

**RESTORATION:** Project is collaboration of many agencies

*Continued from page 3*

opportunity to demonstrate the diversity of great organizations working to ensure that all Oregonians have opportunities to enjoy our state's fish, wildlife and outdoor recreational areas across the state."

Funding for the project also came from Pacific Gas and Electric through their Pelton Dam Fund which supports conservation, water quality and promotes fish passage and improved habitats for fish above the dam. Because Link Creek runs through public and private land, funding was split between Trout Unlimited and the Forest Service, who will be involved in the restoration work.

Nate Dachtler, a fisheries biologist with Deschutes National Forest's Sisters Ranger District, will focus on a large wood restoration project. Trees provide cover and slow-water rearing areas for fish. He'll be working with Trout Unlimited's Pacific Northwest Education Coordinator Darek Staab, and Caldera Arts' Youth Program Director Karena Salmond.

"It's nice to have all these different people from so many agencies working together. That's really great," said Dachtler.

Work on Link Creek began in 1997 when a survey was done and data was collected.

"We found there was little wood on Link Creek back then," said Dachtler. "You could tell the previous owners had logged along the creek and cut the bigger trees. When a tree died they took it for firewood so trees couldn't fall in and serve as habitat for fish. I began talking to Caldera folks and told them what we found and we'd like to do a project to increase the wood and stream for fish habitat. They've been great partners on the project."

With forest fires devastating areas and taking away team members who would have been working on Link Creek restoration, the timeline for the project has been pushed back to next year. In the meantime, Staab and Salmond have been working on online virtual field

trips for students. It's their hope that students unable to attend Caldera Arts' summer programs and local students who've been learning from home will still be able to learn from the restoration plan and eventually walk along Link Creek and help with projects now slated for next spring and summer.

"I'm excited given that Caldera has an environmental and arts focus. We're finding more ways to promote integration through the project and connecting creativity and art," said Salmond. "There's so many possibilities. I'm looking forward to doing things in person to fulfill the project's potential."

Staab was able to do one fieldtrip to the site with students from Black Butte School in Camp Sherman. Students toured Link Creek to see areas that haven't had wood placed in them yet, and then saw a site where wood had been placed.

"They saw what the log structures looked like and observed kokanee salmon using the habitat," said Staab.

Working for Trout Unlimited, Staab's emphasis is on education and the restoration of cold-water fisheries. Staab created two virtual experiences that inspire and engage students.

"We wanted kids to feel like they were there in person," said Staab.

Along with students, the other big winners from the project are the fish. Suttle Lake has one of only two populations of sockeye salmon in the state of Oregon. It is the only run considered recoverable. They went extinct in the 1930s and '40s due to dams. Sockeye salmon are being reintroduced. Chinook salmon used to be in Link Creek and will benefit as well as kokanee which are a landlocked sockeye. According to Dachtler, there's a potential for bull trout to benefit too.

"They've been documented in Suttle Lake but not in Link Creek," he said. "In the last 15 years we've been working on fish passage up to Suttle Lake by removing dams and building natural streams simulation over the dams. Now fish can get up there from the Metolius."

Pajutee is hoping people will participate in the fundraising campaign and donate \$10 each.

"It's a great chance for all of us including hikers, bikers, bird watchers, and nature lovers to demonstrate we care about our natural places and creatures and are willing to help support improvements



PHOTO BY DAREK STAAB

A restoration project at Link Creek near Suttle Lake will reintroduce wood debris for fish habitat.

so we can all enjoy being outside more often," said Pajutee.

With funding diminishing for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the

effort can show state legislators that Oregonians are willing to invest in habitats and access to nature that can provide comfort during difficult times.

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**SUDOKU SOLUTION**

*for puzzle on page 21*

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