



A CREEK RUNS THROUGH US

Newsletter of the Salmon Protection And Watershed Network of Turtle Island Restoration Network

SpawnUSA.org

SPAWN Secures Funding to Complete Habitat Restoration on San Geronimo Golf Course

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT of Fish and Wildlife's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program recently awarded SPAWN two critical grants to save coho salmon from the brink of extinction. We thank the agency for making the restoration of Marin's Lagunitas Creek Watershed a priority. The grants to SPAWN are included in a total of \$665,237 for three projects all located in the watershed.

To accomplish the work funded through these grants, SPAWN will also rely on community partnerships and dedicated volunteer support. The grants support floodplain and instream habitat restoration on San Geronimo Creek that runs through the San Geronimo Golf Course, which we thank for being a committed and active partner in developing the project. SPAWN will design a plan to restore this section of the water-

shed, and provide a welcome refuge for salmon so they can migrate with ease, survive floods, and have cold water to stay healthy during hot weather. This project is part of a larger golf course restoration design that is currently underway. When both projects are completed the entire stretch of San Geronimo Creek on the golf course will be restored, improving crucial salmon habitat and the Course's sustainability.

"We believe this is a wonderful opportunity for San Geronimo Golf Course to do our small part to help protect the endangered salmon," said Jennifer Kim, Executive Director of the Course.

The second grant to SPAWN will restore redwood forest and enhance riparian habitat at the former Redi-mix Concrete Plant along Lagunitas Creek. SPAWN will remove an unused parking lot and re-create 12,000 square feet of riparian habitat. Additionally, SPAWN will be planting 1,000 trees and removing invasive plants throughout a one-mile stretch downstream of the plant to help restore conifer forest to the area. These projects rely on community support and are a wonderful way to help the watershed and the salmon! Email Preston Brown at preston@spawnusa.org to be added to our monthly volunteer list and get involved.

State of Coho Talks



MARIN COUNTY'S coho salmon are going extinct, with the latest count of juveniles (smolts) heading to sea at catastrophically low numbers. In a series of talks, Dr. Doug Karpa, Turtle Island Restoration Network's legal program director, addressed the current state of our coho. Although the current population has averaged 500 adults for the last two decades, a small decline puts the population in great danger. To thrive, salmon need clean streambeds for spawning, clear, cold water to hatch and mature in, and large woody structures to provide shelter from large winter storms. Today the biggest threat going forward is excessive development along streams. Now it's time to put in place common-sense, science-based rules governing development. Marin coho salmon need you! To join our movement to raise public awareness and support, email Doug Karpa at dkarpa@spawnusa.org.



MEL WRIGHT

Marin Youth Demand Protection of Coho Salmon

SPAWN'S EFFORTS to alert the public and demand science-based, common-sense regulations to protect the critically endangered coho salmon's stream habitat has ignited a firestorm of action from Marin's youth—giving us all hope in a healthy future for the environment and revitalizing the environmental movement of Marin!

High schoolers from throughout Marin County have initiated the #SaveMarins Coho social media campaign, which includes a photo petition where people share photos of themselves holding a sign voicing their concerns about the coho (facebook.com/salmonprotection). The

goal is to have 5,000 photos by the end of summer from Marin residents and concerned citizens who want to prevent the extinction of the last run of wild coho salmon in the Bay Area. An online sign-on petition is also gathering steam—add your signature here: seaturtles.org/saveourcoho.

Many of these high schoolers (juniors and seniors) will be voters in the next Marin Supervisors election, and even those that don't are beginning their organizing at home—educating and motivating their parents to support efforts to create a healthy future for them and their younger siblings.

The future is what is at stake. Will any salmon still be around to spawn in our creeks and inspire future generations? I am sad to report the answer is “no,” unless current or newly elected Supervisors rein in development that continues to destroy the already degraded habitat of Marin's coho salmon—now being regularly approved in the state's best remaining stream for this beleaguered species.

For nearly three decades the Marin conservation community has politely asked Supervisors to take action on this issue—without adequate results. It is clear from the last year's Stream Conservation Area battles with Marin Supervisors that many conservationists of my generation have accepted that the “best we can get” are lousy rules, not based on science, that in my opinion would be a death sentence for Marin's coho.

Now, my hopes are soaring as Marin's youth are off the sidelines, stepping up and demanding a brighter future.

TODD STEINER

When Drake High School student Ryan Horn isn't in the creek helping SPAWN monitor salmon, he is organizing his fellow students to demand action. “I am not going to sit by and let this vital species go extinct. I want to make sure that the supervisors hear our message loud and clear. Save these fish for the important role they play in our ecosystem. Save these fish because they are as much a part of California as we are. But most importantly save these fish for future generations to enjoy.”

Ellie Evans of at Tamalpais High School eloquently expressed her views at SPAWN's community meeting in Corte Madera, stating, “As a youth member of the community, I'm speaking on behalf of the future generations to come. The generations where, if we don't act now, salmon won't be a part of our future. We youth can't solely depend upon our parents to solve this issue... Coming together and showing political representatives how much we care is what's needed, because frankly the government won't do anything unless they believe people care.” You can view her entire speech here <http://bit.ly/ellieevans>



Education, Community & Corporate Days

SPAWN currently has openings available to host school and community groups for customized watershed experiences from habitat restoration to creek walks to working in our native plant nursery. SPAWN can develop programming to fit your group's needs and abilities. Currently, transportation grants are available to enable low-income youth to participate.

Please contact us for details. Everyone is welcome.

We also have corporate group offerings for volunteering with Turtle Island Restoration Network that can include volunteer activities and team building. Spend a day in the luscious Lagunitas watershed with hands-on restoration projects to help protect our wild coho

habitat. Your company will have the chance to make a difference locally. Ask us about opportunities to print custom Volunteer Day t-shirts with your company logo or arrange a deli catered lunch. Contact Education Specialist Catie Clune at catie@spawnusa.org to learn more and get involved.

Legions of Lamprey Stark Contrast to Seldom Seen Salmon

Under state and federal Endangered Species Permits, SPAWN monitors all fish migrating downstream out of the San Geronimo Creek during the spring-summer out-migration season, checking traps seven days a week for approximately three months with the help of dedicated interns. Below is a report of this season's findings collected thus far.



Part of one day's catch of lampreys following last week's rainstorm.

AN EARLY APRIL RAINSTORM washed native wildlife downstream into SPAWN's smolt traps. SPAWN biologists, interns and volunteers counted coho salmon, steelhead trout and Pacific lampreys in the smolt trap located on the San Geronimo Creek.

The oft-present but rarely seen Pacific lamprey is a primitive, slender eel-like creature that spends part of its life spawning in the freshwater San Geronimo Creek. In freshwater, it is brown in color, but when it is in the ocean, blue to black in color.

"Seeing a large number of lampreys in our own backyard creeks is exciting," said Dr. Alex Hearn, Turtle Island's Conservation Science Director. SPAWN Intern Michael Rhodes agreed saying, "I've never seen this many lampreys before."

In the three days following the down-pour, 416 juvenile lampreys, 11 coho smolts, 141 steelhead smolts, and two adult steelhead (an unusual find) were captured, counted and re-released

unharmed as of mid-April. This year, SPAWN has seen a significant increase in the number of steelhead smolts but fewer coho smolts were seen than last year.

Despite the legions of lampreys counted and a marked increase in steelhead, SPAWN biologists remain concerned that fewer of our native, endangered coho salmon smolts have been seen.

Todd Steiner, executive director of SPAWN, believes this change is a cause for alarm. "Coho smolt numbers are abysmal, and yet we are still seeing plenty of steelhead trout. This is what you see when the stream system is breaking down," he said. "Steelhead trout can survive in more polluted and simplified streams than coho salmon, which are more sensitive to human altered creeks."

Please take action by making a call for coho and telling your Marin County Board of Supervisors that you would like to see a science-based streamside ordinance put in place to protect what few coho salmon remain. Visit SeaTurtles.org/savewildcoho.



SPAWN Biologist Dr. Alex Hearn, SPAWN Intern Michael Rhodes & visitors at San Geronimo Creek outmigrant trap.

Shop at the Turtle Island Store



SPAWN T-SHIRT
Black
Men's & Women's
S, M, L, XL
\$28



SPAWN HAT
100% organic cotton—
navy blue
\$21



RAINGARDEN SIGN
"This Garden Harvests Rainwater"
\$18



PEWTER SALMON LAPEL PIN
\$11

All prices include shipping.
Order online on our secure server at SeaTurtles.org/Shop or send a check to SPAWN, P.O. Box 370 Forest Knolls, CA 94933.

Leave a Legacy for Coho Salmon

THROUGH A BEQUEST to the Salmon Protection and Watershed Network in your will and other estate plans, you can leave a legacy for coho salmon. Visit seaturtles.org/bequest for details and recommended language, or call us at 1-800-859-SAVE x105 for information on including a bequest to SPAWN in your will, adding a simple codicil to your existing will, and other ways to give through your estate. All information discussed is confidential. Thank you for considering this important way to give.

Turtle Island Restoration Network
 Salmon Protection and Watershed Network
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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, and collaboration with other organizations, media campaigns, and strategic legal action.

Visit SpawnUSA.Org to learn more.

Make a Call for Coho!

You can help save Marin's endangered coho salmon by taking two simple actions:

1. Call (415) 473-7331 and ask the supervisor representing your district to put in place a commonsense, science-based streamside ordinance to protect salmon.
2. Join our social media campaign to #SaveMarinsCoho! Download and print out the sentence starter kit here: SeaTurtles.org/cohophoto. Then, take a photo with the sign and upload it to Facebook or Twitter using the hashtag #SaveMarinsCoho to be part of the coho conservation movement.



Join Today!

Become a member of SPAWN with a donation of any size and help us protect and restore the wild, endangered coho salmon in West Marin. SPAWN's successful conservation efforts are all made possible with the generous support of our members and more than 700 volunteers each year. Your membership includes a FREE naturalist-led Creekwalk for four people. Please visit SeaTurtles.org/salmon, use the enclosed envelope, or call us toll-free at 800-859-SAVE x101 and join today!

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