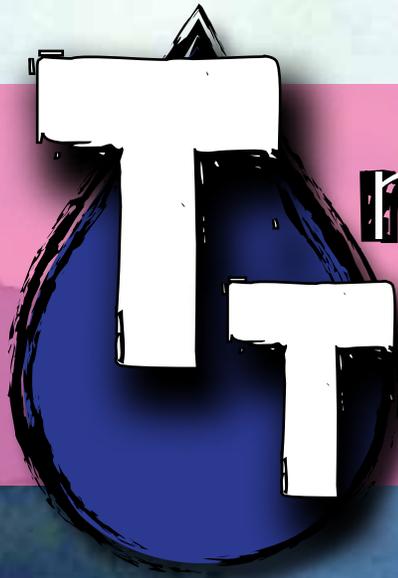


Central Region, 2011



# tributary tribune



**STORIES AND ART BY THE  
AMERICORPS WATERSHED STEWARDS PROJECT**



The AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project's (WSP) mission is to conserve, restore, and enhance anadromous watersheds for future generations by linking education with high quality scientific practices.



A special project of the California Conservation Corps, WSP is administered by California Volunteers and sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

**THE TRIBUTARY TRIBUNE SHOWCASES THE ADVENTURES, INSIGHTS, AND ART OF MEMBERS OF THE AMERICORPS WATERSHED STEWARDS PROJECT. FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS THE WSP HAS BEEN SERVING COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA'S COAST. THIS ISSUE FEATURES STORIES AND ART BY MEMBERS FROM OUR CENTRAL REGION, PLACED IN COMMUNITIES WITHIN HUMBOLDT COUNTY'S REDWOOD EMPIRE...**

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## **Credits**

Stephanie Brindle - Editor  
Erika Stowe-Madison - Submission Supervisor  
Ryan Spencer - Layout Designer



## WELCOME TO PARADISE

When I showed up to Petrolia, the people here said, "Welcome to paradise!"  
"Nah, this ain't paradise," I thought to myself, "the people here are crazy."

It was cold, dark, and wet. I'm homeless and in the middle of nowhere. No Sequoia sempervirens to be seen. Eating PB&J for breakfast, lunch, and dinner out of the trunk of my car was not exactly what I'd had in mind.

When I showed up to Petrolia, the people here said, "You're so lucky to be here!"  
"Nah, this ain't luck," I thought to myself, "the people here are crazy."

It was cold, dark, and wet. No cell phone service or electricity, and spotty internet connections at best. No ATM and the closest In N Out is 5 hours away. The only thing here is a General Store with a gas pump, charging much more than is sensible.

When I showed up to Petrolia, the people here said, "You might never leave."  
"Nah, I'm leaving," I thought to myself, "the people here are crazy."

It was cold, dark, and wet... but I was starting to like it! It turns out that PB&J is the best meal in existence, Pseudotsuga menziesii is just as magnificent as the redwoods, and the internet is a waste of my time. The General Store isn't too bad, either!

When I showed up to Petrolia, the people here said, "This is a very special place."  
"Nah, this ain't special," I thought to myself, "the people here are crazy."

It's no longer cold, or dark, or wet. The mighty Mattole, home to our native Coho, Chinook, and Steelhead, begs to be canoed. Breathing the crisp Lost Coast air, watching the estuary breathe with me, hiking in the wilderness for work, and "getting things done for America" is exactly what I'd had in mind.

When I showed up to Petrolia, the people here said, "Welcome to paradise!"  
"Nah, this ain't paradise," I thought to myself, "the people here are crazy."

The belief in watershed stewardship is alive and well in this small, loving community. Turns out the crazy people here were right- I am so lucky to be here, in this special paradise, and I might never leave.

by Samuel Adelson,  
Mattole Salmon Group  
Petrolia, CA

# I DREAM IN RIVERS

## Facebook Fieldnotes

by Amanda Lightfoot-Wright,  
Arcata Dept. of Fish and Game (HFAC)

October 13, 2010

Today was my first day with the Department of Fish and Game. We went up Freshwater Creek and tagged coho salmon. I now feel pretty capable when it comes to discerning coho salmonids from young steelhead trout.

October 18, 2010

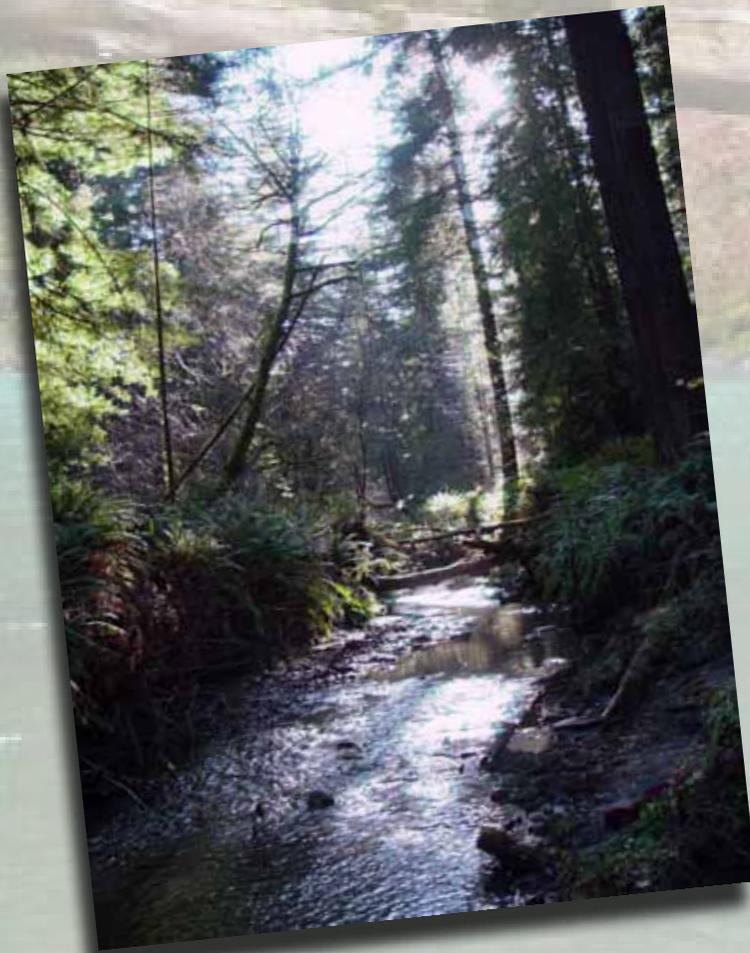
Today I tromped around in a stream again and caught lots of coho parr (little guys). Then I came home to an Austin sleeping at the front door - he'd locked himself out while doing laundry and had to wait 2.5 hours for me to bring the keys.

October 24, 2010

Oh my goodness, I got soaked and muddy today. And this is only a preview of what's to come, now that the rains have started. So nice to come home afterward and take a warm bath.

November 8, 2010

I'm going on a week-long camping trip for two training sessions. It's going to be in-tents! (haha)



**November 20, 2010**

My job has me hike up streams, stumbling over cobblestones, and crawling either over or under gigantic redwoods that have fallen across the creek. My hands have all sorts of cuts and pokes from blackberry thorns and my knees now feature a healthy collection of colorful bruises.

Not that I'm complaining - my job is awesome!

**January 7, 2010**

The after-effects of creek walking. Even lying in bed, you can feel the force of the water against your legs, the mud sucking you down to your knees, the rising and dropping path leading you over boulders and under logs and across rickety cobblestones; riding on bent knees and sore ankles over this bucking creature.

(this space reserved for spawner surveys, nursery plantings, Real Science Education, ISP, volunteer work days, and spring training)

**April 15, 2010**

On my lunch break the other day at the nursery, I saw some mating otters in the Mad River. They're so adorable!

**December 11, 2010**

Rebecca (WSP member placed with Mid Klamath Watershed Council)\*, I love your soup! I make it all the time. It's wayyyyyy too delicious; I'm afraid I am now addicted.



\* No "Third Thursday" potluck at the Panamnik Community Center of Orleans is complete without Rebecca Lawrence's famous soup!



## RESTORING SEQUOIA CREEK

by Jemma Williams  
Eureka Dept. of Fish and Game

On May 7th 2011 a restoration project took place in the beautiful Sequoia Park in Eureka, CA. The project's objectives were to remove two failing culverts on unnamed tributaries that feed into the Martin Slough (an anadromous waterway) and to remove two types of nasty invasive plants: Crocosmia and English Ivy. After the removal, the area was then re-vegetated with over 100 native plants. With the help of the Humboldt Fish Action Council and over 30 volunteers, we were able to successfully complete our mission!! With elbow grease, some pulaskis, and countless hands digging for bulbs, a portion of the park was transformed and the stream is now unobstructed. Thank you to all of the hard working volunteers and to the CCC members who are now completing the last leg of this restoration effort!

# SHAY PARK

## LINKING WATERSHED RESTORATION WITH EDUCATION

by Greg Goforth  
Fortuna Dept. of Fish and Game

Part of the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project's mission is to "link education with high-quality scientific practices." As such, restoration projects provide excellent opportunities for hands-on education and stewardship for youth. A great local example of this link between education and restoration is Shay Park in Arcata. In the early to mid 1990s, approximately 160 feet of Jolly Giant Creek was daylighted and over 1,000 feet of anadromous salmonid habitat was restored.

The project was spearheaded by Arcata High School biology teacher Lewis Armin-Hoiland and taken up by the Redwood Community Action Agency and eventually funded by the State. Today, Shay Park provides natural riparian habitat, habitat for salmonids (Chinook, Coho and Steelhead) and an outdoor classroom for Arcata High School students.

On May 14th, for my Individual Service Project, I had the the privilege of doing a creek clean-up and restoration event at Shay Park with volunteers from Arcata High School. Over a decade later, Shay Park continues to provide a link between education and community-driven restoration, and as a Watershed Stewards Project member, I am proud to be a part of it.



Volunteers restore Sunset Creek, near Shay Park in Arcata.  
Photo by Ryan Spencer (WSP Volunteer Media Team Leader)



## WHY PLANTS?

by Trevor Griffith  
Mattole Restoration Council  
Petroia, CA

Someone recently asked me, “Why are you so into plants?” The question caught me a little off guard and resulted in a somewhat unclear and incomplete response. So, I thought I’d try to re-answer the question with a little more lucidity. This is partly because I think that the power and importance of plants are often overlooked these days and partly because the subject is somewhat relevant to the work that most of us are doing. Also, I am sort of ‘into’ plants.

I’ve gained tremendous respect for the plant kingdom over the years as I learned more and more about them—things like how several billion years ago plant-like ocean dwellers started quietly building oxygen levels in the atmosphere to the point which allows us O<sub>2</sub> breathers to function. Their synthesis of food from inorganic molecules, through the use of sunlight, provides the basis for pretty much all the rest of life on Earth. Also, the greatly varied evolutionary paths of plants have given us so many of the materials (i.e. cotton, timber, paper, petroleum, etc.) which have allowed our culture to become what it is today. These are some of the grandiose attributes of plants that pertain to our lives, but there are other connections to be made with plants that I find more stimulating.

Not that long ago plants were the primary, if not sole, means of treating nearly every malady faced by man. Sure there were/are often rituals and animal body parts thrown in for flare and flavor, but plants were/are the main ingredients. They produce an amazing array of compounds that can affect our body’s chemistry in profound ways. Unlike the yucca moth and yucca plant that co-evolved a mutual dependence on one another for survival, we are generalists, adapted to use many varieties of plants to sustain our

health. Think of spices. Most people like spices with their food. Of course, this varies depending on the person, spice, or dish, but generally, they often make food taste better. Why is this? Spices burn our mouths, make us sweat or your nose runny, and are unappealing in large quantities. And it is exactly because of these caustic properties that we've developed a liking for them. Plants have been engaged in chemical warfare ever since things started eating them and over multitudes of millennia have devised many compounds that keep their predators from killing them off. When we eat spices we are using the plant's chemical defenses to help us by hindering the potentially harmful microorganisms within our bodies. Obviously, there are many other ways in which people use plants, and they're not always simply to keep their body healthy.

Ethnobotany is the study of cultural interactions with plants. It often focuses on medicinal, ritual, and toxic uses of plants in addition to food and material uses. Learning about how remote and ancient cultures, both tribal and of great scale, used complex plant recipes to produce neurotoxins that could paralyze their prey in moments is incredibly enthralling. Much of the information found on these cultures alludes to connections with Earth, and its biotic and abiotic constituents, in a much greater and more profound sense than what the vast majority of people in the world seem to now have. And as I struggle to find a proper path in a culture that I feel is backward in so many respects, I find that rekindling some of the knowledge and practices of obscure and relic cultures gives me a peace of mind and feeling of connectedness that makes me feel confident and content with my life. It is often through plants that I connect with these roots. I believe that the feeling of separateness is salient to many of the issues facing modern society and that this feeling can be reconciled, at least in part, by learning from plants and exploring the doors that they open.

To take it down a notch, I thought I'd mention some of the reasons why I'm so "into" plants that are

more relevant to the work and goals of the restoration effort of which we are all a part. First of all, field safety—knowing how to recognize poison oak in all its various forms can be crucial if you're sensitive to its oil. Also, knowing the different stinging nettles, that you shouldn't grab onto the gooseberry because of its spines, or not to use that weak-rooted mimulus to support you as you scramble up the stream bank are all important for field safety. If you do happen to get stung by nettle, cut up, or bit by a bug, the plants around you can augment or replace your first-aid kit—assuming you know what plants are what. Second, if you're in the business of restoring the land then it's likely that you're removing invasive plants and planting native plants in their place. And if you want to be good at what you're doing and avoid as many mistakes as possible,

I would argue that knowing the species of plant you're gathering seed from, where to find it, when its seeds are ripe, how best to propagate it, and where and when to out-plant it are important nuggets of knowledge. Likewise, it is good to know whether or not the plant you're removing by the hundreds is actually the invasive species it's supposed to be, and if so, what is the best way, the best time and what are the best tools to remove it, as well as where to start and what to expect after you do the work. Finally, I might suggest that plants are the most fundamental aspect of a watershed that people can impact on relevant timescales (as opposed to geologic or climatic processes.) Thus knowing about plants can be instrumental in finding solutions to problems of other species, such as the need for more large woody debris, cooler water, higher base flows, increased food supply, and/or promoting a diversity of genetics which will help engender the ecosystem resilience needed to cope with changing climates.

I feel like I could easily continue... The reasons to study and use and connect with plants seem pretty much endless to me. But I think I've gone on long enough and don't want to take too much of anyone's time, as we all must cultivate our gardens.

## ROMANCING THE ROLE OF WATERSHED STEWARDS IN REGIONAL WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

by Todd Carlin  
Coastal Restoration Monitoring and  
Evaluation Program  
Fortuna, CA



After moving for the Watershed Stewards Project (WSP) from the urban sprawl of San Diego and Orange counties, my idea of what a watershed steward meant changed dramatically. Most of the stewardship efforts I had been exposed to had been solely related to water quality and quantity issues, with few public outreach events, and little means of direct action besides a change of personal behaviors (i.e. reducing trash input or curtailing household water use). More alarming for me was to compare my WSP stewardship role with the Tijuana River Watershed project which I had participated in while at school in San Diego. Because two-thirds of this transboundary watershed lies in Mexico there has been very little, if any watershed management or community engagement. My role as a watershed steward was simply to get stakeholders, community members, and government to acknowledge the concept of a watershed and agree that it is an interconnected common resource that must be managed in order to prevent degradation. In contrast, my experience with WSP thus far has offered a tangible solution to implement change and has further been facilitated by the social climate in which

individuals seem to care or have more means to care about their natural resources.

As I embraced the new environment in Northern California with AmeriCorps, my perception of what being a watershed steward entailed had shifted. Perhaps it was the community with which I was now involved, or simply the contrasted nature and complexity of managing the Northern California watershed system. Similar to my experience in the Tijuana River Watershed, managing Northern California watersheds as a common resource entails many different strategies, in part due to the myriad of land uses and the need to acknowledge the interconnectedness of larger watershed systems when managing the resource. Given the past degradation of these watersheds from logging, water diversions, and hydroelectric facilities, to name a few, it seems no wonder that there exists a need for a program such as WSP in the community to advocate and help individuals foster a sense of belonging and connectedness with their environment.

By the very nature of the goals of the WSP program, this community need has been and continues to be met. Stewards are offered a unique

opportunity to take part in place-based education and outreach, participate in assessments and data collection, and learn hands-on restoration techniques. From teaching watershed based curriculum in the Real Science Education Program, to engaging the community in restoration events at Individual Service Projects, WSP members' role in community-based education is ever-present. Furthermore, in contrast to previous stewardship programs, WSP offers members an opportunity to physically engage in conducting assessments and collecting data that could impact policy recommendations and allocation of grant funding. Members participating in spawner surveys and downstream migrant trapping for example, provide data for use by agencies in estimating

salmonid population abundance, while members participating in habitat and channel typing gather data that can be used to prioritize areas for restoration grant funding. WSP members play a niche role in their respective community's ability to improve the quality of their watersheds. Moreover, looking back I feel that WSP has given me the opportunity to broaden and improve my own role as a watershed steward. It is my hope that the program continue to be funded and that other programs take hold elsewhere, such that important work like this can continue to take place and our watersheds, not just in Northern California, continue to be restored to their natural state.

## ADVENTURES IN HAB-TYPING : WEEK ONE!

by Kady Christen  
Fotuna Dept. of Fish and Game



Kady, Dan, and Meghan habitat-type their way up Water Gulch, past a prison work camp, an old dam, a grave marked with only 'Rest in Peace', an active shooting range, mosquito clouds, and a swamp! What will they find next?...who knows!? 😊



# *Dawn of Life*

---

*By Michael Horwitz  
DFG Eureka*

*Sun glistens off you  
Black beads of cultivation  
Sparks of new essence*

*Dedicated to my froggy friends*



Brave the cold water  
In search for fishy friends  
We are W.S.P.

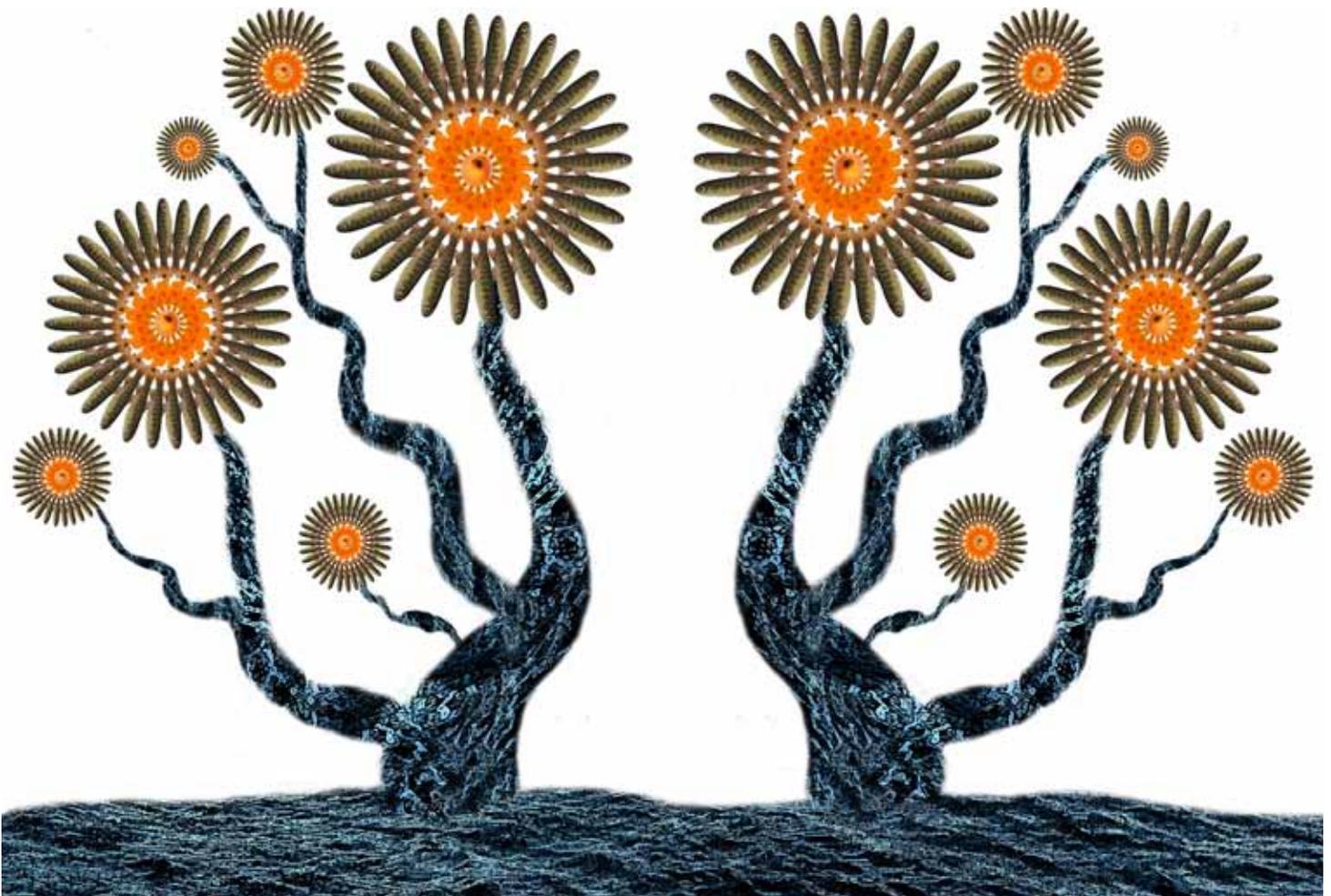
-Alex Blessing, DFG Fortuna

**Above**

Salmon Carcass by Nora Catolico, US  
Forest Service Eureka

**Below**

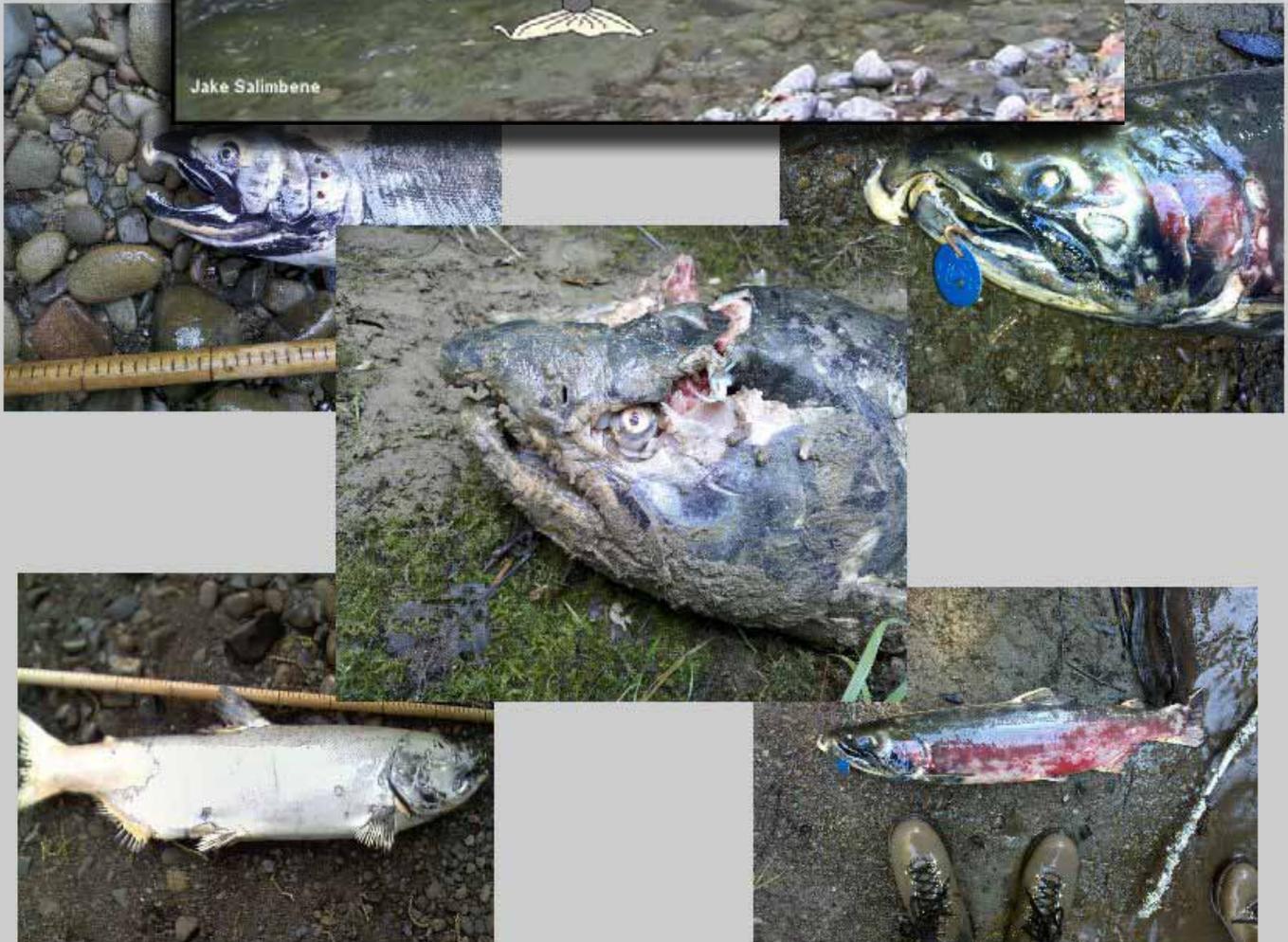
Digital Salmon Lifecycle Sculpture  
by Erin Kantorski, Fortuna Dept. of  
Fish and Game





**Left**  
by Jake Salimbene  
US Forest  
Service, Eureka

**Below**  
"Spawn-a-Thon"  
by Dan Opalacz  
Fortuna Dept. of  
Fish and Game





## REFLECTIONS...

**WSP Outreach Team Leader, Erika Stowe-Madison interviews WSP alum, Erin Hicks.  
Erin begins a 2-year term of service with the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic.**

***Your Background: How did your education and experience guide you into environmental restoration?***

I graduated from Cal State Fullerton in 2003 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts with an emphasis in Illustration. After participating in the Backcountry Trails Program in 2007 (another AmeriCorps program through the California Conservation Corps), I fell in love with working outdoors and wanted to find other environmental opportunities. Another Backcountry Trails Alum (also named Erin!) told me about her experience in WSP. It sounded like a perfect match. I felt very fortunate to be accepted into the program and have the opportunity to work with biologists and biological technicians to help improve the plight of the Pacific Salmon.

***When and where did you serve and what did you like most about your year/2 years of service?***

I served at the Department of Fish and Game in Fortuna in 2008. Allan Renger was my mentor. I enjoyed working with like-minded people who shared a strong passion for the environment. We had such a great group of people. It's quite a rewarding experience to look back on your day's work and say "I planted a certain number of trees, or removed a large amount of invasives, or counted a number of salmon spawning. I also enjoyed the *Real Science* education aspect of the program and felt that educating youth was the by far the most rewarding experience. With our youth lies hope for change for the future.

***What did you do post WSP?***

After WSP, I heeded the mountain's call and returned back to trail work for two more seasons in the Klamath National Forest and in Yosemite National Park. During my Yosemite season, I applied to the Peace Corps and just recently received an invitation to do environmental work in the Dominican Republic. I embark May 28 to start my new Peace Corps adventure.

My AmeriCorps experience (specifically with WSP) allowed me to realize my love for environmental and volunteer work. The Peace Corps seemed like a great option for the future, though also an intimidating opportunity as well (you live in a foreign country for two years away from friends and family). After traveling to Peru and Bolivia and doing some volunteer work there, I came back with a love for traveling, an ability to speak some Spanish, and felt it was time to apply to the Peace Corps.

***What are your fears/goals/hopes associated with being a Peace Corps volunteer? (Any similar feelings to becoming an AmeriCorps)***

An experience like this is bound to spark some fear. It seems like such an overwhelming opportunity as I try to pack my life into two bags and 80 pounds for the next two years. But I know that when I get there (just like when I was in WSP's first weeks of training), I will realize that everything is very doable and that I am blessed to have such an amazing opportunity to live in a new culture and help out communities in need. I hope to have a positive impact with the people I meet and hope that their lives will also change mine. I'm not hoping to change the world. I only want to put my best effort in the right direction. Hopefully this effort will be enough to have some positive impact in the lives of my future community.

***How have you prepared for this experience?***

I don't know if one can particularly prepare for this experience. I think having an open mind and an open heart is what may aid in being prepared. There will be a lot of new situations and cultural exchanges. It helps to be a relaxed person who is willing to learn about different ways people live life despite the possible discomforts it may bring.

If you think you want to do the Peace Corps sometime in the future, you might as well start the application process now. Filling out the application is a tedious process that could take some time. In addition, the process of being placed can take some time as well. On the application it asks when you can be available to volunteer. So if you have a date in mind (even if it's a year or two off), you might as well send in the application so that everything will be processed by the time you're ready to serve. Also, you don't need a second language and, with WSP you have sufficient experience to get nominated to be a Peace Corps volunteer. So don't hesitate!

***Any last words of wisdom?***

This sounds simple and may be quite cliché but it's very true: follow your heart. That's the only way you will be happy. If you're happy, you'll then have a positive effect on others around you. Let your heart and life itself be your guides. Things will work out in the end and if they haven't worked out, then it's not the end.

I often look back to Abraham Lincoln for inspiration. This may not exactly get me through hard times, but he always serves as inspiration to keep on the right track and to do the right thing: "When I do good, I feel good. When I do bad, I feel bad. That's my religion."

Also, I enjoy this quote from Jack Kerouac: "When you get to the top of the mountain, keep on climbing."

Background image by  
Julie Hanson, Hopland  
Dept. of Fish and Game

# D.S.M.T.

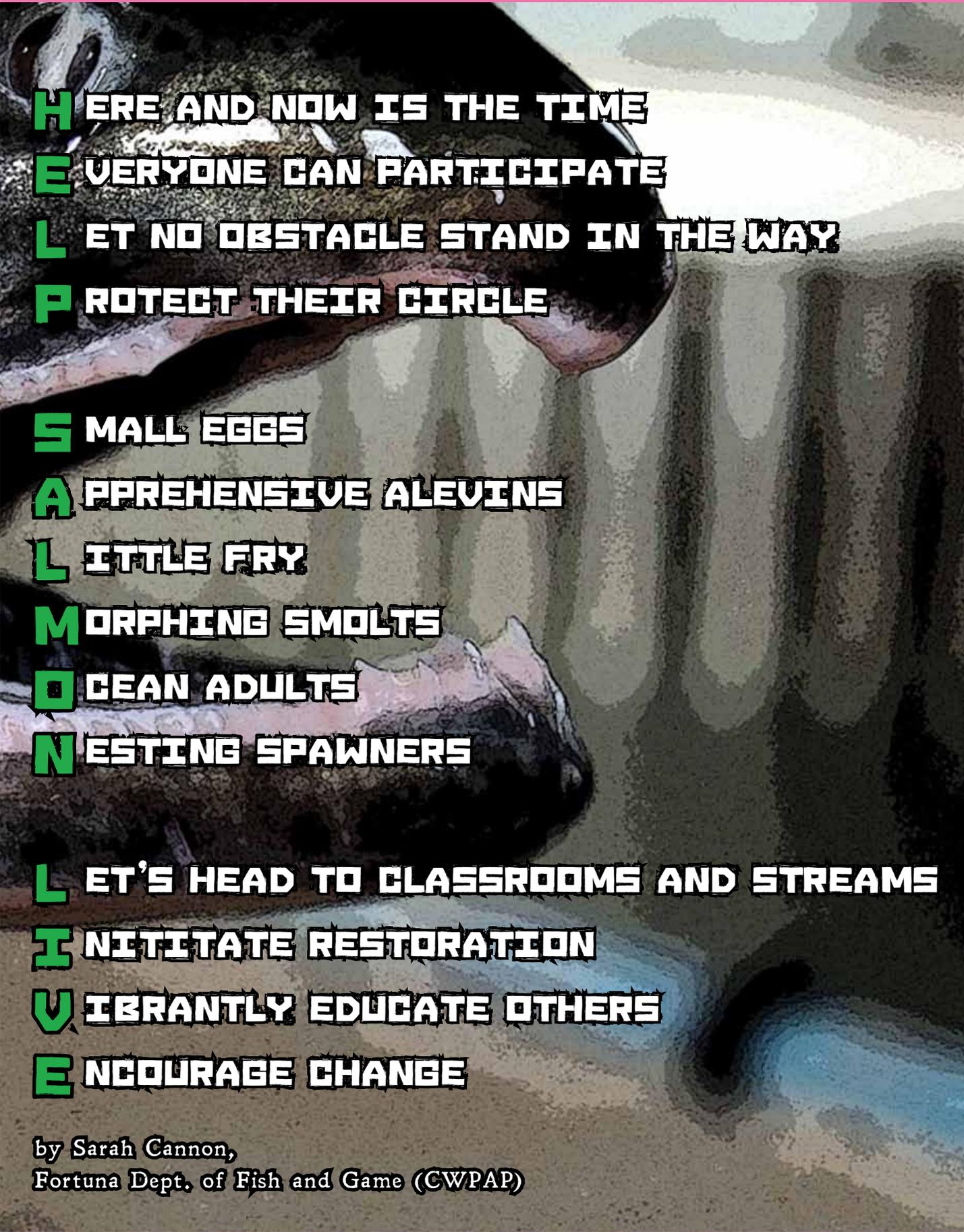
by Danile Hoshizaki  
Mattole Salmon Group

Minding its own business a little salmon swims down the stream  
It's a great day, the water is cold and clean  
Through pools and under brush, the little salmon makes its way  
Till suddenly it sees movement above the water

A dark shadow lurks overhead,  
Watch out little salmon or soon you might be dead!  
Darting from side to side the poor fish tries to escape  
But to no avail the salmon is caught  
Out of the water it goes, it stands no chance

What could it be, a hungry predator?  
A seagull, a fox, or even an otter  
No it's none of these! The little salmon is going to be okay  
It's in the hands of a skilled volunteer running a trap  
Don't worry little fish  
You'll be back in the river before you can say "skat!"

Carefully taking measurements and handling the fish with care  
The little salmon is released back into the river  
Where now it can go on swimming towards the sea  
Be safe little guy and come back soon  
To these waters trouble free  
So more little salmon can be counted by WSP!

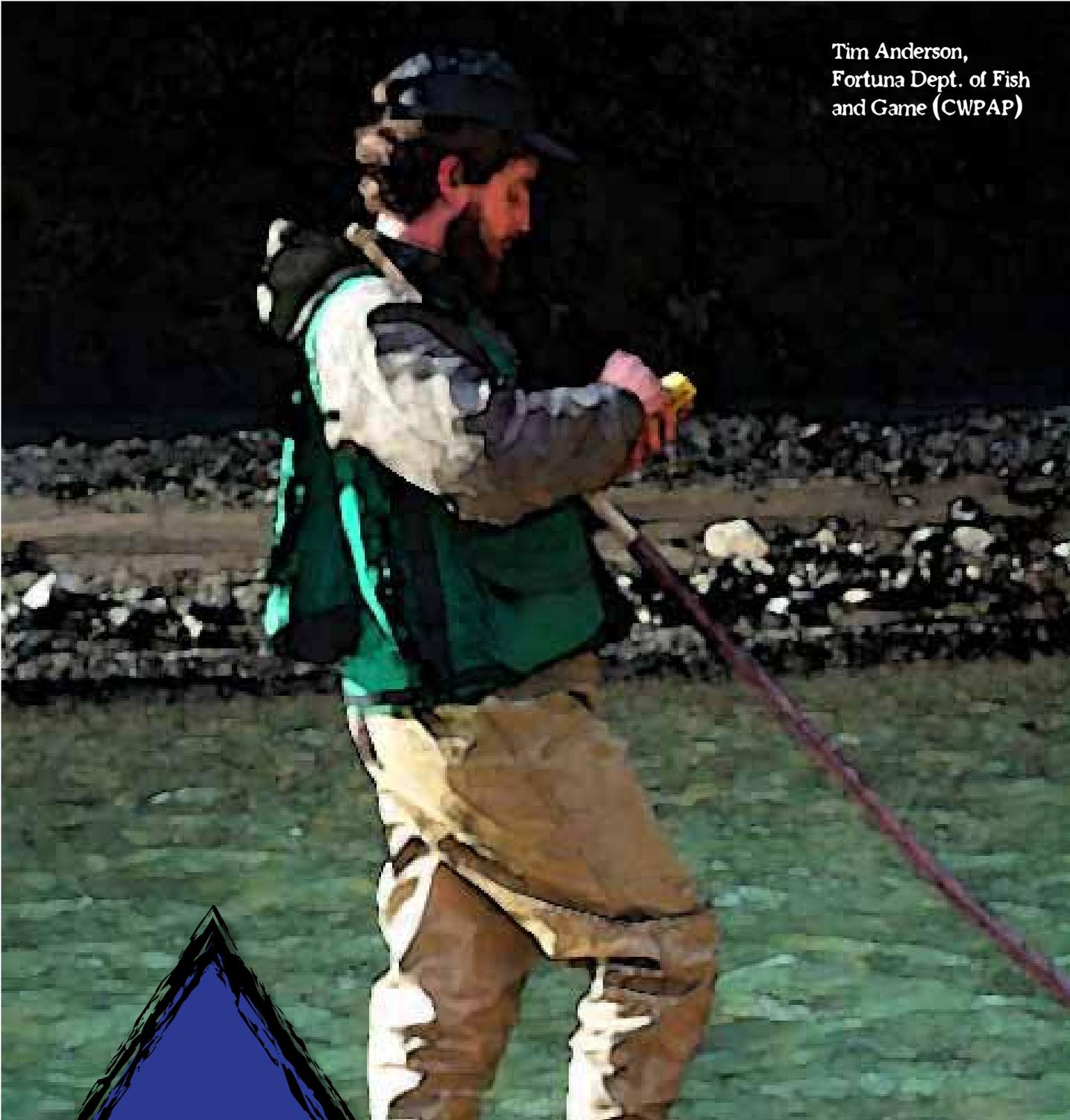


**H**ERE AND NOW IS THE TIME  
**E**VERYONE CAN PARTICIPATE  
**L**ET NO OBSTACLE STAND IN THE WAY  
**P**ROTECT THEIR CIRCLE

**S**MALL EGGS  
**A**PPREHENSIVE ALEVINS  
**L**ITTLE FRY  
**M**MORPHING SMOLTS  
**O**CEAN ADULTS  
**N**ESTING SPAWNERS

**L**ET'S HEAD TO CLASSROOMS AND STREAMS  
**I**MITITATE RESTORATION  
**V**IBRANTLY EDUCATE OTHERS  
**E**NCOURAGE CHANGE

by Sarah Cannon,  
Fortuna Dept. of Fish and Game (CWPAP)

A man wearing a black cap, a green safety vest over a grey jacket, and tan waders is standing in a stream. He is holding a long-handled tool, possibly a net or a rake, and appears to be working on the stream bed. The background shows a rocky stream bed and some green vegetation.

Tim Anderson,  
Fortuna Dept. of Fish  
and Game (CWPAP)

A blue water drop graphic with a black outline, positioned in the bottom left corner of the page.

## Watershed Stewards Project

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