



December 2020

*The Association of NW Steelheaders Anglers dedicated to enhancing and protecting fisheries and their habitats for today and the future.*

### **Cancelled - Sandy River Chapter December 2020 meeting.**

With Oregon Covid-19 numbers where they are, lack of broad availability of a vaccine, State and Local restrictions on social activities, and other unknowns it is not practical for us to hold a highly social activity like one of our meetings, in the near future.

We hope to be able to recommence in 2021. We will keep you informed here and on our Facebook page.

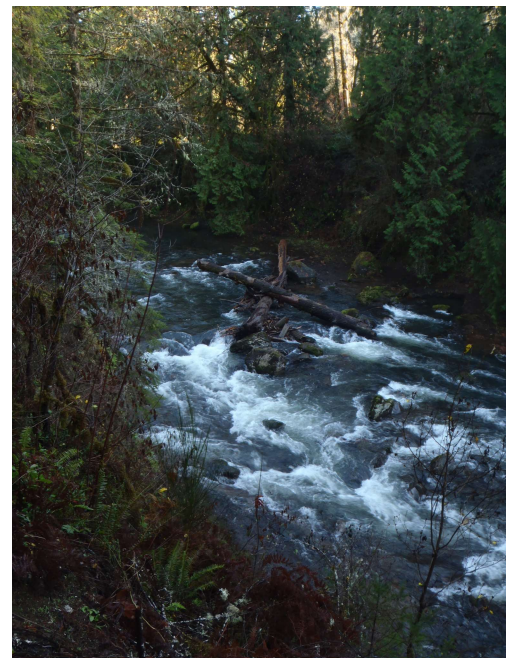
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### **One Last Cast**

Jim Cathcart (aka Navigator)

Sometimes fishing is just finding a place to eat your sandwich. I had one such trip recently where the weather called out to do some fishing but river conditions and run timings were not at their prime. But not wanting to forgo the opportunity I made a plan. First and foremost was to get out in a relaxing way. Sleep in, have a nice breakfast, get the fishing gear in order, pack a sandwich and brew an extra cup of coffee for the road. Either the fish – late run Coho salmon in this case – were going to be there and waiting or not. (Turned out not.) The second part was to seek out water high in the system as that was going to be in the best condition to fish.

I arrived at the creek at just before the crack of Noon. The main parking spot had a few rigs; fellow fisherfolk that had got up earlier with a greater sense of optimism of finding fish. I dropped back about a quarter of a mile to my own spot. It had been years since I last fished these parts and I was pleasantly reminded on just how nice this area is. Tall trees of Douglas-fir and western redcedar mixed with mature big leaf maple and an infrequent alder. An understory of wild hazelnut; forgiving in its limberness. Most of the leaves had fallen – the trail leading to the creek had become a soft mat of big leaf maple. I could hear the creek's cascade as soon as I entered the forest and my spirits – already high due to



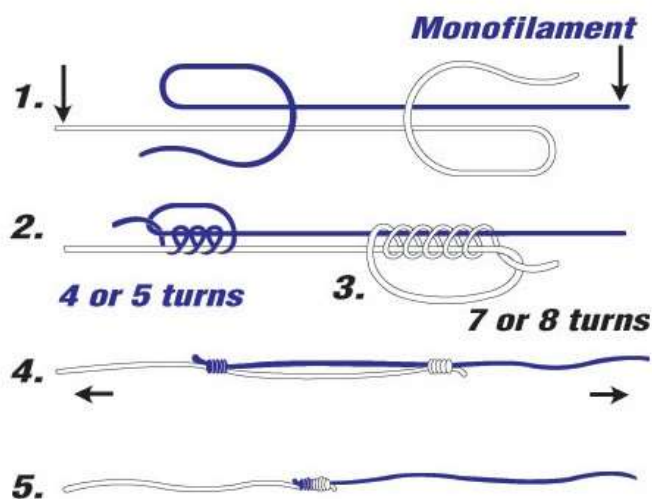
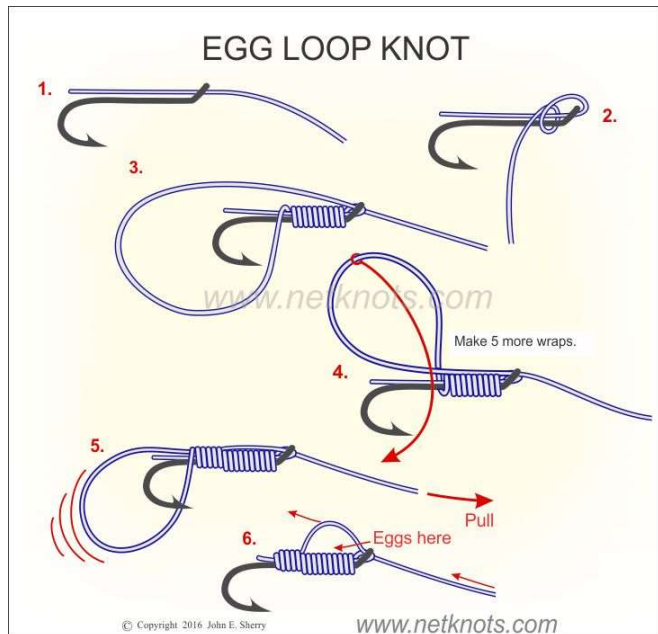
this most beautiful fall day – lifted even further as the sound of the creek grew nearer. Soon I was looking down from a bluff to the clear water at bank full width – perfect conditions for moving pods of Coho salmon. My only question of the moment was to figure out a way to get down. But many a fisher have proceeded before me and soon I found the butt sliding trail down to the creek's edge.



I carried two rods – one for bobber and bait in case I found a deeper hole and one for casting a spinner. The first hole I fished called for the spinner. The light was a set of contrasts – bright sun streaming through the treetops to pockets of shade that blended with the color of the water. Even with polarized sunglasses the glare and shadows made it hard to follow my line through the run or watch my rod tip signal the working of the vibrating spinner. The creek was kind to me and gave back my spinner when I did find a mossy rock or grassy edge.

I worked myself downstream. Exploring was the name of the game now as this section of the creek was new to me. After a few cranes of the neck along the bluff, I came across the next accessible hole – this one deep below a beautiful cascade. I worked my 3/8's bobber and glob of iridescent red eggs through the likely seams and rocky ledges. No signs of fish, no bobber down. Just the beauty of the creek. It was then and there I decided to enjoy my sandwich.

## Double Uni-knot Braid to Mono





# Salmon Spawning Habitat: It's Good to be Complex



By Katelyn Hale, Community Engagement Specialist | November 2020

<https://sandyriver.org/salmon-spawning-habitat-its-good-to-be-complex/>

## Part 1 of 2: Salmon Spawning on Still Creek



*A log jam protects a stream bank, and provides fish habitat, along a curve in Still Creek.*

On a beautiful October day, Still Creek was full of autumnal magic. The sunlight shone through the golden foliage, twinkled on the rippling clear water, and illuminated– what is that? The silhouettes of giant fish swimming through shallow pools! Spring Chinook salmon are spawning and it is a sight to behold.

Council member Howards Schaller joined me on a tour of Still Creek, a tributary of Sandy River located near the town of Rhododendron, OR, over 100 river miles upstream from the Pacific Ocean. Why are we here? In the late 1990s, Sandy River partners identified Still Creek on their list of priority streams for restoring Sandy River salmon habitat. In fact, Still Creek was identified as one of the highest priority streams for restoring wild Chinook salmon in the Sandy River basin by its partners in 2006. Multiple partners, including SRWC, implemented restoration projects over the past two decades, [including our salmon habitat restoration project in 2013](#).

As we walked upstream, Howard pointed out the results of various habitat restoration projects to keep the stream and its banks a complex place. These include placing large pieces of wood in the stream to provide fish with protection from predators. It also includes restoring native stream-side trees and shrubs, which provides shade to keep stream water cool. These different types of restoration projects make it great for spawning salmon and their eggs that hatch the next spring.





***There are multiple log weirs, or low dams, along Still Creek.***

### **Log weirs**

A 'weir' is low, human-made dam that helps regulate the flow of a creek. These weirs were built to create deep pools and areas of slower-moving water. These pools are where salmon migrating up or downstream can rest and hide from predators.

See how this giant log looks like it just fell over?



***A log across Still Creek can create more dynamic areas for habitat during high-flow events.***

Take another look: at the base of the tree. There's a metal cable drilled through the trunk.



***Evidence of helicopter-aided restoration: the metal cable drilled through the tree trunk.***

This log, with its rootwad attached, was flown in here with a helicopter. These projects were done to restore natural processes of a dynamic landscape. In fact, we saw a few trees that had blown over in the windstorm last month. These fallen trees will also impact the flow of the stream and provide lots of cover for juvenile salmon. Howard & I observed multiple adult salmon upstream of the jams, and were happy to see that these new log jams were passable by these amazing fish.



## Log jams

Log jams are another common restoration tactic we use. These are large structures made of logs and tree root wads that create many different benefits throughout the seasons. Log jams help absorb the energy of a stream, slowing it down and stopping erosion in key areas. Log jams are great for fish habitat, too. They often also give migrating salmon & trout a place to rest, create good habitat for the insects they eat, and provide protective cover for juvenile salmon.

For more info on why log jams are the jam, check out [our educational short video](#) another one of our project sites not far from Still Creek.

Like many tributaries of the Sandy River, including the Sandy itself, Still Creek is a dynamic body of water. The creek often floods its surrounding area. This of course is a natural phenomenon, yet climate change is impacting those patterns. Fast waters move boulders, rocks downstream. Erosion occurs, but that is where more cobble and gravel come from. These restoration projects are “designed to be dynamic,” Howard says. Instead of fighting natural processes with dams, pipes, and other constraining infrastructure, we aim to work with natural energies and processes. We aim to keep things dynamic, so that these amazingly resilient animals can thrive.

# A Salmon's Spawning is the End & The Beginning



By Katelyn Hale, Community Engagement Specialist | November 2020

<https://sandyriver.org/a-salmons-spawning-is-the-end-the-beginning/>

## Part 2 of 2: Salmon Spawning on Still Creek

**An-ad-rom-ous** : Chinook salmon are anadromous fish, meaning that they are born in freshwater, spend a portion of their lives in saltwater, then return to freshwater to spawn. Five species of Pacific salmon, as well as Steelhead Trout, are anadromous.



Chinook salmon are a keystone species for the greater ecosystem that covers the entire Pacific Northwest! These are the salmon that orca whales chase after off the coast of Washington. These are the same salmon that bald eagles dive for at the Sandy River Delta. After their incredible journey from these home waters, out to the ocean, and then back again, it's the least we can do to help improve their chances of spawning and make their home waters more welcoming.

Last month I joined retired fish

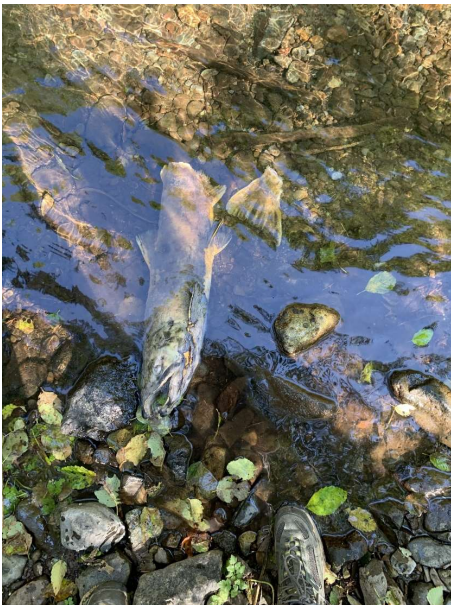
biologist and Council member Howard Schaller for a tour of Still Creek, a tributary of the Sandy River over a hundred river miles from the Pacific Ocean. Just like their ancestors, Chinook salmon have traveled all the way back from the Pacific to spawn in their home waters.

Howard explained a bit about how these salmon, in their final stages of life, build their nests. After swimming hundreds or even thousands of miles, female salmon find a place in the stream to create a nest. They use their tails and bodies to move larger gravel (or “cobble”) into a pile. One way to spot a redd is the color of the gravel and cobble stones will be much brighter, because in the process of digging their redd, the fish almost scrub the stones clean. The female fish will lay eggs in the pit, and a male will fertilize them. The female will cover the nest back up with cobble while the male guards the redd so no other males try to fertilize it. The two take turns guarding the nest until the end of their life.

These fish get one chance to spawn, and that's it. If they make it all the way up here to spawn, they die shortly afterwards. As their bodies decompose, other animals come along to feed on them: bears, birds, insects, (oh my!). With their eggs fertilized in their redd, and their bodies expired, the circle of life continues to turn.

### ***Lighter colored cobble in Still Creek show signs of redd building.***

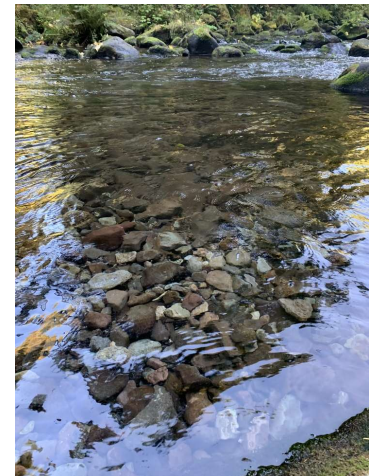
Still Creek is a huge resource for spawning spring Chinook salmon, no doubt in response to all of the restoration work over the past two decades and the removal of Marmot dam in 2008. In 2016, ODFW counted 435 redds in Still Creek, more than any other creek in the Sandy River Basin. This is one creek in this area with the highest density of redds, i.e. most spring Chinook salmon spawning (for what it's worth, the other creeks with a high-density of redds, at least in 2016, are Clear Fork Creek and Final Falls on Salmon River).



SRWC works with government agencies who collect data on spawning salmon. For example, as Howard and I were talking, we saw two ODFW staff walking the stream, conducting a spawning survey. They cut the tails off of the deceased fish to show they have been counted. This data is then released the next year, and influences a long list of decisions made by ODFW and other agencies.

Chinook salmon are critical for the natural ecosystems, and for our social and cultural ways of life. These fish are the descendants of fish that have been here for millenia, and are central to the spiritual and cultural identities of indigenous nations throughout this region. We all need these fish in so many ways that we don't even understand yet. Native and non-native people depend on these fish for their ways of life, from 100 miles out in the Pacific Ocean to just off of Glenn

Otto Park in Troutdale, Oregon. The SRWC aims to support these fish in every life stage in any way we can. That's why we work so hard to maintain and protect their habitat throughout the Sandy River basin.



# Replant the Riverside – 2020 Watershed Celebration



It's been a challenging year for our community, but there's still a lot to celebrate.

For the Clackamas River Basin Council, our work over the years restoring salmon habitat has come to fruition with the highest wild spring Chinook and early-run Coho runs since 1958. Even as we wrap up our Shade Our Streams program – planting over 50 miles of riparian forest – we are starting **a new initiative to Replant the Riverside and help our community recover from this year's devastating wildfires.**

From **Bill Monroes' Facebook** page (in italics) -

*"I didn't want to pick on just 10 friends for this, so am asking everyone to donate to replant our riverside...  
<http://clackamasriver.org/replant-the-riverside/>*

*For each \$10, we can plant a tree and care for it for 5 years so it gets established. Each tree will help shade our streams, provide habitat for wildlife, filter our water, protect our slopes from erosion, and sequester carbon from the air. Please donate to Replant the Riverside, and be proud of your support - SHARE this link on social media to show that you are taking action to Replant the Riverside and tag 10 of your friends to do the same. Thank you!*

*Our Basin Council was unable to get together this year for our annual celebration, but our creative staff developed a wonderful fund-raising event to help rebuild the forests lost in the Clackamas River watershed."*

*And if you don't want to sit through the video, cut straight to the chase:*

*[https://www.paypal.com/donate?token=ZcN6Kwu9Woji3Wk9LJx0mlu2JOs1jxBXK0m10\\_yhm\\_jqcU49GgvV9qMn0sBtPjaKSzPlztxKPRUkNR5s](https://www.paypal.com/donate?token=ZcN6Kwu9Woji3Wk9LJx0mlu2JOs1jxBXK0m10_yhm_jqcU49GgvV9qMn0sBtPjaKSzPlztxKPRUkNR5s)*

Finally, join us as we announce the results of our fundraiser and honor the 2020 Watershed Stewardship Awards: **When: Dec 17, 2020 06:00 PM Pacific Time**

Register in advance for this meeting:

<HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/MEETING/REGISTER/TZCTC-QOQDIQGT3HC18CW-4-FQX5YOPSLQAO>



## Sandy Chapter Board Members

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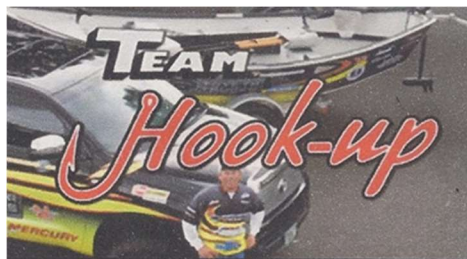
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Co-President	Jeff Stoeger	503-704-7920
Co-President	Greg Reed	503-869-1795
Vice President	Jeff Boughton	
Secretary	Terri Boughton	503-307-2546
Treasurer	Vacant	503-869-1795

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Position	Name	Phone
Eggs to Frye	Mike Myrick	503-281-6438
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<b>River Cleanups</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	-
Sales	Rob Bitney	503-320-9821
Angler Education	Jim Cathcart	503-287-9616

### COMMITTEE HEADS

Position	Name	Phone
Special Events	Steven Rothenbucher	503-257-0039
Website, Content	John Hydorn	503-255-0600



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