OUTDOORS

What's in a name?

Trail moniker is a clue to its unpalatable past

Zach Urness Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

There are many reasons to love Dog River Trail, a pathway just south of Hood River that showcases old-growth forest, clear rivers and a knockout view of Mount Hood. • But that wasn't the reason I stopped here for a roughly 6-mile hike last summer. No, I had come because its name perfectly captures a moment in Oregon history in the most gallows humor way possible. • But let's back up for a second.

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The Dog River Trail, south of Hood River, features old-growth forest, clear streams and a great view of Mount Hood. PHOTO BY ZACH URNESS/STATESMAN JOURNAL; ILLUSTRATION BY MICAELA ENCINAS/ USA TODAY NETWORK, GETTY IMAGES

Recreating the end of salmon migration

Fishing
Henry Miller
Guest columnist

It never will make the summer Olympics.

And it's a far cry from the tourist-loving salmon toss at the fish stalls at Pike Place Market on the Seattle waterfront.

But the annual salmon sling on Pacific Northwest rivers and streams help ensure the future of the iconic fish as well as the health of myriad other species ranging from bugs to bears.

Every year, volunteers from hatcheries, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Salmon Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) and state and federal employees, fling the carcasses of thousands of hatchery-spawned spring-run Chinook salmon into waters where the fish originated.

"It happens in the coastal rivers, wherever there is a hatchery with salmon," said Karen Hans, the Fish and Wildlife STEP biologist with the South Willamette Watershed District office in Corvallis. "We always put them in the same (watershed) drainage. And we always put them where salmon are spawning."

It's a grunt-and-hurl re-creation of what nature has done for millennia.

"When Lewis and Clark came here there were hundreds of thousands of adult spring Chinook salmon that came into the Willamette Valley every year," Hans said. "And they brought tons, hundreds of tons of proteins and fats and minerals."

All of which were deposited in waters when the salmon died after spawning.

Hans, along with two or three members of her pool of about a dozen volunteers, drives twice a week during September to Marion Forks Fish Hatchery about 15 miles east of Detroit to collect large boxes, called totes, filled with Chinook salmon carcasses.

Starting about 10 miles up the North Santiam River from Marion Forks, the crew heads west with about 10 stops along the river and tributaries, depositing 20 to 50 Chinook carcasses at each.

Similar deliveries are made on the South Santiam River drainage using salmon collected and spawned at the state's South Santiam River Hatchery near the base of Foster Dam.

Mimicking Mother Nature

"The big reason that we call salmon a keystone species is because their bodies fed the river ecology, and they fed all the bears and eagles and turkey vultures and mink, skunks and ravens and crows

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Marie Heuberger, an Oregon State University student and Salmon Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) volunteer, unloads a tote of Chinook salmon carcasses on the North Santiam River. TIM AKIMOFF/ODFW