



The **STEELHEADER**

Official Newsletter of the Tri-State Steelheaders Salmon Enhancement Group

THE GOING GETS EASIER FOR MILL CREEK STEELHEAD

Work began in June on a new phase of fish passage improvement in Mill Creek. This project will improve passage for about 930 feet of the concrete channel between Park Street and Otis Street.

“A study of fish passage in the Mill Creek flood control channel was completed in 2009,” recalls project manager Steven Poulos. “What it found is that returning adult summer steelhead, bull trout, and spring chinook are faced with water that is too fast for them to swim in for the full two miles of the concrete channel.”

To correct this, smooth concrete is removed from part of the channel, and replaced with “roughness panels.” The blocky projections on the roughness panels create friction with the flowing water, which creates a zone of lower velocity water that the migrating fish can use to swim the length of the channel. Narum Concrete began fabricating the 59 roughness panels last December.

Steven explains, “Resting pools are also added to provide a chance for fish to rest and regain energy. Each pool includes habitat boulders, so that fish have an opportunity to take cover from predators.”

Mountain States Construction will wrap up work by the end of October. The project is funded by a grant from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, with matching funds provided by Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Bonneville Power Administration, and our Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group funds.

One of the critical challenges to this project was access into the channel. With very few options available, we weren’t sure how this was going to work out. Luckily, the Walla Walla Professional Firefighters IAFF Local 404 allowed access Mill Creek through their property. The Steelheaders owe them a great deal of thanks. Without their help, this project may not have been possible!



Roughness panels (left) ready for concrete to be poured around them. When complete, this resting pool (above) will be one of 15 pools in the project area.

YOUTH PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY CRAB FEED

Each year, we rely on proceeds from the Crab Feed Fundraiser to provide Salmon in School, Kids' Fishing Days, Fishing 101, and Family Science Night.

At this year's Crab Feed:

- 25 auction lots
- 35 bucket raffle lots
- 125 pounds of fresh crab served
- 276 people in attendance
- \$17,600 in proceeds



Deb Bassler won this carving by Jim Schuster in the Silent Auction.

In addition to youth programs, Crab Feed proceeds also support the Jumbo Trout program, which provides over 4,000 trophy sized rainbow trout for stocking in 20 fishing lakes and ponds in southeast Washington.

YOUR SUPPORT MADE KIDS' FISHING DAYS POSSIBLE

Following closely on the heels of the Crab Feed, Kids' Fishing Day at Bennington Lake drew 67 young anglers to our local fishing spot. They all had chances to win prizes at the Casting Contest and the Biggest Fish Contest. And most of them enjoyed a hot dog and a Pepsi in between contests. An hourly raffle gave everyone a chance to win.

The Jubilee Lake Kids' Fishing Day was just a couple weeks later, in early July. There, 89 kids reg-



Ryan Roe, 9, didn't win the Biggest Fish Contest, but he was a raffle winner. Here he is showing his catch for the day and his prize.

Tri-State Steelheaders

is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation

Our Mission

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

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Tri-State Steelheaders is supported by funding from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's *Partners for Fish and Wildlife*, and by funds administered by Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife





*Biggest Fish Contest winner
7-year old Bradley Watko.*

istered at the event co-sponsored by the US Forest Service. All Casting Contest entrants received a prize for playing. Even Smokey the Bear made an appearance at the Casting Contest.

Bradley Watko's Biggest Fish Contest winner at Bennington Lake was a 14-3/8 inch rainbow trout. Julian Endersby's 16-1/2 inch rainbow took the prize at Jubilee.

This year, the Steelheaders were invited by the Last Resort and Asotin Sportsmen's Association to help with the Rainbow Lake fishing derby on the Tucannon River. Steelheaders board members Scott Landwehr and Tim Parker helped tie hooks and tell fish stories there.

Board members Dave Crabtree, Richard Collins, and Larry Zalaznik handed out hotdogs, ran the registration table, and tallied the Casting Contest at Bennington Lake.

Kids' Fishing Days are made possible by proceeds from the Crab Feed, and by donors like Dean Woolery, who donated bait for the events. An anonymous donor provided 10 new fishing poles for prizes and to loan at the events. Sportsman's Warehouse generously donated hooks, bobbers, and weights for all attendees, and new fishing poles as contest prizes. Pepsi donated soft drinks to go along with the hot dogs.



*The Steelheaders' Andrew Bassler announces
contest winners at Jubilee Lake.*

It's back to school time!

Salmon in School



Returns for another year at:

Touchet Grade School
Touchet High School
Dixie Elementary School
Waitsburg Elementary School
Pomeroy Elementary School
Davis Elementary School
Sager Middle School
Rogers Adventist School
Prescott Elementary School
Nueva Esperanza
Leadership Academy
Walla Walla High School
Opportunity Program

Joining Salmon in School this year:

Sharpstein Elementary STEM
Starbuck Elementary School
YMCA Action Zone

**Your donation makes
Salmon in School possible!**

AMERICORPS VOLUNTEER REFLECTS ON HER SERVICE

Aimee Taylor completed her AmeriCorps service term with the Steelheaders in June. During her service, she contributed six new Salmon in School lessons, and created the STEM Rodeo (a three-day outdoor science and environmental education program) for 45 Sager Middle School students. We asked her to reflect on her experience, and here's what she had to say.

As my time with the Tri-State Steelheaders wraps up, I am left to reflect on the positive change I have witnessed within the last seven and a half months. From the perspective of a student, the school year seems like a long time. From my perspective as an educator, I feel like we barely had enough time to say and teach everything I wanted to fit in.

I can compare the students I came to know well to the eggs in the tank. They began so fresh and naïve, but over time they hatched out of their shell, making friends with their class (tank) mates, learning, and growing.

To be able to talk about my passion with kids ranging from first through eighth grade was a true pleasure. Although not every student loved every lesson we taught, I know that we were able to spark interest and engage them in the natural history of this region.

The students grew from alevin to fry. They still have a lot to learn, but I am certain that my time spent with them was not a waste. I loved getting to know the kids, and especially encouraging them to become future biologists, conservationists, and stewards of the environment.

The Salmon in School program is SO important

because we get to go into K-12 classrooms and teach in a formal setting. It seems like most environmental outreach and education happens at events, at after school “science night” and in other informal situations.

Unfortunately, these situations leave out a large chunk of the population. Parents work, kids have weekend commitments, and life just gets in the way. Being able to go into the classroom allows us to include every student from every background and spark an interest in some kids who otherwise would not be exposed to environmental education.

My favorite thing about working with these students was the salmon release at the end of the year. I loved seeing how much they cared about their fish – because they raised them! They care about the habitat, they care about the water quality, and they pick up trash along the riverbanks.

Although I feel like a natural now, it was a challenge for me to break into the education world. I am a biologist, and before this, I thought and spoke in technical language, assumed people had a certain

amount of base knowledge, and would get frustrated when people wouldn't care to try to understand.

Serving here as an AmeriCorps member helped me push those boundaries, and taught me to break down my knowledge into digestible pieces. The first grade students were definitely the hardest, but they challenged me in a good way, and I know they left with a greater understanding of salmon and their environment than many adults I know.

I hope this program can continue as long as our salmon and steelhead are endangered. These kids are the future, and I see so much potential! Thank you so much for supporting the Steelheaders mission of education.



Aimee uses “Sally the Salmon” during a lesson at Dixie School.



The STEM Rodeo took 45 Sager Middle School students outdoors for experiential learning in May. They collected data in specially designed field notebooks at the Walla Walla River, Mill Creek, and the Tucannon River, then compared their data from the three sites.



Support the Tri-State Steelheaders!!

You can help us add *Salmon in School* at Starbuck, Sharpstein, and the YMCA!!!

Name _____

___ Individual Membership (\$15)

Address _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

___ Business Membership (\$35)

Email _____

___ Donation (_____)
amount

Send your payment with this form to:
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Walla Walla, WA 99362

Or, you can give online:
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In this issue of the STEELHEADER:

Kids Catch Fish and Win Prizes



Casting Contest winner Bryson Harvey, with his prize

STEM Rodeo Gets Kids Outside



Sager School students visit the Tucannon River