

Personal Qualifications and Crew Training

West Fork Environmental crew leads have four-year degrees in fisheries, wildlife or environmental studies and frequently have several years experience in conducting fisheries field studies. The second member of the crew may also have a four-year degree or a two-year technical degree from one of the professional tracks offered by one of the Washington or Oregon community colleges. In some years, depending on the experience of the crews, all crew members attend stream electrofishing classes conducted by Smith-Root, the manufacturer of the backpack units we use. Every year regardless of whether we sponsor the manufacturers training, we conduct a full week of our own training, prior to commencing field operations, utilizing the depth and breadth of experience of senior biologists in our company. Phil Peterson, president of West Fork Environmental, always leads these field camps where crews are taught the correct use of the electrofisher and how to minimize impacts to individual fish during field sampling operations. The guidance provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service for use of the backpack electrofisher in waters containing listed salmonids is used as an integral part of the instruction.