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## *Surveying the Long Tom tributaries*



Photo by Alexis Lanham

Jasmine Graves, left, and Jacob Dyste, right, areas surveying the culverts in the Upper Long Tom tributary to see if they need to be replaced. See story, page 3.

# Watershed Council reviews tributary culverts

**ALEXIS LANHAM**  
**Of the News**

Old-timers may wistfully remember when they could walk out their back door, go down to the creek and in one afternoon have enough fish to feed the family.

Sometimes it seems that the old-timers can tell some pretty big "fish" tales, but what may seem like an exaggerated story might once have been true. Years ago, Coastal Cutthroat Trout lived in much greater numbers in the Long Tom Watershed. With the aid of a grant and four stream surveyors, culverts, pipes that run under roads for creeks to pass through are now being assessed and eventually replaced to increase habitat for the trout by the Long Tom Watershed Council.

Education about these fish may often be overshadowed by the more coveted salmon, but the facts about these creatures are slightly different. Some people may argue that it doesn't matter if an inland culvert blocks fish because those closer to the coast are also blocked. Although some trout travel to the sea, there are many fluvial trout that travel only in the Willamette River and Long Tom Watershed. Some "resident" trout even live their lives in a single creek.

Also, these fish can only jump four to six inches, unlike salmon which can jump a much greater height. Culverts having a drop to the water below or that have a grade greater than 2 percent from one end to the other close off habitat for the fish.

"After we get done with the

technician. The idea of people being able to fish in their backyards is a dream that could, in theory, come true. Landowners have been surprised to find these trout in small creeks or ditches isolated not only from the Pacific Ocean, but various larger populations of inland trout.

"There's no reason not to let the fish swim by," said Dana Erickson, executive director of the Long Tom Watershed Council. "It will be each landowner's choice if we bring in technical assistance and funding [to fix culverts]."

Over the years, the Long Tom Watershed Council has worked on a variety of projects repairing culverts in the watershed. Recently, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) approved a \$31,000 grant to the council allowing four stream surveyors to go out and inventory at culverts on both private and public properties this summer.

As more money comes in, culverts can be replaced with fish-friendly ones. In years prior, culverts were made just to let water pass through, and any fish traveling downstream. But when fish need to access areas upstream, often they were closed off. Culverts were made too small for the streams they were placed in, leading to erosion below the culvert and water flowing too fast, flushing out trout that attempt to move upstream. Now, new culverts replacing old ones are no longer a human barrier to the fish. It allows humans and fish to coexist.

Earlier in the year, Kaul sent off 300 letters to landowners with

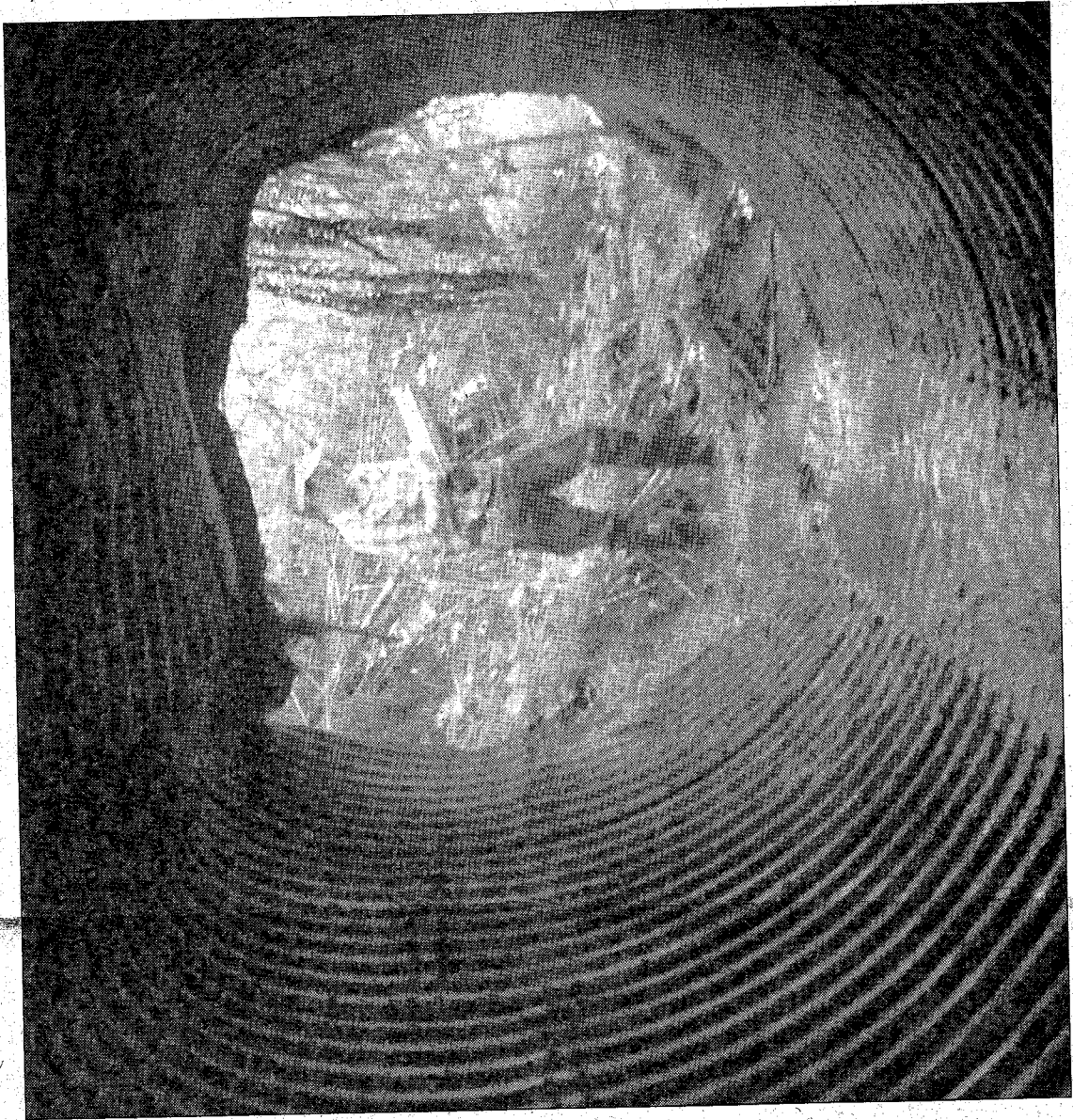


Photo by Alexis Lanham  
Jasmine Graves is surveying the culverts in the Upper Long Tom tributary to see if they need to be replaced.