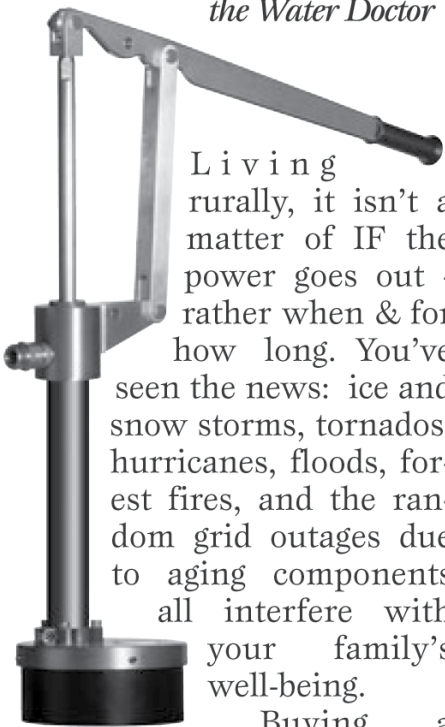




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HAPPY EASTER!



Progress update on Thompson Creek Habitat Restoration Project

BY JAKOB SHOCKEY

At the time of this writing in late January, we have had very little winter rain in southwestern Oregon. The water level in my family's pond hasn't yet risen from where last August's heat left it, and the November run of coho salmon are still waiting in the Applegate River, unable to get up into the tributaries to spawn. Humbug and Forest Creeks are still dry and Thompson Creek does not have enough water for these big fish to complete their journey from the sea. We have no control over this—the rain or the snowpack in the mountains—and, like our forebears, we can only prepare for the summer ahead with the knowledge that water will be scarce.

However, we—the private landowners of this valley—can have great impact on the health of our low-gradient waterways. For as our water trickles out of the steep forests managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Forest Service, it slows down in the valley's private lands, sinking into our water table, providing irrigation to our crops and invaluable habitat for riparian-dependent species of wildlife, plants and insects. This is the part of the water equation that we *do* have a say in. Protecting and improving the health and complexity of our riparian areas directly correlates with how well this valley's people and wildlife can weather water shortages and drought.

Between the five- and seven-mile markers of Thompson Creek Road, 11 landowners have come together as a group to work with the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council (APWC) in a large-scale stream restoration project. This project received funding and support from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, the Ecotrust Whole Watershed Restoration Initiative, Pacific Power's Blue Sky Fund, federal Title II and 319 funds, and American Forests. Work kicked off last summer with the installation of over 70 logs in the stream channel. These logs, donated by BLM and the forest service, were keyed into the stream in multi-log complexes to enhance fish habitat, groundwater recharge and stream complexity. This work was completed by valley residents Chas Rogers, Arthur Sherman, Chuck Dahl and "Dan the backhoe man." The final set of logs will be installed this summer.

This winter, Dan and Dave Bish from the local Plant Oregon nursery mechanically removed invasive vegetation (mostly Himalayan blackberries and poison hemlock) from the riparian areas of participating landowners, and in February they planted over 8,800 native seedlings. The APWC is also working with local fishing clubs, both the Southern Oregon Fly

Fishers and the Middle Rogue Steelheaders, whose members have helped with planting along both the Thompson Creek project and on Forest Creek. Landowners and the APWC have cooperated to fence livestock out of the creek and this summer, everyone will be working together to keep the young plantings watered.

This project continues to succeed only because residents of our valley set aside their differences and came together to protect and strengthen the health of our waterways. With this kind of collaboration we can get things done.

Please contact the APWC if you are interested in assisting through volunteer efforts, donations and/or participating in our Thompson Creek Habitat Restoration Project.

Jakob Shockey
541-890-9989

Riparian Program Manager, APWC



Hadley Dunlevy plants a young big-leaf maple on Thompson Creek.

Barriers by any name are still hurdles for fish and landowners

BY JANELLE DUNLEVY

Barrier, blockade, hurdle, obstacle, obstruction, and barricade—they all mean the same thing but can have varying levels of difficulty for fish and potential safety hazards for humans. The Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council (APWC) is working to create an updated database of barriers that impede migration upstream and downstream to juvenile and adult salmonids, lamprey and resident trout. The last time a project like this was implemented was in the late 1990s by the Rogue Basin Coordinating Council. We have found with some preliminary evaluations that some of the fish-passage barriers listed as passable in the late 1990s are now impassable to salmon, while some, such as the Butcherknife Creek culvert, have become extreme safety hazards for the landowners who use them daily.

The Butcherknife Creek culvert is a large, metal arch culvert that provides the main ingress and egress to residents up Butcherknife Creek Road and Onion Mountain Road. The bottom of this



Butcherknife Creek Culvert, a tributary of Slate Creek, is both impassable by salmon and a safety hazard for the landowners crossing it daily.

culvert has rusted completely through in numerous places, giving it the appearance of a cheese grater. This "grater" can do extreme harm to aquatic species moving up and down the creek, but even more importantly, it has greatly compromised the integrity of the culvert, making it a hazard to the residents who have to cross it on a daily basis.

The outcome of our barrier update project will be an action plan that ranks fish passage issues and the condition of the barriers. This action plan will be provided to interested community members via the

APWC website. We hope this work will help us develop relationships with the landowners that will result in mutually beneficial projects such as improved habitat for fish and wildlife, improved safety conditions for landowners, irrigation-efficiency projects (including reduced maintenance to in-stream irrigation controls), reduced maintenance to roads by replacing undersized culverts, and improved property values.

We need your help and involvement to complete this project. The APWC will be contacting landowners in the Slate Creek, Thompson Creek and Humbug Creek watersheds regarding this barrier update project. Funding assistance is attainable, but it takes time and cooperation with the landowners to make this partnership come to fruition. If you have a barrier on your property that is not used anymore, or one that might need to be improved, please contact us. If you live in the Slate Creek, Thompson Creek or Humbug Creek watersheds, please look for a flyer coming to you in the mail soon for a public informational meeting in March.

If you have questions about these projects, please contact me at 541-899-9982 or barrierupdate@apwc.info. Information also will be placed on our website, so please visit www.apwc.info/our-projects/barrier-updates/.

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