



SUMMER 2014
CREATING COMMUNITY-BASED SOLUTIONS

IN THIS ISSUE >>>>

- Scott River Juvenile Coho Habitat Enhancement Through Beaver Dam Analogues — Page 2
- One less Spark Campaign — Page 5
- Fish Rescue and Relocation — Page 6
- New Coordinator — Page 7

UPCOMING EVENTS >>>>

- RCD meeting – October 2nd, 7-9pm
- SRWC meeting — October 14th, 11am
- Salmon Festival Quartz Valley — October 22nd, 9am-2:30pm
- Ground Water Advisory Committee Meeting — October 27th, 7pm

Scott River Juvenile Coho Habitat Enhancement Through Beaver Dam Analogues



The Scott River Watershed Council has been very busy this summer constructing its first structures for the Scott River Juvenile Coho Habitat Enhancement Through Beaver Dam Analogues Project. Two structures have been completed on Sugar Creek and two structures are currently in progress on the Whipple Ranch near the confluence of Etna Creek and the Scott River. These four structures, along with two additional structures on French Creek, complete the first phase of this multi-year project.



Interest in using beaver dams to restore stream habitat in the Scott River has arisen organically from within the Scott Valley community. Effort started in 2010 with the formation of The Scott Valley Beaver Working Group that focused on managing the problems associated with beavers. These efforts included, tree wrapping and pond levelers which allow the benefits of beaver ponds but keep them from encroaching on productive land. Landowners and other natural resource agencies then became interested and enthusiastic about the positive benefits of beaver dams. These benefits include: retained ground water contributing to late season flows, slow stream habitat in winter high flows for juvenile coho salmon, cooler and deeper water for summer refuge, faster growth and larger size for coho and steel-head in beaver ponds, increased streamside vegetation which provides shade thus helping to meet TMDL requirements. Dams will trap sediments which is another TMDL requirement and deflect water velocity away from eroding banks, keeping streams from down cutting which lowers water table and even helps raise streambeds.



The Scott River Watershed Council has partnered with Michael Pollock of NOAA Fisheries and North-west Fisheries Science Center, and Mark Cookson of USFWS. Together we are constructing the first Beaver Dam Analogues in the State of California. “It is interesting seeing Michael Pollock’s site selection process,” Peter Thamer, the project manager says. “The site selection starts off with more of an art than a science,” Thamer explains.

“Dr. Pollock walks around the site imagining 3-4 more feet of water and what the site will look like in high-flow and low-flow events, and how this will affect the landscape.” Once the location is selected, a detailed survey is taken and then construction begins. These structures are constructed with a hydraulic post pounder, locally harvested fir posts, and locally harvested willows. The BDAs are installed in series to mimic the size and spacing of dams in typical beaver colonies and to provide structural redundancy.

Meaningfully assessing the effect of these structures on coho salmon populations is key to the success of this project. Data will be collected for each of the following parameters: stream temperature, groundwater levels, groundwater temperatures, topography, vegetative cover, and fish response (biomass, density and survival). Data will be collected at the project sites before and after project implementation and at a nearby control site that is similar in character to the treatment site. Also key to the success of this project is an accurate description of how the structures were designed and constructed, and the effect on local hydraulics, sediment transport and fluvial geomorphology that may affect the future condition of the structure or that are related to particular design features. Thus, we will be reporting on both the ecosystem effects of the structures as well as the condition of the structures themselves.



The Scott River Watershed Council has appreciated the tremendous support from local landowners and volunteers. There are over 10 landowners that have agreed to participate in this project and over 242 volunteer hours have gone into preparation and construction this year. Funding for this project has come from the Bella Vista



Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation –Klamath River Coho Enhancement Fund, NOAA, USFWS, NRCS, and CDFW. The Scott River Watershed Council will continue to report on the progress of this exciting project in our quarterly newsletters. For questions or more information you can contact Anne Hilton, the Watershed Council’s Coordinator, at coordsrwc@sisqtel.net

Are Beavers Causing You Heartburn?



If you are having trouble with beaver blocking culverts or causing other property damage this year, consider calling the SRWC. We can install “beaver deceivers” and cage trees to mitigate any damage caused by beavers.

Call Anne at (530) 925-9085, or Charnna at (530) 598-2733 for assistance.



One Less Spark— One Less **Wildfire**

Approximately 90% of all wildfires in California are caused by people

Everyone has the responsibility to prevent human-caused wildfires. Please use extreme caution when traveling on highways. Fire danger in the state of California is above normal levels. Significantly dry conditions are present due to historically low precipitation and high temperatures. You can help prevent these destructive fires by following some simple guidelines:



Be wheel safe – Check tire pressure. Driving on an exposed wheel rim throws sparks.

Be prepared – Carry a shovel and a fire extinguisher in your vehicle and Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV).



Follow all public-use restrictions and access closures – It is important to check with local agencies about any closures before venturing off road.

Keep vehicles off dry grass – Exhaust systems can heat up to 1,000 degrees and ignite adjacent grasses and shrubs.

Check your spark arrester – Before heading outdoors, clean your OHV spark arrester. This will reduce the chance of a spark starting a wildfire.



Nothing dragging – Make sure vehicles are properly maintained with nothing dragging on the ground.

We can all make a difference in reducing human-caused fires during this season. Remember *One Less Spark – One Less Wildfire*.

This information is brought to you by the California Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (CWCG) For more information on the *One Less Spark* Campaign visit their website at www.preventwildfireca.org.



Scott River Coho Salmon Rescue & Relocation Effort in 2014

As of August 12th 2014, over 115,000 juvenile coho salmon have been rescued and relocated to upstream tributaries, where cold water still flows within our Scott River watershed. Another 4,400 juvenile coho have been placed into special tanks at Iron Gate Hatchery on the Klamath River as a back-up measure by CDFW. This seasons relocation effort would not have been possible without the collaboration and cooperation of local landowners, CDFW, Siskiyou RCD, Scott River Water Trust, USFS-KNF, NOAA-Fisheries, and the Karuk Tribe.



The need to rescue and relocate these juvenile coho became a high priority because the Scott River's coho salmon population represents a very significant share of the State's total population of this threatened species. In 2013-14, the Scott River produced an adult run of at least 2,731 coho, as measured by the video weir that CDFW operates. For all of California's surveyed streams last year, the estimated population of adult coho salmon was about 5,000. Therefore, in all of the surveyed streams in California in the 2013-14 season, 55% of the coho salmon population swam up to spawn in the Scott River.

A combination of minimal snowpack from the previous year and limited fall rain caused little runoff and not enough flow in the fall and winter, which prohibited adult fish from reaching the upper tributaries where they typically spawn. The typical tributaries include, French Creek, Shackleford Creek, Sugar Creek, Patterson Creek, Kidder Creek, and a few others. Instead, almost all of the coho spawning this winter occurred in a 10-mile reach of the upper mainstem of the Scott River. The young progeny of these spawners hatched this spring, in warming water and a drying stream which triggered the need to monitor and eventually relocate many of these young fish to their normal summer rearing areas, far upstream, before they become stressed and die off.



This project has required a large effort from a multi-collaborative group. The majority of the monitoring surveys has been performed by the Siskiyou RCD. The RCD has been informing CDFW what the conditions are like on the ground, where the large densities of fish are, and what locations should be rescue priorities. The fish and stream conditions of the planting sites are also monitored by CDFW and RCD. In addition, the Water Trust has been identifying critical locations within the watershed and strategically leasing water which, in some cases,

has delayed the stream from drying, and maintained critical rearing habitat primarily within French Creek, Sugar Creek, and the mainstem of the Scott River.



Monitoring the results of this relocation effort has been a high priority of all involved. In order to evaluate the success of the project, survival rates of coho populations that have been relocated are being compared to survival rates of coho populations that were not relocated. The coho populations are being monitored using two different technologies. The Siskiyou RCD is performing dive surveys where technicians are counting coho for population estimates and visually tracking distribution. These surveys are taking place in the mainstem of the Scott River to track the coho populations that have been left behind as well as the various relocation sites. Hundreds of fish have also been tagged with PIT-tag technology,

which provides us with information on both relocated and non-relocated coho survival. The tagged fish will continue to provide data about the rates of survival of this generation of coho as they pass through array stations set up within the Scott River watershed as well as arrays throughout the Klamath River. We look forward to seeing these tagged fish head out to the ocean next spring and come home as adults in 3-4 years. Good luck out there!

The Scott River Watershed Council has a new Coordinator

Anne Hilton is the new Coordinator for the Scott River Watershed Council.



In 1989, my parents, Michael and Lynn Thamer, moved our family to a ranch outside of Callahan. I was five years old at the time. Like most kids in Scott Valley, I grew up learning to irrigate pastures, nurse animals, pull weeds, repair fences, cook a farm-to-table meal, hitch up a horse trailer, and race bareback through fields. It wasn't until I went off to college at UC Berkeley that I realized how special and unique this ranch life was. I have returned to Scott Valley with my husband Brent, and my twin boys, Wyatt and Finn.

Scott Valley is a beautiful and special place, and I am very excited to have a job with an organization that seeks solutions to the increasing issues surrounding our watershed's resources. I believe that now it is more important than ever, to promote the understanding and the stewardship of local resources with a focus on the recognition and sustainability of the agricultural way of life in Scott Valley. The Scott River Watershed Council holds its meetings on the second Tuesday of the month at Bob's Ranch house at 11:00 am. I would personally like to extend an invitation to you to come to the next meeting with your ideas and to learn about all of the exciting projects the SRWC is pursuing at this time. See you there.



Scott River Watershed Council

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Like us on Facebook and visit our website at www.scottriver.net



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Funding for the SRWC and newsletter is provided by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bella Vista Foundation.

Funding for Beaver Management and Enhancement is provided by the Bella Vista Foundation, the Klamath River Coho Enhancement Fund, and the USFWS.

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