

Siuslaw from 1A

"I remember landing here and just looking out the plane windows and seeing the tall trees and the fog and everything. I thought it was amazing," Tome said.

He was working for the Bureau of Land Management at the time, mapping channel morphology and the different habitat conditions for salmon throughout the Pacific Northwest.

"We were based out of the U.S. Forest Service's compound on the Oregon State University's campus, and it was for the Siuslaw National Forest. So Siuslaw was the first river name I actually learned how to pronounce in Oregon."

Tome ended up getting a masters degree at the University of Oregon in Community and Regional Planning, and after some time in Utah on the Colorado River, he saw a job announcement for the position of watershed restoration project manager last year and he knew he had to take it.

"I saw the word 'Siuslaw,' and I said, 'That's the first Oregon name I learned how to say!'" Tome said. "So I was just really excited to come back here and work in this basin."

The ultimate goal of the SWC is to save the coho salmon population in the Siuslaw region.

"That's a very lofty goal," Tome said.

It's one that involves bringing the timber industry and environmental groups together, helping to rebuild the economy and recreating salmon habitats than have been lost in the past century.

Back in the 1800s, the Siuslaw River was the second most productive salmon basin on the West Coast.

"It was the Columbia River

system, and then the Siuslaw," Tome said. "We were a very productive salmon fishery. If you look at old cannery data, in the late 1800s, there were as many as 400,000 fish that they were catching in a year."

The fishing industry was unsustainable at that rate, and the salmon dwindled in numbers. What was once almost half a million dwindled to just 1,000 salmon returning per season in the 1990s. The salmon entered the threatened species list, and a moratorium on the fishing industry was placed until the salmon population could rise.

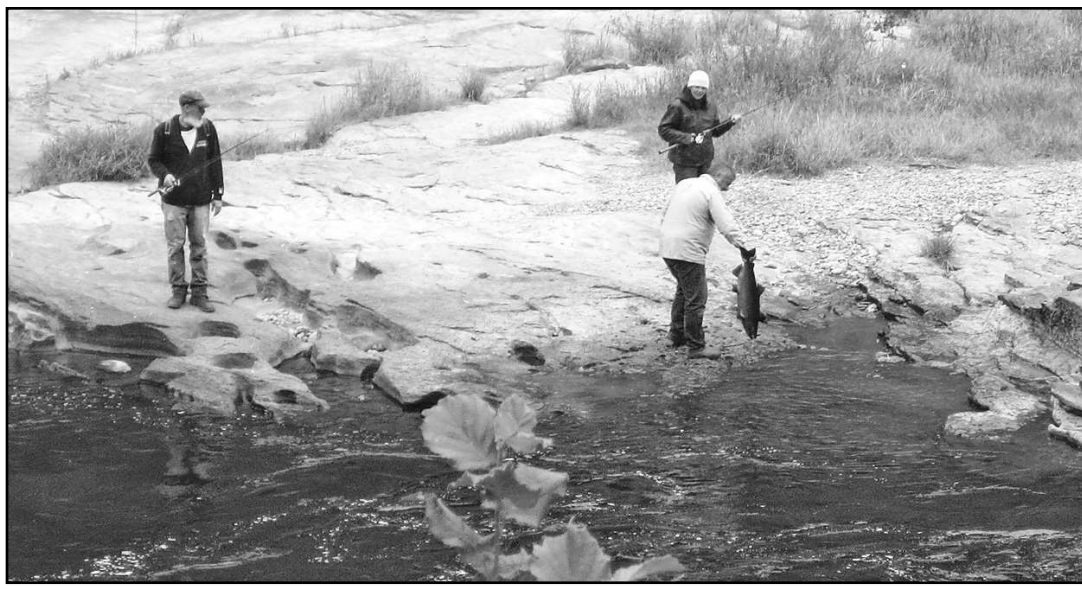
But doing that was difficult with the decades worth of changes made to the salmon's upriver habitat.

"They really like that complex habitat," Tome said. Salmon avoid large single channels of water, like rivers, because of the high velocity of water. "Especially in a storm, the water is going to shoot down that one direction. Little salmon can't withstand that velocity."

Instead, salmon look for smaller eddies and a multi-threaded system with several islands and back channels, small ponds nestled between wood and debris that falls in from the hillside.

"If you think about one threaded channel, most of what they're eating are insects falling into the water," Tome said. "There's going to be more opportunity for the insects to fall into the water if there's more vegetation throughout the system. If there are islands, all of a sudden you're increasing the amount of vegetation hanging over the river. That creates a complex environment where those salmon can then spawn and rear and live."

But those types of waterways were counterproductive to loggers, who need to push the logs down the river. One of the ways



SIUSLAW NEWS FILE PHOTO

People along the Siuslaw have been fishing for salmon for centuries. Once a thriving population, Siuslaw Watershed Council and area partners have worked together to restore habitat, reduce pollution and keep both salmon and the Siuslaw region alive.

they did was called splash-dam logging, as Tome explained:

"They would create these earthen dams across the valley, and then they would cut the trees from the hillsides and float them in the pond."

When the trees were ready, dynamite was used at high tide, creating a burst of floodwater down the valley, transporting the logs downstream to the mill. The process destroyed much of the habitat and complexity in the river.

"If you look at the old survey maps, a lot of streams were described as a mess," Tome said. "There wasn't one clear single stream. The valley was wetted across valley walls. It was an integrated system, there was a lot of tree, wood and swamp habitat. And now, we have mostly single threaded channels. We simplified the waterways because it works better for the human landscape to have one channel."

Area loggers also used rivers as their primary mode of transportation for equipment in the early days, when roads were limited in the Siuslaw region. But to get the barges next to the river bank, they had to clear out the logs and complex systems that made up the habitat.

Those who worked to rebuild the salmon population also created problems. Thinking that log jams posed a barrier for the fish, restorers began to remove them from the habitats.

"And that turned out to be wrong," Tome said. "Science is an iterative process and we're always adapting and learning from our mistakes. We learned that wood was important for fish. What we do now is have big trees with holes in them. Water is flowing through them, as they're like a big sieve. The

fish are still able to get through."

For these reasons, the salmon population continued to dwindle to a point of endangerment.

"So we really wanted to get ahead of that," Tome said.

In 1987, Oregon created the Watershed Enhancement Board, and in 1997, the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds was established. That's the year the SWC was created.

"We're working really hard on restoration," Tome said. "The mission of our organization has always been threefold: community, economy and environment."

Environmentally, the council has been restoring the habitats over the past 21 years with the help of hundreds of volunteers and donors giving their time.

"One cool project we have in the summer is a large wood placement project," Tome said. "We go through the stream and we look at areas that the trees would have naturally accumulated from what would have been delivered through landslides, or something on the landscape would have tied them up. We go through and strategically place large trees into the water. And so we have excavators that tip the trees over and carry them down to the river. And then we put them in these log jams."

They've also worked to create bipartisanship between the environmental movement and the timber industry.

"The environmental movement as a whole has said they don't want clearcutting," Tome said. "So we went through and figured out what particular trees existing in the basin need to be protected because they

have the opportunity to be delivered to the stream, and add to that complex habitat."

The timber industry asked what areas would be needed to help with restoration.

"They said, 'We see you want to protect some timberlands,'" Tome said. "We can't protect all of it, but what are your priorities? And if we protect small areas of land, where is that going to give you the best benefit and investment for restoration.' So we've come up with places that we think are the best value and the best areas to preserve."

For the economy, the council has worked to give jobs to local contractors for the restoration projects.

"On a given project, we can hire multiple contractors sometimes," Tome said. "As much as we can, and we usually do."

And then there's trickle down throughout the economy, where locals spend their money in the community.

Saving the habitats can also have a greater impact on water quality, holding the water in the system for longer, filtering through the natural filters of the landscape.

The council's work also helps with flood retention, slowing down water in the rainy, winter seasons.

If there's one thing that Tome felt the SWC do better with, it's with communicating with the community.

"We're bad at telling our story," he said. "A lot of our work happens deep in the woods. It's not where people go and see it. And they might not know that their neighbor was hired by us to do this work."

The council has been working with the Siuslaw Vision 2025 group on hiring an education and outreach position at the council.

Tome envisions birding tours and kayaking trips, as well as a river clean up scheduled for the

fall.

The SWC also plans to expand its annual September Salmon Dinner into an all-day, family event.

"I look at the future of the watershed council as a community organization that does watershed restoration," Tome said. "And I'm really excited to start having more capacity to show people what we've been working on and to work on other projects that aren't just restoration focused."

He also wants to expand his outreach to more marginalized groups in the region.

"We care for our environment, our fish and our economy, and that all trickles down to show the most vulnerable population are who we need to be hearing from," Tome said. "Sometimes those people are subsistence people living off the fish or off the land, some of those people's voices are often missed."

Has the population of salmon increased? While Tome wasn't sure of exact numbers, the numbers have risen to tens of thousands.

The SWC isn't looking to bring the population back to what it was in the 1800s, but to a point where the population is resilient.

"There's not a number that's associated with that," Tome said. "It's more than it's the trend, and we see that it's a stable population. It's strong."

Tome noted that salmon population has dipped in the last few years, but that is from natural causes.

"The ocean is in a cycle right now where there are less nutrients," Tome said. "The more nutrients that are available for fish that are in the ocean can help make them stronger so they don't die off. That's making it harder for the salmon. Those conditions go on a relatively reliable cycle. We expect the ocean conditions to be poor for the next, this year and next year at least."

Tome also stated that the oceans have been warmer recently due to climate change.

"But we can expect the numbers to go back up after that. It has to do with nutrient cycling in the ocean," Tome said.

So what is the future really like for the salmon population and those who fish in the Siuslaw region?

"There's definitely a bright future here," said Tome. "With a lot of the work that we've been doing with our partners in the basin, I think the salmon have a better shot. We have a lot of organizations and a lot of groups that are working toward their recovery."

PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

Experienced Leadership for a Vibrant Future

▲ Restructured County Budget Saving Over \$6 Million
▲ Helped Bring Over 1,200 New Jobs to West Lane
▲ Cut Property Taxes

Please Vote by May 15th!

re-elect **Jay Bozievich**
County Commissioner

Learn more at JayBozievich.com

Paid for by Jay Bozievich For Commissioner

THANK YOU
Sincere gratitude to our founding sponsors:

Jenna Bartlett	Peggy & Bryan Bradley
Deb Williams	Joann Henderson
Stephanie Sarles	Allan & Lori Muir
Dan & Dina Pavlis	Kim Shields
Mary Ann Cleary	Carol Clark
Frank Hungate	Kelly Ross
Peggy Gooch	Katherine Johnson
Susy Lacer	Justine Parker
Judy Kinsman	Susan Rousset
Karen Earnshaw	Clare Brien
Paula Burnette	
Rebecca Goehring	
Wellspring Clinic	
Arnie Roblan	
Jennifer French	

FLORENCE FARMERS MARKET & LOCAL FOODS MARKETPLACE
Tuesdays • 3-7pm • Bay & Kingwood

Florence Farmers Market is an initiative of the Siuslaw Vision and is sponsored by the FACC.

Quality Pet Grooming

Grooming Products
Pet Fashions
Natural Shampoos
Holistic Treats & Supplements

541-997-2726

1751 12th Street • Florence

Save for a rainy year.

Sue Gilday, Agent
State Farm Agent
1275 Rhododendron Drive
Florence, OR 97439
Bus: 541-997-7161

Get a 30 Month CD
FDIC-insured CD
2.30% APY*
Set aside money with a fixed rate of return. I'll be there to show you rates and terms that can help you reach your goal.
Bank with a Good Neighbor®.
CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION.

State Farm Bank®

*Annual Percentage Yield as of 05/02/18. Advertised rates are subject to change at the Bank's discretion. The minimum balance required to earn the stated APY is \$500 (rates apply to deposits less than \$100,000). A penalty may be imposed for withdrawals prior to maturity. Special Term CDs renew automatically into the next highest Standard Term CD. Some products and services not available in all areas. FDIC basic coverage amount is \$250,000 per depositor, per insured bank, for each ownership category. IRA and ESA CDs are not available for terms less than 12 months. Callers who are hearing or speech impaired should dial 711 or use a preferred Telecommunications Relay Service.

1501580 State Farm Bank, F.S.B., Bloomington, IL MEMBER FDIC

Let me Showcase your property.

Price Reduced

Dan Gilday
Broker
541 554-1844

TR HUNTER
REAL ESTATE
541-997-1200

1749 Highway 101 • 541-997-1200

2143 Royal St Georges Dr - New construction in Wisteria at Sandpines. This 3 bdrm, 2 bath, 1766 sqft home features vaulted ceilings, large great room, master bedroom with large walk-in-closet, den, cozy covered porch, and 2-car garage. \$338,000. #2634-16594804

Calling All Moms

Kitchen Klutter is asking for pictures of Mom for our **Mothers Day event Saturday May 12 from 11-4.** Pictures will be displayed and returned.

Bring in a picture now through May 5th and receive a \$5 coupon for your next purchase of \$25 or more.

NEW and ESSENTIAL gadgets, gifts, decor and baby gifts. NOW carrying Finex, heirloom grade craftsmanship cast iron cookware made in Portland and Staub, versatile handcrafted FRENCH cast iron cookware.

Kitchen Klutter
"A Kitchen Store and So Much More"
1250 Bay St. • 541-997-6060