Scott River Watershed Council

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Scott River Watershed Council

Winter 2014

CREATING COMMUNITY-BASED SOLUTIONS

IN THIS ISSUE

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **RCD meeting – January 1st, 7pm**
- **SRWC meeting — January 13th, 11am**
- **Ground Water Advisory Committee Meeting — January 26th, 7pm**

2014 Salmon Surveys

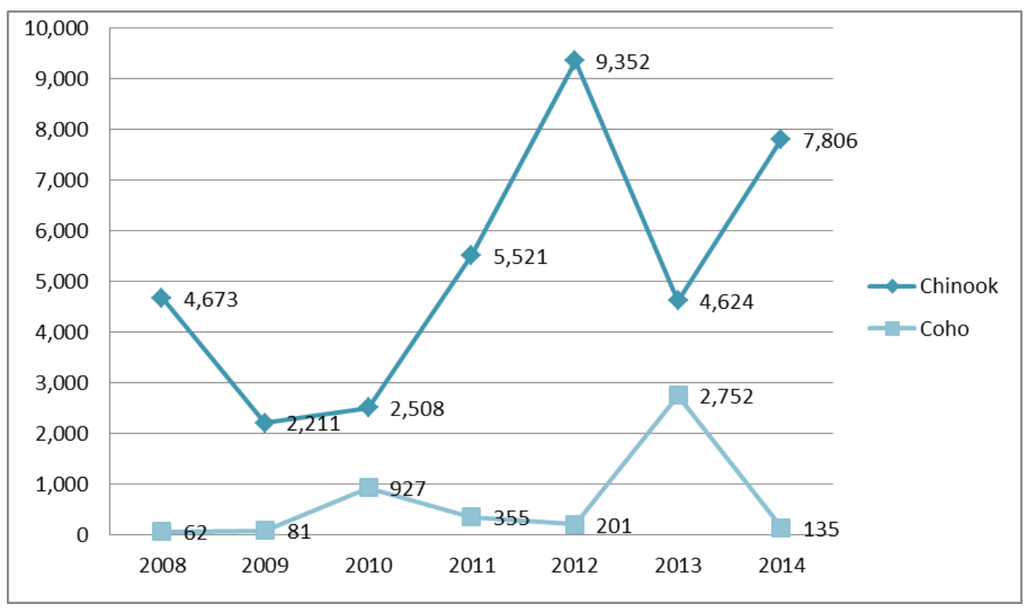
Salmon in the Scott River

The table below illustrates the total amount of chinook and coho salmon that have entered the Scott River since 2008. The totals are calculated based on the number of salmon that pass through the CDFW Scott River Fish Counting station plus the Jolly-Seber mark recapture carcass-based estimates that are conducted in the areas downstream of the counting station. The counting station is located on the Scott River between Jones Beach and Indian Scottie Camp Ground. It is very encouraging that over the past three seasons a positive growth rate for Scott River coho salmon has been observed (Knechtle and Chesney, *2013 Scott River Salmon Studies Final Report)*.

Table & Chart: ***Annual adult chinook and coho salmon population totals for the Scott River***

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Chinook	4,673	2,211	2,508	5,521	9,352	4,624	7,806
Coho	62	81	927	355	201	2,752	135*

*The coho total for 2014 is incomplete, they are still moving up the river.



Historical High Flow Events

December 12th 2014 peak discharge (cfs): 4,790 Stage (feet): 11.47

Historical Stage/Flow Data			
Water Year	**Peak Discharge (cfs)**	**Stage (feet)**	**Date**
Most Recent 5 Years			
2013	5,890	12.46	Dec 2, 2012
2012	5,100	11.81	Mar 31, 2012
2011	3,620	10.47	Mar 16, 2011
2010	4,730	11.48	Jun 04, 2010
2009	3,120	9.95	May 05, 2009
Historical High Stage/Flow Events (Period of Record - Oct 1941 to Present)			
1965	54,600	25.34	Dec 22, 1964
1956	38,500	21.40	Dec 22, 1955
1974	36,700	23.67	Jan 16, 1974
1997	34,300	23.47	Jan 01, 1997
1982	25,500	20.52	Dec 20, 1981

The Scott River Watershed Council has a new Board Chairman

Betsy Stapleton is the new Chairman of the Board for the Scott River Watershed Council.

Betsy, with her husband Michael, moved to Scott Valley full-time in 2010 after having bought their property on French Creek in 2000. The incredible beauty of the area was the initial attraction, as well as the opportunity to live a rural life, but once Betsy and Michael were here they realized that they were unimaginably fortunate to have landed in Scott Valley. They found a community that was a real community with deep roots, families with strong heritages and the values of hard work, honesty and appreciation of the natural world, all based on a functioning resourced based economy.

Prior to moving to Scott Valley, Betsy lived in Humboldt County for 38 years, She worked as Nurse Practitioner and raised three children.

After being invited to join the Scott River Watershed Council, Betsy began to learn about the threats to the lifestyle of the Valley: legacy environmental impacts, climate change, and the ever increasing regulatory burden. She hopes that her term of service as the Council Board Chair will be the opportunity to serve the community she loves.

Photo 2: Southern end of RM 52 project site, December 2014 (Siskiyou RCD).

Photo 3: Shot during last week's flood

Update on the 2014 Chinook Salmon Spawning Surveys preformed by the Siskiyou RCD Throughout the Scott Valley portion of the Scott River

Male & female chinook salmon (male above female below)

This year, the valley portion of the Scott River experienced a very concentrated spawning season. The Scott River connected with the canyon following the October 23rd/24th rains. The USGS stream flow gage at river mile 21 climbed from <20 cfs on October 24th to over 200 cfs on October 26th (Magranet, *2014 Chinook run, Summary of Observations*). As soon as the Chinook could make it up the river, they came in large numbers and spawned within a three-week period. There was heavy spawning observed between Blacks Bridge and Fay Lane the last week of October and first couple of weeks in November. The number of Reds observed has not been confirmed but it was on the order of several hundred. The RCD crews took inventory of sex and fork length of all carcasses encountered. These numbers have not been confirmed but are well above 1,000. Chinook were documented 2.5 miles up Shackleford Creek, 2.8 miles up French Creek, and 6.3 miles up the East Fork of the Scott River. There were no live Chinook observed after December 1st (Magranet, *2014 Chinook run, Summary of Observations*).

2014 Siskiyou RCD salmon survey crew

Coho salmon from 2013 RCD salmon surveys

PAWS Project Update

By Anne Hilton

PAWS near French Creek confluence

The construction phase of this project has been completed and heavy monitoring has begun. The last structure in this phase of the project was installed and the willows were woven during the second week of October. The willow weave is designed to trap leafs and debris during fall leaf off to form a seal that then traps sediment and creates complex, slow water habitat. This has happened accordingly and the structures have sealed off nicely. "It has been really exciting to see the large, extensive new slow water habitat that is being created by these structures" says Peter Thamer, the project coordinator and resident PAWS guru. "I am anticipating a large beneficial impact on the Scott's coho salmon population." Thamer, is closely monitoring the structures throughout the winter for fish passage and how they respond and are impacted by high flow events. Observations to date suggest that both chinook and coho adults are well distributed throughout the watershed, both upstream and downstream of the structures. Thamer is working with scientist Michael Pollock of NOAA Fisheries, local rancher Betsy Stapleton, and CDFW scientists in Yreka, to create a fish monitoring protocol that will assess the benefits of PAWS on our watershed's coho salmon population. Thirty two monitoring wells were installed in order to evaluate the impact the PAWS have on groundwater. Water temperature and dissolved oxygen will also be monitored.

Pool created by PAWS

Salmon above a PAWS structure

Scott River Bioengineered Streambank Project

By Preston Haris

This project took place on private property in the southern end of Scott Valley. The active channel width at this site is approximately 800 feet and composed of a gravel and sand streambed with areas of clay exposure. During high flows, the velocities near the bank are very swift and were actively eroding the sand lenses at the toe of the bank, which undermined the above clay layer and led to an estimated 469 tons of sediment contributions per year in a reach that is important to spawning and rearing Chinook salmon, coho salmon and steelhead trout. The continued erosion on the outside of this meander did not only impact adjacent agriculture fields, but it had the potential to flank the downstream riparian corridor and move the river into neighboring properties.

The objectives of this design are to reduce stream bank erosion by pushing the thalweg off the bank with the installation of anchored log barbs and engineered log jams. The project also addresses a secondary and highly erosive cusp, near the downstream end of the bank, with similar treatments. In addition, a complete revegetation of the 0.6-acre site was completed post construction to enhance the existing riparian corridor and establish trees to supply shade to the river. Thirty cottonwood pole cuttings were planted along the top of the left bank, an up to forty vertical willow bundles were buried between each of the instream log barbs. Photo points will be revisited annually when vegetation is fully leafed out (July) and counts will be made to evaluate survival.

Photo 1: Bank to be treated, looking downstream, September 2014 (Siskiyou RCD)