From: Steamboaters steamboatersboard@gmail.com

Subject: Steamboat Whistle Spring 2021 Date: June 13, 2021 at 4:19 PM To: tkgoforth@icloud.com

The Steamboater Whistle

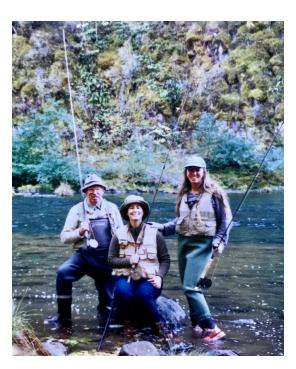
Spring 2021 Volume 60, Issue 4

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North Umpqua River, Oregon



Announcements and Club Events



In Rememberance: Charlie Spooner

Picture: Charlie and daughters Deanna and Alli on the North Umpqua

From Tim Devine

Dear Spooner Family –
My father (Jack Devine) and myself (Tim) spent many glorious August days on the North Umpqua from 1971 – much of the 1980s. Your mother and father always seemed to be there along with many other families, couples, and hard-core summer steelhead "nuts!"

To my father and I, your dad was one of the most respected, gracious, and keen fishermen we knew... and your mother

was always warm, inviting, and delightful as well.

One year, your father took us out on the river to show us the spots he knew.... We didn't have a car in those years so we had to walk everywhere, which limited how much of the river we could cover.... I still think of your father when I am lucky enough to get time to visit the N. Umpqua (only every 2–3 years now). He showed us his secrets and I have even caught fish in some of those pools! You all lived in So. California at that time and that's where my mother was born and raised so we had that in common too. Plus, Charlie often spoke of surf fishing, which my father and I also enjoyed here in No. California.

This has been a tough time for everyone—with the pandemic, drought, fires which impacted you and your family directly this past September.

I have the dament for the households the best actions. But it were there have

i nope the damage for you personally was not too severe, but it must have been extremely difficult regardless.

My thoughts and prayers go out to you and the rest of the Spooner family. I know that Charlie, Beth, and my father are up in heaven, fishing the great rivers, laughing, and enjoying each other's company once again. "A River Runs Through it."

Peace to the entire Spooner family. Your father will live on in our hearts and souls. All the Best

From Lee Spencer

This farewell is for Charlie Spooner and also for his wife Beth, though she has been gone for a while now. They both were fine, gentle, interested and interesting, good friends and great people. Both have left their mark on the river, Steamboaters, the Wildflower Show, and on The North Umpqua Foundation.

They will both be missed, sorely missed. I learned that I could depend on Charlie's incisive mind and his breadth of learning and experience. An example of this involves a big snapping turtle of his youth in Massachusetts. I have always been interested in how freshwater terrapins spent the winter and was talking about it with Charlie. I had just learned that these terrapins went to the bottom of a pond or stream and, if necessary, having anchored themselves there in some way, they stretched out the loose skin of their legs and necks and, thus, carried out their respiration by using this loose skin for breathing.

Charlie had laughed when I told him, and he proceeded to tell me about the snapping turtle that lived in the pond where he ice skated and played hockey as a kid. He told me that he was ice skating over some clear smooth ice and just happened to see this turtle holding in place on the bottom. He told me that with all the pond weed that was growing on this turtle's shell he was surprised that he had been able to see it at all.

It has been close to a couple of decades since I have enjoyed their pulling to a stop on the side of the road where Sis and I were tying flies on the hood of our old pickup. [Alli note: Dogs tie flies?! I gotta get me one of those!] I gave Charlie a copy of a monograph I'd written on Pacific salmon and climate change and I am as sure as I can be that it was Charlie, at that time the president of The North Umpqua Foundation, who was instrumental in my settling in for my 21 seasons at Big Bend Pool.

I remember when Beth, Deanna, and Charlie paid me a visit in the trailer where Frank and Jeanne were putting me up for my first winter after my first spring, summer, and fall at the pool. I had taken pages and pages of notes pertaining to the behavior of the wild summer steelhead that took refuge in the pool, on generalized natural history, and on my interactions with the public at the pool. I thought that people could be interested in these notes and I asked Charlie what he thought about me transcribing these notes.

Charlie was interested, smiled, and added "Along with your ruminations." This interaction with Charlie was all I needed to feel comfortable about transcribing my notes in their entirety. I like to think of Charlie as the godfather of my notes at the pool, all 6,500,000 words of them.

Save the Date: 2021 Steamboaters' Picnic and Celebration of Wild Fish on August 21, location and time TBA. Please plan to come to celebrate being able to gather in honor of our beautiful North Umpqua and her wild fish.

Please Welcome the Following New Members

Marcus Mattioli of Medford, Oregon Brian Godber of San Clemente, California Andrew Archer of Ashland, Oregon Harry Piper of Ashland, Oregon Jeremy Quinlan of Woodland Hills, California Chris Frissel of Polson, Montana

Phillip Ralston of Portland, Oregon Katie Morrison of Bend, Oregon Logan Johnson of Glide, Oregon Shane Stalling of North Bend, Oregon

President's Message by Tim Goforth



Spring Chinook at Deadline Falls Photo: Kirk Blaine

Hello and greetings to you one and all. I don't know how many of you have been able to visit the river since the fire, but as you drive upriver, you see areas of severely burned forest. This is a great personal loss for all of us, my family included. But it is important to remember that fire is a natural part of the existence of forests. As

you will see when you visit, there are already signs of rejuvenation. It seems now our task as individuals and Steamboat members is to support that rejuvenation in any way we can.

In this issue, you will read about the board's efforts on your behalf to that end.

We have included a press release from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding possible fishing restrictions for this summer due to the existing drought conditions.

The articles that follow this press release represent many hours of meetings by your board with many state agencies to keep us informed and inform them of our critical issues for preservation and restoration within our watershed.

Joe Ferguson has given us a synopsis of a multi-agency effort to analyze impacts from the fire on the watershed. Jeff Dose has shared his testimony before the Oregon Ways and Means Committee to propose expansion of the management direction for the Frank and Jeannie Moore Wild Steelhead Management Area elsewhere throughout the North

Umpqua Basin.

Kirk Blaine writes of the issues and concerns regarding the Rogue and South Coast Management Plan. We offer these perspectives on our neighboring waters because actions there can effect statewide regulations and management approaches.

Joe Ferguson gives us a report on the club's efforts to lobby the Fish and Game Commission and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding the rebuilding of the Rock Creek Fish Hatchery.

Jim McCarthy, Steamboaters' member and WaterWatch's Southern Oregon Program Director, gives us an update on the coalition's lawsuit against the Winchester Water Control District to stop the harm to fish caused by Winchester Dam. He includes a call to action to all Steamboaters.

In closing, just a reminder to be extra cautious on the river this summer. The banks are even more difficult than usual to negotiate due to debris and rocks. Tight lines, good fishing, and hope to see you on the 21st of August.

ODFW braces for drought: Fish stocking changes and possible emergency regulations are expected

June 2, 2021

SALEM, Ore.—March and April of 2021 were among the driest spring months since the 1890s. Many streams are already at 25 percent of the flow that is typical for this time of year, with flows usually seen in early summer observed in April on some southern Oregon streams

ODFW is bracing for a serious drought as summer arrives, with the entire state being impacted. Currently, 72 percent of the state is in severe or extreme drought status according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

"Unfortunately, we are likely looking at a very tough summer and fall ahead for fish," Shaun Clements, ODFW Deputy Administrator for Inland Fisheries. "It's possible that ODFW may have to take emergency actions to protect native fish populations due to the drought."

"Please try to be flexible with your fishing plans this summer as we get through this drought," continued Clements. "Our weekly Recreation Report is the best source of information on conditions and any emergency regulation changes due to drought."

Some of the emergency actions that could occur are:

- Trout stocking changes. The stocking schedule may change at short notice due to water conditions. Changes may not show up in the stocking schedule so see the Recreation Report for the latest information.
- Early release of fish: Low flows/high temps at hatcheries may force early release of salmon, steelhead
 and trout being raised.
- Emergency closures/regulation changes: Certain areas may be closed to angling to reduce stress on vulnerable fish populations already struggling due to drought; bag limits could be reduced or seasons shortened; "hoot owl" regulations may close fishing earlier in the day.
- Bag limits may be removed: In areas without sensitive fish populations, bag limits may be removed so surviving fish can be harvested rather than left to die in low water.
- Fish relocation: While rare, it's possible ODFW will salvage fish and move them to a different waterbody.

Any regulation changes will be posted in the <u>Recreation Report / Fishing Report</u> by fishing zone, so don't forget to always check the for the latest regulation change report before fishing.

On days when temperatures soar, anglers can do their part to reduce the stress fish are under:

- Fish early in day when water temperatures are cooler.
- Look for trout in deep, high elevation lakes or shaded streams near headwaters. These places are often cooler.
- Use barbless hooks so you can release fish easily and land fish quickly. The longer the fight, the less likely the fish will survive if released.
- Keep the fish in the water when you unhook it and cradle the fish upright until it revives enough to swim away.
- Use your judgement. If conditions where you want to fish seems especially severe (low, hot water), consider fishing somewhere else where water conditions are better.

Due to climate change, droughts are expected to become more frequent and more severe. ODFW scientists are

working to identify coldwater refuges, support flow restoration projects and improve habitat where possible to mitigate the effects of climate change on fish. For more information, see the <u>agency's climate change policy</u>. "There are things we can do to help ensure our iconic species can weather these droughts," Clements said. "By protecting and restoring the most important habitats to provide cool, clean water, we give them a fighting chance."

U.S. Drought Monitor map of Oregon, May 27, 2021 https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?OR

Contact:

Michelle Dennehy, (503) 931-2748, Michelle.N.Dennehy@odfw.oregon.gov

Archie Fire Analysis by Joe Ferguson



RipRap/Elevation Rock After the Archie Creek Fire: Photo by Lenny Volland

The Archie Fire in September of last year was an extremely severe fire in a dry forest fanned by hot, dry east winds. The fire burned over 130,000 acres (58,000 in the first 1.5 days!), of which approximately 40K was on BLM land, 26K

on National Forest land, and 65K on private timberland. Susan Creek and Rock Creek drainages were hard hit, especially the E. Fork of Rock Creek. There is now a multi-agency effort to analyze impacts from the fire on the watershed, comparing with excellent baseline data, particularly for stream flows and temperatures.

- The United States Geological Survey will be conducting analyses of both water quality and quantity as part of a multi-state effort. They'll be monitoring for micro-sediments and organic carbon, as well as toxins, nutrients, pH levels and impacts to macro-invertebrates. They'll also compare impacts between areas with and without timber salvage efforts. The study will also include the Diamond Lake Fire area.
- The Geo-Science department at University of Montana will look at geomorphic responses in stream channels including flow, sediment loads, and debris flows and relating them to fire severity.
- University of Oregon team will monitor precipitation impacts including runoff rates, levels of soil infiltration, and relationship to debris flows working with Mark Sommer at UNF.

- OSU will analyze fire impacts and post-fire timber harvest in Hinkle Creek, looking at flow rates, water temperatures and chemistry, macroinvertebrates, stream bio-mass, and fish abundance and also comparing with fire severity. Hinkle Creek is the site of a "paired watershed" study of impacts from timber harvest.
- Denise Damman, a private consultant, will be looking at impacts to long-term stream temperatures at 5 representative sites in Rock Creek, Canton Creek, and Pass Creek where they have years of existing data for comparison.
- ODEQ is going to examine impacts on ambient water quality including anions, heavy metals, nitrates/nitrites, and nutrient levels.



Hill Creek After the Fire Photo by Lenny Volland

April 22, 2021 Testimony to Oregon Joint Ways and Means Committee by Jeff Dose

The North Umpqua River is a unique and invaluable resource. It is one of only two Oregon Rivers that flow directly from the crest of the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. Due to this geological and hydrological situation, it has resulted in the natural selection of several uncommon populations of endemic fish species, including wild salmonid. This includes a population of wild summer steelhead, one of only three along the entire Oregon Coast.

As you may know, the U.S. Congress recently passed legislation designating the Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area within the Steamboat Creek watershed, a major tributary to the North Umpqua River. While important legislation, it only applies to a small portion (approximately 10%) of the North Umpqua River basin. I believe that the management direction contained in

this legislation could, and should, be expanded elsewhere throughout the North Umpqua basin. This is a critical need for wild steelhead and should result in an increased emphasis on protection and enhancement of wild steelhead. Currently, the winter steelhead run is entirely wild and is thriving. On the other hand, the rare and unique summer steelhead - as mentioned earlier, there are only three wild populations along the entire Oregon Coast – are showing substantial declines. Most of the life-history of wild winter and summer steelhead is similar in time and space. Other than run timing of adults, the only significant difference is the presence of substantial hatchery production of summer steelhead. There are several factors in this decline, but environmental and biological factors associated with the hatchery program are most certainly a significant causal mechanism in this decline. Recovery of abundant wild summer steelhead populations in the North Umpqua River must address this long-standing, but inappropriate, practice. You can have a very positive impact on changing this direction through your budgeting direction to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, specifically direction to strengthen implementation of the Native Fish Conservation Policy. This would entail reduced emphasis on artificial production in hatcheries and increased emphasis on research, inventory, monitoring, and habitat protection focused on wild fish populations.

A number of individuals and organizations are working diligently to effect this needed change. They need your support. Thank you.

Neighboring Waters: Rogue and South Coast by Kirk Blaine



The Rogue River and south coast streams have long since been considered a steelhead stronghold for many generations. Over the past vear stakeholders in these watersheds have been working with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to create a Roque South Coast Conservation Management plan (RSP) for the watersheds and communities of Southwestern Oregon.

South Coast Fish

The management plan came to fruition through the most recent efforts to provide precautionary management of wild winter steelhead in southern Oregon through catch and release angling and the absence of adequate adult steelhead monitoring. This campaign's background is extensive yet critical for wild native fish, free flowing rivers, and thriving local communities. These streams are some of the only ones left in the Pacific Northwest that anglers can harvest a wild winter steelhead.

Recently, ODFW released their first draft of the conservation management plan to stakeholders outlining hatchery actions, fishing actions, habitat actions, other species actions, research and monitoring actions, outreach/enforcement actions, and other facilities actions. Stakeholders of the Rogue and South Coast provided input for ODFW on the RSP draft as part of the public process. We commend ODFW for the hard work during unprecedented times to host this process and develop a draft plan for southern Oregon. This plan is similar to the Coastal Multi-Species Management Plan (CMP) which outlines management in the North, South and Mainstem Umpqua Rivers.

It is critical that ODFW's final draft of the Rogue and South Coast plan takes a precautionary approach to fish management, incorporating accurate monitoring of identified species, clear management triggers and actions if species decline to conservation status, and responsible hatchery management practices that reflect the best available science. Wild fish are critical to the Rogue and coast's entire ecosystem coast and provide for the many rural communities in southwestern Oregon.

As a Steamboaters Board Member and the Southern Oregon Regional Coordinator for Native Fish Society I have highlighted the following concerns with the most recent draft of Rogue and South Coast Plan:

- 1. The plan lacks distinct management triggers and specific actions that will be implemented when these triggers are observed. (e.g. adult escapement in Chetco River is below conservation status, what actions will be implemented? Is falling below conservation status a trigger?)
- 2. It increases the current risk from harvest on wild Winter Steelhead by sanctioning harvest rates in small and medium sized streams higher than currently estimated.
- 3. It continues the harvest of wild fish throughout watersheds that don't have sufficient data on returning adult fish.
- 4. It expands the negative influence of hatchery fish through proposed additional Mixed Emphasis Areas (hatchery release areas), acclimation facilities for hatchery fish, and hatchery smolt increases.
- 5. Proposed monitoring to collect this data is included in the plan, but the adequate monitoring data necessary to craft management decisions will not be available for another five years.

Native Fish Society does not believe taking these additional risks are justified by the best available science or the precautionary approach described in ODFW's Native Fish Conservation Policy or the recently adopted Climate and Ocean Change Policy. Further, the plan falls short of the directives in the Climate and Ocean Change Policy. If you would like to learn more about the Rogue and South Coast, please contact Steamboaters board member, Kirk Blaine at kirk@nativefishsociety.org today.

May 25 Fish Hatchery Tour and Meeting by Joe Ferguson

The Steamboaters are part of a coalition formed to examine how to move forward after the Archie Fire destroyed so much critical habitat and burned down the Rock Creek Hatchery. We believe this is a critical point for prioritizing the health of North Umpqua wild fish runs; summer steelhead (SSt) are a particular concern since their numbers have fallen below 2,000 wild fish in four of the last six years. On May 25th, our board with representatives from The North Umpqua Foundation, Native Fish Society, Trout Unlimited, Umpqua Watersheds, and the Conservation Angler met at Rock Creek with Fish & Wildlife commissioners, local ODFW managers, and senior staff from the Fish Division to discuss what we can do for

summer steelhead (SSt), and whether it makes sense to rebuild Rock Ck Hatchery given the devastation from the fire and the complete lack of clean cold water for hatchery operations. We toured Rock Creek, and concluded with lunch and a 2.5-hour meeting at the hatchery

We specifically asked for a halt to the summer steelhead hatchery program. In the Coastal Multispecies Management Plan (CMP) there is clear recognition of the harmful impact that hatchery fish have on wild populations. The CMP sets a maximum of 10% hatchery fish in the spawning population, which if met produces a 17% decline in reproduction success. However, that 10% figure hasn't been met outside of Steamboat Creek for years. The CMP sets a target of 3400 wild SSt, but recent runs have fallen well short of that figure and are trending towards the critical level of 1200 wild fish. Jeff Dose pointed out that when the hatchery program for winter steelhead was ended in the North Umpqua in 1992, the number of wild fish rebounded after two generations (8 years) to average 9600/year from 2000 to 2020 and according to the CMP 5-year report is the only winter run on the coast that remains strong.

The commissioners appeared to be more receptive than staff to our proposals, and we intend to follow up with them with what we feel is a strong case: The lack of clean cold water, the low run numbers, declining habitat in both freshwater and the ocean, and the fact that hatchery impacts are the only negative factor under our control. ODFW staff was less receptive, noting that they don't have the staff to follow up with this and preferring to wait to take action for several more years, hoping the numbers improve.

Winchester Dam Update and Call to Action by Jim McCarthy



Construction of Unpermitted Coffer Dam at Winchester Dam's South Abutment During Botched 2018 Repair. Photo courtesy of Oregon Water Resources Department

A coalition of fishing, conservation, and whitewater groups continues to work to bring attention to – and stop – Winchester Dam's ongoing

harm to the North Umpqua River's salmon and steelhead. Much news has happened so far in 2021.

A subset of our coalition – Steamboaters, WaterWatch, and the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermens' Associations – are continuing our federal lawsuit against the Winchester Water Control District seeking to end the dam's harm to protected salmon. Earthjustice, a public interest environmental law firm, represents our groups in this case. Federal courts move slowly but we expect more developments on this front later in the year.

district's former president and current resident and director, who claimed that their dam repairs should be exempt from state water quality laws. The win is the latest development in an ongoing state-level contested case over a \$53,578 fine issued by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) against Basco Logging, Inc., the longtime primary contractor for repairs at Winchester Dam. Another coalition subset including WaterWatch, Steamboaters, Native Fish Society, Umpqua Watersheds, and Oregon Wild intervened in the case on behalf of the river, water quality, fish, and wildlife, and are represented by Crag Law Center.

In issuing her ruling, the judge noted that "DEQ provided an abundance of evidence" in support of its allegations of unlawful waste discharge into the North Umpqua, as well as "very persuasive photographic evidence showing highly visible sediment discharge originating from the dam repair activities." The case will now proceed to a formal hearing in July.

We continue to push ODFW to ensure that the district do more to address the ongoing disrepair, false attraction, and injury to fish at the dam. This included notifying ODFW in January that salvaged rubber belt material the owners used to cover some of the fish ladder's gushing leaks, exposed rebar, and eroded concrete had washed away – again. Most commercial rubber products contain chemicals shown to be lethal to Coho salmon. The dam owners have declined to tell ODFW which cocktail of chemical treatments were chosen for these belts when purchased for their original purpose. In February, ODFW sent a third letter in as many years requesting that the district make durable repairs as soon as possible to end delay and harm to fish. The most easily observed problems on the dam – the fish ladder's large false attraction flow and fishinjuring surfaces – are currently in similar or worse condition than before ODFW sent its first letter to the owners.

In mid-March, the district informed ODFW in writing that by late summer 2021 they intend to build an upriver "coffer dam," dewater the fish ladder, and perform repairs on the dam face and ladder. However, they did not provide engineered plans or permitting details. ODFW responded with a request for detailed information and a reminder to the owners to seek appropriate permits. We have asked ODFW to immediately inform us of any updates, but as of this writing, the dam owners have not submitted permit applications nor provided additional information ODFW requested.

While repairs to the fish ladder area are long overdue, if the dam owners proceed without professionally engineered plans or permits, there will likely be a repeat of the botched 2018 repair. That unpermitted repair done without benefit of engineering killed fish, degraded essential salmon habitat, and polluted the public drinking water source for 37,700 people while failing to achieve a permanent improvement in the dam's condition. To best protect the river, fish, and drinking water supplies, all repairs at this dam should proceed only after appropriate design, engineering, and permitting.

After the botched 2018 repair, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers informed the district in a letter that building coffer dams involves "discharge of fill material below the ordinary high water mark (OHWM)" and that "[f]urther discharges of fill material below the OHWM of the North Umpqua River would need prior Section 404 authorization from the Corps." Army Corps and the Oregon Department of State Lands share authority over regulating discharge of fill material in Oregon's rivers. After learning of Winchester Water Control District's proposed repair in late March through a public records request, WaterWatch immediately informed both agencies. In response, Army Corps contacted the dam owners and requested they begin the permitting process. We will be monitoring developments closely, but hopefully, this means that the proposed repairs at Winchester Dam will occur only after appropriate design, engineering, and permitting is completed.

If you are near the North Umpqua this summer, please help us bring the rule of law to Winchester Dam by stopping by the viewing area parking lot with a camera and a cell phone. If you see a coffer dam, or any activity which could be the construction of a coffer dam (essentially a temporary wall built of earth or other material surrounding part of an existing dam to exclude water) please document this activity and contact the authorities listed below to make a report. However, please do not confront construction workers, trespass, or otherwise interfere with activity at the dam in any way! If a violation is occurring the appropriate authorities will be able to

take action to prevent additional narm to the river.

Where to report a violation:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Anita Andazola, 541-294-4317, <u>Anita.M.Andazola@usace.army.mil</u>

Oregon Department of State Lands: Lauren Brown, 503-302-3290, <u>lauren.brown@dsl.state.or.us</u>

If you are unsure that you are really seeing a coffer dam, please feel free to first call, or email your pictures, to me at the contact information below.

There were additional hard fought wins for the coalition in recent months related to public safety and other matters, but in the interest of avoiding an overly long and detailed article, these will have to wait until the next update.

Do you have questions or concerns regarding Winchester Dam? Please contact Jim McCarthy, WaterWatch's Southern Oregon Program Director, at 541-708-0048 or jim@waterwatch.org.

About Us

Steamboaters PO Box 396 Idleyld Park, OR 97447

The mission of the Steamboaters is to preserve, promote, and restore the unique aesthetic values, the natural production of wild fish populations, and the habitat that sustains these fish on the North Umpqua River.

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