

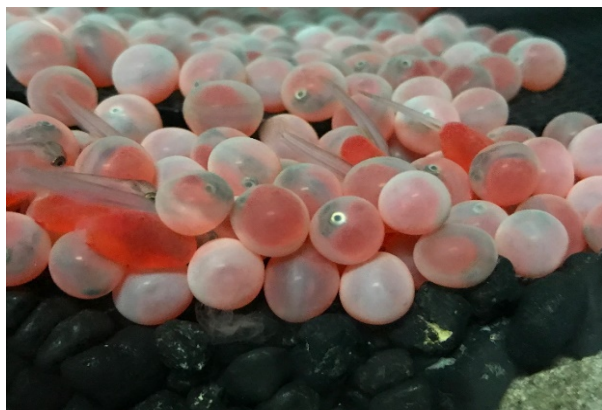


News release

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, 5th-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>.

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