

A CREEK RUNS THROUGH US

Newsletter of SPAWN, the Salmon Protection And Watershed Network - Spring 2010

SAVING MARIN'S WILD COHO SALMON



For over 10 years SPAWN has been working with Marin residents to improve our communities for all living things, especially our totem coho salmon. We believe a healthy community supports diversity - biological, economic, cultural and political.

Our hard work has taken us into the schools to teach, inspire and motivate students and teachers to take action on behalf of our living world. We work with students at all levels. For example, we have taught in Lagunitas classrooms and taken students out into the field to experience nature by participating in fish rescue and planting hundreds of native plants along stream banks. Students at Drake High School have completed internships for credits and experience. College undergraduates and post-graduates gain experience with SPAWN, and we have provided many schools, including our local Lagunitas and Fairfax schools, with thousands of dollars of equipment, ranging from water quality testing kits to rainwater catchment systems to support their organic garden programs.

We have worked with landowners large and small to secure

funding to repair stream banks, fix dirt roads, remove invasive species, create rain gardens and install cisterns. We have helped landowners navigate complicated permitting issues and provided thousands of free native plants for reforestation and community beautification projects.

"We believe a healthy community supports diversity - biological, economic, cultural and political."

To insure that the work of SPAWN, hundreds of local residents, and thousands of volunteers is not in vain, we simultaneously embarked on a political process to improve County policies to protect the resources on which we all depend for clean air and water, as well as spiritual nourishment. To do otherwise was to bury our heads in the sand - because if the natural world is destroyed faster than we can repair the mistakes of the past, we are literally losing ground.

(continued on page 6)

What's Inside

1st Annual Summer Salmon Institute for Educators Page 2

10,000 Rain Gardens Project Launches! Page 3

Save Marin's Coho! How You Can Help Page 7

Naturalist Notes:

SALMON GROW ON TREES

If you were willing to take a cold plunge and catch a glimpse of endangered coho salmon fry on a summer's day in Lagunitas Creek, your most likely bet would be to search out a good tangle of "woody debris" - the logs, root-wads, sticks and branches that fall and accumulate in our creeks.

Woody debris structures in streams are analogous to coral or kelp reefs in our oceans. They are important structures that provide young fish with refuge and shelter from both predators and weather (big storms), and they direct streamflow to scour out deep, cold pools that coho need for survival. For decades wood was removed from streams for aesthetics and flood mitigation. Now we know better. Streams with healthy forests (where woody debris comes from) are meandering, complex in structure, bio-diverse, and provide critical habitat for our salmon.



Woody Debris, Let It Be!

SPAWN INVITES ALL EDUCATORS TO A FREE SUMMER SALMON INSTITUTE!

JULY 12TH - 16TH

Join us to journey in-depth into the ecology of our local watersheds and oceans and to explore how our wild Bay Area salmon provide a vital connection between these ecosystems!

SPAWN has received funding from NOAA's Bay-Watershed Education and Training Program (B-WET) to lead a week-long summer training institute focused on "Meaningful Watershed Experiences."

**Earn CEU's from Dominican University!
Educator Stipends available!**

Educators will take part in seminars led by experts in the fields of salmon biology, watershed restoration, and coastal ecosystems, as well as hands-on field sessions out in the Lagunitas Watershed over one full week (5 days). You will gain the tools and resources to inspire your students to learn about their own watershed and direct actions to restore and conserve habitat on campus and beyond.

To register for this FREE professional development please contact Carrie Sendak at Carrie@SpawnUSA.org, 415-663-8590 x109

WELCOME CARRIE SENDAK! WATERSHED BIOLOGIST

We are very excited to welcome Carrie Sendak as a new member of the SPAWN team!

Carrie comes to us with over ten years of experience working with fish, wildlife, and native plants throughout Northern California and the Sierra Nevada. She holds a BS in Biology from Florida Southern College and a Master's degree from Humboldt State University where she researched the spatial ecology and habitat needs of the Northern Red-legged Frog.



Carrie has worked on salmonid restoration on the Klamath and Smith Rivers, as a wildlife biologist with the US Geological Survey, as a steward on a 500 acre dune and wetland preserve for Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS), and as an Ecologist with the US Forest Service. She has worked on an array of research projects ranging from effects of fire on sensitive salamander species to potential climate change effects on high elevation herpetofauna and fish.

Carrie joins our team to integrate her research, restoration, and education experience to help protect and recover wild salmon in the Lagunitas watershed! Carrie will be leading environmental education, and stream and biological monitoring for SPAWN and aims to expand our research to include aquatic invertebrates and herpetofauna. She will also be focused on networking with local and regional partners to increase advocacy efforts throughout CA for conserving and restoring wild coho. Contact Carrie to get involved!
Carrie@Tirn.net, 415-663-8590 x109.

MARIN'S 10,000 RAIN GARDENS PROJECT LAUNCHED!

By Lisa Chipkin, Water Sustainability Coordinator

We're all grateful for the wet season following the recent three-year statewide drought. But watching these abundant rains pour off of rooftops, driveways and streets and into storm drains is enough to break a salmon's heart!

SPAWN and the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) have teamed up to conserve water and protect our creeks. This year we were selected to lead the way for Marin in rainwater harvesting and launch MMWD's pilot rainwater harvesting program.

The new **10,000 Rain Gardens Project** is designed to educate

community members about the simple practice of rainwater harvesting and encourage us all to take individual positive water conservation actions that, on a large scale, can make a large difference for our streams, salmon, watersheds and water supply!

Rainwater harvesting has been practiced around the world for millennia, and produces many wide-reaching benefits: lowering demand on treated water supplies for landscaping (and reducing water bills!), helping to decrease flooding, erosion and sedimentation in streambeds, protecting against wildland fires, reducing overloads on local sewers, and protecting endangered salmon.

Simple techniques can be used to mitigate the negatives and conserve

water and energy. Rain gardens (vegetated swales) add beauty and provide habitat while filtering storm water and improving soil health. Catching rainwater in cisterns provides supplemental water for landscape use as well as for emergency supply, reducing the need to use precious potable water for irrigation, and reducing the large amount of energy it takes to deliver municipal water to your tap.

Throughout 2010, MMWD residential and commercial customers can take advantage of:

- FREE rainwater harvesting resources, including a new website full of information relevant to local conditions;

- FREE hands on workshops and community project tours and presentations.

- Demonstration projects at schools and public venues;

- Free technical assistance for landowners with Jeffrey Adams, Water Sustainability Coordinator for SPAWN;

- A roving educational exhibit coming to your town soon!

The 10,000 Rain Gardens Project was inspired by a vision of a growing grassroots effort to secure sustainable water futures that make a notable contribution to the improvement of the health and resilience of our precious watersheds and local communities.



Join us today! Learn about the project and how to get started!

Visit www.raingardens.spawnusa.org.

Contact Jeff Adams (Jeff@Tirn.Net) and

Lisa Chipkin (Rainwater@Tirn.net) for more information!

We hosted a number of workshops this past year including creating native plant dyes w/ Ecological Artist Rebecca Burgess, working with willow for restoration, seed collection and College of Marin, Creek rainwater

native plant propagation with Naturalist training, and harvesting!



SPAWN'S Monthly Gatherings

*1st Wednesday eve of each month include dinners, full moon hikes and field trips, presentations and guest speakers, such as Margaret Dubin, editor of Native News and "Seaweed Salmon and Manzanita Cider."
See www.SpawnUSA.org for calendar events*

Our native nursery doubled in size this year!



Thanks to the passion of many wonderful volunteers (of all ages), we grow thousands of plants (>50 local, native species) for restoration projects throughout the Watershed!



Hundreds of young students from across the Bay Area join us each year to work on the creeks and take creek walks.



**FISH AND GAME FUNDS RESTORATION!
FIXING DIRT ROADS FOR CLEAN STREAMS**

In partnership with over 50 landowners, SPAWN has secured funding and assessed and jointly designed repairs to 6 miles of non-County maintained dirt roads in the Valley that currently deliver sediment to streams. This year, we will repair 2 miles of high-priority roadway through a CA Prop 50 and American Resources Recovery Act grant (stimulus funding). Our work will continue along more miles in 2011 with the support of Fish and Game that just awarded us a new grant!

RESTORING WOODY DEBRIS, THE REEFS OF OUR COHO STREAMS

We worked with key landowners and other experts to design woody debris projects that will help provide habitat for young coho and steelhead - and we were awarded funding from Fish and Game! Our projects are scaleable and appropriate for backyard habitats and will also help protect creekbanks from erosion. SPAWN secured designs, raised funds, and will coordinate the permitting with agencies to help ensure the projects are a success and a model for future projects in the Valley!

WORKING WITH FAMILY RANCHERS - UPSTREAM & DOWNSTREAM!

We are very excited to expand our work for coho downstream to work on Tomales Bay with the Straus family. Vivien Straus, inspired by our work through the 10,000 Rain Gardens Project, invited SPAWN to assist with both stream restoration in areas fenced off to cattle and rainwater harvesting for indoor and outdoor home use at their family ranch.

SPAWN also secured funds to help the Flanders family, longtime landowners in the Valley, on their beautiful property.

Saving Marin's Wild Coho Salmon Continued from page 1

This process has been fraught with political intrigue and innuendo. Unfortunately, these days, political advocacy can be full of fear tactics and misinformation, but I am delighted to report that because SPAWN has the science on our side and that our supporters are well informed, we are standing strong to combat negative tactics and plan on moving forward to protect and restore the coho here in the valley. Please visit our website and click on Take Action to sign our petition, if you have not already, to encourage the Marin County supervisors to do the same.

We now have a County-approved Salmon Enhancement Plan, as well as the recently released federal coho recovery plan, written by independent scientists who have confirmed that our beloved coho are on the verge of extinction and that impacts from development need to be addressed if we

have any hope at recovery. Unfortunately, we still haven't secured the political will needed to make necessary changes.

That is where you come in! We need to keep organizing the tens of thousands of salmon supporters throughout the County to be a strong voice for the coho and let County Supervisors know we hold them accountable. This takes people-power and money and we need both to succeed.

We have a strong plan of action to educate, motivate and activate Marin's coho supporters to get involved through a major media campaign, door to door canvassing, house parties - whatever it takes. Please call (663-8590 x111) or email (Tsteiner@SpawnUSA.org) and let me know how you can help.

SAN GERONIMO VALLEY SALMON ENHANCEMENT PLAN

Despite the two year, expensive and somewhat frustrating process, the San Geronimo Valley Salmon Enhancement Plan (SEP) was unanimously accepted by the Marin County Board of Supervisors as a "guidance" document in February. The SEP, and existing conditions report, and a new ordinance to protect riparian forests was required under a tolling agreement with SPAWN to avoid litigation on the County's legally inadequate environmental review (CEQA) with regards to endangered species for the recently adopted 2007 County-Wide Plan.

Unfortunately, the County process:

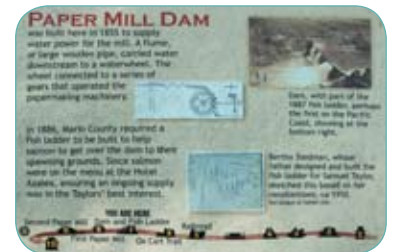
- Left the community feeling uninformed and tread upon and blamed for the salmon demise while polarizing salmon and landowners issues;
- Emphasized only voluntary actions for landowners and not an equitable and balanced approach between voluntary and mandatory measures;
- Didn't illuminate how the County would ensure that its own activities and extensive infrastructure could be modified to protect salmon (for example, how the County could disconnect stormwater runoff and pollution from County roads);
- Failed to deliver a new riparian protection ordinance, as promised.

Nonetheless, the County has legally committed itself to one new ordinance to protect streamside (riparian) vegetation, and though it was supposed to be completed in February, according to an out-of-court settlement agreement with SPAWN, we have offered them a couple more months to get it in place.

Today, the remaining undammed habitat in the headwaters, such as in the San Geronimo Valley, is more precious than ever. In good years, 50% of spawning and 40% of coho smolts occur here.



Historically, the Lagunitas Watershed supported ~5,000 wild fish. Historical impacts included a papermill, dynamite factory and railroad among others (shown here). The large dams, such as Peter's Dam, on Lagunitas and Nicasio Creeks that supply Marin with water were completed by the mid 1900s cutting off over 50% of historical salmon habitat forever.



IF WE CAN'T SAVE THE COHO IN MARIN, THEN WHERE?

The success of SPAWN flows directly from its generous and active membership. Everyone who volunteers for 1/2 day or donates \$35 becomes a member.

I think most of us love getting outdoors, seeing nature, planting native trees, but it will take a lot more, and we will need to get out of our comfort zone if we are to save the coho from imminent extinction.

We live in one of the wealthiest Counties in the world - full of professionals with incredible skills and resources that we need to harness.

To succeed, we need:
\$50,000 Coho Legal Defense Fund -

• Can you or do you know someone who can make a significant (tax-deductible) contribution? We are able to accept cash, stock, securities - even automobiles and boats. If 50 of you can give us \$1,000 each (or commits to \$83/mo.), we're there!



Pro Bono Services -

- Are you (or do you know someone who is) an attorney, media or PR professional that can donate services?
- Are you willing to talk to people and collect signatures at farmers markets, other events, or walk precincts and talk to neighbors?
- Throw a house party for friends and neighbors to solicit their help?
- Willing to spend some evenings calling our members and your friends and getting them to take action?

BECOME PART OF THE SOLUTION AND BE ABLE TO TELL THE NEXT GENERATION WITH PRIDE THAT COHO SALMON STILL SWIM IN THE CREEKS OF MARIN BECAUSE YOU TOOK ACTION!

Please contact Todd Steiner Tsteiner@SpawnUSA.org, 663-8590 X103



Our collective work on behalf of the coho salmon is made possible by ALL our generous supporters and volunteers!

Thank You!

Turtle Island Restoration Network

Salmon Protection and Watershed Network [SPAWN]

PO Box 370

Forest Knolls, CA 94933

www.SpawnUSA.org

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
PERMIT NO. 925

**MARIN CALENDAR OF EVENTS
JOIN US ON THE CREEKS!**

- **Annual SPAWN Party on beautiful Tomales Bay!** This summer, stay tuned and sign up for e-newsletters at www.spawnusa.org.
- **July 12 - 16: FREE Summer Salmon Institute for Environmental Educators and teachers throughout the Bay Area!** Contact carrie@spawnusa.org, 415-663-8590 x109 for details.
- **October 23 - 24: Naturalist Training for fall and winter Creekwalks.**
- **Every Month! Rainwater Harvesting - tours and workshops.** Check out the raingarden website at <http://raingardens.spawnusa.org> for details!
- **Every Week! Creek Restoration and Native Plant Nursery - Friday, Saturday, and Sunday's.** Contact blaine@spawnusa.org for details.
- **First Wednesday of each month:** SPAWN's monthly membership gathering includes campaign highlights, guest speakers, outdoor events and more! Contact Paola@spawnusa.org for more information, and join our e-list and sign up for events and e-newsletters at www.spawnusa.org.

FOR DETAILS AND OUR FULL COMMUNITY CALENDAR PLEASE VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.SPAWNUSA.ORG

Saving Marin's Wild Coho Salmon!



The SALMON PROTECTION AND WATERSHED NETWORK [SPAWN] works to protect endangered coho salmon and steelhead 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 ourselves and our land.

Healthy fish populations mean that our streams run strong and clear, that valuable topsoil is not washing off our hillsides, that our stream banks are not eroding away, that poisonous pesticides are not being sprayed in the air and land and that our own wastes don't pollute the environment.

SPAWN uses a multi-faceted approach to accomplish our mission, including grass-roots action, habitat restoration, policy development, environmental education, collaboration with other organizations, media campaigns and strategic litigation.

A CREEK RUNS THROUGH US - Spring 2010

Newsletter of the
SALMON PROTECTION AND WATERSHED NETWORK [SPAWN]

Staff: Paola Bouley, Todd Steiner, Carrie Sendak, Chris Van Schaak, Lisa Chipkin, Jeffrey Adams, Blaine Vossler, Jodie Pixley

Board of Directors: Carole Allen, Randall Arauz, Andy Harris, Donna Howe, Steve Katz, Wallace J. Nichols, Rick Misuraca, Susan Sakmar, Debbie Sivas, Todd Steiner

Photos: Paul Seri, Mel Wright, Dan Schmahl, Carrie Sendak, Paola Bouley,

Layout and Design: Denise Lussier

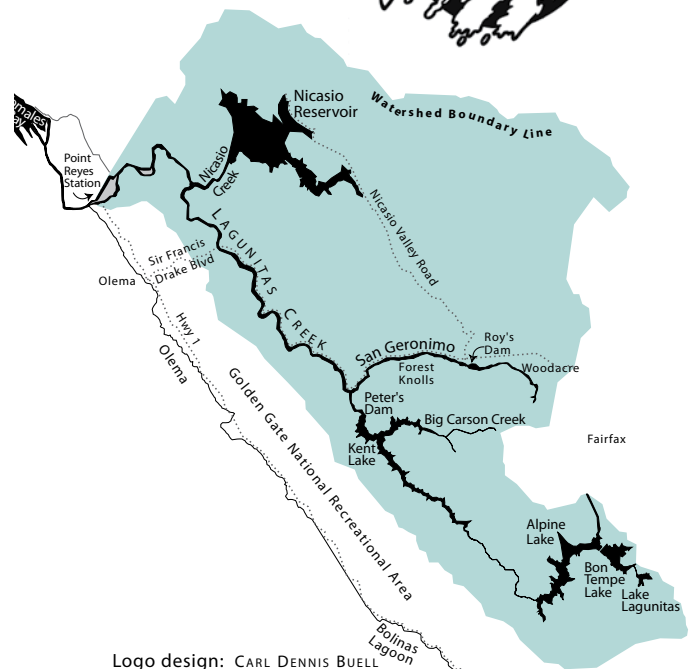
Contact us at:

PO Box 370, Forest Knolls, CA 94933

phone 415-663-8590 fax 415-663-9534

e-mail Spawn@SpawnUSA.org

web www.SpawnUSA.org



Logo design: CARL DENNIS BUELL

