

Salmon Watch[®]

FISH CREEK SALMON WATCH SITE

DIRECTIONS:

Travel west on Hwy. 36 (near Junction City) past Triangle Lake. 1.5 miles past Triangle Lake, at the bottom of a hill, turn left onto Fish Creek Road. Travel approximately 1.5-2 miles on Fish Creek Road until the road crosses a major tributary. There are several hiking trails accessible from this point.

BACKGROUND:

Prior to 1989, when the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) constructed a fish ladder at Lake Creek Falls, salmon migrating up Lake Creek were blocked by the falls. Many of the fish, unable to pass the falls, returned downstream and entered Fish Creek to spawn. As a result, it has consistently had some of the best runs of chinook, coho, and steelhead of any coastal stream. Beginning in 1983, the BLM has had a program of stream and riparian restoration along Fish Creek to enhance habitat for salmon, steelhead and trout.

Chinook and coho will be in the river as early as mid-October, depending on rains. Because the water coming off Triangle Lake and over the Falls remains warm, fish do not start to enter the area until there have been rains and the water cools. Typically, peak spawning for chinook is early November and for coho early December, depending on the rains.

SALMON VIEWING:

Chinook are found all years in the lowest reaches of Fish Creek. How far upstream they migrate depend on water levels. Viewing is therefore better in the lower areas. Access is on primitive trails from the Fish Creek Road at the several viewing sites. In addition, chinook are usually present in Lake Creek where it is crossed by the Fish Creek Road. Coho are also easy to see in the Lake Creek Falls area near the fish ladder.

MACROINVERTEBRATES SAMPLING:

Many riffles are present where samples can be taken. Care must be taken not to disturb spawning fish.

NATURE HIKE/RIPARIAN STUDY:

Good exploration areas are available all along Fish Creek. Some areas of riparian restoration are present.

FACILITIES:

All accesses are on paved roads. At several of the viewing sites there are wide areas off the road where buses can park. The ground is firm. Turn-arounds are available not far from the

viewing areas. The closest restrooms are at the County Park near the store in Triangle lake and at the Blachly-Lane Campground above the Falls.

MEDICAL FACILITIES IN THE AREA:

The closest hospital is in Eugene. Medical facilities are also available in Junction City (about the same distance as Eugene) and from the Triangle Lake Valley rural fire department.

REFERENCES:

Leo Poole, Bureau of Land Management, Eugene