

Salmon River Restoration Council

2013 Annual Report



School kids enthralled with fish dissecting during a Watershed Education class.

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Robert Will, Fuels Coordinator, retired in 2013
Sarah Hugdahl, Program Technical Assistance, Project Staff
Shannon Monroe, Program Assistant
Steve Gunther, Fuels Field Coordinator
Michael Kein, Spring 2013 Watershed Ed Co-Coordinator
Mitzi Wickman, Spring 2013 Watershed Ed Co-Coordinator
Steve Adams, Power & Watershed Center Maintenance
Sam Berry, Project Staff
Maria Mullins, Project Staff

SRRC 2013 + 2014 Crew Leaders & Crews

Steve Adams	Jon Feutz	Riley O'Brien
Bonnie Bennett	Rudy Galindo	Nat Pennington
Sheri Campbell	Jessica Hanscom	Brian Pierce
Gary Collins	Daniel Hendrickson	Katie Reinhart
Eric Cousineau	Mike Kerrick	Miles Richardson
Rob't Cousineau Jr.	Scott Kingery	Beulah Simas
Rob't W. Cousineau	Tamara Lightle	Joe Stoltz
Kyle Cousineau	Charles Lindsay	Jacob Sutter
Timothy Darling	Ryan Lindsay	Irie Swift
Kevin Dunbar	Ken McDonald	Emily Tornroos
		Todd Whitmore

Greetings,

As we all look forward to what 2014 will bring us, (and more rain is what most everyone is hoping for) I thought it would be good to reflect on what 2013 taught us. Here at the Salmon River Restoration Council we are always trying new ways to engage with our partners and stakeholders and we were able to put one of those ideas to the test with great success; our Community Liaison Program (CLP) developed by the Salmon River Fire Safe Council. During the 2013 fire season we experienced a large scale fire suppression effort on the Forks Complex and many of our local fire leaders and representatives acted as Community Liaison's and exercised their voice to help shape fire response, fire defense, and fire communication. It's not easy to voice an opinion in the face of such a large coordinated suppression effort led by a federal agency, but the entire community, through their continued support of fuels reduction, prescribed burning and proactive communication helped provide a safe environment for firefighters and community members to protect their homes and property.

We will face many challenges in the coming year and I think it would be helpful for all of us to remember what it felt like to stand shoulder to shoulder with each other grunting, panting, and drinking lots of water in a coordinated effort to "be good neighbors". I'm very thankful to be part of a River community who values hard work, isn't afraid to voice their opinion, and will drop everything to help their neighbor in the face of crisis, no matter if they share the opinions that neighbor may have. I was truly inspired by all of you who gave long hours, sore muscles, and multiple blisters to your friends and family. We are all in this together, and my commitment for 2014, and I hope you share it, is to promote more opportunities for our river community to get together and rub shoulders outside of a crisis environment.

Thank you for loving the Salmon River,

Josh Saxon, Executive Director
Salmon River Restoration Council



Local heroes, of which these are a few, you know who you are and we love what you do.

Major Accomplishments of 2013

- Coordinated the community liaison program in order to provide local fire knowledge and technical assistance to firefighting teams and improve communication between community and agencies during the 2013 Salmon River wildfires
- Manually treated new populations of Oblong Spurge, which is a Class B weed in California and a Class A weed in Siskiyou County, achieving an 80% reduction between 2012 and 2013, and continuing to prevent the use of herbicides on the Salmon River
- Co-hosted the Salmon River Spring Chinook Population Dives and coordinated Salmon Spawning and Redd Surveys to record live fish, number of redds and carcass data for scientific research
- Continued to participate in the Klamath Basin Coordination Council, promoting the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement/ Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement for the removal of the Klamath River dams and restoration of major parts of the ecosystem
- Completed a new five year Strategic Plan for the SRRC, to guide our work through 2018

SRRC Program Updates for 2013

Fisheries: The crews were busy with a wide range of activities this past year. In the late winter and early spring they improved juvenile coho habitat, adding willow baffles and brush bundles to existing side channels and pools for cover. Last summer's Spring Chinook Dive was once again a huge endeavor and a success. Nearly 100 volunteers, staff, and agency personnel participated in counting 895 spring Chinook and 292 steelhead.

In this hot, dry, low water year we were particularly concerned with the possibility of fish kills and disease in local fish populations, and with the increased importance of cold water refugia. To this end, SRRC crews focused efforts on fish passage into cold water streams, assessing and making subtle adjustments to creek mouths to allow fish access to essential refugia. SRRC

staff participated in the Klamath Fish Health Assessment Team (KFHAT), attending trainings, putting up public notices, and reporting dead or diseased fish and other aquatic species. Anecdotally, juvenile out-migration fish trap staff observed increased juvenile mortality on the Salmon River, but the fish kill we were bracing ourselves for, thankfully, never materialized. Looking at SRRC water temperature data throughout the summer it appears that two months of active fires and smoke significantly cooled perilously high water temperatures, with temperatures dropping as much as 9°C following the onset of the smoke inversion.

Despite a second year without specific funding for spring Chinook surveys, we made a concerted effort to complete consistent spawning surveys. Fortunately the Karuk Tribe, USFS, CDF&W, Yurok Tribe and local volunteers helped in the effort. Crews

focused on gathering genetic samples to support current research projects.

Cooperative Fall Chinook surveys saw less than the anticipated fish numbers, but were nevertheless a successful effort.

SRRC continued operating the Juvenile Outmigration Screw Trap at the mouth of the Salmon River with the Karuk Tribe, however the Big Bar Trap on the Klamath was pulled very early due to low water and extreme algae blooms. Every three years Klamath Basin coho have a strong cohort or brood year. 2013 was a strong year and was expected to have a large run. In light of this SRRC made a particular effort to conduct coho spawning surveys on the Salmon, holding several volunteer days, to try and catch the elusive coho in action. Coho surveys were easier this year due to the low water levels. Numerous live coho and redds were seen, along with a few carcasses.

Habitat Restoration: The SRRC continues to bring stakeholders together to develop a program to implement the Salmon River TMDL. The goal is to reduce water temperatures and improve habitat for adult and juvenile fish in the Salmon River, prioritizing the most beneficial areas and developing targeted restoration activities. It's been a busy year for advancing our Riparian Restoration program. We submitted a proposal to CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife to complete the design work for our Kelly Gulch Off-channel and Riparian Restoration Project. The design focuses on both improving riparian vegetation and shading, and also on creating better side channel habitat for fish. We will be looking for implementation funding in the near future. In addition, we initiated a collaborative Salmon River In-Stream Restoration Work Group, to plan and prioritize future restoration efforts in the watershed.

As part of ongoing fish passage improvement efforts, the mouths of creeks providing important fish habitat got an overhaul – small barriers removed, step pools created by hand, and the benefit of cold water maximized, so that both juvenile and adult fish can utilize the habitat more effectively. We've been working with the USFS to move forward on design and implementation of the Hotelling Barrier Removal project. NEPA compliance documents are the next stage to be completed for this project.

photo by Michael Bravo

Before and After Fuels Treatment by SRRC's Awesome Crew



Fire, Fuels, and Forestry:

The fires will likely be what we remember most about 2013. At least 7 arson fires were lit on the Salmon River on the evening of July 31st. They resulted in over 37,000 acres burned; \$60 million in expenditures; and many community member's homes threatened and properties burned. All of this during one of the driest years on record! But the climate worked magic, holding in a thick inversion layer, increasing moisture, and amazingly retarding fire activity on this dry year, leading to a healthy fire mosaic, with a large percentage of low to moderate severity burning with high severity mostly restrained to the upper slopes of drainages. Then September was unusually wet dumping over 5 inches, and essentially putting the fires out early.

After substantially revising and updating our Community Liaison Program (SRCLP), it got its first trial by fire, and it was hugely successful. Communications between USFS, Incident command teams, and the community was so improved from past fires on the River that it is hard to compare them. USFS KNF leaders set the stage for open, honest communication and mutual respect. Community liaisons worked with

the various teams to share current information, maps and strategy when needed, acting as intermediaries between crews and local residents. For the most part teams used more restraint than we've seen in the past with their firefighting techniques, and were much more open to working with liaisons and the community. There were glitches, of course, and there are many areas where improvement is needed, but this was a huge step in the right direction.

Another positive result of these fires is that several recent SRRC/SRFSC fuels reduction projects were directly tested by fire, and they performed really well. Not only did they help protect private parcels and structures, they also allowed firefighters and residents to feel safe enough to remain on site protecting property while the fires burned within 30 ft of homes.

SRRC and Salmon River Fire Safe Council staff have been involved in a very promising regional, collaborative fire planning effort this year, the Mid-Klamath Restoration Partnership. We are hopeful that this impressive grassroots effort will result in a comprehensive fire plan for the area, laying out important forestry and fuels work at a landscape level.

SRRC crews completed over 48 acres of fuel reduction this year, creating shaded fuel breaks, fire-safe residences, and safer emergency access routes. SRRC hosted a Fire Awareness Week this spring, coordinating volunteer work days in Sawyers, Forks, and Cecilville, as well as hosting the USFS Level I Fire Training, and a Fire Ecology Night. We continue to be engaged in planning and commenting on USFS projects in the Salmon.

The SRRC and Fire Safe Council work with stakeholders to develop an approach toward forestry management that can improve forest health by developing projects that better prepare private and public lands for wildfires. We are working on a Neighborhood Community Wildfire Protection Plan for the Bear Country Neighborhood of Godfrey, Harris, and Blue Ridge Ranches, and surrounding landscape.

2013's Fire Fuels and Forestry Program was funded by the USFS/Grants Clearinghouse, MKWC, USFWS, and exceptional volunteerism of landowners and community members. And did we mention that the whole watershed didn't burn to a crisp this summer!

Watershed Education:

SRRC's Watershed Education Program integrates natural resource sciences, ecosystem management, and watershed stewardship into the curricula of our two Salmon River schools. Students focused on fire ecology this year, participating in a Fire Ecology Workshop and field trip led by Mike Hentz, and shared their fire projects and knowledge with the community at the annual Watershed Fair in May. Once again, SRRC shared coordination of the Klamath-Siskiyou Outdoor School (KSOS) with the Mid Klamath Watershed Council (MKWC). KSOS is a summer program that empowers students to become stewards of the natural environment while fostering team building skills, cooperation, and mutual respect.

Currently the in-school portion of our watershed education program is unfunded. Even without specific funding we still plan on coordinating key activities within the schools and bringing in guest presenters to share their expertise. If you are interested in volunteering expertise, time, or funding to the program, or know of someone who would be a great guest presenter, let us know. This fall we initiated a new 4 series of community education workshops, which we kicked off with



a very well attended mushroom walk and identification workshop (photo above). We plan on holding quarterly workshops, on topics such as wildflower identification, local geology, and local wildlife.



The Oblong Spurge Site across the river- Left, How they got there. Below, What they found. Bottom, What they achieved!



Noxious Weeds: This year we continued our efforts to control priority noxious weed species at several hundred sites throughout the watershed. We focused our efforts on Italian thistle and oblong spurge from February through June, both species that seed early. We continued to see good progress with both species. The paid crew and volunteers made immense progress this year in beating back the oblong spurge populations discovered on the Mainstem Salmon in late 2010. This new species is particularly difficult as the main population is across the river and it drops seeds in the spring while the water is usually still high. This year saw the biggest effort yet, with volunteers showing up once a week from late March through the first of June with rafts, kayaks and even a paddle board, to cross the river to the main site. With the consistent low water, access was particularly easy this year. In our third year of actively treating these sites we are seeing impressive reductions in the population, ~80% from 2012-2013. With the huge effort this year, we expect to see similar results in spring 2014. The crew also made progress in removing populations of Marlahan mustard, focusing on fire camps, trailheads, campgrounds, tanker fill sites, and river accesses. As always this effort is made more effective by our “Drivers that Care” and “Adopt-a-Site” campaigns. Many thanks to community members who stop to notice, report, and pull/dig these weeds while driving, biking or walking the roads and who have adopted sites. Once again, the summer was spent combing river bars, roads and decommissioned roads, and private lands for spotted knapweed, an effort that has been so successful over the years that they are getting incredibly difficult to find. SRRC’s knapweed monitoring and removal has long kept the USFS from having to consider the need to spray toxic herbicides to control this “Class A” weed on the Salmon River. Sadly, funding for this critical and highly successful program is becoming increasingly hard to find.



Temperature Monitoring: The Salmon River, along with much of the West, experienced extreme drought in 2013, and the trend seems to be holding. We had one of the driest years on record, and are now experiencing an even drier winter. What is particularly unusual about 2013 is not how low the river got; we’ve had many years where flow has dropped lower in the Salmon, but the duration of low water seems unprecedented. After the December 2012 high water, the river barely jumped above average summertime lows all the way through the end of the year. In a case of an interesting silver lining, water temperatures seem to have been held at survivable levels for fish by the over two months of heavy smoke from this summer’s fires.

The SRRC and community volunteers monitored water and air temperatures at approximately 50 sites this past summer. In addition to our long term sites, we continued to help the US Forest Service collect temperature data throughout the watershed for their Klamath National Forest Monitoring Plan. The SRRC has also continued to participate in the collaborative Klamath Basin Monitoring Program to develop and implement a long term monitoring plan for the Klamath and its tributaries, which includes the Salmon River.



photos- Air and water temperature data being collected. 5



News from the Watershed Center

The Watershed Center played an important role during this summer's wildfire event. The building served as a center for community meetings, a communications hub for visiting fire teams, and a clean air refuge for residents. We continually strive to make this building available as a community resource, whether during emergencies, or just day to day activities.

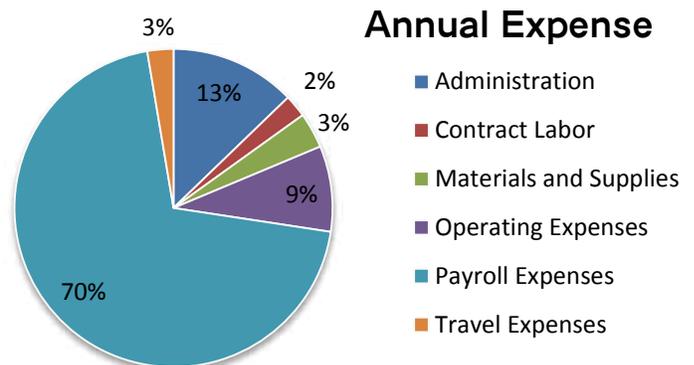
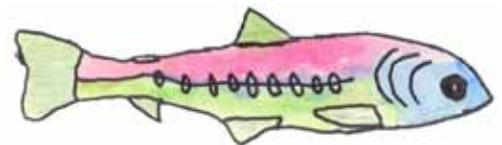
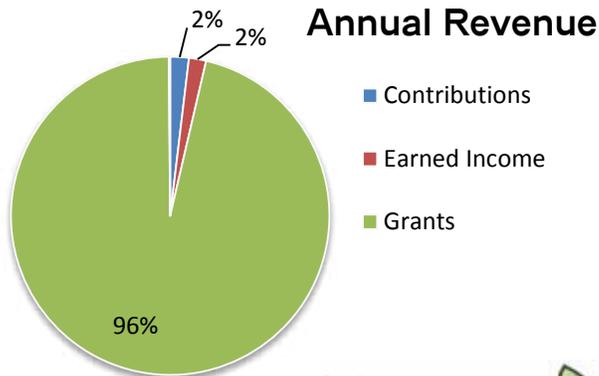
The big infrastructure project at the Watershed Center this year was an upgrade of our off-grid power system. With the help of the Ford Family Foundation, we were able to purchase a smaller, more energy efficient generator to replace our old one. We also did some maintenance and improvements on our solar system and battery bank to improve our ability to operate without running the generator as much as possible.

The outside of the building got jazzed up this fall by the addition of several bright and colorful fish sculptures (see above) donated by local artist, Stuart Buehler. We are very appreciative of this generous contribution to the Watershed Center.

We've had some staffing changes this year. Robert Will retired this fall after 15 years of working on many of our projects as a Fuels and GPS technician. We haven't quite let him go though, as he'll be training someone to take over his work this winter. Both Bonnie Bennett and Mitzi Rants Wickman took leave from their work at the SRRC to bring new babies into our community. We're hoping they and their little ones come back to work when they're all ready. Sam Berry and Maria Mullins joined us as Program Staff this past summer and will be staying on through next summer, helping with water monitoring, noxious weeds and other programs.

The Watershed Center has been occupying the old school in Sawyers Bar for over 12 years now. Our membership and fundraising drives contribute significantly towards our ability to operate the Watershed Center, and your contributions are much appreciated. We couldn't have a better office and meeting space.

Financial Report	
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Annual Revenue	
Contributions	\$6,976.00
Earned Income	\$6,420.00
Grants and Agreements	\$354,873.00
Miscellaneous Income	\$509.00
Total Revenue	\$368,779.00
Annual Expenses	
Administration	\$43,559.00
Contract Labor	\$7,851.00
Miscellaneous	\$2,502.00
Operating Expenses	\$29,710.00
Payroll Expenses	\$238,511.00
Materials and Supplies	\$12,314.00
Travel Expenses	\$9,033.00
Total Expense	\$343,479.00
Net Income	\$25,300.00
Volunteer and In-Kind Contribution	\$110,349.00



Thank You to our 2013 Members, Volunteers, Donors, and Funders!



Noxious weed crew and volunteers gather for lunch after crossing the river at Indian Bottom and digging the Oblong Spurge invaders like the bunch in Josh's hand.

Thank you to all the people who donated what they could of their time, materials or money.

All contributions, whether by becoming an SRRC member, sending us a donation, or volunteering your services to the SRRC and the Salmon River, are hugely appreciated.

Thank You New and Renewed Members for 2013:

Spring Chinook Memberships - Danny Hagans & Pacific Watershed Associates, Frank Colver

Green Sturgeon Memberships - Robert Gale Family, Frank Berry, David & Paula Rose, Creek & BettyAnn Hanauer, Cavin Family

Coho Memberships - Sharon Hoppas & George Martin, Lynn Halpern, Don & Elaine Dvorak, Mary Ciavonne & John Ziegler, Robbie & Richard Van De Water, Tributary Whitewater Tours, Dee Tolson, Michael Tierra, Tom Carlson & Jenn Sowerwine, Mary Sobol, Sandy Bar Ranch, RAM Offset Printing, John Moriarty, Bill & Patsy Marcy, Glen Lyons & Nancy Gerdt, Nick & Marilyn Letsos, Earl & Trace Landberg, Jan Kieth & Gene Millburn, Jim & Suzanne Jennings, Shirley Hugdahl, Chris Hatton & Tera Palmer, Les & Barbara Harling, Jon Grunbaum, Carl & Marie Flarity, Patricia Girczyc & Steven Durham, Sibyl Diver, Don Comstock, Mat & Myrna Berry, Bob & Judy Beaver, Denise & Bob Bearding

Fall Chinook Memberships - Kristy & Peter Sturgis, Don & Carol Monkrud, Don Flickenger & Jennifer Silveira, Hope Woodward, Diane Wickstrom, Jared & Wilson Strote, Cedar & Mahaj Seegar, Steve Robinson, Ahni & Kit Robinson, Liz Pullen, Felice Pace, Dennis Grady, Amber & Andy Getz, Adam & Christine Furlanic, Jim Ferrara, Yvonne Everett, Donna England, Pat & Joe Dougherty, Brett & Laura Denight, Susanne Cardiff, Foster Boone

Winter Steelhead Memberships - Peter Leaf Kleinert, Ron & Janet Harding, Matt Van Scoyoc, David & Valerie Van Scoyoc, Thalia Truesdell, Karin & Terry Swanson, Mary E. Strote, Barry Snyder & Karen Anderson, Lee & Sandy Smith, Melissa & Bill Schroeder, Martin Peterson, Pearlringi Family, Maria Mullins, Sarah Jacobs, Jerry & Charlotte Denight, Ralph Del Pino, Clara & Alan Crockett Sr., John Brennan

Thank you to our Funders:

CA Department of Fish & Wildlife, CA Department of Food & Agriculture, CA Department of Conservation, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, US Fish & Wildlife Service, US Bureau of Reclamation, US Forest Service, Grants Clearing House, Karuk Tribe, CA Fire Safe Council, Firedoll Foundation, Norcross Wildlife Foundation, MidKlamath Watershed Council, Ford Family Foundation, Sidney Stern Memorial Fund, Patagonia World Trout Initiative, and SRRC Members like You!

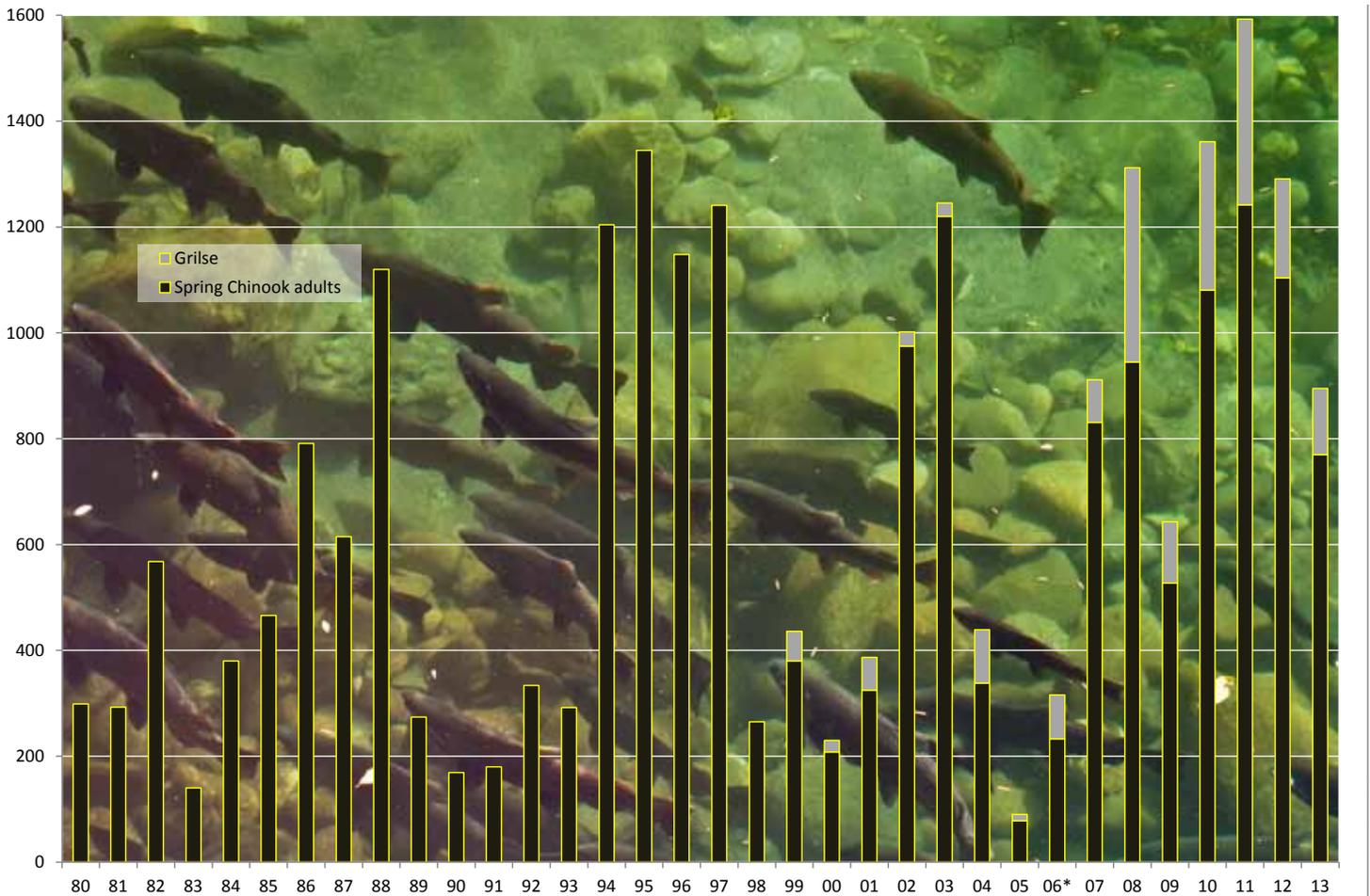
The Salmon River Restoration Council's mission is to assess, protect, restore and maintain the Salmon River ecosystems with the active participation of the local community, focusing on restoration of the anadromous fisheries resources and the development of a sustainable economy.



Salmon River Restoration Council
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Salmon River Spring Chinook Population Totals 1980 - 2013
Grilse counted separately only since 1999, *06 Estimation due to inability to survey 35% of the river because of wildfires.
Photo by Jan Jaop