we **WILL** see fish populations return to historic levels once again. *Ron*

APRIL 2017

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Wednesday, April 5th
Membership Meeting
Elks Lodge **7:00 p.m.**

This month's speaker will be **Mike Bones** - Mike will show a video and speak about digging clams in the Siuslaw Bay. The Video will show how and where to dig for the local eastern **soft shell clams**. It will also show how to clean and prepare them. Mike Bones grew up in the Florence area and worked at Honeyman State Park, where he led many happy campers on clamming trips. He will explain his techniques and answer questions after the meeting.

*Step meetings are held in the back room of the Florence Elk's Club and **open to the public.***

Wednesday, April 19th
Board of Directors Meeting
4 p.m. Port of Siuslaw Office

Saturday, April 22nd
ADA Grange BINGO 5:00
Dinner and PIE! **6:00 BINGO!!**
10 Miles out Canary Road
Questions ? Call Nancy at
541-997-2380

Whitaker Creek Trap Report from Bill Hennig

The trap was closed this year on March 21st it was flooded for half of the time it was in. When this happens the fish travel over the weir and miss the trap. This will also be part of the cause of low return numbers.

The total Steelhead we processed this year by my count was 359. Last year we had over **1200**. Fortunately we have sent approximately 240,000 eggs to the **Alea** hatchery which was our goal.

The fish returns are down on the whole coast due to poor ocean conditions. We have no fish in our hatchery because we did not get Coho returns in **Munsel Creek** or **Little Woahink** traps. This the first year this has happened since I started in 2005. Hopefully next year will be better.

Tidbits from the Tackle Box!

Keep selling those Raffle Tickets! Drawing will be held on **May 29th** at Three Rivers Casino – we can still use raffle prizes – you can drop prizes off at the STEP meetings or contact Ron

Some Interesting Information sent from Don Phillips:

The worst run forecast on record for the Klamath River's chinook salmon could close **all** salmon fishing along most of the Oregon Coast this summer. That's the most draconian of three season alternatives adopted Monday by the Pacific Fishery Management Council, meeting in Vancouver, Wash. All three, however, allow some COHO and CHINOOK fishing in the Pacific Ocean north of Cape Falcon, including popular fisheries off the mouth of the Columbia River. Seasons would be similar to 2016.

Fishery Options :

South of Cape Falcon, near **Manzanita, Sacramento** and **Klamath river** chinook mix with other returning salmon, so to protect them, all salmon sportfishing might close after **April 30**. (That alternative is similar to a closure proposal in 2008, spurred by a low run into the Sacramento River. However, there was a tightly limited coho fishery that year. The economic shock to the coast brought a state-of-emergency declaration from Gov. Ted Kulongoski and a release of \$1 million to help the commercial and charter fishing industries.)

Two other 2017 alternatives allow for both coho and chinook fishing seasons similar to last summer (but only south to Humbug Mountain near Port Orford) and the most liberal allows for a September non-marked coho fishery.

Season proposals are found on the council's website at <http://bit.ly/2nkQRWV>.

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President Ron Caputo roncaputo@charter.net 541-997-4961

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Newsletter Editor Kim Gomez gokimgo66@gmail.com

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Hatchery Terry Barrett tkbarett4@yahoo.com 541-997-8480



popssmoke@gmail.com

Christy Goodman
(541) 268-6809

12300 Hwy 126
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