

# Salmon Watch<sup>®</sup>

## WHITTAKER CREEK CAMPGROUND SALMON WATCH SITE

### **DIRECTIONS:**

Whittaker Creek Campground is approximately 30 miles west of Eugene on Highway 126. At the town of Austa, turn left (south) on Siuslaw Access Road. Continue on Siuslaw Access Road (do not cross the Siuslaw River). Follow Whittaker Campground signs for approximately 1.5 miles to Whittaker Campground. Turn right and cross the river. Park at the campground or at the gate.

**Allow approximately 45 minutes driving time from Eugene.**

### **BACKGROUND:**

Whittaker Creek has one of the best runs of chinook and steelhead of any stream on the coast. It is used by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) as a collection station for steelhead. Anadromous fish can only use the lower half of the creek because of a long falls section that blocks migrating fish. Cutthroat trout are found in the upper half, and are genetically distinct because of their extended isolation. The creek is currently the site of extensive habitat restoration in a cooperative project involving the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), ODFW, and John Hancock Corporation to improve habitat for all species.

### **SALMON VIEWING:**

The timing of fish runs depends on precipitation. Chinook will move into the creek after rains cause the stream to rise and the water to cool. This can be any time after the second week of October, but may be as late as mid-November. Coho begin arriving the middle to end of November and are often seen at the same time as the Chinook.

Salmon use several areas in the campground, but are usually easiest to see in the “swimming area.” The BLM places boards in the stream during the summer when no fish are migrating to create a swimming area. The ponding helps collect gravels that the fish like to use. Fish use other parts of Whittaker Creek in the campground, but it is more difficult to get to the water. Fish can also be seen from the road that parallels Whittaker Creek upstream from the campground, but parking is not available and the roadway can be hazardous when trucks are present.

### **MACROINVERTEBRATES SAMPLING:**

There are many locations where gravels are present that can be used to sample for macroinvertebrates. It is very important to not disturb the spawning fish. If necessary, you can go to a different location along the creek within the campground. Many have used the old low-water crossing below the foot bridge as a sampling site.

**NATURE HIKE/RIPARIAN STUDY:**

The area within the campground can be used although the understory is not so well developed. An alternative is to cross the foot bridge in the campground and go out along the old growth trail (which runs for over a mile to the top of the ridge) to a site outside the campground.

**FACILITIES:**

The campground has pit toilets and a small, covered gazebo. Accesses are all paved and buses can park in the parking area near the swimming area.

**MEDICAL FACILITIES IN THE AREA:**

The closest hospital is in Florence, about 25 miles to the west, or in Eugene, 30 miles to the east. Emergency service is available from the rural fire department in Mapleton, approximately 12 miles to the west.

**REFERENCES:**

Leo Poole, Bureau of Land Management, Eugene