

In 1981, Bill Bradbury from Bandon was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives. During his freshman year, he successfully led the passage of legislation to establish the Salmon Trout Enhancement Program (STEP). This legislation established ten STEP districts in the state of Oregon, among them, our Tenmile, Coos, and Coquille District. This ground-breaking legislation recognized that volunteers could play an important role in the restoration of stocks of salmon and trout.

The same year STEP was authorized and the Tenmile, Coos and Coquille District established, a young, forward-thinking biologist, fresh out of Oregon State University, was hired by the Department of Fish & Wildlife to administer this program. Tom Rumreich was more than a perfect fit for the program, for 35 years, he brought a creative vision and energy that far exceeded anyone's imagination. When the goals for STEP were laid out, we had no idea just how far and wide Tom would take the programs. Words can hardly describe just what this outstanding man has done for our communities. So, let me offer a few pictures here to let your imagination take hold:

Economic:



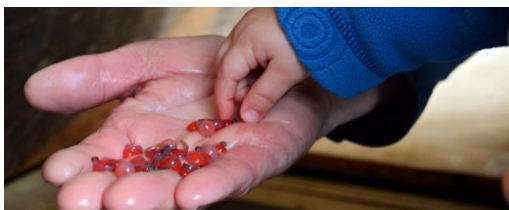
When Tom first arrived in Coos Bay, the annual harvest of fall chinook in the watershed was about 200 fish per year. That number had increased to nearly 11,000 fish in 2011, and it continues to grow. The fall chinook fishery in Coos Bay is now known as a renowned fishery that attracts anglers from all over the United States and it has a profound impact on the economy of the local community and Oregon.

Environment:



Tom's leadership was instrumental in bringing together many disciplines to improve the stream habitat for fish. As an example, Log placements creates in-stream habitat for spawning chinook.

Education:



Tom's true Legacy is not the restoration of fish habitat in our watersheds, nor the economic impact the hatchery programs have had on the struggling economy of Coos County, **it is the indelible mark of knowledge that Tom imparted to over 130,000 children that were touched by him over his career. We had no idea just how powerful this would be.**

Today, the programs Tom started at the Millicoma Interpretive Center, the Rumreich Education Center at Morgan Creek and the many school classrooms throughout our region will continue to provide unique opportunities for student groups to do something “real” with the ecosystem.

The impacts of the programs have been and will continue to be far reaching for decades. Thousands of children have now grown-up and moved on, many working to enhance the natural environment elsewhere. Tom has given them a valuable appreciation for the natural resource cycles of Oregon; especially the magnificent Natural Resource called salmon.

It has been my honor to have participated in many of Tom’s projects.

I want to thank the Legislature for considering a resolution to honor this incredible human being.

Thank you,

Bill Lansing
President and CEO – Retired
Menasha Forest Products Corporation
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