



# A CREEK RUNS THROUGH US

Newsletter of the Salmon Protection And Watershed Network of Turtle Island Restoration Network [seaturtles.org/salmon](http://seaturtles.org/salmon)

## The Salmon Are Coming!

**F**OUR SPECIES OF SALMON have entered Marin County's Lagunitas Creek (through Tomales Bay from the Pacific Ocean) to mark the beginning of the spawning season. Wildlife enthusiasts may have the opportunity to catch a glimpse of pink salmon, a species rarely seen in California.

"We watched a pair of salmon spawning right from the upstream side of Shafter Bridge at the Leo Cronin Viewing Area on Saturday that clearly were not the coho we normally see," said Catie Clune, Turtle Island Restoration Network's education specialist. "While the behavior was similar to coho spawning, the dark black and red bars on the side of the male indicated it was a chum salmon."

"In my 25 years of watching and studying salmon in Marin, I have never seen a pink salmon and this weekend was only the second time I have seen a chum salmon in the area," said Turtle Island Restoration Network's executive director, Todd Steiner. "Nature always brings exciting new discoveries."

The sighting of chinook salmon in the Lagunitas Watershed marks the start of their fall run. California Coastal chinook salmon have been listed as 'threatened' under the United States Endangered Species Act since 1999.

The largest remaining population of Central California Coast coho salmon occurs in Marin County in the Lagunitas Creek Watershed, but remains critically endangered.

"The arrival of the pink salmon suggests this is going to be an interesting year," said Preston Brown, director of watershed conservation with Turtle Island Restoration Network. "Now we keep our fingers crossed that it will be a good year for endangered coho salmon."

## Nursery Days



**B**E A PART of our native plant nursery team and help us germinate seeds, plant seedlings and cuttings, transplant mature plants. Learn what it takes to care for thousands of native plants. Afterwards, take a stroll with us as we collect wild seeds along one of many local trails.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about native plants and help restore wildlands. Please join us for a great time with skilled botanists. No experience needed. Free!

**Every Friday from 10 am to 4 pm.**

RSVP by emailing [audrey@tirn.net](mailto:audrey@tirn.net)

**Meet at our office:**

9255 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.,  
Olema, CA 94950



JENNIFER NICOLE BUCHANAN / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

*Chinook salmon*

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife staff noticed the first spawning nests in Lagunitas Creek in late September. They saw fish they suspected were pink salmon.

Pink salmon are uncommon south of Washington State, and are rarely seen in California streams. This year, pink salmon have been reported from as far south as Pescadero in San Mateo County.

The four species of salmon spotted to date are coho, chinook, pink, and chum salmon.

## Rewilding the Golf Course For Endangered Species and Humans

ON NOVEMBER 14, 2017, after a raucous public hearing attended by nearly 300 residents, Marin County Supervisors voted unanimously to purchase the 157-acre San Geronimo Golf Course to create public open space and to benefit endangered coho salmon. Opponents of the purchase included an organized vocal minority of golfers, anti-tax proponents and private property rights followers.

Thankfully, our Salmon Protection and Watershed (SPAWN) program team organized our supporters: folks like you. Together, we generated over 1,800 individual supporter letters to Marin County Supervisors and scores of people showed up to testify at the hearing, including elementary and high school students, environmentalists, parents, cyclists, and residents of Marin who see the value in open space and protecting our resources.

We also obtained letters of support and resolutions from government officials, agencies and organizations including the Marin Municipal Water District, Lagunitas Technical Advisory Committee and the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture.

Today, Marin's coho salmon and steelhead trout populations hang on by a thread—teetering on the edge of extinction. This golf course is one of the last places in the San Francisco Bay Area that provides nesting grounds for

endangered coho. Why? Because it is one of the few places where we haven't developed right up to the water's edge.

SPAWN's first project was moving endangered salmon past the Roy's Dam barrier on the San Geronimo Golf Course. Ever since we got the first fish over the dam, one of my visions was to rewild this property so it could provide the ecological services that once supported enormous runs of salmon and steelhead trout.

To rewild is to return an area of land to its natural state. Replacing sod and fill that was trucked in to create the golf course with floodplains and native plants will allow the San Geronimo Creek to once again meander across the valley floor as it had done for thousands of years. This kind of restoration work will give refuge to baby salmon who need slow, quiet waters to survive storm events, and provide sheltered paths for bobcats and fox to move from the ridgeline to the main creek below.

Permanent protection as open space will preserve over \$1,000,000 of public and private restoration funds our SPAWN program has raised and already invested on the property, and assure continuation of the \$3,000,000 of enhancements currently in process. These restorations will ensure that everyone will be welcome to visit and watch the coho salmon spawn around Roy's Dam.



*An elementary school student speaks to the Marin County Board of Supervisors' about how endangered coho salmon habitat should be protected.*

This purchase benefits the San Geronimo Valley community and all Marin residents by one day providing safe and healthy walking connectors, saving over 49 million gallons every year of municipal water used to water grass, eliminating the use of fertilizers and pesticides that get into our water and air, re-creating floodplains that will help reduce flooding of downstream creekside houses, and allowing for the planting of redwood trees that help fight climate change.

We applaud Marin County Supervisor Rodoni for taking the initiative and thank all Marin County Supervisors for their support. We view this purchase as a heightened commitment to protect endangered salmon, which in turn creates an opportunity to build a more collaborative relationship between Turtle Island Restoration Network and the County.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Steiner".

TODD STEINER, Executive Director  
Salmon Protection And Watershed Network  
Turtle Island Restoration Network

## Give a Unique Gift

IT'S HOLIDAY SEASON! We want to offer you a unique present that will live for hundreds of years. Our 10,000 Redwoods Project provides an innovative way for you to buy a tree in honor of your loved ones, and directly engages in climate action. Why redwoods? Redwood trees store more carbon per hectare than any other tree on Earth. Coastal redwood trees



sequester triple the above ground carbon of any other type of tree, making them a key player in mitigating climate change. When you buy a redwood tree for your family, friends or colleagues they will receive: Certificate of adoption; Tree name selection; GPS location of their tree; and a Picture of the tree on our website. Visit [10000redwoods.org](http://10000redwoods.org) to purchase your redwood tree gift today!



*Our native plant nursery was started by a group of dedicated volunteers, pioneered by Mel Wright, Bill Teufel, and Nancy Hanson (pictured left to right).*

## Holiday Gift Ideas that Benefit SPAWN

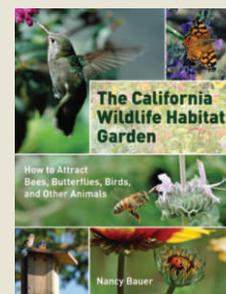


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**SPAWN  
Hat**  
\$21

100% organic cotton; in black



**Calif. Wildlife  
Habitat Garden  
Book \$30**

A 250-page guide on how to transform your garden to attract bees, butterflies & birds.

Order online on our secure server at [seaturtles.org/shop](http://seaturtles.org/shop), call 1-800-859-7283 or send a check to SPAWN, P.O. Box 370, Forest Knolls, CA 94933.

*All prices include shipping & handling*

## We Got A New Truck!



In September 2017, we purchased a new truck to help our team with projects around the

San Francisco Bay Area, like habitat restoration, project maintenance, biological monitoring, and educational events. We want to thank the members of our SPAWN program. Their contributions go toward general care and maintenance of the truck, which ultimately helps us complete important environmental projects.

## We Love Our Volunteers!

**T**HE SALMON Protection and Watershed Network (SPAWN), a program of Turtle Island Restoration Network, was built by volunteers. We continue to see some of the most inspiring people return week after week to help restore the San Geronimo Valley watershed. SPAWN's bread and butter is habitat restoration, removing invasive plants and planting natives that we have grown from seed. We have dozens of folks from around Marin County and beyond that volunteer each month.

Our volunteers bring a variety of talent and know-how to SPAWN beyond landscape restoration. This season, we're highlighting five SPAWN volunteers.

**MEL WRIGHT** was a teacher for many years and is a talented carpenter as well as a native plant expert. He built much of the nursery infrastructure and propagated thousands of plants as our volunteer nursery manager for more than a decade. Mel shows up to all of our nursery days and restoration events and still finds time to co-lead the Broom Service group which removes invasive Scotch and French Broom from West Marin.

**BILL TEUFEL** was a doctor and now he spends his time cracking jokes in the nursery. He always adds cheer to our

nursery volunteer days. Sometimes he reads us excerpts from his favorite books. To see a video of Bill reading to us, visit [seaturtles.org/newssection/spawnvolunteers](http://seaturtles.org/newssection/spawnvolunteers).

**NANCY HANSON** is a dedicated SPAWN volunteer. She also leads the Zen Weeding program at Samuel P. Taylor State Park and heads the crew of volunteers that care for Oval Park in Woodacre. Nancy is a bundle of enthusiasm and we always appreciate her steady attention to detail.

**KEN WU** first connected with us as a smolt-monitoring volunteer. He quickly branched out to volunteering with the Broom Service group and the nursery. We appreciate Ken's keenness to help out in any way he can.

**ALEXIS FINEMAN** travels over the hill from San Anselmo to help out at our volunteer nursery days every Friday and has joined our restoration workshops on the weekends. We love the drive she has to advocate for the protection of existing native habitat gardens in her own neighborhood.

Live in or around the North Bay area in California? We hope you'll volunteer with us soon. Check out our events calendar for upcoming volunteer dates: [seaturtles.org/events](http://seaturtles.org/events).

Turtle Island Restoration Network  
Salmon Protection and Watershed Network  
P.O. Box 370  
Forest Knolls, CA 94933

**ABOUT SPAWN** TURTLE ISLAND RESTORATION NETWORK'S SALMON PROTECTION AND WATERSHED NETWORK (SPAWN) program works to protect endangered coho salmon and steelhead trout, and the environment on which we all depend. The protection of these keystone species leads to the protection of all the wildlife of our community, and indeed, the protection of our land and us.

SPAWN uses a multi-faceted approach, including grassroots action, habitat restoration, policy development, environment education, collaboration with other organizations, media campaigns, and strategic legal action.

Visit [seaturtles.org/salmon](http://seaturtles.org/salmon) to learn more.



## Take A Creekwalk With Us

**E**ach winter we look forward to following the endangered coho salmon as they return upstream. It is the best chance for people to more deeply connect with the coho's struggle. Often in awe of their determination and fight, creekwalks provide the perfect opportunity to learn more about our present day struggle to protect these iconic fish before they disappear!

With the first hard rains, comes the beginning of spawning season for coho salmon. The Salmon Protection and Watershed Network (SPAWN) program of Turtle Island Restoration Network offers creekwalks to the surrounding community.

SPAWN naturalists lead the creekwalks in the Lagunitas Creek Watershed, home to the largest remaining run of wild Central California Coast Coho. Our tours explore many sites throughout the watershed in an effort to teach participants about the ecology of our endangered coho salmon and their ancient connection to coastal redwoods. We also learn about native plants, animals, and anything else we encounter along the way.

We offer tours on Saturdays through December and January, as well as a few additional tours on the holidays. We suggest a \$15 donation per person on our public tours OR a \$35 annual SPAWN membership earns you a free family creek walk. We are always happy to set up a private tour, just email us to discuss your group's needs. We typically ask for a \$200 donation for private tours, or an exchange for a group volunteer project.

For questions email Catie Clune at [catie@tirn.net](mailto:catie@tirn.net).

Sign up for a creekwalk by visiting [seaturtles.org/events/creekwalks](http://seaturtles.org/events/creekwalks)

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Fall/Winter 2017

Newsletter of the Salmon Protection  
And Watershed Network

*A program with Turtle Island Restoration Network*



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Masthead photo: Susan Farrar  
Design: Hummingbird Design Studio

♻️ 30% post-consumer waste ♻️