

2014 AFS Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program

Coos Bay BLM, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife – Charleston Office, and the Forest Service Powers Ranger Station mentored three students selected to participate in the American Fisheries Society Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program. The goal of the eight week Hutton Program is to recruit students, with an emphasis on female and minority applicants, into careers in fisheries.

We were very fortunate to have three students selected. Zoey Lehnheer will be a senior at Myrtle Point High School, Haley Lott will be a senior in Coos Bay's Destination School, and Aimee Wood just graduated from Reedsport High School and is starting her freshmen year at the University of Wyoming with plans to study fish and wildlife management. Zoey, Haley, and Aimee were respectful, enthusiastic, and eager to learn. They performed all duties as requested and maintained a positive attitude throughout the eight weeks.



The mentors included Karla Cottom from the Powers Ranger District on the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, Stephanie Messerle from the Coos Bay District BLM, and Jeff Jackson from ODFW. The students spent time with each agency.

While the students were with the BLM and Forest Service they assisted fish biologists with habitat restoration planning, monitoring, surveys, and layout. The students also assisted with fish passage assessments at culvert crossings. The students learned about water quality monitoring and sampling techniques. The students were exposed to the multi-use nature of these land management agencies by also working with wildlife biologists, hydrologist, and the geologist.

The students assisted ODFW fish biologist implementing fish habitat enhancement projects. The students assisted with seining in the lower Coos Bay estuary. They also toured a seafood processing plant with an ODFW Commercial Port Sampler where they learned to ID flatfish and rock fish and how to remove otoliths for aging purposes. The students accompanied a habitat protection fish biologist to a tidal

channel construction project at the Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. The students assisted ODFW with hatchery facility maintenance, as well as working with students at their interpretive center and set up for free fishing events.

The Hutton Program succeeded in giving the students an idea of careers with federal and state agencies and created an interest in the fisheries field. All three mentors discussed potential career opportunities with their respective agencies, career paths, college, and what led to our career in fisheries.

This was a great opportunity for fisheries professionals to offer students interested in the field. The program provides valuable experience for students to have on their resumes, future scholarship applications, and for the students to get an idea of career opportunities in fisheries. The \$3,000 scholarship paid by AFS was a nice amount for high school students to earn during an eight-week program.

