

UNWC Recaps Productive Year *continued from front page*

“very productive” for the UNWC, its Board of Directors, and its numerous partners, with successful projects across a wide spectrum of watershed health and native salmon recovery activities. Nearly \$1.3 million in grant funds have been disbursed since 2017 to successfully implement ecosystem infrastructure improvement projects in Columbia, Clatsop, Tillamook, and Washington counties.

“This was our best year for high profile restoration projects,” said Peyton. “We did a large culvert replacement project on Apiary Road, a pilot project helping create beaver dams, and we placed a lot of large woody debris structures in streams. We also got quite a bit of recognition for some of our work.”

The original UNWC Charter was recognized by the Columbia County Board of Commissioners in July 1996 and by the Clatsop County Local Government Group in August 1997. Since that time UNWC has continued to educate local communities while helping address watershed management issues

in coordination and cooperation with key regional stakeholders composed of government agencies, environmental protection groups, local contractors, and private landowners - including the timber industry. The end goal continues to be a balanced ecosystem that supports a healthy watershed while providing for an economic base and viable communities.

Primary funders/partners/donors include the Wild Salmon Center, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Columbia County Road Department, Weyerhaeuser Company, and Stimson Lumber Company.

One of the most visible projects this past year partnered with Columbia County Road Department on Oak Ranch Creek and replaced an undersized cul-

vert under Apiary Road with an open bottom reinforced concrete arch allowing unconditional salmon passage. That project, along with two other bridge installation projects that replaced undersized culverts in the Mist/Birkenfeld area on Lane Creek and Calvin Creek, opened up a total of 20 miles of productive aquatic habitat.

“We did ‘stream simulation’ work on all three of those crossings, which is an additional layer of work that rebuilds the stream beds once the culvert is removed but before the bridge is placed,” explains Peyton. “It stabilizes that reach of the stream and protects the bridge abutments.”

Two of those projects were in collaboration with Weyerhaeuser, who Peyton says were good partners to work with. “I have to give them a thumbs up – they did a really good job helping write the grant for funding, managing the projects, and keeping us in the loop.”

The other high profile project was the installation of what are called Beaver Dam Analogues (BDA) on four different streams that contain wild coho salmon, steelhead, and cutthroat trout populations. This pilot project installed a total of 27 structures (wood poles sunk vertically into the ground about two feet apart across the stream and then interwoven horizontally with willow, maple, or conifer branches) in small stream tributaries on ODF managed public land,



including the north Fork of Lousignont Creek south of Highway 26 towards Timber, on Upper Rock Creek and Bear Creek near the rest area on Highway 26, and Buster Creek near Jewell.

These BDAs act as footholds for the beaver to build out into full-fledged dams, providing shallow, cold water pools where coho can find food and cover from predators. These types of off-channel habitats are essential for juvenile coho and other species to survive and grow.

Beavers are considered a “keystone species,” an organism whose pond-creating powers help support entire biological communities.

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Vernonia's Got Talent!

2019

Featuring local singer
* Hank Sohler *

Celebrity Judges:
 Kimberly Maus
 - from Channel 12 News
 Mike Pihl
 - from Axe Men

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