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Goose Lake Fishes Working Group plans update to 1995 Conservation Strategy

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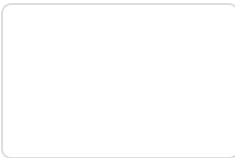
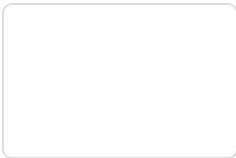
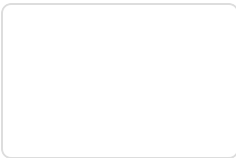
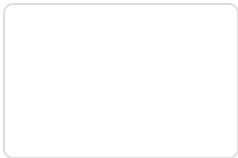
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Group visits Bauers Creek where a rock ramp roughened channel provides for irrigation and fish passage.

Photo by Laura Snell

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The Goose Lake Fishes Working Group (GLFWG) recently met for a field tour and workshop that brought together members and guests to visit two upgraded irrigation diversions in the Goose Lake Basin. Both sites featured newly implemented fish passage solutions designed to improve connectivity for native species.

Following the tour, participants convened for a workshop where researchers from Oregon State University (OSU) presented the latest findings from ongoing native fish studies. Modoc Extension also shared results from its 2025 water quality monitoring efforts.

Formed in 1991, the bi-state coalition spans northeastern California and south-central Oregon and has spent more than 30 years working to conserve the basin's unique native fish species. The GLFWG was created in response to the 1987–1994 drought, when petitions were filed to list the entire Goose Lake fish fauna under the Endangered Species Act. In lieu of waiting for regulatory action, local landowners, agencies, and conservation groups united around a collaborative, community-driven approach that balanced habitat protection with the needs of working agricultural lands.

Since publishing the Goose Lake Fishes Conservation Strategy in 1995, the group and its partners have completed numerous restoration projects benefiting both native fish and working lands. These efforts include culvert and diversion upgrades, riparian restoration, the installation of off-channel livestock watering systems, and ongoing habitat and population monitoring across the basin.

With four new ESA listing petitions recently submitted — for the Goose Lake sucker, lamprey, tui chub, and Northern Pit Roach — the GLFWG agreed during the October meeting that the 1995 strategy should be updated to reflect current watershed conditions and guide future restoration priorities. The group will reconvene in January to outline next steps.

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