

# UNWC Watershed Restoration Project *continued from front page*

says Laws, who has a Fish and Wildlife degree.

The placement of large woody debris in streams helps capture and slow the flow of water downstream during high water events, something that is especially useful in the Upper Nehalem watershed that has been known to experience flash flood conditions during heavy rainfalls. "The mindset is often that, the faster you can get the water off your property, the better off you will be," says Peyton. "But really, if you start at the top of the watershed, like we are doing here, and you capture the water as it flows downstream, you can slow the whole process down."

Peyton says slowing the flow of the stream also has the additional impact of allowing water to soak in and recharge groundwater supplies, something that is becoming more important as the region faces drought conditions during the summer months.

Douglas fir logs for the project were purchased and harvested from the Oregon Department of Forestry on a nearby intact forest site. The 70 trees that were harvested include the root wads and are broken into two or three pieces providing at least 140 total logs to be placed in the creek to assist in the creation of naturally forming log jams.

"Weyerhaeuser has been very generous by giving us access and by donating rock to help us stabilize the approaches we are working on," says Peyton.

The UNWC has contracted with Quality Excavation to build the actual log jams, using huge pieces of equip-

ment to harvest, move and place the logs.

Laws monitored and guided the placement of the logs during the project, ensuring the structures will stay intact. "You want the structure to interact with the stream flow to create flood plain connection, sort the gravels that flow through, and also capture other debris so the log jams get bigger and stronger over time," explains Peyton.

"The reason we do these log placements is because in the 60s and 70s we cut a lot of these streams right down to the waters so we don't have the old trees that would naturally fall in," explains Laws. "Basically we're helping jump start the process and allow the surrounding trees to put some years of growth on them. These log jams change the stream's hydraulic ability by constraining it and creating a relief within the valley width and the flood plain, so all that stream energy has a place to go. All the stream is just trying to do is seek its balance within the parameters it's given."

Laws also says the log placement in streams and in the surrounding flood plain helps fish find sanctuary during high water events. "During flooding, if the fish have somewhere outside the stream channel, they can wait out the event and then come back to the channel. That's the ideal situation. Otherwise they get displaced and pushed down

stream. And so do all the other fish. And pretty soon all the fish get congregated in the same place and there's more competition for food sources and habitat, and sometimes it makes them more vulnerable to predation. Spreading the habitat out is the best situation for the survival of the young fish so they can head out to the ocean and then return."

came open. "I grabbed onto this right away because now I am working on the streams I grew up with and know a lot about," says Laws.

While Laws says he thinks his biology background really helps him understand the physical habitat needs for the fish, he also says it's about more than just fish biology. "Some of our staff are only out counting fish and surveying anglers and don't really look at the whole lifecycle," says Laws. "I have a lot of experience working with contractors and I've actually done some of the construction work myself. I also think the relationships I've developed have helped. People know me and know what I do and they've been great about participating, cooperating, and donating or providing resources. Those connections have led to a lot of the successes we've had on these projects."

Peyton thinks the Oregon Plan has produced many benefits. "It has turned out to be a wonderful investment for the people of Oregon and the agencies that have been participating," says Peyton. "The plan has lost some of its leadership at the top, and it's really been the individuals like Troy who have made it their personal goal to help Watershed Councils, because we get things done. They can actually take their agency resources and figure out ways to help us accomplish good work on the ground. But we need more people like them."



Troy Laws, a Habitat Restoration Biologist with ODFW, assists the UNWC with riparian projects.

Peyton says she appreciates the way so many different entities come together and collaborate on projects of this type. "It really takes dedicated people, like Troy, within the agencies, to make this happen," says Peyton.

Laws grew up in Seaside and started his career with ODFW working in Gold Beach. He spent about 15 years circling the state, working in various positions before a job with the Tillamook North Coast Watershed District office

**For Kids and Families at the Library**

**Homeschool Library Time**  
Wednesday, October 12, 1 pm  
Opportunity for homeschoolers and families to get together at the library. Geared to K - 5 students, but older students are welcome. Will need parents to attend to help with activities.

**K-5 Library Time: 3D Halloween Lanterns**  
Thursday, October 20  
4 - 5 pm  
For children grades K-5 and parents. Materials and a snack provided.

**Halloween Pre-Parade Photos**  
Monday, October 31 at the Library 3:45-4:30 pm

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