



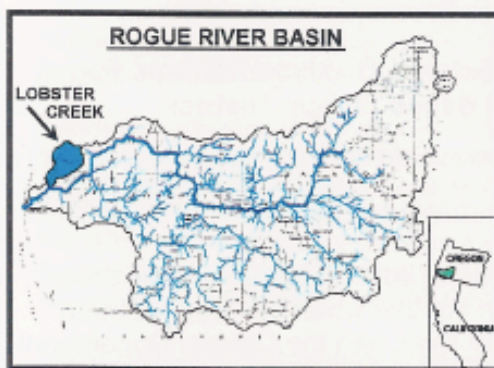
LOBSTER CREEK

WHOLE BASIN RESTORATION STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

YEAR-END 1997

ABOUT LOBSTER CREEK



Located in southwest Oregon, the Rogue River is an outstanding recreational and water resource and is rated one of the most productive coastal river basins for salmon and steelhead. Lobster Creek is the largest tributary to the lower Rogue River; entering the river from the north, 11 miles upstream from the Rogue's confluence with the Pacific Ocean. The Lobster Creek basin is a fifth field watershed that is almost entirely forest land - comprising 44,300 acres.

Ownership in the lower basin is mostly private, whereas federal lands comprise the bulk of the upper basin. Lobster Creek is a major spawning tributary for the lower Rogue's Fall Chinook salmon - an important recreational and commercial fishery. Lobster Creek is a good producer of steelhead. The basin also supports coho salmon, coastal cutthroat trout, and resident rainbow trout.

SALMONID FISHERIES

FALL CHINOOK SALMON — Fall Chinook enter the Rogue River in early Fall to spawn in the gravel beds of the main stem and the South Fork of Lobster Creek from October to December. Eggs hatch in Winter and the fry emerge from the gravels in Spring; spending a short time in the basin before migrating to the ocean in Summer. Adults spend several years in the ocean and attain a large size, some weighing more than 50 pounds.



COHO SALMON — Coho salmon head to smaller upstream reaches and tributaries to spawn from October to January. Eggs hatch in late Winter, with the fry emerging in Spring. Unlike Chinook, coho fry stay in the stream an entire year before migrating out to the ocean. Coho have unique summer rearing (deep pools, cool water) and over wintering (marshes, side-channels, etc.) habitat needs. Adults spend up to two years in the ocean.

STEELHEAD — Steelhead are rainbow trout that migrate to the ocean, much like salmon. Unlike salmon, steelhead do not necessarily die after spawning. Lobster Creek supports a strong winter run. Adults return in late Winter to spawn in upper tributaries and headwater reaches. Fry emerge in late Spring. Young steelhead may stay in the stream for several years before migrating to the ocean, where they may spend 2-3 years.



COASTAL CUTTHROAT TROUT — Coastal cutthroat exhibit complex life histories within a population. Some stay in the stream their entire lives as residents, others migrate to the lower Rogue and inter-tidal zone (fluvial), while others are sea-run and actually spend a portion of their life in the ocean. Spawning occurs in late Winter and early Spring.



WHY THE INTEREST IN LOBSTER CREEK?

Lobster Creek can be divided into three stream segments important to salmon and steelhead: (1) main stem Lobster Creek from its mouth to the junction of the north and south forks (10 miles), (2) the North Fork of Lobster Creek (7 miles), and (3) the South Fork of Lobster Creek and its tributary, Boulder Creek.

Lower Rogue stocks of Fall Chinook have been listed as critical, and coho stocks have been listed as threatened, by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Oregon Coastal Salmon Restoration Initiative (OCSRI) identifies the main stem and lower south fork as a core area — an area which supports higher than average spawning and rearing — for Fall Chinook salmon. Further, the OCSRI identified the South Fork of Lobster Creek as a core area for coho salmon.

In April of 1997, the National Marine Fisheries Service listed coho salmon in the region as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Steelhead are also proposed for listing under the ESA; with a decision due in early 1998.

A 1995 federal stream survey identified the lack of conifer in riparian areas and a deficiency of in stream large woody debris as priority salmonid habitat needs for Lobster Creek.



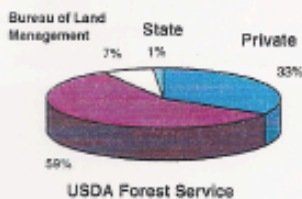
A LOOK BACK

The history of Lobster Creek can be broken into three periods: pre-settlement, European settlement, and post World War II development. During the pre-settlement period, the primary forest type was a mixed conifer-hardwood forest of Douglas-fir, Port Orford cedar, western hemlock, myrtle, madrone, red alder, and big leaf maple. Fire played a major role in resetting the forest to young ages with an estimated fire frequency of 70-100 years, some of which were undoubtedly set by American Indians. European settlement began in earnest in 1853, with the discovery of gold in the lower Rogue River. Hydraulic mining was extensive and it is likely that it extended into Lobster Creek.

Post World War II development began with a marked increase in logging. Harvest on private lands in the lower basin peaked in the early 1960's. Natural seeding created large patches of alder dominated stands on good conifer sites. Federal harvests peaked in the 1970's and 80's, but dropped in the early 90's due to the adoption of the Northwest Forest Plan. The peak harvesting increased sediment loads and removed large conifers from valley riparian areas. As a result, younger, hardwood dominated riparian stands did not have the size and stopping power to intermittently transport sediment through the basin, creating transport regimes the stream channel could no longer hold. This impaired the stream's ability to capture gravels and large wood for the formation of flats and pools for spawning and rearing.

MORE ON LOBSTER CREEK

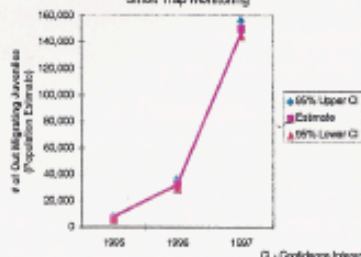
LAND OWNERSHIP



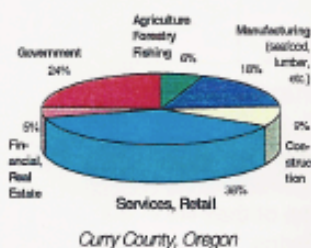
SERIAL STAGES



PRODUCTION OF FALL CHINOOK



EMPLOYMENT INCOME



WHO'S INVOLVED

Curry Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD)

Hancock Timber Resource Group (HTRG)

Lower Rogue Watershed Council (LRWC)

Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)

Pacific Rivers Council (PRC)

USDA Forest Service, Siskiyou National Forest Gold Beach Ranger District

A COOPERATIVE EFFORT COORDINATED BY PAUL HOOBYAR, WATERSHED INITIATIVES (WI), EUGENE, OREGON.

A formal cooperating interest in the Lobster Creek basin first began in 1994 when the Pacific Rivers Council sought to work with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop a whole basin restoration strategy for the watershed — modeled after PRC's successful effort with the Hancock Timber Resource Group and the USDA Forest Service in Knowles Creek, Oregon (Siuslaw Basin). During that same year the Lower Rogue Watershed Council was formed under Oregon House Bill 3441 in close association with the Curry Soil and Water Conservation District. In 1997, Watershed Initiatives and the CSWCD were awarded the World Wildlife Fund's Walter A. Haas Jr. Conservation grant for the Rogue River for the purpose of coordinating a whole basin restoration strategy for Lobster Creek. The effort is also a voluntary forestry measure in the Oregon Coastal Salmon Restoration Initiative (ODF #39).

ABOUT WATERSHED INITIATIVES

WATERSHED INITIATIVES IS AN INDEPENDENT BUSINESS DEDICATED TO FINDING STRATEGIES THAT HELP LOCAL COMMUNITIES SOLVE DIFFICULT NATURAL RESOURCE PROBLEMS - STRATEGIES THAT PROMOTE THE HEALTH OF WATERSHEDS. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE LOBSTER CREEK WHOLE BASIN RESTORATION STRATEGY, CONTACT:

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