

Salmon Watch Program Overview

The Salmon Watch program is available annually to schools throughout Bear Creek Valley, Greater Jackson County, and Josephine County. The program is coordinated by the Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG) and Rogue Valley Sewer Services on behalf of local communities in the Bear Creek and Middle Rogue watersheds, including Designated Management Agencies (DMAs) and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s).

The program teaches students about watershed health and stewardship through an exploration of salmon, the conditions they need to survive and thrive, and how our individual and community decisions can affect watershed health and salmon populations. The primary component of the program is a field trip that brings students to a local creek or river for hands-on, field-based learning.

Specifics about program implementation and activities are provided in the 2025–2026 Salmon Watch Summary below. The complete *Salmon Watch Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 Activity Report* is also available online on the RVCOG website and is included below.

A key component of the program’s success is the support provided by partners, including nonprofit organizations, educational organizations, watershed councils, state and local agencies, and municipalities. Partners contribute volunteer time for module instruction and provide in-kind and/or direct financial support to the program. For example, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife donates fish for dissection activities; Oregon State Parks waives or reduces certain permit fees; Jackson County waives parking and site-use fees; and the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District provides direct financial support. These contributions reduce overall program costs and allow grant funding to be leveraged to expand program reach and impact.

Grant funding supports contractor costs for module instruction, program supplies and equipment, and transportation assistance for local schools. These funds, combined with partner contributions, help make the program available at little or no cost to participating schools.

In addition to field-based instruction, Salmon Watch activities include recruiting schools and instructors through email and personal outreach; program advertising and marketing; developing and administering program surveys; coordinating schools, field sites, schedules, and instructors; obtaining permits for use of State Park sites, including Tou Velle and Valley of the Rogue; managing instructor contracts; processing reimbursements for program-related expenses; maintaining and stocking Salmon Watch kits; presenting the program to schools; and coordinating other program logistics.

The Salmon Watch program page and associated educational resources are housed on the Stream Smart webpage.

<https://www.stream-smart.com/our-work/programs-and-projects/rogue-basin-salmon-watch/>

<https://www.stream-smart.com/virtual-resources/>

Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 Program Summary

In the Fall of 2025 and the Spring of 2026, the Rogue Valley Council of Governments, working on behalf of the NPDES Phase II Stormwater Communities (Ashland, Central Point, Jackson County, Medford, Phoenix, and Talent), Rogue Valley Sewer Services (RVSS), and local water quality programs (TMDLs – including Grants Pass, Josephine County, Phoenix, Talent, and Jacksonville) partnered with the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (JSWCD), Bear Creek Watershed Education Partners (BCWEP), the Rogue River Watershed Council (RRWC), and others to implement the Rogue Basin Salmon Watch Program. Classes were conducted primarily in September, October, and early November (week ending November 7th) of 2025, and in May of 2026. We also held a special session in December 2025 in partnership with a class from LOGOS Public Charter School who participated in the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (ODFW) Eggs to Fry program and released fry into the Rogue River as part of the Salmon Biology station. Overall, 32 field days were conducted with 31 schools and 1,806 students. Classes represented schools from the Bear Creek Watershed, greater Jackson County, and Grants Pass/Josephine County.

In addition, 17 organizations, agencies, and municipalities donated their time and provided in-kind match to the program. The match reduces program costs and allows us to leverage grant funding for the program. Details on the class dates, field locations, schools involved, number of students, and other information (e.g., volunteer instructors) can be found in Table 1.

The Rogue Basin Salmon Watch Program received financial support from JSWCD, as well as the Bear Creek DMAs and MS4s, Josephine County, and the City of Grants Pass. We continued our partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers operating under the MOU established for the program to host field trips out at McGregor Park near Trail. Further, we continued to work with Oregon State Parks and Jackson County to waive fees for park use at TouVelle State Recreation Site, and we expanded our use of North Mountain Park in Ashland as a field trip site. Lastly, ODFW has also continued to provide fish carcasses for instructors that opt to perform a dissection as part of the Salmon Biology station.

In addition to the field classes, there are several other program activities that are conducted to implement the program. Activities include an instructor training held on September 11th for both contracted educators and volunteer instructors and a Return of the Salmon – Family Field Day on October 18th, as well as recruiting schools and instructors through emails, personal contacts, and at events, advertising the program, completing before and after program surveys, providing in-school presentations, coordinating logistics for the program (schools, sites, programs, and instructors), obtaining permits for site use at state parks (TouVelle), managing contracts for instructors, providing reimbursements for program expenses (transportation, parking fees, and program equipment and supplies), maintaining and stocking kits, and other logistics.

Salmon Watch Field Day

For most classes, the format is the same in terms of timing, modules, and other logistics. There are exceptions for classes that make special arrangements (e.g., Scenic Middle School). Salmon Watch field days are scheduled for around 4 hours (time of classes on-site) at field locations spread throughout Bear Creek and the Middle Rogue Watershed. Field sites available for Salmon Watch include Cantrall-Buckley County Park, Fish Hatchery Park, Griffin Creek at

Scenic Middle School, McGregor Park, Palmerton Park, Reinhart Volunteer Park, TouVelle State Recreation Site, Valley of the Rogue State Park, and numerous sites along Bear Creek (Bear Creek Park, Blue Heron Park, Cascade Christian Middle/High School, Coyote Trails Nature Center, Lynn Newbry Park, and North Mountain Park).

The “core” four module model is used from the Salmon Watch Curriculum for the programs. Instructors are assigned stations to discuss Salmon Biology/Salmon Life Cycle (station 1), Water Quality (station 2), Macroinvertebrates (station 3), and Riparian Areas (station 4). Each station also has activities for students, including salmon and redd viewing (when spawning), salmon dissection, water quality testing (temperature, pH, biological oxygen demand (BOD), turbidity, etc.), macroinvertebrate sampling and identification, native plant identification, drawing riparian cross-sections and longitudinal profiles, scavenger hunts, and shade surveys. Classes are divided into 4 groups and rotate through the stations at approximately 35 minutes, allowing every student to participate in each of the four stations. Examples of completed activity forms are included in Appendix A and an example schedule is presented below:

Schedule

9:30-9:50	Opening Circle (Lead Instructor)
9:55-10:30	Rotation 1
10:35-11:10	Rotation 2
11:15-11:50	Lunch
11:55-12:30	Rotation 3
12:35-1:10	Rotation 4
1:15 - 1:30	Wrap-Up and Closing Circle (Lead Instructor)

There are a few exceptions to the field day, most notably at Scenic Middle School. Due to the size of the class, the program is usually structured over 8 days where one module (e.g., Salmon) is taught to all 5 of the 6th grade periods for the class. Further, for smaller classes (30 students or less), we have adjusted the schedule to use only 3 instructors teaching the four sessions. One session (usually riparian) is either shared amongst the instructors or taught once by each instructor onsite. For larger classes (more than 60 students), we have adjusted the schedule to use 5 instructors teaching five sessions. Curriculum surrounding fire ecology, pollinators and pollinator plants, drinking water, riparian restoration, and service-learning has made up the fifth station for these field trips.

Field Day Statistics

Table 1 summarizes all the Salmon Watch classes completed in the Fall of 2025. Information on the dates, field locations, schools/districts, grade levels, number of students, and contributing partner organizations (volunteer instructors) are included in the table.

Table 1: Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 Salmon Watch Field Trip Information

2025-2026 SALMON WATCH HIGHLIGHTS

Class Number (Field Days)	Date	Location	School	Grade	Number of Students	Partners (organizations providing match instructor time)
1	9/16/2025	McGregor Park (MG)	Ruch Outdoor Community School	5 th -8 th	37	RVSS, RVCOG
2	9/18/2025	MG	Roosevelt Elementary School	5 th	50	RVSS, RRWC, & SOLC
2	9/18/2025	MG	Rogue Valley Homeschool Adventures Collective	3 rd -6 th	20	RVSS, RRWC, & SOLC
3	9/19/2025	MG	Wilson Elementary School	5 th	48	RVSS, RVCOG, & TCMSO
3	9/19/2025	MG	Homeschool Group	3 rd -6 th	20	RVSS, RVCOG, & TCMSO
4	9/23/2025	MG	Bellview Elementary	2 nd -5 th	85	RVSS
5	9/24/2025	Palmerton Park	Rivers Edge Academy Charter School	2 nd -4 th	60	RVCOG, SOWT/RR, & ODFW
6	9/25/2025	MG	Homeschool Group	3 rd -6 th	20	RVSS, SOFRC
7	9/26/2025	MG	Talent Elementary School – ODP	3 rd -5 th	25	RVSS, TCMSO
8	9/30/2025	MG	Talent Elementary School	5 th	40	RRWC, AFR, SOWF, & RVCOG
8	9/30/2025	MG	Butte Falls Charter School	3 rd	20	RRWC, AFR, SOWF, & RVCOG
9	10/2/2025	MG	Helman Elementary School	5 th	56	SOFRC, MWC
10	10/3/2025	MG	North Medford High School	10 th -12 th	60	RVCOG, SOWF, RVSS, & BCWEP
11	10/7/2025	TV	Jacksonville Elementary School	4 th	60	ODFW, RVCOG

2025-2026 SALMON WATCH HIGHLIGHTS

12	10/8/2025	Reinhart Volunteer Park (RVP)	Allen Dale Elementary School	5 th	78	RVCOG, SOWT/RR, RRWC, WL
13	10/9/2025	TV	Oak Grove Elementary School	4 th	75	RRWC, SOWF, MWC, & ODFW
14	10/10/2025	TV	Talent Elementary School	4 th	28	BCWEP, RVSS
15	10/14/2025	TV	Williams Elementary School	4 th /5 th	22	MWC, RVCOG, & ODFW
15	10/14/2025	TV	Applegate School	4 th /5 th	22	MWC, RVCOG, & ODFW
16	10/16/2025	TV	Phoenix Elementary School	3 rd	60	SOWF, SOFRC, MWC, & RRWC
17	10/17/2025	TV	Shady Cove School	3 rd	37	RVCOG, SOWF, & RVSS
18	10/21/2025	Blue Heron Park (BHP)	Phoenix Elementary School	4 th	58	RVSS
19	10/23/2025	TV	Sams Valley Elementary School	4 th /5 th	60	SOWF, SOFRC, & MWC
20	10/24/2025	TV	TRAILS Outdoor School	3 rd -5 th	30	ODFW, BCWEP, RVCOG, RRWC
20	10/24/2025	TV	Eagle Rock Elementary	4 th	45	ODFW, BCWEP, RVCOG, RRWC
21	10/28/2025	NMP	Griffin Creek Elementary	4 th	60	AFR, RRWC, & TFT
22	10/30/2025	NMP	Griffin Creek Elementary	4 th	27	RRWC, MWC, & SOLC
23	10/31/2025	Cascade Christian (CC)	Cascade Christian Middle School	7 th	67	SOWF, RVCOG, & BCWEP
24	11/3/2025	Fish Hatchery County Park	Kalmiopsis Community Arts High School	9 th -12 th	16	RVCOG
25	11/4/2025	TV	St. Mary's School	11 th -12 th	20	BCWEP

2025-2026 SALMON WATCH HIGHLIGHTS

25	11/4/2025	TV	Orchard Hill Elementary School	4 th	33	BCWEP
26	11/6/2025	NMP	Pinehurst School	K-5 th	16	ODFW, AFR
26	11/6/2025	NMP	Orchard Hill Elementary School	4 th	32	ODFW, AFR
27	11/7/2025	NMP	Walker Elementary School	4 th /5 th	82	PPRV, RVCOG, & BCWEP
28	12/18/2025	TV	LOGOS Public Charter School	4 th /5 th	30	SOLC, ODFW
29	5/7/2026	BHP	Talent Middle School	6 th	68	RVSS, TCMSO, PPRV, SOFRC
30	5/8/2026	BHP	Talent Middle School	6 th	55	RVSS, SOFRC, PPRV, SOWT
31	5/21/2026	Griffin Creek at SMS	Scenic Middle School	6 th	100	RVSS
32	5/22/2026	Griffin Creek at SMS	Scenic Middle School	6 th	100	RVSS

Color Legend

MS4 or DMA
All. Regional Enrollment
Medford
Phoenix/Talent
Central Point
Ashland
Josephine County/Grants Pass
Other Schools – Jackson County

Table 2: Key to Instructional Partners and Project Supporters

Abbreviation	Organization Name	Support Detail
AFR	Ashland Forest Resiliency	Module Instruction
BCWEP*	Bear Creek Watershed Education Partners (*Volunteers – Former Board Members)	Module Instruction
BLM	U.S. Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Land Management	Module Instruction, Training Video Production, Program Site (Provolt)
CC	Cascade Christian Middle/High School	Site Access/Facility Use, Module Instruction
CP	City of Central Point	Module Instruction
GH	Gold Hill	Module Instruction
JC	Jackson County	Site Access, Fee Waivers (Cantrall-Buckley), Module Instruction
MWC	Medford Water Commission	Module Instruction
NMP	North Mountain Park	Site Access/Facility Use, Module Instruction
ODFW	Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Module Instruction, Supplies, Fish Carcasses
OSP	Oregon State Parks	Fee Waivers
PPRV	Pollinator Project Rogue Valley	Module Instruction
RBP	Rogue Basin Partnership	Module Instruction
RR	City of Rogue River	Module Instruction
RRK	Rogue Riverkeeper	Module Instruction
RRWC	Rogue River Watershed Council	Module Instruction
RVCOG	Rogue Valley Council of Governments	Module Instruction, Coordination, Administration
RVSS	Rogue Valley Sewer Services	Module Instruction, Coordination
SOFRC	Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative	Module Instruction
SOLC	Southern Oregon Land Conservancy	Module Instruction
SOWT	Southern Oregon Water Technology	Module Instruction
TCMSO	The Children’s Museum of Southern Oregon	Module Instruction
TFT	The Freshwater Trust	Module Instruction
USACE	Army Corps of Engineers	Site Access/Facility Use, Hand Washing Stations, Fee Waivers

Program Photos

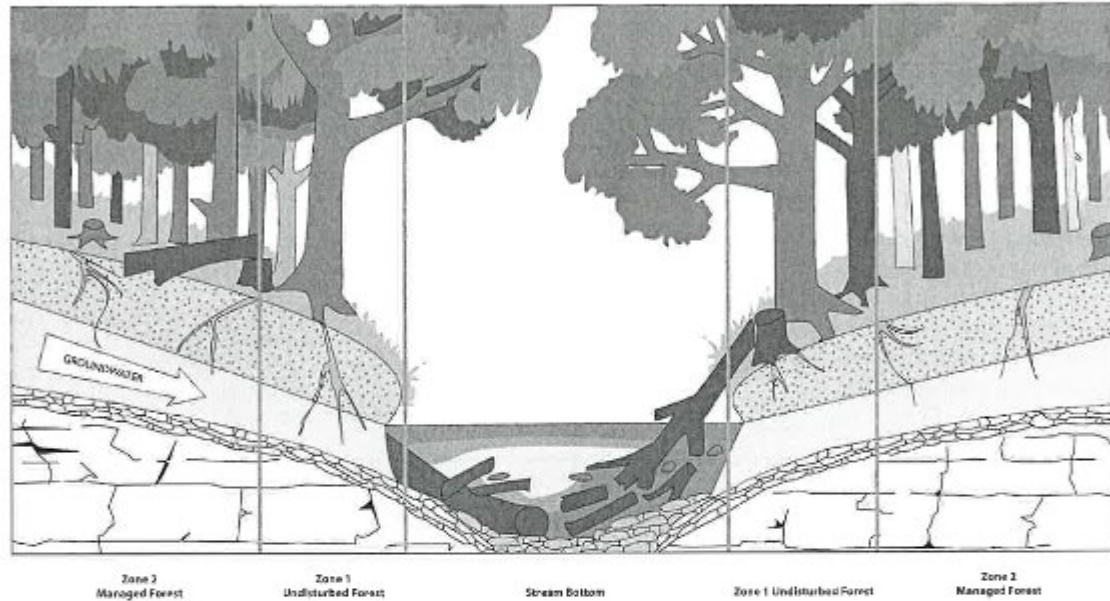


Data Sheet/Activity Example

RIPARIAN AREA PROFILE DATA FORM

Directions: Pick a place along the stream that you particularly like. Draw a profile (cross-section, see **Figure 2**) of this place. Include the near bank, stream, and opposite bank in your drawing. If you aren't sure how to do this, ask your adult group leader. Show the water level in your drawing. Now, draw in features of the riparian zone that you think are important to salmon.

Figure 2



Salmon Watch Wrap-Up for Fall 2025 & Spring 2026



Rogue Basin Salmon Watch Program Summary – Fall 2025 & Spring 2026

Another Successful Year in the Books!

In collaboration with partners and volunteers, we were able to provide 10 weeks of field trips, bringing students outdoors to learn about their local watersheds. Thanks to funding from the Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District and contributions from the water quality programs of local cities (Ashland, Central Point, Grants Pass, Jacksonville, Medford, Phoenix, and Talent) and counties (Jackson and Josephine), as well as seventeen additional partner organizations, we were able to provide no-cost field trips to students primarily in grades 3rd-8th from twenty-nine different schools in the Rogue Basin. In addition, we taught mixed classes (1st through 5th), AP high school classes, and multiple homeschool groups. Collaboration and partnership make it happen!

of students served: 1,806

of schools participating: 31

of individual instructors contributing: 37

Coordinating agencies:



Thank you, Salmon Watch Partners!



And Salmon Watch Sustainers!

