

Jefferson County Conservation District

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State Legislative District #24
Congressional District #6

2015 Feature Accomplishment:

Chimacum Watershed water quality and fish: A comprehensive review

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Chimacum Watershed is located in East Jefferson County on the Olympic Peninsula. Agriculture has been the dominant land use activity since the turn of the 20th century. Coho, Chum, Steelhead, and Cutthroat Trout inhabit the watershed, and the creek empties into a shellfish producing bay. Since the '80s, best management practices including livestock exclusion fencing and buffered plantings have been implemented, but no long-term studies have measured the impacts or been used to guide land management decisions.



Students from Chimacum School collect data by fish trapping along Chimacum Creek. Credit: B. Marston



Fishery Biologist, Glenn Gately, collecting water quality samples. Credit: JCCD

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS Jefferson County Conservation District completed a 2015 Chimacum Watershed Comprehensive Report that synthesizes water quality and fish data that has been collected since the early '70s and consistently by the district since 1996. This report establishes a baseline for future studies and shows water quality trends over time. Trends include: decreasing fecal coliform concentrations, decreasing water temperature, increasing trends of juvenile Coho and Chum in restoration sites, and a greater frequency of human-source fecal coli-

form than ruminant. Findings will be used to guide future best management practices and land management recommendations in this watershed.

KEY PARTNERS: Jefferson County Environmental Health Department; US Environmental Protection Agency; North Olympic Salmon Coalition; Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Chimacum School Pie Program; Washington Conservation Corps; Jefferson Land Trust; WSU Extension; Washington Department of Ecology

Other Accomplishments

- Constructed three solar power off-channel watering facilities and associated fencing for a livestock cooperator that resulted in getting cattle out of a salmon-bearing stream.
- Completed a Pollution Identification and Correction Plan and an associated best management practices prioritized list in collaboration with Jefferson County Environmental Health.
- Established an At-cost Soil Testing Program that resulted in over 40 soil tests and led to a number of farm and pasture plans.
- Completed a stream remainder project that included installation of large woody debris, raptor poles, and a forested buffer in order to improve the quality of salmon habitat.

More Work to Do!

- Conduct a two-year (2015-2017) water quality monitoring study in the Hood Canal Priority Basin in collaboration with Jefferson County Environmental Health.
- Assist in leading a six-week Upland Watershed Steward Training Program.
- Complete two shellfish projects that will improve the quality of water flowing into Port Townsend Bay.
- Initiate three new Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program forested buffers totaling 26.2 acres.