

Salmonid Restoration Federation

14th Annual Coho Confab on the Pristine Smith River August 19-21, 2011

The Coho Confab is a symposium to explore watershed restoration, learn restoration techniques to recover coho salmon populations, and to network with other fish-centric people. The 14th Annual Coho Confab will be held at Rock Creek Ranch on the South Fork of the Smith River in Del Norte County. Salmonid Restoration Federation and Trees Foundation are the permanent co-hosts of this educational event and this year the Confab is also supported by the Smith River Alliance and the California Department of Fish & Game. The Confab allows for participants and instructors to learn from each other's experience. Participants learn skills and practices that can be applied to restore salmon habitat in their home watershed.

Restoration pioneer, Richard Gienger, coined the term "Confab" from the verb "confabulate" which literally means to informally chat or to fabricate to compensate for gaps in one's memory—not to imply that restorationists are prone to hyperbole when recounting the size of a rescued fish, the magnitude of the waterfall coming out of the culvert, or the heroics of a particular restoration job.

The Coho Confab begins Friday evening with orientation presentations including a talk with Grant Werschull of Smith River Alliance, and Mike McCain of Smith River National Recreation Area, about the history of restoration in the Smith River watershed. Troy Fletcher of the Yurok tribe will discuss the Klamath Restoration Settlement Agreement and efforts to preserve cultural traditions and coho salmon. Joshua Strange, a fisheries scientist with the Yurok Tribe, will highlight scientific and large-scale restoration efforts to preserve and restore coho salmon populations in the Klamath Basin and beyond.

On Saturday the Confab offers several exciting, concurrent field tours. There will be an all-day tour of various restoration



*Divers at the South Fork Smith River
If the water is cold enough for salmon to congregate,
it is cold enough for you to need a wetsuit!*

Photo: Thomas B. Dunklin

projects in the Mill Creek watershed including a native plant nursery, late seral forest restoration, and back-country road management. Other workshops and tours include a fish passage toolbox presentation followed by a tour of fish passage projects on Peacock and Cedar Creeks, a look at how insects can help restoration projects, underwater fish identification, a geomorphic approach and response to wood loading in East Fork Mill Creek, and an open forum regarding the impact of pesticides on salmonids. We are pleased to once again offer Stories and Songs of Salmon with Yurok tribal elder Walt Lara and singer Joanne Rand. This informal workshop will provide a cultural and spiritual perspective of our relationship with salmon. The forums will be followed by a traditional salmon dinner hosted by the Yurok tribe, an inspired campfire, and a performance by river troubadour Joanne Rand.

Sunday concludes with a half-day of concurrent tours and workshops including a tour of restoration projects in Yontocket Slough, a review of constructed off-channel habitat and wood jams in Terwer Creek on the Lower Klamath with Rocco Fiori and representatives from the Yurok tribe, and another offering of the ever-popular macro-invertebrate sampling workshop.

Please come prepared. Bring layers of clothes, sunscreen, a sun hat, a personal water bottle, flashlight, and sneakers or boots. For the underwater fish ID workshop please bring a wetsuit, snorkel, and mask.

To register for the Confab or to view the agenda, please visit www.treesfoundation.org or www.calsalmon.org



*Confab participants
will have a chance
to visit this recently
completed fish
passage project on
Peacock Creek.*

Photo: Antonio
Llanos

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Legislative Challenges and Opportunities for the Restoration Community

by Dana Stolzman

From my perspective, the habitat restoration field mimics the struggle of salmon to scale obstacles, reach maturation, spawn, and complete its natural life cycle. Ambitious restoration projects often are stalled because of permitting issues or because they run out of funding, or lose their volunteer base. Federal and state priorities change and regions that were once deemed salmon strongholds are no longer “focus watersheds” for funding. Citizens may spend decades struggling to protect and restore large watersheds like the Klamath River or the San Joaquin, only to have the promised federal funding jeopardized by federal bills proposed by a newly elected Congressional delegation. This year marks the first commercial salmon season that holds promise of a good catch yet simultaneously, Delta pumps have killed over 50,000 Spring-run Chinook salmon.

Yet, we persist. We find hope in the discovery of a solitary fish stranded in the upper reaches of a small creek. We forge unlikely alliances to better coordinate and advocate for the recovery of wild salmon populations. To truly spawn new ideas and ensure that the restoration field evolves, restorationists need to stay aware and active about federal and state legislation that threatens the future of large-scale fisheries protection.

It is encouraging to see that California North Coast tribes are often at the forefront voicing opposition to federal bills that undermine salmon recovery. California's largest Indian Tribe, the Yurok Tribe, has joined the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, Modoc Nation, commercial fishing groups, recreational angling organizations, Delta farmers, conservation groups and environmental justice organizations in strongly opposing the San Joaquin Valley Water Reliability Act (HR 1837) sponsored by Representative Devin Nunes (D-California).

This bill could result in severe economic impacts to the fishing communities of Northern California, including the Yurok Tribe of the Klamath River.

Many fisheries' interests are concerned that HR 1837 would result in the extinction of Sacramento River Chinook salmon, Central Valley steelhead, Delta smelt, longfin smelt, green sturgeon and other imperiled Delta fish populations, as well as devastating Trinity and Klamath River salmon populations.

HR 1837 is just one of many federal bills that could affect long-term restoration efforts. Other legislation that could have positive implications for the restoration community includes AB 587 that extends the sunset clause on the ability to utilize volunteers in restoration projects. This bill would continue the ability of California's residents to volunteer in popular activities including beach and river trash clean-ups, walking trail brush-trimming, and invasive species removal.

Community volunteerism helps sustain the restoration field, and tracking legislation that affects our collective ability to do large and small-scale restoration projects is vitally important to the future of the habitat restoration movement. Part of SRF's mission is to keep its members informed about legislation affecting salmon recovery, whether it is positive or negative, so members can take action. Letters to congressional representatives, state legislators, senators at the state and federal levels, and key members of legislative committees can make a difference in whether a bill passes or fails —so please keep informed and let your legislators know that the future of wild salmon populations is important to you.



Yurok tribal representatives will cook wild Klamath salmon traditionally as part of the Saturday night feast at the Confab.

Photo: Dana Stolzman

Salmonid Restoration Federation

Holding the Line on Species Decline—One Steelhead, One Salmon, One Restorationist at a Time

Salmonid Restoration Federation hosted the 29th Annual Salmonid Restoration Conference March 23-26, 2011 in San Luis Obispo, California. The theme of this year's annual conference was "Restoring Salmonids—Holding the Line on Species Decline." The Central Coast was an ideal location for the conference because of the various multi-stakeholder restoration projects in the region as well as the cooperative nature of agencies, parks, and landowners working to protect and restore steelhead.

function. Paul Jenkin from Surfrider Foundation and Matilija Coalition gave a multi-media presentation highlighting the integrated ecosystem-management approach to restoring the Ventura River. Thomas William from the Southwest Fisheries Science Center presented on Restoration of Habitat Capacity for Salmon Populations and Congresswoman Lois Capps urged participants to track federal legislation that affects watershed restoration and conservation jobs.

The conference also featured workshops on topics including Fish Passage Design & Implementation, Stormwater Pollution Runoff & Water Quality, Invasive Species Management for Salmonids, and Sustainable Water Conservation. Field Tours included tours of the Morro Bay Watershed from Headwaters to Mouth, a San Luis Obispo and Arroyo Grande Creek Tour, a Sustainable Vineyards and Agricultural Tour, an Instream Structures Tour, and a tour focused on controlling road-related erosion and sediment delivery.

Concurrent sessions included: On-the-Ground Salmonid Restoration; Barrier Identification, Design Criteria, Implementation, and Project Monitoring to Recover Steelhead; Coho Salmon Recovery Efforts; Enhancing



Participants in the Morro Bay tour visited multiple restoration sites that showcased restoration techniques including ranch road restoration, fish passage design, riparian fencing and native plant restoration, bioengineering techniques, instream structures, and floodplain restoration.

Photo: Jacob Pounds

Instream Flows; Salmonid Strongholds: the Key to our Future; Climate Change and Salmonids; Population Status and Trend Monitoring; The Future for California Chinook Salmon—Fisheries, Restoration, Recovery; and the Role of Lagoons and Estuaries for Steelhead and Salmon.

The 2012 Conference will be held April 4-7 in Davis, CA. SRF will be posting the first call for abstracts in August. If you are interested in being a session, workshop, or field tour coordinator, please email srf@calsalmon.org.



Meredith Hardy of the Los Padres California Conservation Corps and the 2011 Restorationist of the Year award recipient, led a tour of Santa Rosa Creek restoration projects.

Photo: Brock Dolman

Highlights of the conference included the Plenary session that featured Michael Pollock of the Northwest Fisheries Science Center of NOAA Fisheries, who discussed the influence of beaver habitat on coho smolt production and ecosystem



Grade control downstream of a fish passage project on San Luis Obispo Creek. The 14 ft water supply dam was partially removed. Stored sediments were excavated and used to fill the downstream channel to provide passage for steelhead.

Photo: Antonio Llanos

Summer 2011

2011 Restorationist of the Year



Meredith Hardy
2011 Restorationist of the Year

Meredith Hardy

Fish Habitat Specialist

California Conservation Corps

2000 – Present

Years of Service to the CCC: 11

About 35 Projects Permitted & Completed in 4 Counties

Watershed Understood: 17

Creeks Nurtured: 20

Habitat Structures Constructed: 75

Partners: Over 20

Feet of Bank Stabilized: 4700

Native Plants Installed: 5,270

CA Red-legged Frogs Rescued: Numerous

Hundreds of Corpsmembers Trained

One Native Plant Nursery Rejuvenated and Thousands of Native Plants Propagated!

Salmonid Restoration Federation

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www.calsalmon.org
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30th Annual Salmonid Restoration Conference

April 4-7, 2012, Davis, CA

The 30th Annual Salmonid Restoration Conference will be April 4-7, 2012 in Davis, CA. SRF will post the First Call for Abstracts in August, 2011.

If you are interested in being a session, workshop, or field tour coordinator, please email srf@calsalmon.org



Yolo Bypass at its terminus with Cache Slough
Photo: courtesy Department of Water Resources archives

Summer North Coast Salmon Dives

Northern California has several strong, active, community-based watershed restoration organizations performing critical actions to conserve and restore their local salmon runs including instream and upslope restoration projects, invasive species removal, landowner workshops, and salmon population monitoring. One of the most exciting and important parts of the population monitoring is the annual salmon survey dives.

Each of the dives listed below takes place in a watershed critical to salmon survival on the North Coast. Please contact the organizations to find out more or to participate in these exciting volunteer opportunities!

Mattole Salmon Group

2011 Mattole Summer Steelhead Dive:
July 14-16, 2011—Mattole River

707-629-3433, amy@mattolesalmon.org,
www.mattolesalmon.org

Please RSVP with dates you can participate, if you will attend the training and whether you will need gear or have gear to share. Camping is available at A. W. Way County Campground.

Salmon River Restoration Council

2011 Spring Chinook Cooperative Dive:
July 26-28, 2011—Salmon River

530-462-4665, fisheries@srrc.org, www.srrc.org

All divers must RSVP. Space on the dives is limited, but assistance in other dive related activities is welcome. Please note your gear needs and experience level so you can be accommodated. Bring your own gear if you have it. Camping available at Nordheimer Campground.

Smith River Alliance

2011 Smith River Fish Survey:
July 29-31, 2011—South Fork Smith River

(916) 715-9898, rachel_mccain@nps.gov,
www.smithriveralliance.org

Please RSVP. Camping is available to participants. A \$10 donation is requested for camping and food items provided. Please come prepared with food and gear. Wetsuits, hoods, masks and snorkels may be rented at Pacific Quest Dive Center in Crescent City, (707) 464-8753.



Photo: Thomas B. Dunklin