



Upper Nehalem Watershed Council

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

OUR MISSION:

To foster stewardship and understanding of the natural resources of the Upper Nehalem Watershed among the stakeholders of the watershed communities in order to protect, conserve, restore and sustain the health and functions of the watershed.

OUR WATERSHED:

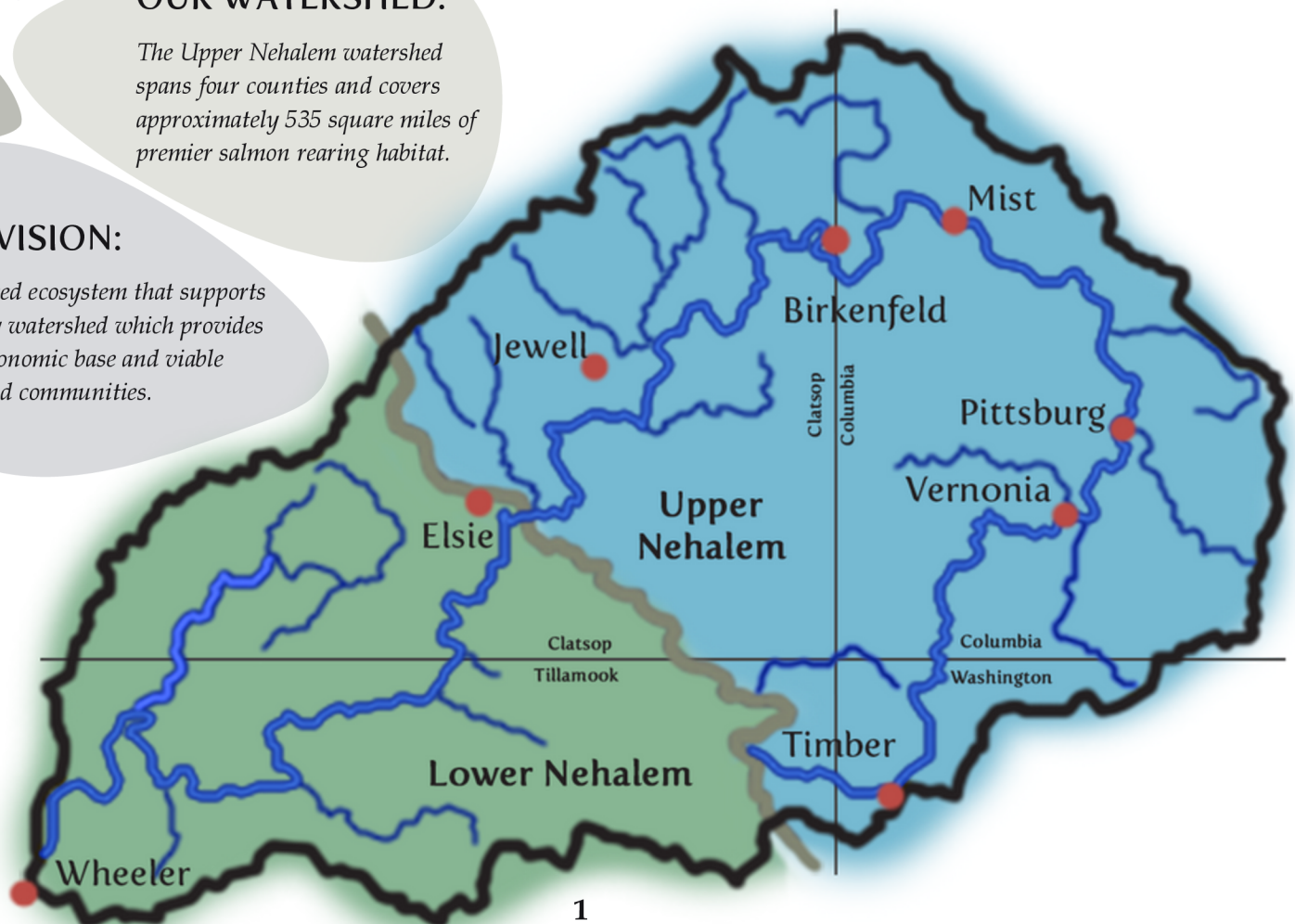
The Upper Nehalem watershed spans four counties and covers approximately 535 square miles of premier salmon rearing habitat.

OUR VISION:

A balanced ecosystem that supports a healthy watershed which provides for an economic base and viable watershed communities.

Founded in 1996 to help maintain the health of the waterways and wildlife in the Upper Nehalem Valley, the UNWC works with stakeholders, community members, and other organizations to complete projects and share information. The UNWC provides a framework for all stakeholder voices to be heard and to coordinate efforts towards shared goals.

Nestled in the northwest corner of Oregon, the Nehalem watershed nurtures a vibrant aquatic ecosystem that includes coastal Coho salmon, winter steelhead, summer Chinook salmon, brook lamprey, and Cutthroat trout, to name a few. Through restoration and enhancement of critical stronghold habitats, the UNWC and its partners work to ensure these species and others will survive for future generations.



OUR STAFF

Maggie Peyton
Executive Director



Susan Spicer Pond
Fiscal Administrator



Mark Hall
Reforestation Crew Leader



Sebastian Heselton
Reforestation Crew



Vance Landry
Reforestation Crew



OUR BOARD

Michael Calhoun
Board Chair



Spencer Kroll
Vice Chair



Eric DeWitt
Treasurer



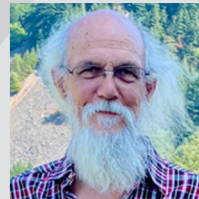
Diane Turner Maller
Secretary



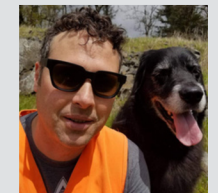
Susan Schmidlin
Member-at-Large



Wade Bullier
Member-at-Large



Thomas Dee III
Member-at-Large



Building partnerships was the theme of 2023.

We started the New Year with a hand-off of the Nehalem Strategic Action Plan from the Wild Salmon Center. Then we further developed the Nehalem Basin Partnership by drafting a 10 year work plan referencing the completed NSAP and we shifted into high gear to progress the Nehalem Coho Habitat Initiative Focused Investment Partnership. The NCHI FIP strives to gain the capacity and partnership resources to engage effectively in work plan implementation aimed at delivering measurable ecological outcomes in the form of greater native salmon production across the Nehalem Basin.

The NBP is representative of all the stakeholder groups and agencies with interest within the Nehalem watershed. We maintain an open seat at the table to all Tribes of the region to participate in the NBP for the greater good of our collective humanity and the abundant nature and resilience of our watershed.

Maggie Peyton

Maggie Peyton
Executive Director



UNWC is committed to continuing to learn from and honor the Tribes, especially when it comes to stewardship of the Nehalem watershed. The sovereignty, well-being, cultures, and languages of Indigenous peoples are born of their homelands and that makes these lands and waters cherished to Native communities. All of us have a responsibility to treat the lands and waters with respect and care so they can be stewarded with respect and care for the future generations. This is a living statement, meant to grow and evolve as our understanding grows and evolves.

We recognize the Indigenous People and Tribes that persist today and honor their resilient spirit as they continue to preserve their cultures, spiritual practices, and languages for themselves and their children.



Tribal and Indigenous Peoples map of the Pacific Northwest from the online interactive <https://native-land.ca>



Obsidian spear point found in Vernon on Rock Creek in 2016

Through our research we learned that the Nehalem Basin was home to many Indigenous groups and Tribes depending on the area including Chinook, Clatskanie, Clatsop, Cowlitz, Grand Ronde, Nehalem, Salish, Siletz and Tillamook.

The Clatskanie, who spoke Athapaskan and were related to the Kwalhioqua in SW Washington, inhabited the eastern portion of the Nehalem basin. They lived south of the Columbia River near the Klaskanine and Clatskanie Rivers and fished with spears, weirs, and traps. They constructed short-nose canoes. There is no record of what they called themselves, known only now by versions of their Chinookan names including "itáckani" meaning "those of the region of small oaks." In 1780, a rough estimation of their population was 1,600, but by 1851 only 13 individuals remained. Historic accounts tell how those who remained were removed and taken to the Grand Ronde Reservation. It is unknown if any Clatskanie survived, but they did marry into other Tribes, including the Chinook, so their genetic legacy may yet live on.

2023 FINANCIALS

The year 2023 was a financially challenging year. Several major projects ended, and while new projects were awarded, some of the new projects weren't to be implemented until 2024. Once again, much of our funding was obtained through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The balance of the funding was fairly equally split between the Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Wildlife Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Resources Conservation Service and Wild Salmon Center.

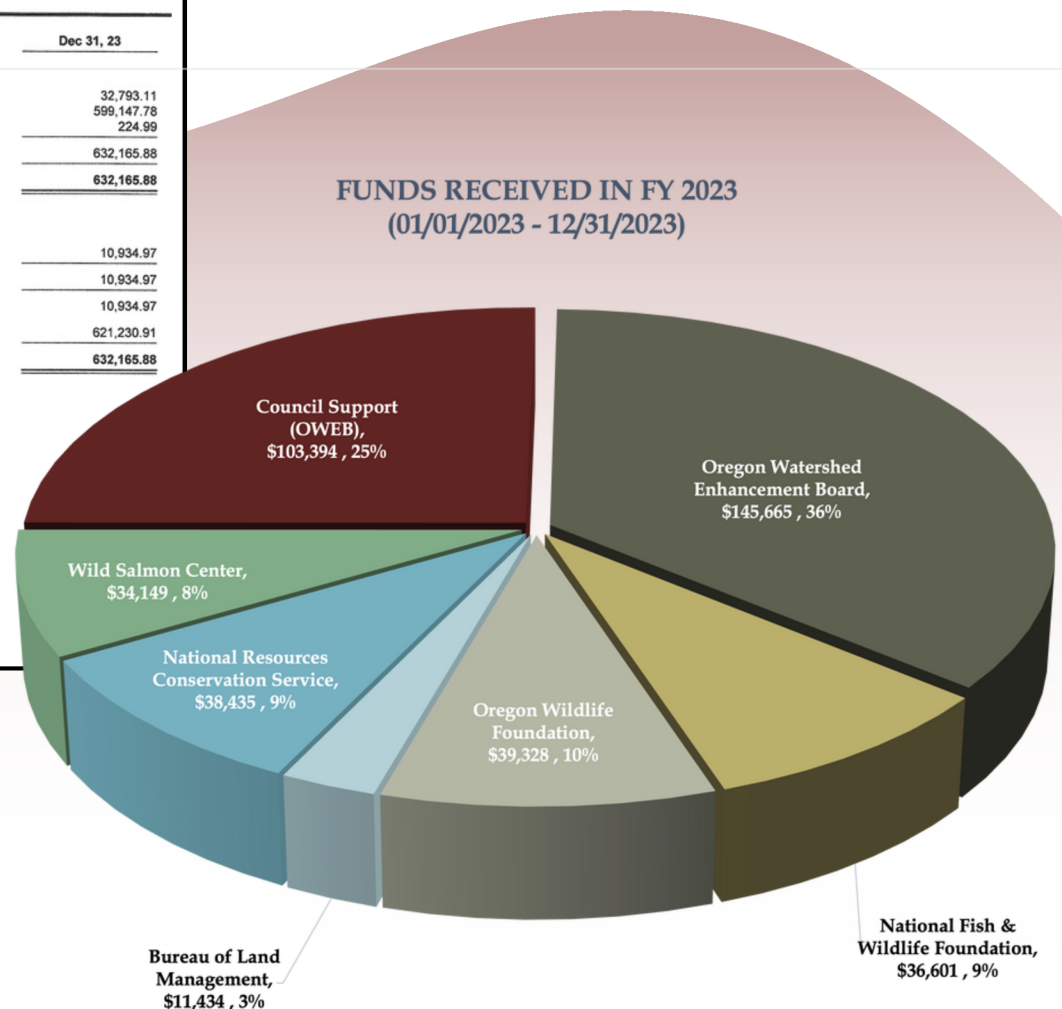
It also became clear mid-year that our on-site Nehalem Native Nursery needed closer management, not only to maintain it, but to enhance and expand.

This necessitated hiring three new employees. We were formerly using contracted personnel to work in the nursery and do planting at the various project sites. Having our own crew available is a definite advantage, although it did put a strain on our cash flow.

We finished 2023 slightly under our operating budget total, but not in as strong a financial position as we were last year. However, we are ready to face the challenges of 2024 and look forward to many new opportunities to increase UNWC effectiveness in implementing high value projects.

Susan Spicer Pond
Fiscal Administrator

| Upper Nehalem Watershed Council Summary Balance Sheet As of December 31, 2023 | |
|---|-------------------|
| | Dec 31, 23 |
| ASSETS | |
| Current Assets | |
| Checking/Savings | 32,793.11 |
| Accounts Receivable | 599,147.78 |
| Other Current Assets | 224.99 |
| Total Current Assets | 632,165.88 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 632,165.88 |
| LIABILITIES & EQUITY | |
| Liabilities | |
| Current Liabilities | |
| Other Current Liabilities | 10,934.97 |
| Total Current Liabilities | 10,934.97 |
| Total Liabilities | 10,934.97 |
| Equity | 621,230.91 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY | 632,165.88 |



THANK YOU!

Throughout the years the UNWC has developed many vital relationships that enrich and sustain all aspects of the organization, from daily administrative tasks to deep project development. These funders, partners, and supporters not only make the work possible, but also elevate it, and for that we are sincerely grateful.

Thank you.

AGENCIES

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Clatsop County
- Columbia County
- National Oceanic Atmospheric Admin. (NOAA)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
- Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)
- Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)
- Oregon Division of State Lands (DSL)
- US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFW)

CONTRACTORS

- Aiuto Designs
- BioHabitats
- Bio-Surveys, LLC
- David Strickland
- Drift Awake
- ForeSight Drone
- JJ & L Excavation, LLC
- Lower Columbia Engineering
- Portland Community College (PCC) - Sylvania Campus Geography Department
- Rob Walton Consulting
- Trask Consulting, LLC

LANDOWNERS

- Armstrong Family
- Berg Family
- Carmichael Family
- City of Vernonia
- Fishhawk Lake Reserve & Community (FLRC)
- Galassi Family
- Hayes Family
- Johnson Family
- Justice Family
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) - Jewell Meadows Wildlife Area
- Oregon State University - Blodgett Tract (OSU)
- Schmidlin Family
- Semerjian Family
- TTG Forestry Services
- Weyerhaeuser
- Younger Family

ORGANIZATIONS

- Clatsop Soil & Water Conservation Dist. (SWCD)
- Columbia Soil & Water Conservation Dist. (SWCD)
- Lower Nehalem Community Trust (LNCT)
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)
- Necanicum Watershed Council (NWC)
- Nehalem Bay Watershed Council (NBWC)
- Nestucca, Neskowin & Sand Lake Watersheds Council (NNSLWC)
- North Coast Watershed Association (NCWA)
- Northern OR Restoration Partnership (NORP)
- One Tree Planted
- Oregon Wildlife Foundation (OWF)
- Tillamook Estuaries Partnership (TEP)
- Vernonia Grange #305
- Vernonia School District (VSD)
- Wild Salmon Center (WSC)

NEHALEM BASIN PARTNERSHIP (NBP)

DESCRIPTION: *The Nehalem Basin Partnership formalizes to implement the Nehalem Strategic Action Plan (NSAP) to improve Coho Salmon habitat.*

PARTNERS TO DATE: *Clatsop SWCD, Columbia SWCD, DEQ, LNCT, NBWC, North Coast Land Conservancy, ODF, ODFW, TEP, Trout Unlimited, UNWC, USFW, Weyerhaeuser*

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: *OWEB - \$149,512*

TIMEFRAME: *3 years*

CAPACITY



In 2023 the NBP advanced considerably. A web developer contract was secured to build a website for the partnership, two GIS interns were hired through Portland Community College Geography Department to assist with map creation, and in the fall the MOU was finalized and signed by multiple partners.

Additionally, within the partnership a FIP application was created, finalized and submitted to OWEB for the benefit of Coho habitat. This is an exciting opportunity and full details are listed on page 7.

The GIS interns have collected and organized all the available shape files, conducted additional analysis using state of the art NetMap watershed modeling tools, and created maps for grant applications.

Maggie Peyton and Zac Mallon led weekly NBP core partnership meetings with facilitator Rob Walton and conducted four quarterly meeting with the full partnership.

Visit the website at nehalembasinpartnership.com.

NBP MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SNAPSHOT

LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Leadership Team includes the Executive Director of the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council and the Coordinator of the Nehalem Bay Watershed Council. They are responsible for co-chairing meetings of the Core Partners and providing overall management for the NBP, including managing funds that support partnership development. They receive support from ODFW, the NBP Facilitator, and other Core Partners who join the leadership team.

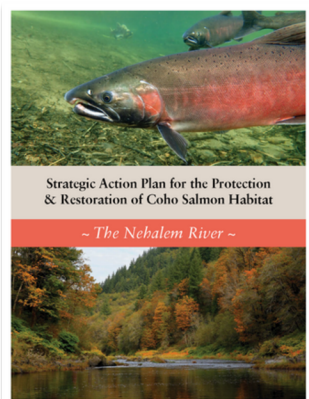
INTENTION

The MOU intends to explain and formalize the Partnership's overall operation, including the decision-making process and the intended role of the Leadership Team, Core and Active Partners, and the Nehalem Technical Advisory Group (NTAG) relating to the goal of the Nehalem Basin Partnership which include implementation of the NSAP and additional efforts to achieve broad-sense recovery of Coho Salmon and watershed health in the Nehalem Basin; provide a means for partners to indicate that they understand and support the structure and procedures described in this MOU; minimize conflict throughout the governance process.

VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The NBP's vision is that implementation of the Nehalem Basin Coho Strategic Action Plan results in healthy ecological, economic, and social conditions that can ensure a sustainable future for native Coho Salmon. The NBP determined goals and objectives through the development of the Partnership's NSAP and are described in that document.

NEHALEM STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN (NSAP)



NSAP Cover, 2023

DESCRIPTION: *The Nehalem Strategic Action Plan advances the Oregon Coast Coho Conservation Plan and the federal ESA Recovery Plan for Oregon Coast Coho Salmon by identifying priority locations where habitat protection and restoration would have the greatest benefit to watershed function and Coho Salmon conservation and recovery.*

PARTNERS: *Columbia SWCD, DEQ, NBWC, NOAA, ODF, ODFW, TEP, UNWC, Weyerhaeuser, Wild Salmon Center*

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: *OWEB/Wild Salmon Center - \$41,000*

TIMEFRAME: *Released and available now!*

CAPACITY



The Nehalem Strategic Action Plan is printed and available for distribution! Get your PDF copy by visiting coastcoho.org/strategic-action-plan-for-coho-salmon-recovery-on-the-nehalem-river/ or contact the UNWC for a hard copy.

EXCERPT FROM NSAP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Strategic Action Plan (SAP) represents a locally led effort to implement the broad recommendations contained in these state and federal recovery plans. In 2015, the Nehalem Partnership convened to develop an SAP that could achieve two long-term goals:

| LONG-TERM GOALS | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Protect and restore summer, winter, and incubation habitats sufficient to produce a detectable change (i.e., improving trends) in Coho production in high-priority 6th field subwatersheds. |
| 2 | Protect and restore watershed processes to ensure sufficient habitat diversity for the expression of multiple life-history strategies within the Nehalem Coho population. |

To achieve these goals, the SAP emphasizes restoration of the watershed processes that generate and maintain critical Coho habitats. This process-based approach relies heavily on an "anchor habitat strategy," which seeks to identify, protect, and restore the stream reaches most capable of supporting Coho across the full spectrum of their freshwater residency, including spawning, egg incubation, rearing, and smolting.

The primary strategies presented in this plan to restore watershed processes and conserve anchor habitats include:

- 1. Protect selected timber stands to promote large wood delivery to anchor habitats within debris-flow prone Type-N tributary corridors.*
- 2. Add large wood to identified anchor habitats and priority reaches of cold water refugia.*
- 3. Enhance riparian habitats along tributaries through native plantings and the management of invasive species.*
- 4. Recruit and promote beaver colonization and encourage dam-building in selected 1st - 3rd order tributaries.*
- 5. Reconnect and restore tidal wetlands and sloughs and associated freshwater habitats.*
- 6. Replace or remove culverts and other barriers to fish passage.*

By 2045 the Nehalem Coho Partnership will achieve the following restoration outcomes:



Upland Forests: 536 acres of upland timber are protected to ensure long-term delivery of large wood to anchor habitats.



Instream: Instream complexity is restored within 66 miles of focal area anchor habitats.



Riparian: Riparian function is enhanced along 58 miles of focal area tributaries.



Off-Channel: Beavers colonize and build dams along an additional 40 miles of Coho-bearing tributaries, increasing off-channel habitats available for Coho rearing.



Tidal Wetlands: 300 acres of tidal wetlands and other estuarine habitats are reconnected.



Fish Passage: 52 barriers to fish passage are removed, restoring Coho access to 92 miles of anchor habitats and cold-water refuge.

Illustrations: Elizabeth Morales

By reaching these six restoration outcomes, the Nehalem Partnership seeks to achieve the SAP's long-term goals and advance the vision of a healthy Nehalem Coho population.

FOCUSED INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP (FIP)

DESCRIPTION: (From the Oregon.gov FIP overview)

A Focused Investment Partnership is an OWEB investment that: 1) Addresses a board-identified Focused Investment Priority of significance to the state; 2) Achieves clear and measurable ecological outcomes; 3) Uses integrated, results-oriented approaches as identified through a strategic action plan; 4) Is implemented by a high-performing partnership.

Implementation funding supports partnerships with up to \$12 million over 3 biennia (6 years). Initiatives must demonstrate clear and measurable restoration outputs and ecological outcomes that support limiting factors outlined in a federal recovery and/or state conservation plan(s).

PARTNERS TO DATE: Columbia SWCD, Giustina Timber, LNCT, NBWC, ODF, ODFW, TEP, Tillamook County Creamery, UNWC, Weyerhaeuser

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: OWEB - Requested \$10.6 million

TIMEFRAME: 6 years

CAPACITY



The Focused Investment Partnership is a 6 year, multi-million dollar funding opportunity offered by OWEB to advance high-performing initiatives focused on improving the seven priority habitats identified by the OWEB Board.

The NBP FIP application fits under:

The Nehalem Basin Partnership has been diligently working to prepare a FIP application for the 2023 submission deadline. A consultation with OWEB in July was helpful and the final application was submitted in October.

This FIP, if awarded, would fund the implementation of high-priority projects focused on Coho habitat by embracing:

- NSAP Strategy 2: Add large wood to identified anchor habitats and priority reaches of cold water refugia.
- NSAP Strategy 3: Enhance riparian habitats along tributaries through native plantings and the management of invasive species.

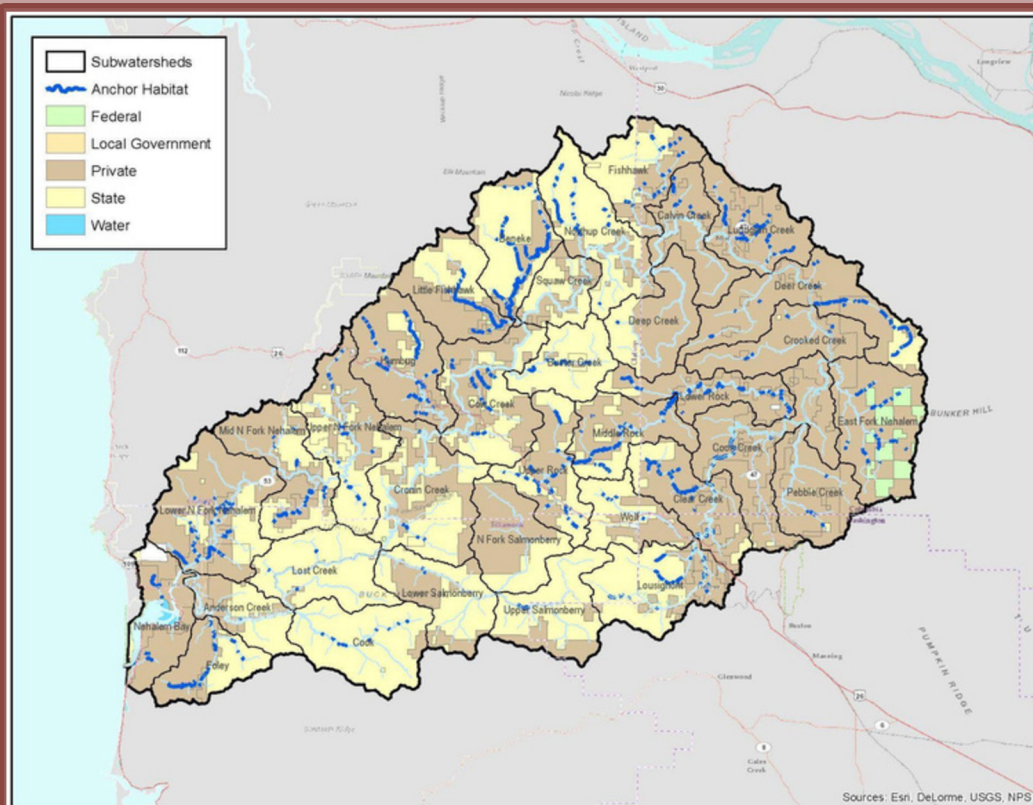
Out of the 35 sub-watersheds of the Nehalem, the focal 17 were selected based on the amount of anchor habitats identified and riparian restoration prioritized, and the presence of partnerships capable of implementing the prioritized projects.

OWEB Board-Identified Priority Habitats for FIP Funding

- Aquatic Habitat for Native Fish Species
- Coastal Estuaries in Oregon
- **Coho Habitat Populations along the Oregon Coast**
- Dry-type Forest Habitat
- Oak Woodland and Prairie Habitat
- Oregon Closed Lakes Basin Wetland Habitats
- Sagebrush/Sage-steppe Habitat

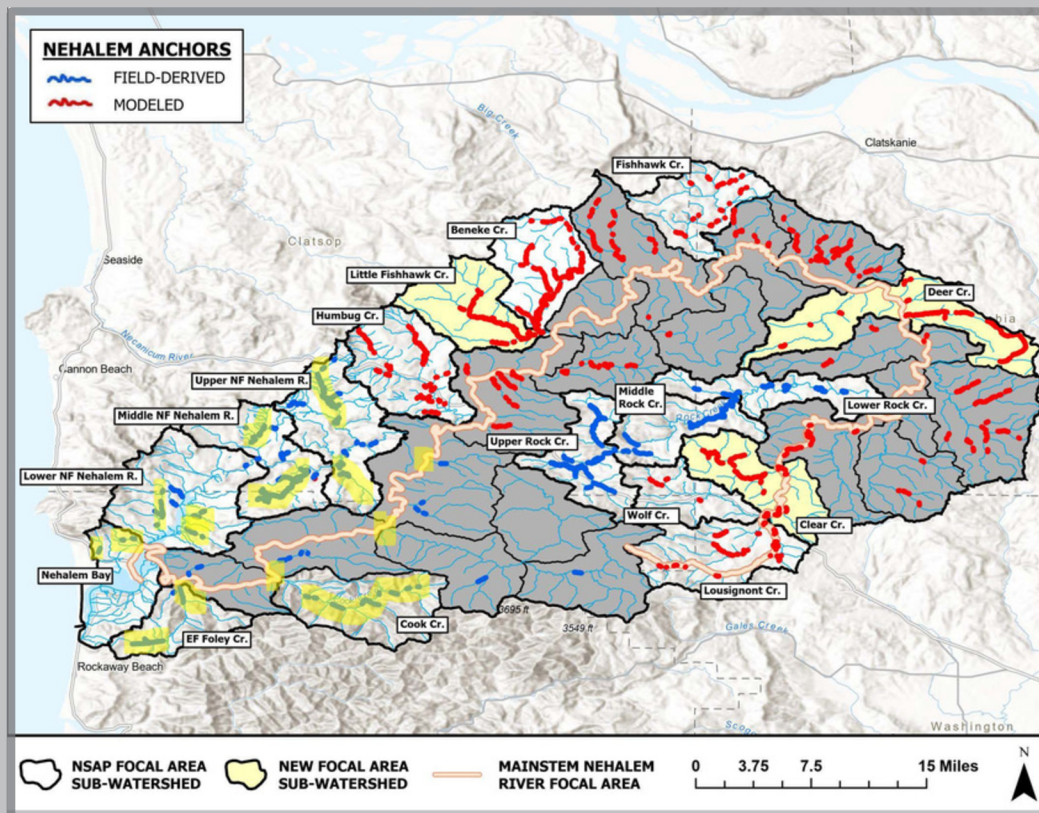


Douglas Iris near Lousignont Creek



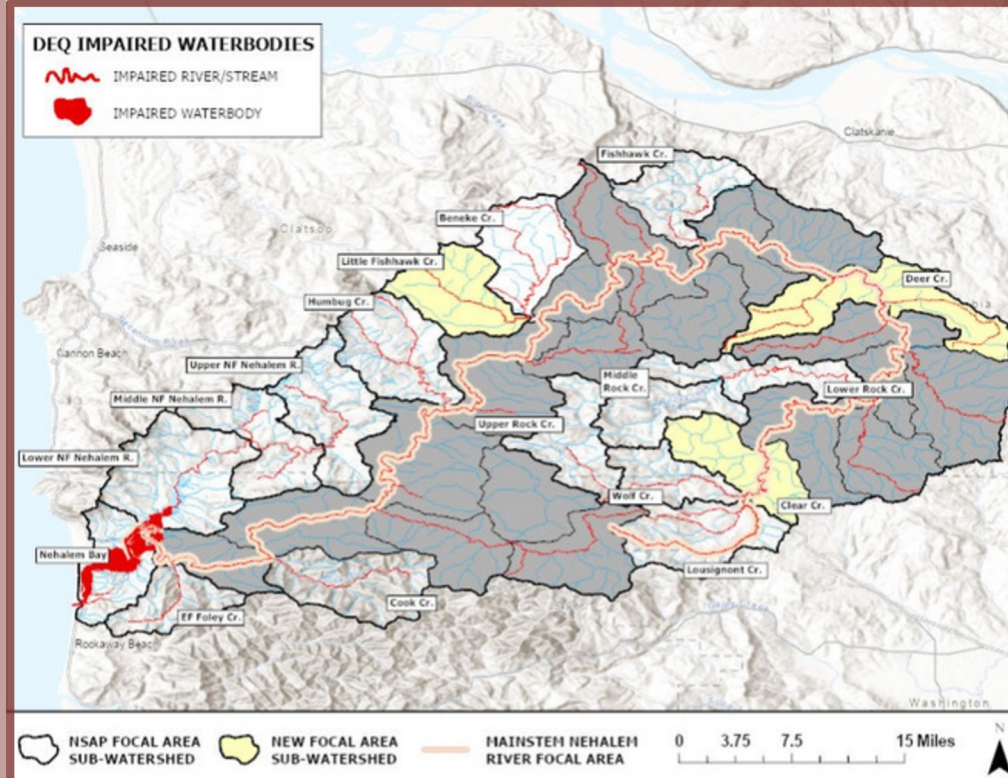
The Landowner Map is featured in the 2023 FIP application submitted to OWEB by the Nehalem Basin Partnership.

This map highlights the types of land ownership throughout the Nehalem watershed, a majority of which is private and state land with some swaths of federal and local land.



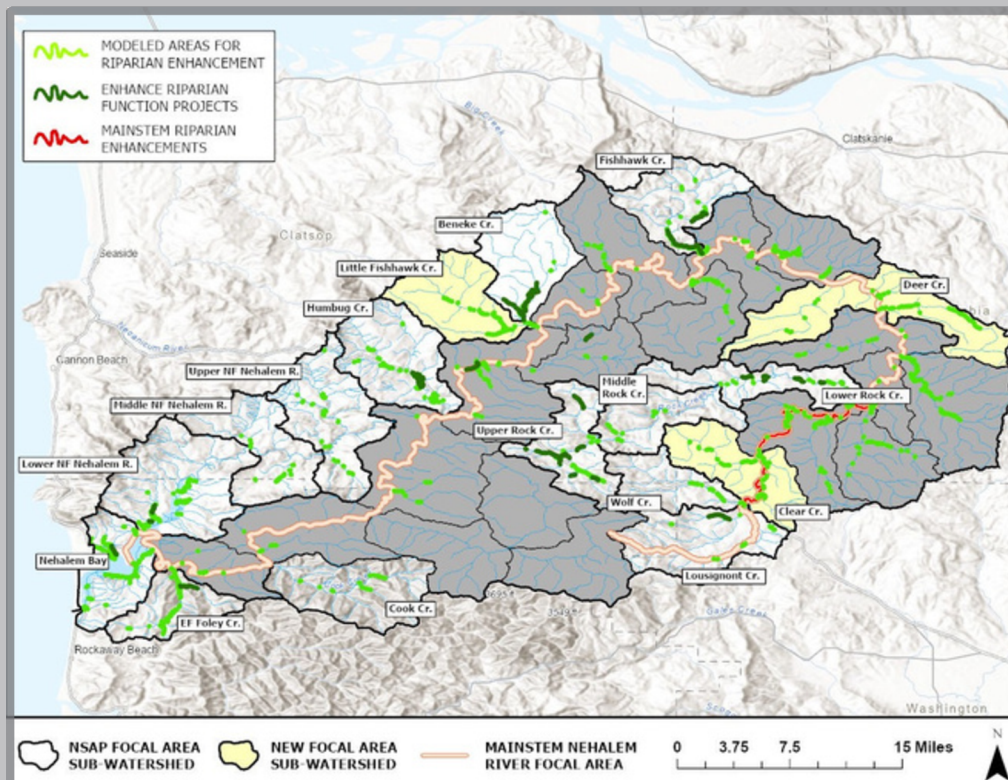
The Nehalem Watershed Anchor Habitat Map is featured in the 2023 FIP application submitted to OWEB by the Nehalem Basin Partnership.

This map highlights 17 high priority sub-basins out of 35 that the NBP identified for anchor habitat enhancement in partnership with cooperative landowners.



The Nehalem Watershed DEQ Impaired Waterbodies Map is featured in the 2023 FIP application submitted to OWEB by the Nehalem Basin Partnership.

This map highlights the reaches of the Nehalem that meet the DEQ's criteria for waterbody impairment, specifically, temperature. As the map shows, the entire main stem of the Nehalem is impaired, meaning the water temperature reaches lethal levels for salmonids in the summer.



The Nehalem Watershed Riparian Enhancement Map is featured in the 2023 FIP application submitted to OWEB by the Nehalem Basin Partnership.

This map highlights the areas of the Nehalem where riparian enhancement projects offer maximum benefits. Robust riparian cover can help reduce summer water temperatures and winter sediment loading, and eventually provide large wood for in-stream habitat and complexity.

COUNCIL CAPACITY

DESCRIPTION: OWEB's Council Capacity grant funds part of the UNWC's day-to-day operations, board support, community outreach, and project development.

PARTNERS: Stakeholders, UNWC Board of Directors, Vernonia School District, Volunteers

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: OWEB - \$131,465

TIMEFRAME: 2023-2025 Biennium

CAPACITY



OWEB's Council Capacity grant is designed to assist Oregon's watershed councils with operational funding. Councils must demonstrate effective governance and management, project planning and implementation, and stakeholder engagement to be eligible for Council Capacity support. Funds are awarded in two-year cycles.

The 2023-2025 biennium application was due in March 2023. The process included a two-phase merit review and submission of the 2021 UNWC Annual Report to OWEB and the commissioners of Columbia, Tillamook, and Clatsop counties. Once completed, the application was approved in July 2023.

NORTH COAST BASIN COLLABORATION

DESCRIPTION: This project is funded by an OWEB grant through the NBWC and intends to elevate collaboration among watershed councils in the North Coast Basin.

PARTNERS: NBWC, NCWC, NNSLWC, NWC, TEP, UNWC

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: OWEB - \$26,992

TIMEFRAME: 2022 - 2023

CAPACITY



This collaboration between councils in the North Coast Basin continues to explore how to work more powerfully as a team. The current focus is on developing a marketing strategy to reach a wider audience in the North Coast Basin and securing funding. Past efforts include:

- NBWC secured this OWEB funding to explore the collaboration.
- NCWA secured a stakeholder engagement grant that funds GIS story mapping.
- NNSLWC acquired and manages the technical assistant grant and hired grant writer Ken Bierly (see below).

NORTH COAST WATERSHED COUNCILS RESTORATION ASSISTANCE

DESCRIPTION: A technical assistance grant awarded to NNSLWC to hire a professional grant writer to assist with capacity building efforts for multiple watershed councils.

PARTNERS: NBWC, NCWA, NNSLWC, NWC, UNWC

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: OWEB - \$73,240

TIMEFRAME: 2021 - 2024

CAPACITY



In 2023, the Nestucca, Neskowin & Sand Lake Watersheds Council hired a new grant writer. Ken Bierly, a private consultant and former OWEB Deputy Director will continue writing grants on behalf of the North Coast Basin Collaboration to increase project implementation capacity.

Ken assisted the UNWC and the NBP with the FIP application that was submitted to OWEB in October 2023 and assistance on additional grants is ongoing.

FISHHAWK LAKE – FISH PASSAGE

DESCRIPTION: The fish ladder project at Fishhawk Lake provides unconditional fish passage to all life stages of salmonids and lamprey as per engineered design approved by ODFW and NOAA.

LANDOWNER/PARTNERS: FLRC, NOAA, ODFW, UNWC

*FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: ODFW - \$ 105,238
Weyerhaeuser - \$34,000*

TIMEFRAME: Summer 2022 - 2023

**FISH
PASSAGE**



The Fishhawk Lake fish ladder and spillway is finally completed as of December 2023! The new fish ladder, designed by ODFW and NOAA, is functioning as designed and passed ODFW inspection.

The fish ladder now allows anadromous fish like salmon and lamprey unconditional passage upstream to premier rearing and refuge habitat.

The UNWC assisted FLRC by writing grants to additional funders. The UNWC helped secure \$140,000 towards the fish ladder with the project estimated at over \$6 million.



New fish ladder completed at Fishhawk Lake in 2023



Fish ladder and spillway from a top-down view

CLEAR CREEK PASSAGE

DESCRIPTION: A Weyerhaeuser project outlined in the Nehalem Conservation Action Plan to install LWD structures and potentially alter stream crossings.

LANDOWNER/PARTNERS: ODFW, UNWC, Weyerhaeuser

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: TBD

TIMEFRAME: TBD

**FISH
PASSAGE**



In 2023 this project regrouped with Weyerhaeuser and ODFW. Assistance from ODFW Restoration Biologist Derek Wiley has been significant, including grant applications submitted to the Private Forest Accord and Oregon Wildlife Foundation for the Clear Creek Project.

Weyerhaeuser contribution includes cost share for crossing engineering and bridge materials and access to whole trees for large wood structures. The LWD structures are slated to cover 2 miles of upper Clear Creek.

LOUSIGNONT ANCHOR HABITAT

DESCRIPTION: The Lousignont Anchor Habitat project seeks to improve anadromous fish habitat and natural stream functions by building 16 Large Woody Debris (LWD) structures on the Upper Nehalem River Basin.

LANDOWNER/PARTNERS: ODF, ODFW, UNWC

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: OWEB - \$70,000, ODF in-kind (trees and technical support) - \$46,800

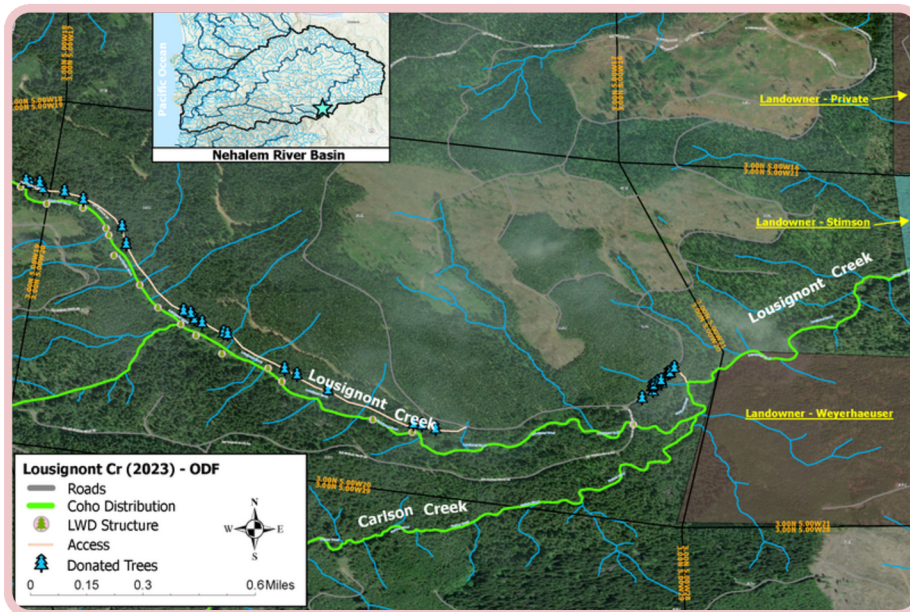
TIMEFRAME: Summer 2023

ANCHOR



This 2023 anchor habitat project, (which was paired with OWEB grant funding for the Northrup Creek project completed in 2022), continues anchor habitat improvement in the Upper Nehalem Basin.

Construction was completed in August by JJ & L Excavation, LLC, which successfully installed 16 new LWD structures along Lousignont Creek. ODF representatives and ODFW Restoration Biologist Derek Wiley provided the necessary technical support to ensure the project advanced as planned. A special mention to ODF Forest Grove District Operations Coordinator Stephanie Beall, and Aquatic & Riparian Specialists Erik Moberly and Randy Smith for their support in the field and permitting process.



Equipment ready to work at Lousignont Creek



Top: Lousignont Creek anchor habitat improvement project map

Left: Equipment moving logs to install LWDs

Right: Newly installed LWD



TWEEDLE CREEK CHANNEL MEANDER

DESCRIPTION: The Tweedle Creek Channel Meander project relocated the creek into a low gradient stream and floodplain, which will increase off-channel habitat nearly fourfold.

LANDOWNER/PARTNERS: Carmichael Family, NFWF, NOAA, ODFW, OWF, UNWC, WSC

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: DEQ, NFWF, NOAA, WSC - \$338,000

TIMEFRAME: 2019 - 2023

ANCHOR

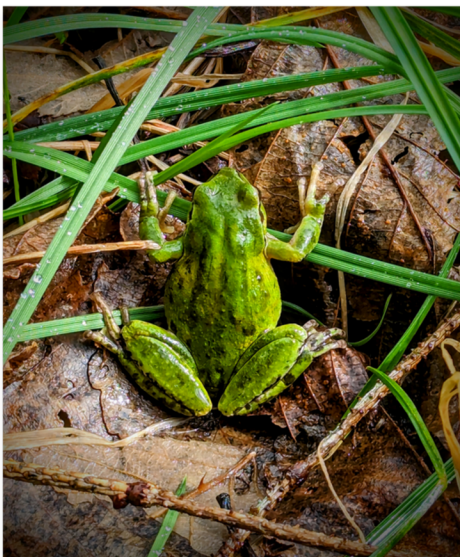


Monitoring continued at the Tweedle Creek project in 2023 after its completion in 2022. The new channel has deepened and stream gravel is appearing. The beaver, while they did not adopt the BDA, are active upstream of the BDA and have moved into the new meander reach. Adult and juvenile Coho have also been seen in the new meander reach.

Riparian plantings were completed and additional plantings are slated for 2024.



Laurie & Wayne Carmichael with contractor Steve Trask



Frog at Tweedle Creek



Newly installed Beaver Dam Analogue



*Top & Right:
Tweedle Creek
meandering in
the fall of 2023*



GALASSI WETLAND ENHANCEMENT

DESCRIPTION: The Galassi Project will convert 52.5 acres of farm land into wetland habitat through land contouring and reforestation along the main stem of the Nehalem near Mist.

LANDOWNER/PARTNERS: BioHabitats, Galassi family, NRCS, UNWC

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: NRCS - \$375,000

TIMEFRAME: 2022- 2027

RIPARIAN



In 2023 the Galassi Wetland Enhancement project saw real progress. Invasive plant species, mostly reed canary grass, were removed through mowing and herbicide application throughout the spring, summer, and fall.

The next phase of work involves additional invasives removal, tilling land to prepare for installation of native trees and shrubs, and moving earth to plug the drainage ditch that will impound water to form micro-highs and lows that allow wetlands to form deeper pools.



Mowing and invasive plant removal in spring 2023



Field after removal of invasive plants, fall 2023

JEWELL MEADOWS WILDLIFE AREA - HUMBUG TRACT

DESCRIPTION: This is a straightforward riparian reforestation project in the pristine Jewell Meadows Wildlife Area.

LANDOWNER/PARTNERS: DEQ, ODFW, OWEB, UNWC

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: DEQ - \$13,000

OWEB small grants - \$15,000

TIMEFRAME: 2022 - 2025

RIPARIAN



Example of heavy duty tree protection that is necessary in the elk refuge



In 2023, the riparian reforestation project at Jewell Meadows Wildlife Area along Humbug Creek and Big Creek near Camp 18 progressed nicely. Funding was secured from DEQ 319 Non-Point Source Reduction program and the OWEB Small Grant program. Project implementation, including planting 1,200 trees and building 300 protective structures will begin in the spring of 2024.

NEHALEM NATIVE NURSERY

DESCRIPTION: The Nehalem Native Nursery is the UNWC's beautiful, on-site facility for growing and housing native trees, plants, and vegetable starts and is a favorite of our volunteers.

LANDOWNER/PARTNERS: BLM, NORP, ODF, VSD & Forestry Class

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: BLM RAC - \$22,000

TIMEFRAME: Ongoing

RIPARIAN



The administrative dynamic in the Nehalem Native Nursery changed considerably in 2023. Previously employed as contractors, the Reforestation Crew was hired on as UNWC employees. Crew leader Mark Hall and his two workers, Sebastian Heselton and Vance Landry, continued to provide exemplary work in the nursery and in the field.

The NNN now produces plants that are supplied to riparian reforestation projects at cost and covered by grant funds, which in turn, funds the ongoing maintenance of the nursery.

Two volunteer tree planting events were held in the fall. Trees were sourced from the NNN, the Reforestation Crew prepared planting sites, and Mark coordinated supplies and instructed volunteers in planting methods.

A special mention to Forestry Class teacher Justin Benassi for his continued support in our shared efforts to educate and provide valuable hands-on learning experiences to the students of Vernonia.



Reforestation crew member Sebastian Heselton at the nursery

Forestry Class working to pot donated trees

UPPER NEHALEM RIPARIAN

DESCRIPTION: The UNWC has identified three reaches for additional riparian restoration work and is seeking funding to support those efforts.

LANDOWNER/PARTNERS: Private rural residential and farm landowners, UNWC

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: Seeking funding

TIMEFRAME: Ongoing

RIPARIAN



The UNWC is seeking more opportunities for riparian restoration work. Our reforestation efforts are focused on reducing temperatures in the main stem of the Nehalem River. Building and strengthening relationships with private residential and farm landowners is critical to restoring more riparian forests along temperature limited reaches. Healthy riparian areas are beneficial to both landowners and the watershed.

Three reaches identified for riparian reforestation work include the main stem Nehalem, Rock Creek, and Fishhawk Creek. A door-to-door campaign along those streams is needed to recruit more landowners into riparian restoration programs.

BDA MONITORING

DESCRIPTION: The Beaver Dam Analogue pilot project, which addresses the loss of legacy beaver habitat and started in 2018, continues to be monitored in an effort to produce 10 years of BDA effectiveness data.

LANDOWNER/PARTNERS: NFWF, NOAA, ODF, ODFW, OWEB, OWE, Trask Consulting, LLC, UNWC, WSC

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: ODFW internal - \$8,000, ODFW Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund - \$35,920

TIMEFRAME: 2018 - 2028

RESEARCH



2023 marks year 5 of monitoring the BDA pilot project. While “monitoring years” 4 and 5 were funded, additional stopgap funding was sought and secured from ODFW OCRF to cover two more years of monitoring funding, years 6-7 (2024-2025). The remaining three years are not yet funded.

Some BDAs required reweaving and in the fall the Reforestation Crew acquired fresh bows and installed them at the various BDA sites.

The initial 2018 installation included 27 BDAs along four stream reaches with an additional 30 structures installed in 2019. The 2020 monitoring report found 15 out of 37 BDA sites were adopted by beaver with an additional 30 natural beaver dams constructed between the BDA sites.



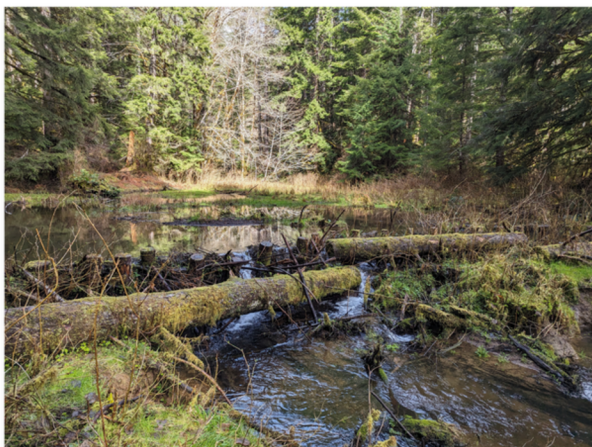
Above & Below: BDAs on Upper Rock Creek



Upper Rock Creek
tributary BDA



Mark Hall, Sebastian
Heselton & Steve
Trask assessing a
BDA for reweaving



BDA on Upper
Rock Creek
tributary above
Sunset Rest Area

CLAUDIA THE CHINOOK

DESCRIPTION: *This larger-than-life salmon is an educational tool on a trailer whose purpose is to engage kids and adults alike in learning about the salmon lifecycle through art and awe.*

LANDOWNER/PARTNERS: *the Millers, the Shaffers, PCSWCD, RWC, UNWC*

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: *Brett Costley, Tobie Finzel, Lisa Marin, Brian Tingle, Susan Wagner, Julie Kehoe*

TIMEFRAME: *Ongoing*

OUTREACH & EDUCATION



who fully restored her in 2016. Stripped down to fiberglass and refurbished, she was repaired and released into the wild to educate and inspire. She was rented to other organizations, including the UNWC for the annual Salmon Festival in Vernonia.

When the PCSWCD announced they were rehoming her in the fall of 2022, UNWC staff immediately crafted an adoption proposal. The proposal was accepted in the spring and Claudia arrived in Vernonia in July.



Claudia was home, but needed repairs once more. Travel left a damaged fin, lights did not function, and weather had eroded the paint. A renovation GoFundMe received donations from the Vernonia community.

Mark Hall quickly repaired trailer, interior, and exterior. Now, pressure washed, scraped, and sanded, Maggie enlisted the help of community members to bring Claudia back to life with paint and brush.

Retired commercial painter Matt Belmore applied the primer coat, and Penney Lane Antiques owners Joe and Nina Shaffer painted color and details. Julie Kehoe assisted Nina with finishing touches, adding detail to eyes and gills. Frank and Karen Miller provided the barn for the transformation until the full reveal at Salmon Festival.

Built in the summer of 2003, Claudia the Chinook was "spawned" by Jackie Hastings, the then Coordinator of the Rickreall Watershed Council (RWC). Claudia took four months to complete: first building the rebar frame with chicken wire wrap, next a layer of spray foam that was sanded and shaped, then fiberglass, and finally paint. Eyes made of resin-filled hubcaps and interior murals were painted by Pamela Baillie, Carol Treadway, and Jackie Hastings. Many people contributed labor, resources, and talent. When completed, she was an educational wonder big enough to hold seven to eight adults.

Over the years Claudia needed exterior and interior paint work from weather and travel damage, and in 2010, the RWC gave her to the Polk County Soil and Water Conservation District (PCSWCD),

CLAUDIA'S ORIGINS



Wire-frame skeleton, 2003



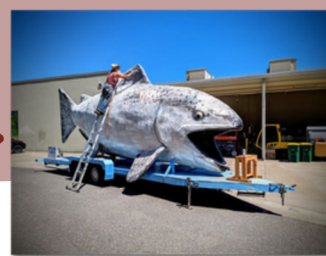
Completed in 2003



Mark Hall sanding & paint removal, 2023



Fiberglass body



Claudia reveal at Salmon Festival, 2023

SALMON FESTIVAL

DESCRIPTION: The annual Salmon Festival in Vernonia is a one day event celebrating the returning salmon with food, vendors, harvest-themed crafts, and an auction. Coordinated by the Mitchell family and community members for 21 years, the UNWC inherited the event and will continue the tradition of education and fun.

LANDOWNER/PARTNERS: City of Vernonia, Columbia SWCD, Josette & Casey Mitchell, UNWC

FUNDERS/AMOUNTS: Former Salmon Festival committee - \$12,000

TIMEFRAME: Ongoing

OUTREACH &
EDUCATION



Since the event began in 2002, Maggie Peyton and the UNWC have participated in the annual Salmon Festival, often bringing Claudia the Chinook.

In 2022 and 2023, the three primary event coordinators, Josette Mitchell, Shawn Gibson, and Paula Hansen, stepped down from managing the event. Josette approached the UNWC about taking on festival responsibilities and the Council agreed. This is an exciting development for UNWC Outreach & Education efforts.

The festival celebrates the returning salmon and always takes place in Hawkins Park, which sits adjacent to Rock Creek, a tributary to the Nehalem river. Often, visitors can see salmon spawning in the creek a few hundred feet from the event as they enjoy crafts and vendors.

SALMON FESTIVAL MEMORIES



Nina Shaffer & her salmon art



Rob Wilson & his salmon art



Josette Mitchell & salmon artist



Pumpkin Carving station



Trout fishing pond



Kids explore Claudia the Chinook



Entry to Hawkins Park



Claudia at Salmon Festival

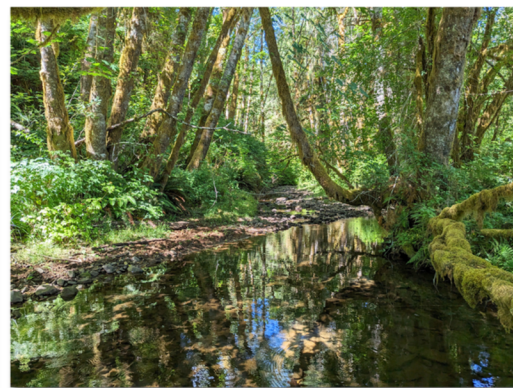
SNAPSHOTS



Forget Me Nots



Forestry Class at the Nehalem Native Nursery



Humbug Creek



Mark Hall at Humbug Creek



The Forestry Class with teacher Justin Benassi and Mark Hall in the greenhouse



Conifer canopy near Lousignont Creek



Nehalem Native Nursery

Contact the UNWC

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual/1st Qtr. Council Meeting

Thursday, April 25 2024

5:30 - 7:30 pm - Vernonia Grange
& Zoom Hybrid

2nd Qtr. Council Meeting

Thursday, July 25 2024

5:30 - 7:30 pm - Vernonia Grange
& Zoom Hybrid

Salmon Fest Planning Committee

3rd Thursdays

5:30 - 6:30 pm - Vernonia Grange

Salmon Festival

Saturday, Oct. 5 2024

10 am - 5 pm - Hawkins Park

3rd Qtr. Council Meeting

Thursday, Oct. 24 2024

5:30 - 7:30 pm - Vernonia Grange
& Zoom Hybrid

4th Qtr. Council Meeting

Thursday, Jan. 23 2025

5:30 - 7:30 pm - Vernonia Grange
& Zoom Hybrid