Rogue Basin Coordinating Council

In 1995, the Oregon legislature passed HB 3441, which provided guidance in establishing watershed councils throughout the state. The bill clarified that the formation of a council is a local government decision; that it must be locally organized, voluntary, and nonregulatory; and that its charge was to improve watershed conditions.

In 1999, members from all seven watershed councils in Oregon, except Seven Basins, which became a member in 2002, formed The Rogue Basin Coordinating Council (RBCC) as a nonprofit corporation. The purpose was to enhance the success of member councils in watershed protection and restoration. Each council concentrates efforts on local planning, while RBCC's focus is on broader issues. The eight-member watershed councils are Applegate River, Bear Creek, Illinois Valley, Little Butte Creek, Lower Rogue, Middle Rogue, Seven Basins, and Upper Rogue.

Watershed councils were formed in response to state government efforts to improve conditions for the Endangered Species Act's listed fish species and to prevent future listings. They serve as the foundation of the voluntary habitat improvement and protection portion of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. As voluntary, independent organizations, councils operate with the belief that healthy watersheds are essential for thriving communities and strong economies.

RBCC serves as a forum for exchanging information and coordinating activities among member councils and federal, state, and local natural resources agencies. The council sponsors a working group of agency and resource professionals and watershed council members charged with developing a strategic plan and prioritizing the man-made barriers to fish passage in the Rogue River Basin. The regional priorities that evolved from the plan are high stream temperatures, water quantity, fish barriers, and lack of adequate in-stream fish habitat.

Using this strategic plan, the RBCC, in cooperation with the Bureau of Reclamation, provides engineering design services to the member councils that are working to improve anadromous fish passage in the Rogue River Basin.

Written by Janet Walker

Further Reading:

Rogue Basin Coordinating Council. http://www.roguebasinwatersheds.org/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=11.

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