

# TRI-STATE STEELHEADERS



## Strategic Plan 2025 – 2028

Approved June 4, 2025

## Introduction

The Tri-State Steelheaders (TSS) was organized in 1965 as part of the larger, Portland based Northwest Alliance of Steelheaders. TSS reorganized as an independent body in January, 1976 with a focus on salmonid restoration efforts on the Walla Walla River watershed and Snake River tributaries of southeastern Washington, northeastern Oregon, and north central Idaho (hence the “Tri-State” Steelheaders). In March, 1989, TSS was incorporated as a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation under Washington State law. In December 2000, TSS was designated one of Washington’s fourteen Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups.

Tri-State Steelheaders’ programs fall into three areas: restoration, education, and recreation. Restoration projects restore fish passage, improve instream and riparian conditions, and improve water quality with emphasis on ESA-listed summer steelhead and bull trout, and on tribally reintroduced spring chinook. Education programs are intended to inform the public about our fish resources and the challenges fish species face regionally. The Salmon in School program provides hands-on STEM learning as students raise salmon in classroom aquariums, learning about their salmon with monthly lessons, leading to the release of the salmon into local streams in the spring. Recreation programs connect people with the outdoors, with the goal of recruiting future stewards of our natural resources.

The Strategic Plan lays out Goals and Objectives, building on our past efforts and current focus, prioritizing our actions and resources for the next four years.

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# Our Values

## ***Conservation of Native Fish Species***

Abundant, self-sustaining populations  
Respect for tribal values and the heritage and history of our region

## ***Healthy Riparian Ecosystems***

Clean, plentiful stream flow  
Habitats that support biodiversity  
Reduction of flood impacts  
Resilience to climate change

## ***Recreational Opportunities***

Publicly accessible fishing opportunities  
Connection to wildlife and nature  
Conservation awareness  
Family traditions

# Our Vision

We envision a future where the Blue Mountain region has healthy river systems with sustainable populations of native fish species.

# Our Mission

Restore sustainable populations of native fish species.

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## ***Strategic Initiatives***

Programs

Communications

Personnel

Financial Sustainability

Facility

## *Strategic Initiative:* PROGRAMS (Restoration, Education, Recreation)

### GOALS:

- Expand community education programming
- Connect with diverse audiences to address mission-driven community and environmental concerns

### OBJECTIVES:

- Develop summer youth programs
- Develop year-round community education programs
- Increase community interest in and knowledge about Mill Creek and the Mill Creek project
- Create volunteer opportunities across all three program areas

### ACTIVITIES:

- Downtown projects
  - Engage school students in the design and development of murals related to Mill Creek
  - Create a walking tour/tour passport/QR codes (on signage)
- Mill Creek restoration
  - Install interpretative signage at the completed segments of the Mill Creek project
- Education program
  - Add a full-time educator
  - Develop additional field-trip experiences for schools
  - Develop an informed action (stewardship) program for school-aged youth
  - Expand community learning opportunities about stream habitat and/or fishing

## *Strategic Initiative:* COMMUNICATION (Marketing & Outreach)

### GOAL:

- Make the Tri-Steelheaders a recognizable organization of distinction

### OBJECTIVES:

- Create a new identity for the organization
- Increase public awareness and understanding about the role Tri-State Steelheaders plays in the region
- Increase frequency and effectiveness of communication about Tri-State Steelheaders' purpose, roles, and activities

### ACTIVITIES:

- Select a new name and logo for the organization
- Update the organization's website and social media presence
- Add informational signage linked with QR code directing to information on our website
- Use the connection to families of students in the Salmon in School program to spread the word about Tri-State Steelheaders
- Use teachers' workshops participants to help spread the word about the work of Tri-State Steelheaders
- Develop outreach materials (e.g., brochures, stickers, flyers, posters) to distribute at public events
- Expand event promotion (posters, social media, etc)

## *Strategic Initiative:* PERSONNEL

### GOAL:

- Continue to recruit and retain highly qualified staff

### OBJECTIVES:

- Provide competitive employee compensation
- Develop a succession plan for the executive director position

### ACTIVITIES:

- Increase employee professional development opportunities
- Explore health care plans for staff
- Update paid time off policies

## *Strategic Initiative:* Financial Sustainability

### GOAL:

- Diversify funding resources

### OBJECTIVE:

- Increase support from private foundations and individuals
- Increase sponsorship of individual projects/programs
- Increase membership
- Add staff/board/volunteers with fundraising skills

### ACTIVITIES:

- Engage a grant writer
- Provide grant writing training for staff
- Develop a list of potential sponsors and a recruitment strategy
- Conduct a membership drive

## *Strategic Initiative:* FACILITY

### GOAL:

- Purchase or lease a vehicle for the organization
- Secure new office space

### OBJECTIVES:

- Decrease reliance on use of personal vehicles to accomplish organizational tasks
- Provide a pleasant office environment

### ACTIVITIES:

- Identify vehicle use goals
- Research options
- Develop a vehicle use policy
- Develop a maintenance plan