

Mendocino County Fish and Game Commission Grant for the
Round Valley Elementary School Salmon and Steelhead Education Project

Final Report

This project was part of the Eel River Recovery Project's education program. [See website.](#) The grant was awarded in the spring of 2015. Because of the drought in 2015, the streams were dry, so much of the project was postponed. The field trips and teacher trainings took place in in 2016.

Community Support

ERRP Education Committee Chair, Diane Higgins, who is the prime sub-contractor on this project, began developing relationships with the community of Covelo and RVES teachers at an Earth Day (4/22/15) celebration hosted by the Round Valley Indian Tribe (RVIT) and its Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This networking was not expensed to the MCFGAC grant and should be considered a donation of services that could qualify as part of "matching funds", were such required. We brought on Bruce Hilbach-Barger as the project's local liaison and the \$3,000 budgeted for workshops and teacher support will be shared with him. Bruce taught math at RVES for several years and has been involved in many projects involving the school and the tribe.

Salmon Awareness Festival

We organized and participated in the Salmon Awareness Festival in October 2015 at RVES in Covelo, once again independent of grant support. There were presentations about aquatic insects, fish of the Eel River, traditional wisdom, wilderness, stream dynamics/sedimentation, water conservation at home, the science of water, and using video for social justice journalism. The second grade students from Laytonville came to Covelo to share their salmon banner. The little kids paraded around the school yard holding a long banner painted with fish, singing and playing instruments.



Round Valley Elementary School students form a "Salmon Run" with banners brought over by Laytonville Elementary School.

Networking at the Salmon Awareness Festival led to identification of several community members interested in assisting teachers with stream studies and cemented our relationship with the RVIT Tribal EPA, which is fully supportive of the project. We also met with the RVES Superintendent, Mike Gorman, to gain support for the program. He is very supportive and said he would help when we do the field trips with students, including making sure buses are made available.

Workshops for Teachers / Field Trip for Students

On February 8, we visited the school to coordinate with key teachers and the principal. We went to the two streams that flow through Covelo to assess access points and stream conditions. On February 19, 2016, Bruce Hilbach-Barger made a presentation at the RVES teachers' staff meeting to set a date for the teacher training at the stream site.



Round Valley Elementary School teachers and aids get an orientation before going down to Mill Creek on 3/4/16.

The stream monitoring training for teachers took place on March 2, in the afternoon. Diane gave an overview of the Klamath River Educational Program curriculum materials for grades K-3, grades 4-6 and grades 7-8 and teachers received copies of these manuals. Then, we went to Mill Creek with the teachers and the school principal to sample insects, place a temperature probe and learn about indicators of stream health. The home school coordinator, Laura Hirsch, also attended.

On March 18, we spent the whole day at Mill Creek. Every class from the elementary school visited the creek. We had three stations set up along the creek. One focused on sediment, erosion, stream dynamics and steelhead habitat. At the second station, students saw how aquatic insects are sampled and got to see insects that were collected from Mill Creek and also from the Mainstem of the Eel River. At the third station, students learned about the importance of the riparian area and saw photos of animals that depend on it. Teachers, teacher aides and some parents were in attendance. Four people volunteered their time to assist, including Pat Higgins, Heron Hilbach-Barger, Bruce Hilbach Barger, and Dane Downing.



Diane Higgins with RVES fourth graders on 3/18/16 at Mill Creek when the entire school visited the site.

Project Wild Training

The Project Wild training took place on April 30 at the Covelo Library Commons. The nine people who attended received the *Project Wild Aquatic* and the *Growing Up Wild* curriculum manuals. The people who attended who are not teachers have given their manuals to teachers and support staff who were not able to attend the training.



Plant lesson at Project Wild training first half day. April 30, 2016

Possible follow-up student activities:

- Earth Day Presentation – Tribal Earth Day stream display
 - Stream Care Poster(s) – Community education poster for stream health and respect
 - Letter to Public Officials – Requesting action to protect the stream
 - Grant Support Letter – for Natural Resource Dept. stream restoration, for educational projects
 - Discussion/Essay – Community Stream Care Standards and personal commitments to stream care
- Posters are being designed now and will be available for teachers in March. (\$200)

Purchase materials for schools

We have purchased eight stream scopes (2-way magnifiers), one aquatic kick-net, two submersible thermometers and two Hobotemp meters. The total cost for all these materials is \$366, which is \$26 over the budgeted amount. The difference will come out of our travel budget.

Posters

We have copied 9 posters for teachers who want them. They will be delivered to the school by May 30, 2016.