



The *STEELHEADER*

Official Newsletter of Tri-State Steelheaders Salmon Enhancement Group

STEELHEADERS TO CONTINUE JUMBO TROUT PROGRAM

Since 2009, Tri-State Steelheaders has partnered with Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) to continue the Jumbo Trout Program. Food for the young trout is purchased in installments by the Steelheaders throughout the year. WDFW provides the staff and facilities to raise the trout. Recently, our board of directors voted to maintain our support for the 2015 brood year.

\$5,500 provided by the Steelheaders will result in 4,000 jumbo trout in southeast Washington lakes and ponds.

The 2015 brood year fish will be reared at the Tucannon Hatchery for about 15 months, and then stocked in area lakes in spring 2017. Our contribution of \$5,500 will pay for all the food necessary to raise 4,000 jumbo rainbow trout.



Jumbo trout like this one are stocked in 20 lakes and ponds in southeast Washington. See page 4 for stocking locations.

WDFW stocks regional ponds and lakes with jumbo trout and catchable trout. Jumbos are considered to be 14 inches or bigger, and average 1.5 pounds. Catchables are considered to be 8 inches, and about a half pound each. Last year, 625 jumbos were planted in Bennington Lake.

Your support makes the Jumbo Trout Program possible through donations to our Fish Food Fund and with proceeds from the Crab Feed fundraiser.

WDFW’s website has a weekly stocking report to tell you where fish have been stocked, and how many. You can see the weekly report at:

www.wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/plants/weekly



Kids fishing at Bennington Lake may catch one of hundreds of jumbo trout stocked there each year.

STEELHEADERS VISIT THE CAPITOL

As part of a Legislative-meet-and-greet event, board member Larry Zalaznik and executive director Brian Burns met with 9th District Senator Mark Schoesler and Representatives Mary Dye, Terry Nealey, and Joe Schmick, and 16th District Senator Mike Hewitt and Representative Maureen Walsh in January.

Each year, the Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups spend a day at the state capitol meeting the legislators for the districts in which they work. The meetings are brief at 15 minutes each. During these meetings, we are able to tell our legislators about projects we are doing in their districts, and the statewide impact of the RFEG program in salmon recovery. It is also a chance to thank our legislators for their support of the RFEG program, and to highlight funding challenges to the RFEG program.

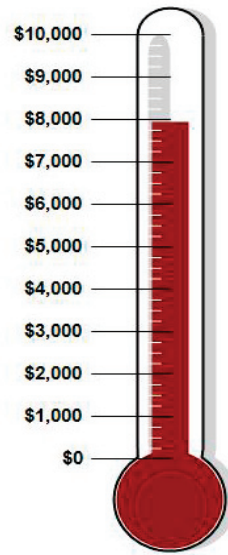


Brian Burns and Larry Zalaznik met with retiring Senator Mike Hewitt in his office in January.

State funding for the RFEG program has declined due to a combination of factors. One source of state funds is the sale of excess fish carcasses and roe (eggs) from some of the state hatcheries. Revenue from this source is about one-third of what was expected because of conditions in the markets for these products.

In addition, the portion of fishing license fees that return to the RFEG program has remained unchanged since the RFEGs were created 25 years ago, representing a significant loss of buying power. These funding problems pose challenges for the RFEGs as salmon recovery projects become more complex and expensive, and as the demand for education and volunteer programs grows.

Our time in Olympia helps to build the legislative support necessary to address the challenges to the RFEG program. You can help our cause too, by letting your legislators know that you value and support our work.



We're getting close to our \$10,000 goal!

\$7,995 donated

You can help us restore youth fishing in College Place with your donation.

Lion's Park Pond Campaign

Please contact us at (509) 529-3543 or tssfsh@tristatesteelheaders.com for more information.

Please indicate that your donation is for Lion's Park.

STEELHEADER SUPPORTS LEGISLATIVE OUTREACH

For three years running, Steelheaders member Larry Bowton has supported our legislative outreach effort with his home-smoked salmon. It takes Larry about four days to brine and smoke the 20-30 lbs of salmon taken to Olympia in January. In addition to the smoked salmon, Larry also provides a smoked salmon dip that some consider the best they've ever had.

Larry hasn't always been a Tri-State Steelheaders member but he's always loved to fish. "I bought my first boat when I was eleven and I've fished all my life," he says. Retired for 10 years, Larry spends over three months each year fishing, mainly for salmon. He throws a lot of fish back, but the ones he does keep are filleted, vacuumed packed and frozen by the river they were caught in. Larry then brings the salmon home and removes all the bones before letting them sit in a dry rub for a day and then smoking them for 8 hours. Most of the salmon is distributed to friends and family

during the holidays. “What I enjoy is the reaction from people,” he says. “They get it. They like it.”

Larry’s smoked salmon and dip are a featured part of an evening reception hosted by the Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups following their day at the capitol. Legislators and their staffs are invited for refreshments and an opportunity to learn more about the statewide salmon recovery effort while sampling the fish that inspire our work. Thank you Larry!



Salmon smoked by Steelheaders member Larry Bowton was served to legislators and staffers in Olympia.

GRANT AWARDED FOR NEXT PHASE OF MILL CREEK FISH PASSAGE

At their December meeting, the Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board awarded Tri-State Steelheaders a grant in the amount of \$155,371. The grant will fund the next phase of fish passage designs in the Mill Creek flood channel between Roosevelt St and Park St. The construction-ready plans are scheduled for completion in spring of 2017. This project was one of 10 projects in the southeast region in the grant round.

Executive Director Brian Burns explains the importance of this grant, “When we designed our first passage projects back in 2010, we started with small projects because we wanted to be cautious working in



Larry Bowton spends a few months each year fishing for salmon, and steelhead on the Snake and Columbia Rivers.

the Mill Creek flood channel. But small projects take a long time to provide real benefits. We’ve completed three projects, and are preparing for a fourth this year. Each project has been a little bigger. This grant allows us to complete plans for about one mile of the channel, which will significantly accelerate our progress toward our goal of providing fish passage throughout the length of the concrete channel.”

SALMON IN SCHOOL RECEIVES IMPORTANT GRANT AND DONATION

Kris Fischer, fish biologist for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, read about the Steelheaders’ Salmon in School program in a recent newspaper article and contacted our office to donate his long beloved fish tank.

His timing was fortunate, as Cheryl Peters, special education teacher at WaHi also contacted the office

after reading the same article and requested a tank for her classroom. Kris' donated tank is now home to about 100 young spring chinook in Cheryl's classroom.

Each tank requires a chiller unit to keep the water temperature within a range suitable for the fish. An aging chiller unit in the tank at John Sager Middle School was failing, jeopardizing over 200 chinook alevin in the tank there.



Students in Cheryl Peters' classroom at WaHi observe the new fingerlings in their newly donated tank.

The WildHorse Foundation came to the rescue by providing an emergency relief grant of \$615 to replace the outdated chiller. Now the 300 middle school students at Sager can be assured that their young chinook will continue to thrive. A big thank you to Kris Fischer and the Wildhorse Foundation for their support of Salmon in School.

To donate equipment or volunteer time to Salmon in School email amber@tristatesteelheaders.com.

NEW FACES AT THE OFFICE

This month we welcome Lynda Oosterhuis to our staff as our Stewardship Coordinator. Her duties will be to monitor and maintain our completed projects, and to supervise volunteer work events. Lynda is a student in the Water Technology program at Walla Walla Community College.

We also welcome Whitman College Intern Nevin Schaeffer. She received a 2016 Spring Internship Grant which allows her to intern 70 hours for the Steelheaders during the semester.



Intern Nevin Schaeffer will visit CURB projects to provide monitoring and maintenance.

Nevin is a senior studying meteorology and mathematics. She sees this as an opportunity to expand her experience in natural science while pursuing a personal interest in environmental sustainability and improving riparian habitats.

Ponds and Lakes stocked with Jumbo Trout thanks to Tri-State Steelheaders member donations

Columbia County

- Big Four lake
- Blue Lake
- Curl Lake
- Deer Lake
- Rainbow Lake
- Spring Lake
- Watson Lake

Whitman County

- Garfield Pond
- Pamp Pond

Asotin County

- Golf Course Pond
- Headgate Pond

Walla Walla County

- Bennington Lake
- Hood Park Pond
- Jefferson Park Pond
- Lion's Park Pond
- Quarry Pond

AWARE OF FISHING CLOSURE ON THE TUCANNON ?

We've been hearing of folks surprised to learn that fishing on the Tucannon River is closed above Marengo. The fishing rule change was effective September 15, 2015 and is in effect until further notice. The change has the following conditions:

1. Daily limit is reduced to 2 hatchery steelhead per day.
2. Mandatory hatchery steelhead retention is required.
3. Barbless hooks are required while fishing for steelhead.
4. Release all wild steelhead.
5. The area from Marengo (at Turner Road Bridge) upstream is closed to fishing.

The reason for the rule change is that natural-origin steelhead returns to the Tucannon River are not meeting management goals for conservation. The fishery for hatchery steelhead was modified to provide more protection of naturally produced steelhead.

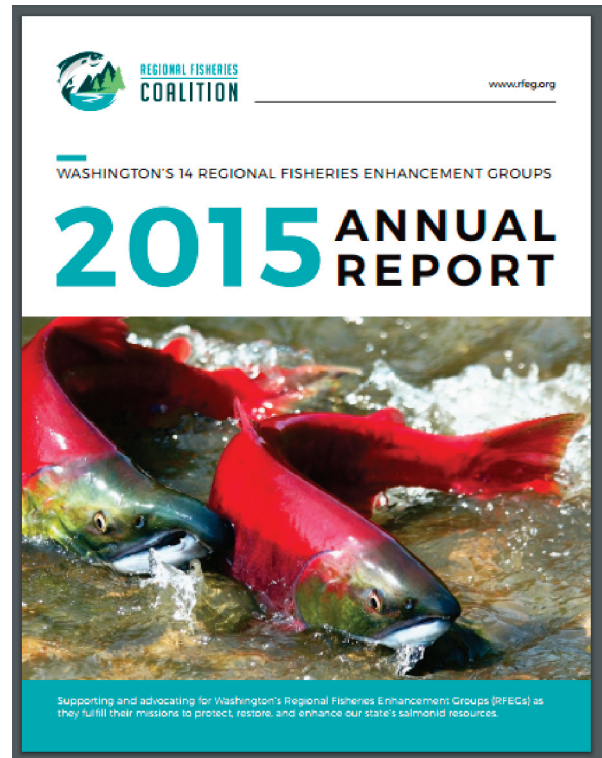
The rules are intended to remove stray hatchery steelhead to prevent them from spawning, as well as provide a refuge area above Marengo to protect early returning wild steelhead.

For more information, contact Jeremy Trump, WDFW District 3 Fish Biologist at (509) 382-1005. To see the rule change, go to:

<https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/erule.jsp?id=1668>

RFEG ANNUAL REPORT

The Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups' Fiscal Year 2015 report is now available. In the report, the projects and programs of each of the 14 RFEGs (including the Tri-State Steelheaders) is featured. The report also highlights the RFEG program's collective impacts in salmon recovery statewide over the last 25 years.



You can stop by the Steelheaders office for a copy, or view the report at :

www.wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01777/wdfw01777.pdf

25 Year Statewide Impact

Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups

661

miles of
habitat
restored

856

fish passage
projects
completed

1,118

miles of
stream
opened

3,831

salmon
projects
completed



**Tri-State Steelheaders
Officers**

President

Scott Landwehr

Vice-President

Monty Buell

Treasurer

Dan Vernon

Secretary

David Cowles

Board of Directors

Dave Crabtree

Ralph Hogate

Mike Mahan

Tom Whitaker

Larry Zalaznik

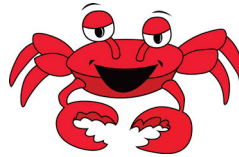
Executive Director

Brian Burns

Tri-State Steelheaders

is a 501(c)3 non-profit
corporation

Tri-State Steelheaders
216 N. Roosevelt
P.O. Box 1375
Walla Walla, WA 99362
509-529-3543
www.tristatesteelheaders.com
tssfish@tristatesteelheaders.com



SAVE THE DATE!

CRAB FEED FUNDRAISER

May 12, 2016

Join the Tri-State Steelheaders!!

Individual (\$15) Family (\$25) Business (\$35)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Send your check with this form to:

Tri-State Steelheaders, P. O. Box 1375, Walla Walla, WA 99362

Visit us online at www.tristatesteelheaders.com

Thank you for your support!!!

Tri-State Steelheaders' mission is to restore sustainable populations of native salmonids by enhancing habitat, providing public education, and promoting recreational angling.