



2018 Accomplishments

Rogue Basin. In 2018, fishery agencies projected that the Rogue River would have the biggest fall chinook returns on the Pacific Coast south of the Columbia River. In 2017, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife projected 246,900 fall chinook would return in the Rogue. In 2018, the department projected a whopping 462,800 will return to the Rogue with the fall run! Your support for WaterWatch's work over the last decade – removing barriers and protecting instream flows for fish – is a big part of why we have reason to celebrate today.

Willamette Basin. Water Watch participated in a process to allocate the water storage space in the 13 Army Corps of Engineers reservoirs in the Willamette Basin among irrigation, municipal and fish and wildlife uses. WaterWatch advocated for a larger share for fish and wildlife and an implementation strategy that puts the needs of imperiled fish ahead of discretionary uses such as lawn-watering. WaterWatch also completed a two week trial involving a proposed 70 foot high channel spanning dam on Drift Creek. The dam proposal does not include fish passage and would flood the lands of 12 family farmers.

Klamath Basin. WaterWatch continued to lead a coalition to bring public attention to the ongoing disastrous neglect of the internationally significant Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges. To reform the Department of Interior's mismanagement of refuge lands and waters, WaterWatch and conservation allies are asking a federal court to require the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to follow federal law in creating Comprehensive Conservation Plans for the Klamath refuges.

North Fork Smith River. In January 2018, the Oregon Water Resources Commission adopted rules reserving the waters of this sub-basin for



instream fish and wildlife use, livestock and human consumption. This decision protects fish, wildlife, recreation and water quality and is a major win for what is arguably the most pristine river remaining on the west coast in the lower 48 states. State protection is particularly valuable now given attempts by the federal government to roll back mining withdrawals previously secured in this region.

Umatilla / Lost Valley Dairy. WaterWatch participated in a broad coalition of groups opposing a new industrial-scale dairy near Boardman, Oregon. Plans called for 30,000 cows at this confined animal feeding operation. Our work highlighted the water resources impacts of the dairy, including its consumption groundwater and exploitation of a “stockwatering” exemption from water-use permitting requirements.

Conversion of Unused Hydroelectric Water Rights. WaterWatch continued its campaign to convert unused hydroelectric water rights to instream water rights. WaterWatch took one case to the Oregon Court of Appeals and engaged in a state rulemaking process.

Legislation. WaterWatch successfully blocked dozens of poorly conceived water bills in the 2018 short session, including one that would have legalized current illegal irrigation in the Klamath Basin and another that would have allowed the wholesale transfer of water storage projects/dams without any environmental review.

Groundwater Reform. WaterWatch continued its campaign to secure critical groundwater management reforms at the Water Resources Department, the Water Resources Commission, with the Governor and in the Legislature. WaterWatch successfully challenged key permitting decisions; advocated for money for groundwater studies in the Harney Basin and elsewhere; and worked in the Harney Basin and elsewhere to find groundwater solutions that protect groundwater dependent ecosystems and domestic wells.

Placed Based Planning. Oregon’s roadmap to meet water needs now and in the future—the Integrated Water Resources Strategy—includes a place based planning program. WaterWatch joined collaborative water planning processes in the Lower John Day and Harney Basin to ensure that instream values and ecologically appropriate outcomes are a big part of the emerging plans.

Watchdogging. WaterWatch remained the only conservation group watchdogging all decisions of the Oregon Water Resources Department across the state. In 2018, WaterWatch influenced and challenged permitting decisions with significant water policy or ecological impacts. Examples of this work include: securing streamflow protections for Grave Creek in the Rogue Basin; securing withdrawal of unsustainable groundwater decisions in the Klamath and Harney Basins; protecting 22 million gallons of water per day in the McKenzie River and litigating for the water needs of imperiled fish in the lower Clackamas River.

Looking Forward to 2019

Climate Change. Cold water habitat is at risk in Oregon. All of WaterWatch's projects and programs are designed to help Oregon's waters, species and people adapt to a changing climate. A goal underlying all of our programs is to secure healthy, connected cold water habitat for Oregon's future.

Groundwater Reform. Groundwater will play a key role in protecting cold water habitat and adapting to a changing climate. WaterWatch will continue to demand reforms to Oregon's outdated approach to groundwater. We will push for data and science driven decision making and protective, sustainable standards to preserve groundwater dependent ecosystems and cold water habitat.

Deschutes Basin. While WaterWatch's advocacy has started to improve winter streamflows on the Upper Deschutes River, these interim improvements are only a starting point to increasing streamflows and aquatic habitat necessary to meet the needs of the Oregon Spotted Frog. In 2019, WaterWatch will work to ensure that the Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan, which will be released for public comment in April 2019, provides adequate water at the right times of the year to ensure the frog's recovery on the Deschutes. On the Crooked River we will work to



WaterWatch of Oregon

Main Office: 213 SW Ash St. Suite 208 Portland, OR 97204

Southern Oregon Office: PO Box 261, Ashland, OR, 97520

www.waterwatch.org

Main Office: 503.295.4039

S. OR Office: 541.708.0731

ensure proper implementation of the Crooked River Act so that stored water released for fish remains instream and is not diverted by downstream irrigators.

Replicating the Rogue Restoration Formula. In 2019 and beyond, WaterWatch projects will replicate the successes achieved in the Rogue Basin on other Oregon rivers. At its core, the Rogue Formula includes removing obsolete dams and securing adequate water for fish. It's a formula for river resiliency in the face of climate change that will benefit everyone who depends on healthy rivers.

Lake Abert/Chewaucan River. WaterWatch will actively pursue resolution of water permitting and allocation issues to sustain Oregon's only hypersaline lake and the Wilson's Phalaropes, grebes and other shorebirds and waterfowl that rely on Lake Abert.

State Scenic Waterways. WaterWatch and conservation allies will work to ensure that 17 miles of the Nehalem River on the North Coast is designated as the state's next scenic waterway. This is on track to be protected in February of 2019. We will also work to ensure that the state continues to grow this program that protects Oregon's most iconic rivers against development — a program that WaterWatch helped to revive after a 30 year hiatus.

Legislature. In 2019, WaterWatch will press the Legislature for widespread water use measurement and reporting, additional capacity for the instream flow program at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and for programs at the Oregon Water Resources Department that focus on securing and using data to more sustainably manage Oregon's waters.

Accountability and Good Government. In 2019, WaterWatch will continue to advocate for equity and fairness in government water decision making and transparency and public access to government processes involving water.

Photo Credits: Blossom Bar by Jim McCarthy, Wimer Dam Removal by Scott Wright, The Big Float by Megan McAfee, Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, Pelicans by Brett Cole, Snowy Hood River – East Fork by John DeVoe, Oregon State Capitol, NF Smith River by Tim Palmer, Dogs of WaterWatch by Kimberley Priestley, McKenzie River by Doug Heiken, Columbia River Sunrise by Kimberley Priestley, Cottonwood Canyon by Brian Posewitz, Deschutes Rafting by Mary Lou Socia