



# UPPER NEHALEM WATERSHED COUNCIL

## STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2021 - 2023

### OUR VISION

A balanced ecosystem that supports a healthy watershed which provides for an economic base and viable watershed communities.

### OUR MISSION

To foster stewardship and understanding of the natural resources of the Upper Nehalem Watershed among the stakeholders of the watershed communities in order to protect, conserve, restore and sustain the health and functions of the watershed.

### GOALS

**GOAL 1: Conserve, protect and restore native salmon populations while improving the overall health of the natural environment within the Nehalem River watershed. Focus on projects identified as priorities in the watershed from data collected by the UNWC, stakeholders, agencies, consultants, volunteers and other organizations. Continue to collect data as needed.**

**Objective 1.1: Nehalem Conservation Action Plan - Upper Nehalem Project Development:** Complete the task of gathering, translating to usable formats where necessary, organizing, and analyzing relevant data sets including LiDAR

and the large assessments developed by various organizations and agencies. This information will be used to develop and execute projects that carry out NCAP strategies in the Upper Nehalem at the fifth-field HUC level.

**PROGRESS** = Development of in-house GIS capabilities, and improvement of data management, storage and access systems/methods is slow. Additional specialized staff or contracted services resources are needed. Exploring the possibilities of obtaining the capacity to secure technical support for the Upper and Lower Nehalem WC's through the Nehalem Basin Partnership.

**Objective 1.2: Nehalem Strategic Action Plan:** The Nehalem Partnership approached SAP development guided by a vision of healthy ecological, economic, and social conditions in the Nehalem basin that ensure a sustainable future for native Coho salmon through highly connected, functional, and productive landscapes. Through implementation of this SAP, local partners hope to achieve two long term outcomes:

- 1) Protect and restore summer, winter, and incubation habitats sufficient to produce a detectable change in Coho productivity in high priority 6th field watersheds, and promote the long-term viability of the Nehalem Coho population.
- 2) Protect and restore watershed processes to ensure sufficient habitat diversity for the expression of multiple life-history strategies within the Nehalem Coho population.

**PROGRESS** = Developing and implementing high priority projects identified during the NSAP process with advisors from Wild Salmon Center (WSC), National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Lower Nehalem Watershed Council (LNWC) and Trask Consulting.

**PROGRESS** = In 2017 we initiated the "pilot" Beaver Dam Analogue (BDA) on ODF public lands. Cost share funds were secured from NOAA and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for the summer 2018 and 19 implementations.

**PROGRESS** = Summer 2018 27 BDA's were installed in Buster, Upper Rock Creek and the NF Lousignont (ODF). 17 LWD structures were installed

along the NF/Lousignont (ODF/Hyla Woods). 5 LWD structures were installed along Olsen Creek (Stimson).

Summer 2019 30 BDA structures were stalled along Deer (ORM), Walker (ODF) and upper Fishhawk Creeks (OSU). 60 LWD structures were installed along Lousignont (Hauck Trust/ODF), Deer (ORM) and upper Fishhawk Creeks (OSU). Project is continued into 2022 for BDA augmentation stage.

Fall 2020 we secured funding from OWEB to install 21 LWD/1 BDA structures on Lousignont Creek (ODF), 18 LWD structures on Oak Ranch (ODF/Col. Co.), 8 BDA structures on Crawford (ODF), and 15 LWD structures on Northrup Creek. Project scheduled for implementation in the summer of 2022 and 23.

**PROGRESS** = Monitoring of BDA sites is in motion. 3 years of monitoring of biological and physical attributes and has been completed. Cost share funding has been applied for through Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) and Oregon Wildlife Foundation (OWF) to complete the 10-year monitoring plan in 2028.

**Objective 1.3: Oak Ranch Creek:** Replace fish passage barrier at MP 3.5 on Apiary Road in the Oak Ranch Creek sub-basin that will open 7 additional miles of the anchor habitat to salmon. Include salmon habitat improvements (LWD/BDA) to Oak and Archibald Creeks to the extent funding is available.

**PROGRESS** = Summer 2016 14 LWD installed between RM 1.8 and 3.5 crossings.

**PROGRESS** = Summer 2017 15 LWD structures installed long lowest mile of Archibald Creek.

**PROGRESS** = Summer 2018 open bottom reinforced concrete arch installed w/stream simulation at RM 3.5. Monitoring is in motion.

**Objective 1.4: Rock Creek:** Carry out riparian plantings, large wood placements, off-channel habitat and Beaver Dam Analog creation. Partner with ODFW, DEQ, Columbia SWCD, and landowners Weyerhaeuser, Stimson and ODF. Follow prescriptions identified in the Rock Creek Limiting Factors Analysis.

**PROGRESS** = 10 Beaver Dam Analogues installed along upper Rock Creek/Beaver Creek in summer 2018.

**PROGRESS** = 5+ BDA installed in summer 2019. Working with consultant, ODFW and ODF to augment BDA's installed in 2018/19 with a reweaving in the autumn of 2022.

**Objective 1.5: Fishhawk Lake:** Continue research and development of Fishhawk Lake dam retrofit for spillway/fish ladder.

**PROGRESS** = over time we developed 4 technical assistance grant applications, and in spring 2022 submitted 1 construction grant application. All applications were not recommended for funding due to circumstances beyond my control. ODFW fish passage funding was secured and will be applied to the fish ladder construction in the spring of 2023.

**PROGRESS** = Fishhawk Lake community has advanced the project technically, legally, financially and politically to the point of construction. Ground breaking ceremony occurred in spring 2022.

**Objective 1.6: Deep Creek Passage and Habitat Improvement:** Collaborate to develop fish passage and habitat improvement projects in the basin and seek cost share from OWEB for summer 2018/19 implementation.

**PROGRESS** = Weyerhaeuser Lane and Calvin Creek crossings implementation completed in summer 2018. Monitoring is in motion.

**PROGRESS** = Develop next phase to capture remaining barriers and improve stream habitat in sync with Weyerhaeuser operations and grant opportunities.

**Objective 1.7: Clear Creek - Salmon Passage and Anchor Habitat Improvement:** Collaborate with Weyerhaeuser to develop passage and habitat improvement projects in designated reaches.

**PROGRESS** = Secured OWEB technical assistance funding in 2021. Design phase summer/fall 2022. Secure funding for summer 2023 implementation.

**Objective 1.8: Deer Creek - Salmon Anchor Habitat Establishment:** Collaborate with Olympic Recourse Management to develop passage and habitat improvement projects along designated reaches.

**PROGRESS** = Design phase winter spring 2019 - implement summer 2019. Monitoring of LWD and BDA sites in motion.

**Objective 1.9: Tweedle Creek - Stream Corridor/Habitat Improvement:** Collaborate with NSAP advisors (WSC/NOAA/ODFW/Consultants), permitting agencies (NOAA/NMFS/DSL/USACE/SHPO/Clatsop County and landowner (Carmichael) to develop engineer designs, secure cost share (OWEB small grant/NFWF/NOAA/ODFW) and implement project in the summer of 2020.

**PROGRESS** = Engineer design completed and reviewed. Cost share secured through NFWF/NOAA/OWF. Removal fill permit secured from USACE/DSL, DEQ 401/1200C permits secured, ESA programmatic review completed including SHPO review and archeological survey w notification to tribes, Clatsop Co flood plain permit secured, and Clatsop co Development and Grading permits in review. Monitoring plan reviewed and approved. Drone flight conducted preconstruction. Contractor secured.

**PROGRESS** = Plans in motion for summer 2022 implementation. Logs staged and riparian fence being salvaged and setback. Contractor scheduled for late August - September construction.

**Objective 1.10: Nehalem East Fork:** Investigate and develop a plan for restoring salmon habitat and passage on the East Fork of the Nehalem. Conduct feasibility analysis in future.

**PROGRESS** = None to date.

**Objective 1.11: Riparian Restoration - Shade Our Streams (SOS):** Enlist 5 new landowners, plant 5000 trees on 15 acres, and re-vegetate 1000 feet of eroding stream bank annually. Seek additional cost share from OWEB Small Grant and volunteer support from SOLVE, BSA, VHS Forestry class, Landowners and community volunteers.

**PROGRESS** = UNWC continues to provide seedlings from the NNN to landowners for riparian plantings. Secured DEQ 319 funding for the

riparian reforestation on the ODFW JMWA Humbug Trac starting in the fall of 2022. Secured funding from the OWF for plantings along Fishhawk Creek. Secured BLM RAC funding for plantings along the East Fork Nehalem. Researching funding opportunities to increase riparian reforestation efforts of the mainstream Nehalem above Vernonia.

**Objective 1.12: Younger Riparian Restoration:** Completed Phase II report and submitted to OWEB in winter 2019 and conducted plant establishment tasks in the summer/fall of 2019/20/21 in the riparian area of the Younger property around the confluence of Fishhawk Creek, Beaver Creek and along the Nehalem River.

**PROGRESS** = Additional plant establishment activities scheduled for fall 2022.

**Objective 1.13: ODA Nehalem - Strategic Implementation Area:** Developed and implemented high priority riparian restoration and water quality improvements projects in cooperation with identified landowners, Columbia SWCD, ODA and ODFW. Johnson and Armstrong riparian reforestation plant installation completed in the spring of 2020. Project completion report submitted to OWEB in summer of 2020. Plant establishment activities will continue until fall 2022. Columbia River Youth Conservation Corp and UNWC staff conducted the plant establishment work.

**PROGRESS** = Additional plantings are scheduled for the fall of 2022.

**Objective 1.14: Nehalem Native Nursery:** Continue to develop and expand the nursery operation and supply healthy plants for UNWC, NORP, VHS, fundraisers and private projects. Continue to strengthen integration of nursery operations with VHS students, faculty and mutual staff, and community volunteers. Employee 2 student interns for 10 weeks every summer to maintain nursery and upkeep greenhouse, outbuildings and grounds w/BLM RAC funds administered by Vernonia 47J. Develop new cost share partners/donors with 47J.

**PROGRESS** = Secured RAC funds for 2021-22. Applied for RAC funds for 2022-23. Nursery well-tended by crew and students. Surplus seedlings obtained from BLM and ODF. Propagating other natives, pollinators and veggies. Heirlooms will be propagated. Plants being produced for riparian and wetland reforestation projects.

**Objective 1.15: Monitor - Water Quality - Temperature/Turbidity:** Continue to collect samples from designated sites through-out the Nehalem watershed as per DEQ standards. Process data, provide to DEQ/partners, and archive for future reference and use in watershed health and restoration analysis.

**PROGRESS** = Provided DEQ with 2015, 16, 17, 18 temp data in the new submission format.

**Objective 1.16: Monitor Post Project Status**

- Pebble I - 5 crossings/19 LWD (complete 9-30-19)
- Pebble II - 46 LWD (complete 9-30-19)
- Beneke - 13 LWD (complete 4-20-18)
- Oak - upper crossing (6-22-23/6-22-25)
- Oak - lower crossings/14 LWD (complete 12-13-21)
- Rock Creek - 32 LWD (11-16-19/ complete11-15-21)
- Lousignont - 15 LWD (complete 4-1-19)
- Archibald - 14 LWD (complete 12-27-19)
- Younger I - 14 acre planting (complete 2019)
- Younger II - 14 acre planting (complete 2021)
- ODA SIA PE - riparian (7-01-23)
- Beaver Creek - 14 LWD (11-30-22)
- Deep Creek - 2 crossings (complete 10-23)
- Anchor Habitat - (ytbd)
- Tweedle - Meander alignment (ytbd)

**GOAL 2: Promote community awareness, interest, and participation in our watershed health.**

**Objective 2.1: Online presence:** Update the UNWC website and the UNWC Facebook page.

**PROGRESS** = UNWC website was rebuilt in winter 2019 on Nehalem.org domain hosted by GoDaddy. UNWC is in the process of rebuild by a local volunteer after unexpected GoDaddy crash. UNWC will be securing a new host in 2022. Community volunteer Continue adding new content as available. Develop and infuse UNWC blog regularly. Add Story Map.

**Objective 2.2: Local summer event:** Participate in at least one summer/fall community event such as the Friendship Jamboree and Salmon Festival, or sponsor a community wide picnic on the river, with project tours and/or native plant nursery tours.

**PROGRESS** = UNWC participates in Salmon Festival by having an information table, interactive stream table, scavenger hunt and Claudia Chinook displays. Volunteer recruitment is ongoing. Fundraising committee focusing on silent auction to be held in Scout Cabin at Hawkins Park Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>. Need to create informational display. Invite to ODFW.

**Objective 2.3: Educate the local community:** Submit an article on UNWC business and or watershed related articles of interest, written by a board member/staff/consultant to the Vernonia Voice, at least once a quarter. Conduct field tours of watershed and restoration projects.

**PROGRESS** = Articles are routinely submitted to the VV by Aiuto Designs. Field tours will resume in 2022/23. Writers wanted.

**Objective 2.4: Educate local teachers and students:** Continue to work with VSD faculty on at least two joint projects involving hands-on activities in the watershed, community and/or nursery.

**PROGRESS** = Forestry class, student interns and special education students are routinely involved in the NNN operation.

**PROGRESS** = Participate in Salmon Watch with V 47J and home schools.

**Objective 2.5: Educate landowners:** Collaborate with NRCS to promote the pasture improvement project in the Upper Nehalem River valley.

**PROGRESS** = No progress.

**Objective 2.6: Beaver:** Promote the expansion of Beaver/Salmon Anchor Habitat protection and restoration projects with advisors and partners. Seek to elevate the public status of the North American Beaver species *Castor Canadensis* (Oregon State Animal) as a viable watershed recovery partner whose industrial nature is an essential element of ecosystem process geared to increase native salmon production through active colonization.



**PROGRESS** = UNWC supportive of the work of the newly formed Beaver Coalition.

**PROGRESS** = UNWC requested a trapping ban on Beaver to the ODFW Fish and wildlife Commission on ODF lands in certain high priority anchor habitat areas in the upper Nehalem. Request denied.

**PROGRESS** = UNWC conducts field tours of BDA sites with a wide variety of interested participants. Next tour scheduled for summer/fall 2022.

**GOAL 3: Maintain and develop partnerships with schools, public agencies, businesses, timber interests, private landowners, and other organizations to carry out our mission.**

**Objective 3.1: Nehalem Basin Partnership:** The Upper and Lower Nehalem Watershed Councils secured OWEB support essential to the facilitation of structuring a network of partners dedicated to engaging in a 3-year collaborative process to lay the groundwork for the continuation of the implementation of the Nehalem Strategic Action Plan (NSAP 2021). The partnership hereafter is referred to as the Nehalem Basin Partnership (NBP). There is a need to elevate the partnership's current level of performance in service to the NSAP through improved outreach, coordination, communication, engagement with stakeholders through memorandum of understanding, resource sharing, restoration project planning, project tracking and website development. NBP's primary focus will be strategic planning to assure future goals are met for the implementation of Coho Salmon anchor habitat projects identified within high priority 6th field sub-basins of the Nehalem Basin (4th field HUC #17100202). With dedicated facilitation from a contracted consultant, the NBP will finalize and disperse the NSAP document regionally. The consultant will also provide a 3-year framework of dedicated NBP coordination, network communication, facilitated quarterly meetings (12) and support of the over-all NSAP implementation planning process. The project will also include: alignment of NSAP with other regional management plans, project tracking to ensure this project is completed as proposed, identification of match funding sources, grant and collaboration opportunities, and identification of a project management/tracking database. The project will also contract a website developer. Project partners (committed) include: The Upper and Lower Nehalem Watershed Councils, Tillamook Estuary Partnership, Oregon Department of Fish

and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Forestry, US Fish and Wildlife Clatsop SWCD, Columbia SWCD, Weyerhaeuser, Department of Environmental Quality, Trout Unlimited, North Coast Land Conservancy, and the Lower Nehalem Community Trust.

**PROGRESS** = First partnership meeting scheduled for September 2022. NSAP document has been sent to the copy editor by WSC. Request for quote will be released in July 2022 to recruit a planning facilitator.

**Objective 3.2: Partnership with Vernonia School District/Native Plant Nursery:** Continue our work on the native plant nursery we established on the grounds of Vernonia School District in cooperation with BLM and the VSD. Continue to use the nursery to supply plants for restoration programs and to educate Vernonia students in nursery operations and restoration activities, as well as hands-on riparian planting projects with forestry class, temperature monitoring of upper Nehalem, Salmon Watch, and watershed health awareness activities.

**PROGRESS** = In the spring of 2022 renewed lease agreement with superintendent Miller of Vernonia School District 47J for 2 more years. Forestry class wholeheartedly engaged in the NNN operation and riparian planting projects. Student interns scheduled to work in the nursery in the summer of 2022.

**Objective 3.3: Wild Salmon Center:** Continue to participate in the Wild Salmon Center's development and finalization of the Nehalem Strategic Action Plan to promote funding for restoration of Coho salmon/Beaver anchor habitat to a broader funding community. Continue to engage stakeholders and natural resource agencies concerned in the process.

**PROGRESS** = WSC secured NOAA funds to support the development and implementation of Nehalem anchor habitat improvement projects that were implemented in 2018 and 2019. WSC plans to secure another NOAA block grant in the summer of 2022 with special focus on NSAP projects.

**Objective 3.4: Partnerships with other watershed agencies:** Continue to work with Tillamook Estuary Partnership, Lower Nehalem Watershed Council, Northern Oregon Restoration Partnership, Lower Nehalem Community Trust,

North Coast Land Conservancy, and other watershed groups to plan future partnerships and joint projects as viable opportunities arise.

**PROGRESS** = The Nehalem Basin Partnership is in formation and supported by a 3-year planning process to develop and implement NSAP projects in sync with partners.

**Objective 3.5: Focused Investment Partnerships:** Explore and if feasible, participate in the development of a focused investment partnership for restoring Coho habitat in the North Coast Basin/Nehalem basin.

**PROGRESS** = LNWC and UNWC decided to seek OWEB funding for partnership building capacity as a stepping stone to a FIP. Funding secured in February 2022. 3-year planning process has begun in collaboration with the LNWC and committed stakeholders. In the process of seeking a qualified planning facilitator.

**Objective 3.6: Board Development:** Educate the Board on current and potential strategic partners by meeting with individuals and/or boards of Columbia County, Columbia SWCD, Clatsop SWCD, Tillamook SWCD, Tillamook Estuary Partnership, OWEB, and at least three other organizations whose mission concerns fish habitat and/or the health of rivers.

**PROGRESS** = Need to continue to engage stakeholders in UNWC activities and encourage identified representatives to participate at the core level by serving on the UNWC Board of Directors and/or strengthening restoration partnerships with stakeholder group. Continue to work together to identify core values and renew the UNWC mission of vision. Publish UNWC mission and vision on banners for public display at events and office entryway.

**GOAL 4: Sustain and improve a strategic, accountable, and transparent organization.**

**Objective 4.1: Financial Oversight:** Continue Board oversight of finances and projects through reports from the Board Treasurer, UNWC Bookkeeper and the UNWC Executive Director on at least a quarterly basis.

**PROGRESS** = Ongoing. New Treasurer in training.

**Objective 4.2: Annual Audit:** Conduct an annual audit of all equipment over \$100.

**PROGRESS** = update planned for 2022.

**Objective 4.3: UNWC Policy and Procedures:** Monitor the use of the UNWC policies and procedures and revise as needed. Executive Director will conduct a biennial review of the policies and procedures and recommend updates to the UNWC Board of Directors for approval.

**PROGRESS** = Review of policies to take place in 2022-23. Procedure manual progress is slow. Need dedicated staff support to accomplish. Policies reformatted, and new member notebooks made and are being distributed.

**Objective 4.4: UNWC Operational Plan:** Develop a written operational plan that encompasses the wide variety of activities and obligations UNWC is involved in daily, monthly, annually and biennially.

**PROGRESS** = Additional staff resources needed to complete in 2023.

**Objective 4.5: Board recruitment:** Focus board recruitment efforts on identified stakeholders. Special focus on recruiting a faculty or student of Vernonia High School.

**PROGRESS** = Recruitment efforts ongoing. Additional effort needed.

**Objective 4.6: Director's Contract:** Review the Executive Director's contract and job description and revise as necessary. Conduct and annual review with UNWC Executive Director and UNWC Board of Directors.

**PROGRESS** = Review needs to be conducted in 2023.

**Objective 4.7: Self-Evaluation:** Conduct biennial OWEB council self-evaluation, develop actions and report accordingly.

**PROGRESS** = Self-evaluation conducted in 2021. Next one to be conducted in January of 2023.

**GOAL 5: Explore/Develop new sources of funding and volunteer support.**

**Objective 5.1: Online fundraising:** Explore the concept of raising money for specific projects through various “crowd-funding” websites.

**PROGRESS** = Additional effort needs to be made. Additional staff and volunteer resources needed.

**Objective 5.2: New funders:** Research and develop new funding sources including individual and group donors.

**PROGRESS** = Additional effort needs to be made. Additional staff and volunteer resources needed.

**Objective 5.3: Celebration/Fundraiser:** Recruit volunteers to assist staff and board in developing an UNWC 25-year accomplishment, family friendly, celebration at Camp Wilkerson to showcase Oak Ranch Creek projects, enjoy barbeque and live music, conduct silent action, camp, etc.

**PROGRESS** = Focus changed to increasing UNWC activities and promoting celebration during Salmon Festival 2022. UNWC formed a committee in winter 2021 to work on celebration.

**GOAL 6: Develop a long-range plan for the continuation of the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council.**

**Objective 6.1: 10-year plan:** Plan for the succession of the Executive Director and the continuation of the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council. Current Executive director plans to retire in 2027.

**PROGRESS** = Additional effort needs to be made.

**Objective 6.2: Long Range Plan:** Work with stakeholders and community to develop a long-range plan for the continuation of the Upper Nehalem Watershed

Council beyond the 7<sup>th</sup> generation. Establish a relationship with indigenous tribes with presence and ancestry in the Nehalem and greater North Coast Basin.

**PROGRESS** = Additional effort needs to be made. Additional staff and volunteer resources needed.

Nehalem Basin Partnership will attract a wide array of valuable resources and opportunities to build organizational, financial and ultimately watershed vitality in sync with a vibrant network of engaged partners.

The waters of the Nehalem are sacred to life... from the headwaters to the bay...