

Feb. 12, 2018 – See update at end of news release.

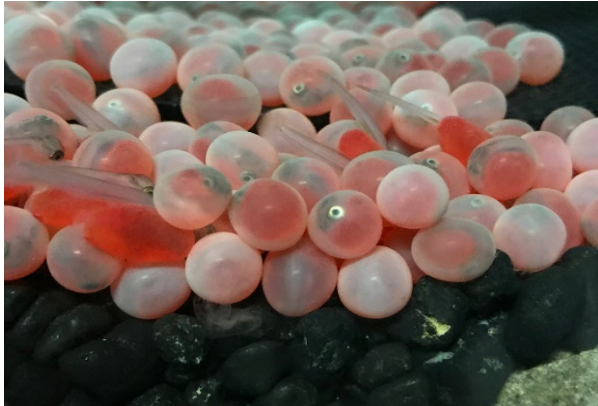


News release

February 2, 2018

Silver Firs Elementary students learn to become *Guardians of the Salmon*

A special permit was required for students to raise 500 Wallace Falls Coho salmon eggs



500 Wallace Falls Coho salmon eggs are carefully monitored as they grow and hatch, eventually being released this spring into the Sultan River.

"We have a special permit to raise 500 Wallace Falls Coho!" shared Nikko Linn, 4th-grade teacher at Silver Firs Elementary School. "Students learn to do all the water quality testing while caring for the babies. They study the Pacific NW and watersheds of Washington to learn about these amazing fish. As part of environmental education they will also be learning about this area of the world as the only place the top 5 salmon species ALL call home."

These are a keystone species and need careful management (a keystone species is a plant or animal that plays a unique and crucial role in the way an ecosystem functions. Without keystone species, the ecosystem would be

dramatically different or cease to exist altogether). This spring they will be released into the Sultan River. The site, Osprey Park, is a special salmon habitat restoration project created by Snohomish County PUD, the City of Sultan, the Wallace Falls hatchery and others. Students can see spawning salmon in the Sultan River this winter as well. These fish will spend about two years in the Snohomish River system before heading out to sea.

"Luckily, they do not imprint on our fish tank!" laughed Linn. "They will take final magnetic readings of their birth place in the final months before heading out. This ensures they will return to the same area in about three years to spawn."

"A student's world grows from our little neighborhood to the whole Snohomish valley! Some have told me they said 'hello fish!' as they drove to Leavenworth, or went hiking at Wallace Falls. Exciting!"



Students learn to do all the water quality testing.

[Watch short video of their salmon eggs in the classroom](http://bit.ly/2DWuLPh) at <http://bit.ly/2DWuLPh>.

Feb. 12, 2018 UPDATE

Salmon egg hatching school project actually began years ago!

Monroe Elementary teacher began program to help other teachers get started



Monroe Elementary School Teacher, Barney Peterson, really plays the part when teaching!

"I originally began raising salmon 14 or 15 years ago using an annually renewed grant from the [Everett Steelhead and Salmon Club](#) (ESSC) which allows my classes to go on extra field trips and provide additional activities to teach students about salmon ecology," said Barney Peterson, Monroe Elementary School teacher.

"About five years ago I did a class for teachers in the district who wanted to set up salmon tanks they had available," said Peterson. "Teachers from Garfield, View Ridge, and Silver Firs elementary schools; Allison Greenberg, elementary STEM facilitator; and, via Windows Live, a teacher from the tribal school on St. Paul Island in the Bering Sea all participated in the class. They all successfully started their tanks that winter and used them for a couple more years.

"I've currently partnered with both Robin Hart, View Ridge Elementary teacher and Nikko Linn, Silver Firs teacher so we could do our fish release trips together using the grant money I receive for the project.

"All of the eggs for schools in our district are provided from the Wallace River Hatchery on a permit from the State Department of Fish and Wildlife. Release sites are set by the state in this specific watershed to keep salmon genetics as constant as possible. The district science department originally purchased tanks and equipment for salmon rearing from a program partnered with the Snohomish County PUD.

"Raising and releasing salmon eggs is a favorite project for my students," shared Peterson. "This year we've stepped it up a notch with our own original dramatic production of *Salmon, The Musical!* This musical was inspired by one of my former students and we're looking forward to performing it later this month for parents and guardians!"

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