

# Coos River S.T.E.P. News

P.O Box 5907 Charleston, Oregon 97420

June 2011

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### NEWSLETTER

Ray Lee 267-4176

Clyde Haga 267-3563



## DONATIONS

Dave West  
Shirley Perkins

These members have made very generous donations to Coos River STEP.

## HATCHERY NEWS

The last two weeks have been a time to pickup and cleanup the Hatchery after we released the fish on May 23rd.

Now we have been busy trying to get Coos River STEP's garage sale all set up and ready to go by June 10th. This sale is our main fund raiser for the year, so we depend on getting the sale right as it pays most all of our monthly bills. There has been lots of support for this sale this year, so it should be a great sale. There is no big items like the boat and trailer that we had last year, but there is lots of very interesting items that have been donated by a lot of good supporters of our STEP program. Harold and Don have been putting a lot of time and miles into picking up sale items from a lot of different supporters. There was lots of things brought to the hatchery also, plus all the things that were taken right to Shorty and Loretta's for the garage sale. The large garage that they have is overflowing with sale items. There is some things outside, so there is room to get to everything, inside and out so the buyers could get a better look. things.

## COOS RIVER STEP NEWS

Here at the Noble Creek Hatchery, all the work of spawning the adults and the hatching of the eggs for the brood year of 2010-2011 is coming to a close. We have been feeding the Chinook babies from about February till May 23rd, when we released them into Noble Creek so they could start their journey of life. We wanted them to be 75 per pound at the time of release, which was an average weight that happened on May 23rd. The newer broadcast feeders worked really good for us. These feeders were used on the main pond that is 120 feet long built right by the creek. The belt feeders that we have had for a long time that we used on Nora's pond worked but not as well as we would like. There was quite a size difference in these fish. There was also two different age groups of eggs that these fish were hatched from. We need to do a better job for these fish if this happens again.

## SUMMER PROJECTS TO WORK ON

We still have 500 Chinook in a 5by5 foot pen, waiting to be checked to see what percentage of them still have the coded wire in their nose. We need to hold these fish for 30 days to get a good reading on how well they have retained this marked wire. Then we can expand this percentage to cover all 600,000 of them, so we will know how many actually have retained this marked wire. There was 30,000 that had the wire inserted into their nose, these fish are identifiable any place in the ocean where ever they are caught, either sport or commercial.

Once these fish are checked out and gone we will clean out their holding pond, and have it ready for the return of the adults this fall. It looks like it may help some of the natural salmon (COHO) if we hold a small pond of water right above the hatchery for them to spend the summer in.

Harold is working on getting some paint to finish painting the outside walls of our new room. He is still trying to decide on a color for repainting all the outside walls of the whole hatchery, they sure need it. This will be a big job for us, but nothing seems to stop anyone from trying. Paint is high priced and we will need quite a bit of it, so if you know someone that could help us get this paint donated, or reduced in price come talk to us about it.

There is still a real need for a room that we can lock up, to store some of our tools and pumps and other equipment that we use here at the hatchery. We're hoping to build this room under the existing roof that we have, this roof was put up to cover our hatchboxes before we got our new style hatchboxes, and it would make a good location for this tool room. Our plans right now are to build this room 12 feet by 16 feet, we're hoping this will give us plenty of room for the racks that Harold built for our waders so we can lock them up also. We already have a desk that we can build right in this room that will make a good place to store some of the little stuff plus a bench like surface to work on when needed.

Another major job is to get an adequate wood supply cut and stacked under this roof for our heat in our meeting room. The heating stove is showing signs of wearing out, but we're not ready to give up on this unique wood heating stove yet. We do have another wood heating stove on hand that we can put in place any time that it's needed. For sure everyone that works during spawning season does need to be able to warm up several times a day. The people that fin clipped also had awful cold hands and feet, it's just cold water that you have to work in with these fish.

We're talking about buying another new style hatchbox, if we do we could take out the 3 older style hatchboxes that we have all plumbed in and ready for eggs. We'll store these three in the barn with the other 5 that's over there now. These eight boxes are made of fiberglass, and should last a long time in case we ever need them. They could even make good trading stock with another STEP group that could use them.

## 2011 Fin-Clipping

The fin-clipping program this year went extremely well thanks to all the volunteers in the community that came out to help. A total of 282,755 fall Chinook were adipose fin-clipped, out of a total of 595,000 fish released. This gives us a clip rate of 47.5 percent, with a goal of a 30 percent clip rate, we are at 158 percent of our stated goal. The fish were released volitionally on May 23, within a few hours they were actively moving out of the raceway downstream. They had all left the hatchery a little over a week later. Average weight upon release was 71 to the pound. Some of the groups that helped out were: The Harding Learning Center under the guidance of John Lemmons, The United States Coast Guard and The Bay Area Chamber of Commerce. The greatest effort was provided by the students of the Bob Belloni Ranch lead by John Vickrey. They clipped around 180,000 fish over a four day period. Our total number of volunteer hours was 875. If I had to perform this job by myself it would have taken me around ten weeks of doing nothing but clipping.

This just goes to show what a powerful effect volunteer effort can have. Combined with the clipping efforts at Morgan Creek and the Millicoma Interpretive Center we have clipped 1.5 million fish within the basin this year. The benefit of this is that anglers can purchase additional hatchery salmon tags and keep clipped fish at a rate of two per day all season long. If in the future we had to implement more restrictive regulations on wild fish, these marked fish would still be available for harvest at the same rate. The group of coded wire tagged fish will be released on June 13 after being scanned for retention of the tags.

Our fish have been caught and these tags recovered in the commercial fisheries of both British Columbia and Alaska. With the opening of an ocean commercial bubble fishery outside of Coos Bay we will have the opportunity of seeing if our fish are contributing to the fishery and to what degree. Thanks to the Coos River S.T.E.P. group and all the other volunteers for their help this year and over the past three decades! Together I'm sure this program will provide the community with fish for many years to come.

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