



Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited | 2018 Annual Report



From the Incoming Oregon Council Chair

As the new Chair for Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited I thought I should introduce myself with a bit of my history. My family were pioneer people who traveled the Oregon trail to Anacortes, Washington, in the 1880s. They worked in mining, lumber mills, ranching, and later the Forest Service. In the 1920s they moved to Chelan, Washington. I grew up as a country kid in a resort town. I spent a lot of time camping and fishing in the Methow, Okanogan and Wenatchee basins with my maternal grandfather.

Let me share one of my favorite memories: I fished too quickly up around a bend of Gold Creek because I was in a hurry to beat my grandfather to where I was sure there was a big rainbow feeding on fresh salmon eggs. This hole was a spawning pool also favored by the local black bears, so as I got near I slowed my pace, scanning the water and the bank. Then upstream I saw a large gray cat. . . in the water. It was chasing a spawning salmon to another large gray cat at the top of the run. Canada lynx! I watched for I don't know how long till they had captured a fish each and carried them off up the hillside.

At Fairhaven College in Bellingham, I studied biology and chemistry, then pharmacy with a degree from the University of Washington. (Yes, I am a Husky!) In the summers, I did trail building and fire suppression work in the North Cascades, Olympic National Park and the Three Sisters Wilderness. I worked as a hospital pharmacist for 30 years at Peace Health Hospital in Bellingham, then three years for Kaiser Permanente in mental health and drug and alcohol treatment. I am now retired.

A couple of years ago my spouse, Janet, and I traded our home in Tigard for a cabin on the Sandy River. Just far enough up the mountain to enjoy the forest and river but still close to family in the Portland Metro area.

I have been a member of Trout Unlimited for 20+ years, happy to send in my dues and write an occasional letter to my congressman. Since retiring, I have served on the Tualatin Valley TU board, organized stream projects and day fish camps with the Tualatin Riverkeepers, volunteered at the Clackamas River TU summer youth camp (what fun), served on the Clackamas River TU board, and most recently volunteered with the Oregon Council TU as Vice Chair.

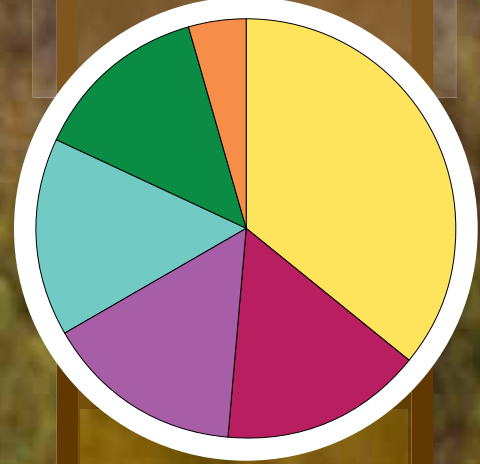
In one of my best dreams I stand in an alpine meadow of big views and a cold clear lake with leaping trout. I cast a perfect loop to a ring 50 feet from shore.

Thank you for all you do to keep the dream of healthy streams and fish for now and always.

Mark Rogers
Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited
Chair

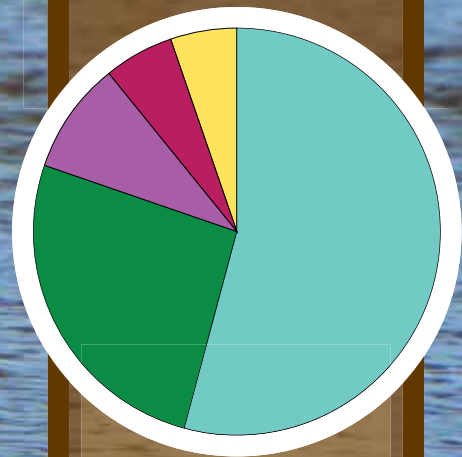


2018 REVENUE



35.9%	REBATES
15.7%	FUNDRAISING
15.3%	CONTRIBUTION
15.3%	SOLICITATION
13.5%	2017 BALANCE
4.3%	NLC STIPEND

2018 EXPENSES



54.3%	COORDINATOR
26.2%	OUTREACH
8.9%	DEVELOPMENT
5.6%	CHAPTERS
5%	MEETINGS

Please use the envelope to contribute to Oregon Trout Unlimited. Your donations support Oregon programs and chapters. Your donation is fully tax deductible.

Kids Camp: A Weekend Whirlwind of Fishing, Conservation and Fun

The warm sun shone bright on a late July morning in the Mount Hood National Forest. Clackamas River Trout Unlimited volunteers—after months of planning—hustled to prepare the site for our annual Youth Fly Fishing Camp. Campers would arrive in just a few hours.

Our task was to change this barren space into an inviting community for about 40 kids and adults. Essentials rolled in by the truckload. The cook tent went up, coolers filled with ice and food. Large containers of water were moved to shady spots under trees. Tents popped up. Portable toilets and hand washing stations were at the ready. Canopies, tables and camp chairs unfolded for fly tying and other educational activities. Lights strung and banners announcing our location staked at the fork in the road. The all-important cornhole game was set up for play! Rods and reels assembled. The vacant space began to resemble a small village, ready to house campers for the next three days and nights.

By late afternoon the campers rolled in—13 boys and two girls, aged 10-14. Family members accompanied some, others camped alone. Mostly they began as strangers, but within minutes forged friendships as gear was unpacked and tents chosen. The environment quickly changed from that of preparation to the energy created by a group of kids ready for an adventure. Our volunteers were also ready and excited. They knew that the next few days would be a whirlwind of coordinated activity, fun and learning for all.

Our camp goal was simply to provide a safe, fun experience for youngsters to learn about fly fishing, fly tying, our watershed and the creatures that inhabit it. We began with an introduction to casting. For some, it was their first time holding a rod. The next day focused on applying those new skills on the nearby Collawash River. Kids also learned about riparian habitat, identifying macro invertebrates and assessing water quality.

One highlight of the camp was a salmon dissection. We fondly refer to this lesson as “knowing your fish guts.” It competed with fly tying for popularity!

A field trip to Fish Lake on Saturday let the kids practice more casting. When the fishing slowed down, catching crawdads became a highly competitive sport.

Our last evening in camp featured an engrossing session on survival strategies. Kids learned about skills and equipment to keep them safe in a challenging environment like the forest that surrounded us.

Sunday morning came all too quickly, but a round of casting golf showed off how much campers had learned. They challenged one another with their casting accuracy. After lunch, campers packed up for their return home.

This annual camp offers fun and educational experiences for everyone, both kids and adult volunteers. The young people learn new skills, meet new friends and spend time on a river in a beautiful environment. For a few days, they experience life in a different way. As volunteers, we experience fly fishing and the environment through the eyes of young people. We are impressed by how quickly they learn, how thoughtful they are, the questions they ask, their enthusiasm and their energy.

We leave camp with a renewed appreciation for those who will become our environmental stewards. And with sincere thanks to all those who contributed time, energy, knowledge, skills and resources to make this amazing experience possible.

Now it's time to begin planning for next year! If you'd like to be involved, learn more at: clackamasrivertu.org.





Welcome to the Rogue

The Rogue River is a uniquely awesome place where massive conservation progress has been made: big-time dam removals, floodplain and channel restorations, too many tree plantings to count. A hotter and drier character differentiates the Rogue from other coastal systems. This distinction is especially evident in its interior valleys, which are most important to fish production. They're also nice places to live. And to grow stuff, like crops and cows.

So what's the problem? It all takes water.

There's broad consensus among fish managers and biologists that insufficient water is the primary factor limiting salmon and steelhead production in the Rogue. That's where TU comes in with our strong track record helping fix low streamflow issues. In Southern Oregon, no other entity is more proactively pursuing water for fish.

TU's flow restoration work in the Rogue is fairly new. Since 2015 we've built partnerships with agricultural and industrial water users, biologists, NGOs and government agencies. The end game is improved flows for fish, but we strive to help people, too. The Rogue's unusually large number of small water rights (allowing stream withdrawals for human uses) makes this a challenge. All this water use happens along spawning and rearing habitats for coho and steelhead—so habitat disappears one water right at a time. But we're working hard and we'll get it figured out.

Sometimes we get an "easy" stream enhancement project—a worthwhile water right held by a single, cooperative party. We're working on one now, which will permanently repurpose a significant water right so it stays in-stream for salmon and steelhead. Other projects like this are out there. We'll find them and make them successful. Because at TU, that's what we do: find creative, collaborative ways to solve problems that help both fish and people.



STREAM Girls

A new partnership program between Trout Unlimited and the Girl Scouts of America is home-grown in Central Oregon. Launched this past summer on the banks of the Fall River, STREAM Girls aims to inspire Girl Scouts, as well as the program's leaders and mentors, to study and steward our local streams and coldwater fisheries. Field trips in autumn and spring connect scouts to river restoration projects, instruct them about fly fishing, and culminate in a summer campout. The curriculum is a great mix of STEM (science education), art and recreation.

"The girls love it," says Melyssa Graeper, TU's Pacific Northwest Volunteer Coordinator. "The program encourages them to get in the water—something they've been told not to do, don't get wet, don't get dirty—and really experience the river as if they are a scientist, an angler, an artist."

The program has served 38 scouts from as far away as Medford. Younger scouts enjoyed day trips to explore the upper and lower Fall River, while older scouts camped and fished the amazing Metolius River. It was all made possible by generous donations from Roundhouse Foundation, Deschutes Redbands TU, and Vernier Science Equipment.

Graeper encourages volunteers to sign up at tu.org/STREAMgirls. "I think the volunteers get even more excited than the kids," she said. "You lead a girl through tying a fly, learning to cast, then catching a fish—and we all remember our first fish! It brings up positive memories."



What's a Steelhead Redd Survey?

There probably isn't a fish species that generates more conversation and opinion than steelhead in Oregon. Anglers of all types spend a big part of their fishing budgets planning, prepping and pursuing steelhead. There are probably just as many opinions on how to improve steelhead populations as there are anglers. One key piece that we can all agree on is how to judge the current state of wild steelhead in various watersheds across the state.

The only way to get good info on wild spawning populations is to count them. As you can imagine, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife lacks sufficient resources to monitor all wild spawning populations of winter steelhead. In the case of Willamette River tributary streams, some reaches have not been sampled for spawning data in almost 20 years.

ODFW recently released a report on sea lion predation, which is driving a high risk of extinction for winter steelhead. However, with limited data on actual spawning activity in tributaries above Willamette Falls, the story was incomplete. The agency had good data on predation of fish below the falls, but the data to support which tributaries were most affected did not exist.

After some calls with Trout Unlimited and other volunteer organizations, TU was able to support spawning surveys in the Molalla and Santiam rivers above the falls, as well as Eagle Creek in the Clackamas River watershed.

The Clackamas River TU chapter teamed up with Native Fish Society volunteers to cover several reaches on the Molalla River. The Molalla has no hatchery fish and has historically been a good producer. The Bluebacks TU chapter in Corvallis ran both floating surveys and walking surveys on the Santiam. These efforts provided data that ODFW otherwise would not have had at all. It's a great example of how volunteer angler science can provide valuable assistance and population data to ODFW.

A walking steelhead redd survey can be a great workout! Slogging through a mile of water—almost always upstream—can keep you in shape. Spawning surveys usually happen February through April, when springtime is just waking up here in the valley. Steelhead redds can be challenging to spot early in the season. We depend on fish "polishing the algae" off the bottom, but in the cold spring water there isn't much algae. Survey teams do spot spawning fish, but they are very elusive. Surveying on an upstream trajectory gives you a better chance at finding steelhead.

Talk to your chapter about starting a steelhead monitoring project with your local ODFW office, or reach out to one of the chapters mentioned above to get get involved and learn more about their angler science surveys.





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