

Testimony for HCR-14. Recognition from Education of the Year nomination:

For over 30 years, Tom Rumreich has worked consistently to improve the Salmon and Steelhead runs in the Coos River basin through use of the Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) and its many volunteers. In addition to producing fish for people to catch, he and the local STEP groups involve thousands of school children from all over Coos County in their programs. Each year between 2,500 and 3,000 students from six different school districts visit the Morgan Creek fish hatchery. In fact, since 1982 some 132,000 child participants have been part of the program. Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities including capturing live salmon, collecting roe and milt, manual fertilization of the eggs and fin clipping juvenile fish. Tom's teaching methods are both factual and entertaining. With the hands on experience several have gone on to seek careers in fisheries and other biological disciplines. Tom has second and third generation participants at his fish hatchery activity. Another aspect of his program is taking salmon eggs into the class rooms which children watch and learn the growth process of the young salmon and then release it into a stream, like Blossom Gulch creek, for example. Completing the salmon life cycle they see, in a couple years, their adult fish on the Coos Bay dock waterfront ready to go back up to the stream they came from. This is truly education at its purest sense which makes a lasting impact on the students. Tom has a passion for fish, educating our youth and providing a renewed salmon resource for our future. Therefore, I am happy to nominate him for the Contributor to Education and also recommend him as Educator of Year.