

Elk River Hatchery

Background: The major portion of Elk River Hatchery construction was completed in 1968. In the late 1970's the hatchery intake and ten new ponds completed final construction. The hatchery produces fall Chinook for ocean commercial and sport fisheries, recreational fisheries on the Elk River and Chetco River, and to supplement natural production for depressed populations in the region. The hatchery also produces legal and trophy size rainbow trout for release in various Rouge basin and South coast standing waterbodies and it produces winter Steelhead to provide for sport fishing on the Chetco River.

Elk Rivers cool and constant water temperature creates ideal rearing conditions for salmonids. Utilizing cold/cool water hatcheries as "refugia" is a strategy to address global climate change for ODFW Hatcheries. A number of ODFW and STEP rearing facilities suffer from lack of water or adequate cool water temperatures. Other hatcheries have been affected by wildfire and ODFW is still working to rebuild and replace the lost rearing capacity. Expanding the rearing capacity at Elk River Hatchery would provide this capacity within the complex of ODFW Hatcheries.

Request: Construction of two (2) additional raceways at Elk River Hatchery will provide additional capacity to deal with both temperature issues across the region, as well as expanded programs. The capacity shortfalls from a number of issues including the loss of Rock Creek and Klamath Hatcheries and warm temperatures in the Coos and Coquille systems (and their reliance on Cole Rivers Hatchery) will be greatly reduced with this proposed expansion. In addition, raceway expansion could create space for new programs such as the Coquille fall Chinook conservation program, aided to help restore and recovery the suffering population on the Coquille.

Schedule: Prior to construction, work would begin to ensure adequate water rights were secured. Construction could occur in the summer to late fall of 2024 with the raceways being operational in early 2025.