

Healthy Communities

Shasta River's Salmon Initiative



Photo Credit: Nancy Crowley

Healthy Streams



Photo Credit: Nancy Crowley

Spring waters in the Shasta River Watershed are essential to the survival of Fall Chinook and coho salmon as well as steelhead trout. This water is also critical to maintaining a healthy and thriving ranching community on the slopes of Mt. Shasta in far Northern California. The mutual need for water by both fish and ranchers have brought together ranchers, conservationists and agencies to find lasting solutions.

Market-based Solutions

TNC's Water Transaction Program Works collaboratively with water users to negotiate short-term agreements to leave water instream, when fish need it most.

In exchange water users are compensated at fair market value for the water not used for irrigation. This win-win approach promotes water to meet fish needs while making sure these small family ranches stay intact and are sustained for generations to come.



Photo Credit: Erika Nortemann

TNC California's -Salmon Initiative Goal

Restore and protect coho salmon, Chinook and steelhead trout to sustainable and fishable abundance and demonstrate solutions in California that have application beyond salmon and beyond California.





Photo Credit: Carson Jeffres

Striking a Balance Between a Working Ranch and A Healthy River

In 2005 and again in 2009, TNC purchased two adjacent ranches in the Shasta Valley totaling approximately 6,000 acres. One goal of purchasing these two ranches was to show that a working cattle ranch can be balanced with the needs of healthy salmon streams.

One way to help strike this balance is by adding fish and wildlife as a beneficial use to TNC-owned water rights utilizing California Water Code Section 1707. The purpose is:

1. To have California recognize fish and wildlife as an additional beneficial use of TNC owned water rights in the Shasta River Watershed along with rights to irrigate and water livestock;
2. To continue to utilize our water rights for irrigation of cattle pastures, but at times cease irrigating and instead use our water rights for fish and wildlife benefits. We will continue to operate Nelson and Shasta Big Spring Ranch for cattle production.

Water Code Section 1707 is 23 years old with 53 petitions approved since 1997- 38 of which were approved since 2009.

(Crader, 2013)



Photo Credit: Erika Nortemann