

# The Clackamas

## CURRENT



## News

NEWSLETTER of the CLACKAMAS RIVER BASIN COUNCIL FALL 2002

### Landowner Profile: The Simpkins Family Grows up on Foster Creek

Tim Simpkins and his brothers Mark and Todd grew up on 42 acres of pasture and woodlands near Oregon City. With their big backyard on Foster Creek, Tim and his siblings developed a love of the outdoors and wildlife, fostered by fishing, hunting and growing up on the farm. Tim and his family manage a modest beef cattle operation and hope to leave the legacy of a small-scale beef operation for the next generation.



The Simpkins clan and their new fence at their Foster Creek property. From left, Susan, Tim, Mark and Tod. On stile, Casey (top) and Tyler (lower). Photo courtesy of Steve Werblow.

Last year, in partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Project, the Simpkins family fenced a 500-foot stretch of Foster Creek that meanders through their property. They planted 300 native trees and shrubs inside a 140 foot wide enclosure, selecting a combination of shade trees that will keep the creek cool, and native bushes that will provide cover and food for deer and birds. Clackamas River Basin Council (CRBC) assisted with the project by providing Western Red Cedar and Douglas Fir seedlings. Inside the fence, lush green grass frames a quietly burbling creek. Tim explains that he and his extended family hope to leave their children another legacy, a creek where trout and salmon may once again thrive.

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### Fishy "Fertilizer" Placed in Streams of the Clackamas Watershed this Fall.

Just like your garden, streams need the right nutrients to grow their crop. For thousands of years salmon have returned annually to spawn in the rivers and streams of the Clackamas Basin. As the fish nose their way back to their natal stream, they carry in their bodies nutrients gathered in rich ocean waters. After spawning the fish die and decay, releasing these nutrients for aquatic life and the next generation of fish. As salmon runs have declined in recent years so has the availability of this important fertilizer.

Studies have shown that juvenile salmon and steelhead benefit in terms of growth and survival from this influx of nutrients brought from the ocean into freshwater by spawning salmon or in this case, placed carcasses. The resulting algae growth serves as food to aquatic insects, which in turn are eaten by fish. Both insects and fish can also feed directly on the decaying salmon.

### Old Fish Help Young Fish

To address this lack of nutrients so important for salmon survival, in November of 2001, the Forest Service and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife launched a pilot project to boost fish and stream productivity in the Clackamas River Watershed by distributing salmon carcasses to streams low in nutrients. Initially, 21 tons of surplus salmon were spread by helicopter over 20 miles of stream in the upper Clackamas and Collawash Rivers. Monitoring of this and previous projects show positive results.

### Clear Creek Proposed for Treatment this Fall

This fall and in future years, the project will focus on six streams in the Clackamas Basin, including Clear Creek. Carcasses will be added and the results monitored over several years. In Clear Creek, volunteers, Forest Service and ODFW personnel will distribute surplus coho and chinook salmon carcasses from the Eagle Creek Hatchery. With the permission of willing landowners and avoiding higher population areas, the carcasses will be placed by hand from Highway 211 downstream. Distribution of carcasses will likely occur on several occasions beginning in October and continuing into November. Once placed in the stream carcasses tend to move a short distance downstream and get caught up in woody debris or under boulders.

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## Landowner Profile... (cont.)

Long-time residents along Foster Creek tell tales of pitch-forking huge coho salmon out of Foster Creek when they were kids.

With good stewardship and all creek-side landowners like the Simpkins working together, you or your children may once again see abundant salmon runs in Foster Creek.

A good start to bringing fish back to Foster Creek is the county's Bakers Ferry culvert replacement project - landowners above the new crossing report seeing coho and steelhead for the first time in many years.

Inspired by the results of the first project, Tim and his family are now working with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and Salmon Corps volunteers to fence the rest of their stretch of Foster Creek and plant native vegetation.

**If you want advice, or financial and technical support to care for your creekside property, the CRBC and other local agencies provide assistance. Call Michael Carlson (CRBC) or Lee Ko or Ralph Meyers (NRCS) 503-656-3499 or Todd Alsbury (ODFW) 657-2000 x 233.**

## What is a Watershed, Why Work Together for Clean Water?

The term "watershed" describes an area of land that drains downslope to the lowest point (Figure 1). The water moves by means of a network of drainage pathways that may be underground or on the surface. Generally, these pathways converge into a stream and river system that becomes progressively larger as the water moves downstream.

Watersheds can be large or small. Every stream, tributary, or river has an associated watershed, and small watersheds aggregate together to become larger watersheds. It is a relatively easy task to delineate watershed boundaries using a topographical map that shows stream channels. The watershed boundaries will follow the major ridgeline around the channels and meet at the bottom where the water flows out of the watershed, commonly referred to as the mouth of the stream or river. Notice for Clear Creek that Springwater Road and Hillockburn Road comprise the eastern border of Clear Creek Watershed and that the mouth is at Carver Boat ramp.

Since we all live downstream from someone else, every thing we do to our rivers and creeks we do to our neighbors and to ourselves. We all drink well or municipal water and we recreate, swim or fish in our rivers. If we all work together to keep our waterways clean and do projects to improve our streambanks such as plant trees or prevent soil erosion, we all benefit, as do fish and wildlife.

-Michael Carlson

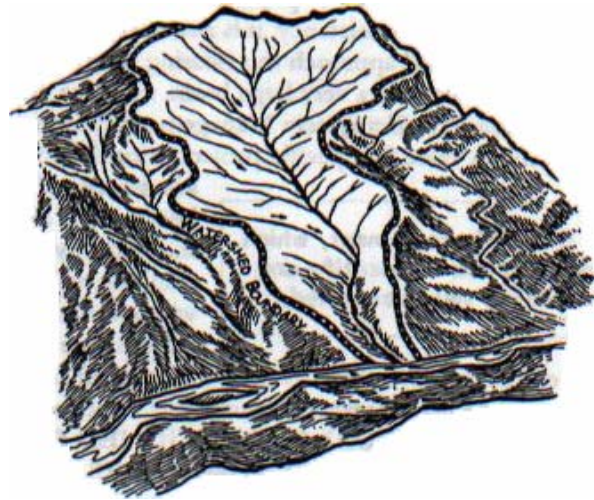


Figure 1. A watershed is an area of land that drains downslope to the lowest point.

## Fishy "Fertilizer" Placed in Streams of the Clackamas Watershed this Fall... (cont.) Some Things to Consider

Dead fish stink for awhile, but it's worth it. Odors associated with decaying carcasses tend to be localized around concentrations of the fish in larger debris jams. The smell is generally noticed in and immediately adjacent to the channel. Carcasses placed in the creek this fall generally won't be recognizable by January and February. A reminder, care should be taken with dogs whenever spawning or dead salmon are in the creeks. Fido should not be allowed to eat raw salmon as he can acquire a potentially lethal parasite that wild animals that scavenge fish are immune to.

## Summer 2002 Fish Passage Assessment Project May Help Fund Culvert Repairs for Landowners

Starting in June, a crew hired by the Clackamas River Basin Council conducted a fish passage survey on public and private lands in the Clear and Foster Creek Basins. The goals of the fish passage assessment project are:

- To find out where fish passage is blocked
- To better understand where fish can go in each basin
- To prioritize creek crossing sites that are barriers
- Identify willing partners and apply for funding to repair priority barriers

The Clackamas River Basin Council hired Watersheds Northwest Inc. and Upstream Connection LLC as the lead scientific team on the project.

Between June and July, the crew assessed over 170 county, public, and private culverts, bridges, dams, and fords on Clear Creek, Foster Creek and their tributaries. Along with visiting every public and private road that crossed a stream, their efforts included a twenty mile, two day float/hike down Clear Creek from Metzler Park to Carver Boat ramp at the Clackamas River.

Local landowners were extremely helpful. Working closely with local landowners, the field crew identified and collected data from all but one identified crossing. The residents of Clear and Foster basins are clearly interested in a healthy fishery and the watershed assessment process. The Clackamas River Basin Council and the consultants want to wholeheartedly thank all who allowed access to inspect their culverts and crossings.

The Clear and Foster Creek Fish Passage Assessment now enters the data analysis phase with an abundance of useful data. From here, the consultants will analyze data to rank stream crossings in order of their importance to fish passage. Fish passage importance is determined by how much high-quality fish habitat exists above a crossing and whether fish can successfully pass through the crossing. The prioritization will also include information on design alternatives and cost estimates for repairs.

Using the prioritized crossing list, the CRBC will better understand where critical crossings are located, what design alternatives exist, and what the estimated costs are. With this information, the Council will work with willing landowners who would like to repair their crossing, and be able to compete for grant funding for on-the-ground repair projects – ones that could open up miles of high quality stream habitat for fish.

The consultants will present a full report to the Clackamas River Basin Council this fall. The CRBC will then host public meetings in the watershed to present and discuss these results. For more information please contact the CRBC or visit the CRBC website at <http://www.clackamasriver.org>



**One of the 131 culverts assessed in the fish passage survey.**

## Who Ya Gonna Call?

Could you use advice or assistance with your land? Below is a list of local resources that can help you.

<b>Contact</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Phone/Email</b>	<b>Type of Assistance</b>
Mike Bondi	OSU Extension 200 Warner Milne Rd Oregon City, OR 97045	503-655-8631 <a href="mailto:michael.bondi@orst.edu">michael.bondi@orst.edu</a>	Forestry Extension for small woodlot owners.
Michael Carlson	Clackamas River Basin Council PO Box 1869 Clackamas, OR 97015	503-650-1256 <a href="mailto:crbc@clackamasriver.org">crbc@clackamasriver.org</a>	Partnerships and funding for projects, watershed planning and history, urban area projects.
Cole Gardiner	Clackamas River Basin Council PO Box 1869 Clackamas, OR 97015	503-287-2622 <a href="mailto:GARDINER31@aol.com">GARDINER31@aol.com</a>	Trees and site visit for streamside landowners, call Nov.- Feb. yearly
Ken Humbert	Oregon Department of Forestry 14995 S. Hwy. 211 Mollala, OR 97038	503-829-2216 <a href="mailto:kenneth.m.humbert@state.or.us">kenneth.m.humbert@state.or.us</a>	Commercial forestry practices.
Clair Klock	Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) 256 Warner-Milne Rd. Oregon City, OR 97045	503-656-3499 <a href="mailto:clair-klock@or.nacdnet.org">clair-klock@or.nacdnet.org</a>	On-site conservation visits, education materials, project cost sharing.
Lee Ko Kris Homma	Natural Resources Conservation Service 256 Warner Milne Rd Oregon City, OR 97045	503-655-3144 <a href="mailto:lee.ko@or.usda.gov">lee.ko@or.usda.gov</a> <a href="mailto:kris.homma@usda.gov">kris.homma@usda.gov</a>	Larger farm conservation planning and project cost sharing.
	Farm Services Agency 256 Warner Milne Rd Oregon City, OR 97045	503-655-3144	Farm services, crop insurance, and financial assistance.