

## ANOTHER STEM INTERVIEW!

## Meet Larry Lowe

*PUD Fisheries Biologist & Environmental Coordinator*

We recently interviewed Larry Lowe to find out more about his job at the PUD.

### What sparked you towards a STEM career field?

When I got out of high school, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, but the thing to do was to go to college so I did. Meanwhile, I always loved the outdoors, fishing and being in nature. Some people discouraged me from going down a career path in those fields, so I ended up getting an economics degree. While I was working on my economics degree, I got a job during the summers working as a foreign fisheries observer up in the Bering Sea. I was on South Korean boats, and I got a good taste of the fisheries biologist world, which I really liked. I worked for a year in an office with my economics degree, but then I went back to school and got a fisheries biology degree by taking classes at the University of Washington and from Central Washington University.

### What type of training do you have?

I volunteered along the way when I was getting my fisheries biology degree, and then I got a job for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and stayed there for 20 years. I did a variety of jobs from monitoring fish populations to habitat restoration. I worked from Darrington down to Renton, which has allowed me to acquire a lot of information over the years about the fish in all of the little creeks in this area.

### What STEM skills are important in your job?

I use the basics of math constantly for my job. I'm always collecting data and then analyzing that data to figure out how we are going to use all of the information that we've gathered. Science is the obvious one since I know a lot about fish from my original degree work and through all my work experience.

### Why is your career unique?

My job is really diverse in all that I get to do. One day I might be putting on a dry suit, helmet and waterproof pack to float part of a river that is difficult to access, and another day I might be catching fish to measure them and take scale samples. I've always liked being outside, and I get to do a fair amount of field work with my job – probably three-quarters of my time is spent out in the field. While out in the field, I get a lot of exercise and see a lot of different wildlife.



### What do you like about your job?

The PUD is doing some positive things for the environment, and I get to help make those changes. Hopefully, these will result in increased fish populations. I really do love the fish. They are just amazing creatures.

### Any advice for students who want to go into a similar career?

- ✍️ Going to college is important and it's worth the time, effort and expense. You learn the specifics of your field interest, as well get a good education for life skills in general.
- ✍️ Try and find internship opportunities whenever you can, even in high school.
- ✍️ Be willing to be mobile when you get out of college so you can move for job opportunities.
- ✍️ If you are passionate about a career like mine, take the time to research it and make sure it is a good fit. Don't get persuaded to do something different.
- ✍️ Don't let people tell you that there aren't jobs. The fishery biologist jobs are here to stay. Everything we've learned has opened up even more areas such as genetics. Everyone really knows the importance of fish now.
- ✍️ I work with a lot consultants in this field, and I don't know of any of them who haven't really enjoyed their career and feel fortunate to have their job. If you have the fishing bug like I do, run with it! 🐟

Check out the PUD short "Sultan River Fisheries Project" video that shows a major project with which Larry has been involved. Go to [www.snopud.com](http://www.snopud.com) and click on "Videos." You'll find the video under "General Information."