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Solano County Office of Education Awarded \$300,000 Grant for Student Salmon Monitoring Project

SOLANO COUNTY, CA –Solano County Office of Education (SCOE) has been awarded a \$300,000 Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The grant focuses on engaging teachers and students in citizen science to help solve a mystery threatening the salmon population in California's ecosystems. SCOE's grant program, dubbed the [Spinning Salmon Citizen Science Monitoring Project](#), launched today with a two-day training for a small pilot group of teachers from across Solano County at SCOE's main office in Fairfield.

The Spinning Salmon project was developed through a collaborative effort with SCOE, NOAA, the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the UC Davis Center for Community and Citizen Science. Other community organizations like the Solano Land Trust and the Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District also supported the project and teacher training. The teachers will lead Solano County high school students through a partnership with researchers from UC Davis and facilitate the collection of data in the classroom to support UC Davis' work.

"Exposure to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and STEM-related fields can be a significant equalizer for students. We are excited to be awarded this grant that will provide students the opportunity to provide real research and data that can help CDFW and UC Davis scientists solve a problem endangering salmon in our local ecosystems," remarked Solano County Superintendent of Schools Lisette Estrella-Henderson.

A mystery emerged in 2020, when experts at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Fish Health Laboratory and UC Davis Aquatic Animal Health Laboratory discovered something was causing young salmon in fish hatcheries to swim in corkscrew patterns and die at unusually high rates. Investigators with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's California-Nevada Fish Health Center noticed that a bath of thiamine immediately revived the ailing juveniles. They now suspect the problem is linked to a deficiency of thiamine in returning adult salmon that fed off the coast of central California.

SCOE's Spinning Salmon project will place fish tanks, research equipment and salmon fry in local classrooms. Teachers received training and permitting from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CA DFW) allowing them to legally possess the wild species. The program aims to provide real-world data collected by Solano County high school students to support research looking to uncover what is causing the deficiency in the salmon, which play a critical role in our Californian and global ecosystems.

The [NOAA B-WET](#) program is a competitive grant program that promotes Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences: activities driven by rigorous academic learning standards that aim to increase participants' understanding and stewardship of watersheds and related ecosystems.

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