Your Help Needed

Your input could improve the accuracy of RFF's 42-year Habitat / Conservation history.

There doesn't seem to be a consistent record of RFF's fisheries habitat and conservation projects since 1971. Big gaps; photos without names, dates, or locations; few before- and after– studies; no reports of what worked and what didn't. With foundations, agencies and other organizations actively looking for project partners in a very competitive funding environment, RFF could buff up their long commitment to the Rogue Basin and help shape sustainable fisheries. Please take a few moments to help shape the Rogue's Future.

In the 17 years from 1972 to 1988, club focus was improving fish access to upstream spawning sites on the Rogue and Applegate tributary streams, by contract construction over \$150,000, volunteer labor, donated materials and equipment. Sites appear to include:

1972 Star Gulch 1972 East Evans Creek 1973 Big Butte Creek 1975 Antelope Creek 1978 Ward Creek 1978 Bill's Creek 1979 Slate Creek 1979 Foots Creek 1979 Yale Creek 1981 Fielder Dam fishladder on Evans Creek 1981 Kane Creek 1981 Hog Creek 1981 Griffin Pond 1982 South Fork Little Butte Creek 1983 STEP & ODFW Habitat Project 1984 Trail Creek 1985 Ashland Pond 1985 Little Butte Creek fish kill 1986 Savage Rapids fishladder repair 1987 Union Creek 1987 Bear Creek fishladder at Oak Street 1987 Little Applegate River 1987 Jones Creek jump pool 1988 Alfonso Dam removal on Evans Creek

During the next 20 years, from 1989 to 2008, several major changes occurred and RFF adjusted to changing circumstances. Legislation authorized creation of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board with the development of local Watershed Councils with varying relation to county governments and existing Soil and Watershed Conservation districts. Eight councils, some with SWCD relation but most not, formed in the Rogue Basin all with OWEB affiliation and funding, and Williams Creek Watershed Council formed later without affiliation or funding through OWEB. All undertook field projects of several types, mostly funded through OWEB, and RFF appears to have had no restoration projects with watershed councils, and perhaps few other major restoration projects except where gravel mining impacted fisheries as at the Rogue Stakeholder Project.

The Rogue Stakeholder Project slowly took form along the Middle Rogue when gravel extraction by multiple owners resulted in about a dozen excavation pits, some of 65-foot depth, adjacent to a major river of 15-foot depth.

Since the mid-1970s, Craig Tuss and Frank Bird from NOAA and NMFS worked with Frank Schnitzer, DOGAMI, to identify and resolve habitat projects to limit erosion and stabilize river and river banks along this portion of the Rogue. The inactive gravel mine sites posed serious sediment threats by smothering salmon beds downstream if pit capture occurred.

RFF volunteers in the mid-70s helped plant thousands of conifers, maples, willows, alders, shrubs, aquatic sedges, and seed grasses to provide dense root mass and hold the soil. To ensure high plant survival, RFF helped install a drip irrigation system and metal collars to minimize rodent damage. During a high water event in1997 the Rogue River broke through a fairly narrow berm separating the river Channel from the much deeper Oregon Department of Transportation pit, capturing and flooding the pit which quickly became the new river channel. The established plants withstood the erosive flood and the developed roots held the soil, minimizing sediment downstream. The resulting riparian canopy is still in place and protecting the site and the salmon redds downstream.

Rogue Basin Watershed Councils formed a "Rogue Basin Coordinating Council" with a sub-committee, Rogue Basin Fish Access Team, who developed a ranked list of about 1,350 man-made or natural fish passage barriers within the Rogue Basin. Councils began developing grant applications and projects to provide fish passage so fish could reach spawning beds above any barriers along these tributaries. This process led to identifying several very high priority "fish killer barriers" on the mainstem Rogue River at major dam sites such as Savage Rapids Dam, Gold Ray Dam and others. Negotiation and litigation began about 1982 and was funded in part by RFF. This led to removal of Savage Rapids Dam in 2009, and Gold Ray Dam in 2010 which made Rogue River free flowing for 157 miles from Lost Creek to the Pacific Ocean.

With removal of major mainstream Rogue River dams and other barriers on tributaries several watershed councils approached RFF for assistance to replant and stabilize some 16 sties in 2009 to 2013. In 2012 RFF volunteers helped remove the metal collars installed 35 years earlier to protect knee-high seedlings from rodent damage. The crew salvaged several thousand feet of piping, tubes and fittings from the drip irrigation system that nurtured the young seedlings, now 30+ feet tall. In addition to the Rogue Stakeholder Project, the RFF planted sites including:

2009 Louse Creek 2009 Wrights Creek 2009 Ouartz Creek 2009 Applegate Sustainable Aggregate Project 2009 Applegate River monitoring vegetation at Hyde Bar Reclamation site 2010 Louse Creek 2010 Sucker Creek 2010 Quartz Creek 2010 Limpy Creek 2010 Vannoy Creek 2011 Jones Creek 2011 Quartz Creek 2011 Shady Cove at Aunt Caroline's Park 2011 Rogue River at Kelly Slough 2012 Rogue River at Tolo Slough 2012 Sucker Creek 2012 Palmer Creek 2012 Bear Creek