

The Adipose

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WILD STEELHEAD COALITION

August, 2007

President Run

Thank you...to our membership for your continued support!

As many of you are aware, our VP of Membership, **Jim Schmitz**, has been leading a membership drive for the WSC. Jim has been very active and working hard to connect with our membership and reconnect with lapsed members. We certainly hope our current membership will help Jim by inviting others who are interested in the future of wild steelhead to become involved by becoming new members. I know it's not easy to get others to participate. I recently took Jim's challenge to invite five people who I have fished with to become new members. This challenge took me a bit out of my comfort zone, because I believe that becoming a member is a personal choice and I don't like to push. But I soon realized that most of the guys just needed a gentle reminder and some questions answered about where this organization is headed, which brings me to my next topic.

Currently the Wild Steelhead Coalition is engaged in three major activities. The first involves supporting current wild steelhead issues, the second is developing a new strategic plan for the organization, and the third is continuing to contribute to the development of Washington's new Statewide Steelhead Management Plan.

A sampling of recent steelhead issues the organization has been involved with include developing, preparing and submitting rule proposals to the

WDFW that support the positions included in our last white paper and our recommendations into the State's Steelhead Management Plan. We were recently part of a successful lawsuit to insure that hatchery steelhead should not be counted with wild steelhead when considering the ESA downlisting of wild steelhead in the Upper Columbia River. And recently the WSC submitted a compelling letter (see Umpqua River article in this issue) to Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife and Commission that helped overturn a rule change that would have increased the harvest of wild steelhead on the main stem and fabled waters of the NF Umpqua. We have also been working on some various projects that will help increase visibility and gain exposure to the plight of wild steelhead.

The second module includes the WSC's strategic planning in which Trustee **Rob Masonis** submitted an overview included in this issue of the Adipose. After seven years of planning, involvement and leadership of WSC, I find this activity imperative to the future success of the organization. Any organization "worth its salt" needs to develop and evolve to stay healthy and meet the challenges brought by the future. It is a painstaking and time consuming task that has really challenged the board to take a hard look at our work and have constructive conversations about where we have been, identify what our core competencies/values are, and define what our needs are to enable this organization to continue to effectively advocate for the protection and restoration of wild steel-

head ecosystems. I am thankful for **Rob Masonis**, **Nate Mantua** and **Jim Schmitz's** support in the development of this activity and proud of our board members for their patience and perseverance.

And finally the third module: the ongoing development of Washington's Statewide Steelhead Management Plan and associated Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Please read the article submitted by **Nate Mantua** in this issue. Playing an active and important role in the development of Washington's new Statewide Steelhead Management Plan has been a huge focus for the WSC the last three years. To refresh our memories let's go back to the 2004 statewide moratorium on wild steelhead harvest. During the proceedings of the moratorium it was mandated by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission that the Department of Fish and Wildlife research and develop a conservation based statewide steelhead management plan that would be the guiding policy for how steelhead are managed in the state and aid in their recovery. I can not stress how important this plan is as this plan, when adopted, will guide steelhead management in Washington State for years into the future. Following the completion of our last white paper members of our organization have attended many stakeholder meetings and submitted many comment letters with the intent to help shape the contents of the Steelhead Management Plan. Now the time has come for public comment on the Draft

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Environmental Impact Statement for the management plan. To my disappointment the public meetings that have been advertised by the WDFW have been poorly attended. At the Mill Creek public hearing on August 16th there was one person from the FFF Steelhead Committee, retired WDFW fish biologist Curt Kramer, and seven members of the WSC board. But I am optimistic, (I have to be...I am a steelheader) as **the deadline for public comment has been extended to September 10**. The WSC is in the process of writing comment letter on the Draft EIS, which we will email out to our membership and make available on our website as a guide for you to craft your comments and send to the department. This is your opportunity to support the organization and participate in ensuring that this plan will be good for steelhead. The future is in your hands...handle it with care.

Sincerely

Rich Simms
Wild Steelhead Coalition
President

WSC Builds to the Future

For a small organization with no paid staff, the Wild Steelhead Coalition has accomplished quite a bit over its first seven years. Reducing the allowable harvest of wild steelhead in Washington State and establishing the Steelhead Summit Alliance, a network of steelhead advocates, are just two examples of the great work our organization has accomplished.

But organizations, like people (at least some!) need to evolve to meet new challenges and grasp new opportunities. That is why the WSC Board embarked in the spring on a strategic planning process to focus the organization's work where it will do the most good for wild steelhead and to ensure that WSC has the resources necessary to be effective.

Through the Executive Service Corps of Washington, WSC retained the services of Gerry Cutler, a seasoned strategic planner with many years of experience in the private sector, to lead the WSC in its first strategic planning effort. Starting with a board retreat along the Skagit River in mid-April (as you might suspect from the location, strategic planning was not the only thing the board was up to that weekend!) and continuing through the spring and summer, Gerry has ably led the Board through the process, which is moving into its final phase.

And the early results are promising. The board anticipates an invigorated and stronger WSC to emerge once the planning is completed this fall, and looks forward to sharing the results with you and opening the next chapter in our quest to protect wild steelhead. Stay tuned.

Fall is in the Air!

Is it me or does the anticipation of fall make us all a bit unstable? If you ask those around me, it is an annual occurrence. My mind is usually in the gutter and I am totally at peace. Is this a good combo? My answer is absolutely. I have the rest of the year to be responsible, stressed, and at times down right cranky due to my lack of time in paradise. Many of you can sympathize with my feelings and you know there is only one solution to this mindset. Get away, turn off the phone and do what you love. Chase Steelhead. This means endless hours of windshield time, comfortable nights in tents, gourmet camp meals, endless trash talking amongst your cronies and even a few fish if you are lucky. Many of us love the 12 month chase, but does the winter impact you like the Fall? What is it about the best season of the year? Maybe its football, the smell of leaves burning or just knowing that there is a place you will soon visit that will completely put you at ease. If that place is still in your thoughts, I urge you to go there and think about what you really love. My guess is the answer is your friends, family, the surrounding environment and the mighty Wild Steelhead. The future for these fish is in our hands. We need to assure that our Fall seasons ahead continue to disrupt our daily grind and put our minds in the right place. Is it just me or does Steelheading cure everything? Find your place, go there, keep fighting for the fish and have a great fall season

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my mind that it had a very positive impact on the ultimate vote. At least two commission members spoke of items you had made reference to in casting their votes in favor of the regulation change. The outpouring of positive correspondence in favor of the change was considerable, and those that did not support the change at this point seem to be looking ahead to the 2009 review of all the regulations with an eye toward a blanket rule in Oregon for catch and release on wild fish. It is always difficult to muster votes that don't go with the staff "findings" so this was a significant step in the right direction. Thanks again, and as a member of WSC, I was really pleased that it is taking the time and making a wonderful effort to reach beyond the geographic borders of Washington on behalf of the fish.

Best Regards,

Jon Lund
437 Covey Lane
Eugene, Oregon 97401
541-338-7195

On 8/5/07, **Wild Steelhead Coalition** <wscmembership@yahoo.com> responded:

Thanks Jon, I am glad that the WSC was able to help make the case, to use the old adage "it takes a village" I am fortunate in the WSC to be surrounded by great guys who have a passion for steelhead and want to help make a difference. Special kudos to Jeff Johnson who drafted the letter, and Nate Mantua and Eric Doyle for filling in the scientific position language. Keep in touch.

Rich

Biography of Ryan Petzold

For the past 10+ years, it seems as though everything I do has some connection to steelhead. So back in 2000, when the WSC was formed, there was no question that I was going to be there, that I was going to be involved in any way that was needed to advance the Mission that I believed in.

I was born and raised in Western Washington and have fished for steelhead the better half of my life and have looked for ways to pursue my passion for steelhead beyond just fishing for them.

After I graduated high school, I pursued a degree in Fisheries Science from the University of Washington but became disinterested because I could not connect every class I was forced to take to steelhead and their life histories and their biology and their ecosystems...well you get the point. So I moved on.

Currently I manage Kaufmann's Streamborn, a flyshop in Bellevue, Washington. I also guide steelhead and teach Spey casting on my days off. And when I am not in the shop, guiding or teaching, I am fishing for steelhead.

It is hard for people to grasp my passion for flyfishing. It is even more difficult for those to realize that that passion is directed towards one fish: steelhead. And I believe that passion is of value to the WSC's Board of Directors.



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**2007 Membership Update &
September 5th "Fall Kick Off" Membership
Meeting.**

The WSC is now in its 7th year and we owe many thanks to our loyal supporters and members. As many of you know we are in the middle of the 2007 membership drive. Our goal is to reach 250 members. We realized from the beginning that this would be a challenge and we are still only about half way there. As a young organization, we have learned on the fly how to reach out to our members. Over the past month, I have personally called over 50 past members and asked for their opinions about the WSC. I would like to thank those of you that took the time to give me your insight. From these conversations, I now have a better understanding of the things that our members want most from the WSC. The answer from most was "Communication." With this in mind, we hope to update our members on a more frequent basis. As a small organization with no paid staff, the WSC has been led by a dedicated board of directors. Over the past few years, the WSC has been focused on the issues that impact the fish the most. Trying to find the balance between the issues and communicating to membership is a challenge, but we are certainly going to continue to improve.

The WSC membership has now moved to an annual renewal so it is much easier to track your current membership status. Every January we will send out an annual re-renewal form to our members and you can also join online utilizing Pay Pal at www.wildsteelheadcoalition.com. We hope that those of you who have not re-renewed for 2007 will come back and support the only group dedicated solely to the future of Wild Steelhead. If you are unaware of your current status, please contact **Jim Schmitz** at wscmembership@yahoo.com.

We would also like to welcome aboard the following new members and encourage them to attend this event. **Joseph Baldwin, Saul Bankaitis, Tom Bowden, Miles Bubenik, Ellis Chang, Greg Corrado, Charles DeJong, John Jones, Greg and Andrea Larson, Dene LeBeau, Tony Magnano, Jerry Metcalf, Kent Morris, Jeff Ostrom, Gene Oswald, Anthony Potestivo, Andrew Powell, MK Sexton, Tom Shipley, Chris Sunde, Burleigh Surbeck, Ed-**

gar Vaughn, Jon Velikanje, & Robert Wismar.

We want everyone to know that on **Wednesday September 5, 2007 @ 6:30 PM** we will be hosting a great evening at the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture Douglas Classroom and Courtyard Area. The festivities will begin at 6:30 PM and run till around 9:00. **Ryan Petzold** has set up a beer tasting featuring brews from Hale's Ales in Ballard which will be accompanied by plenty of great food, wine and refreshments for you all. We will have a surprise fly tier doing some masterpieces, a raffle, and slide show of many pictures furnished by those of you that have sent in your pictures. We also hope to spend some time discussing the past year for the WSC and what we have ahead. It is not too late so if you want to share your favorites, email them in ASAP. The evening will end with a raffle featuring a few pair of Smith Optics polarized sunglasses donated by Peter Crow of Smith and a guided steelhead trip for the new member raffle if we sign up 20 new members or renewals during the course of the evening. All current members will be entered in the raffle and for each friend you sign up, it will get you one more ticket in the raffle. We really hope you can make the event and just have a chance to meet some new members and get together with your friends. We really hope you can make the event as well as recruit a few friends to bring along. The new WSC hats and T-shirts will also be available. The following link will provide a map with directions:

<http://depts.washington.edu/urbhort/html/info/images/CUHGroundsmap05.pdf>

Jim Schmitz, Membership Vice-president



"Ed, you're the best fly tying instructor I've ever met, but maybe you shouldn't refer to upright wings as Viagra Style."

Comments Sought for the Draft Environmental Impacts Statement on Washington's Statewide Steelhead Management Plan

By Nate Mantua, VP of Science

On August 1, 2007, Washington's Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) released their Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the *Statewide Steelhead Management Plan (SSMP)*. The statewide management plan, scheduled for action by the commission next February, will provide policy guidance for development of regional steelhead management plans around the state.

The DEIS aims to assess the potential benefits and risks of various strategies proposed in the current draft management plan on such issues as natural production, artificial production, fisheries management, habitat restoration, enforcement, monitoring and education to conserve and restore the state's wild steelhead populations. According to WDFW, the focus of the DEIS is to *"analyze a range of reasonable alternatives, to assess their risk of possible significant impacts to elements of the environment while identifying mitigation measures to avoid or minimize related adverse environmental impacts."* Both the draft EIS and the current draft steelhead management plan are posted on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm>.

The WDFW is actively encouraging stakeholder input, and the WSC continues to engage in the ongoing process of developing the statewide management plan. WDFW hosted public meetings across the state to present the DEIS and allow stakeholders to comment on and discuss the different draft management alternatives that have been considered for the SSMP. At the August 17 public meeting in Mill Creek, seven members of the Wild Steelhead Coalition were joined by one other stakeholder for two hours of discussion about the relative strengths, weaknesses, and omissions in the current DEIS. The WDFW was represented by 5 staff members, including Jim Buck, the statewide steelhead EIS manager for WDFW. This meeting began with introductions around the room, then a presentation by Jim Buck that covered some background information on the EIS process and how it fits into the development of first a statewide management plan, then regional management plans and watershed plans that are to be developed with stakeholder input. Buck stated that WDFW is especially interested in receiving comments on the 32 different manage-

ment alternatives included in the Draft management plan, and on other general and specific stakeholder reactions to the DEIS.

On August 17 the WDFW announced that they will consider public comments on the draft EIS received in writing through Sept. 10 at 5 p.m., as well as those received at their public meetings. Written comments should be addressed to SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, Regulatory Services Section, Habitat Program, 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501.

WSC members are now working on a comment letter that will be shared with membership when it is completed (no later than the 1st week of September). For more information on Washington's steelhead populations and draft statewide management plan, see WDFW's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/steelhead/index.htm>). To contribute to the development of the WSC's comment letter, please contact me at nate@xsat.com.



"No, I don't think your parents are responsible. I think the fish kicked your butt and you lost it."

(The following letter was sent to the Oregon DFW)
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
3406 Cherry Avenue NE
Salem, OR 97303

August 1, 2007

RE: Angling Rules Proposals

Dear ODFW,

The Wild Steelhead Coalition would like to submit comments on the proposed rule changes to steelhead harvest policy in the Umpqua River. We support a ban on the wild steelhead kill fishery on the Main stem and North Umpqua.

We strongly oppose the proposal to increase the allowable harvest on wild steelhead. Our concerns are based on our review of your research report entitled *Biological Assessment of the Impacts to Wild Winter Steelhead on the Umpqua River from the Recreational Fishery*. First, we must applaud ODFW's considerable efforts to develop rigorous estimates of steelhead population abundance and productivity in the Umpqua River system. We understand the data and modeling described in this document to be the basis for your proposal to maintain a wild kill fishery. We accept that the information provided is based on sound research methods and science, but we have some lingering questions about how it was interpreted to support your management proposal because the presentation was quite confusing.

We feel that ODFW has not adequately considered the potential effects of wild kill at harvest rates approaching 30% on the long-term viability of this critical population. Our concerns are twofold. First, we are not convinced that the factor of safety you have defined on the basis of intrinsic productivity is sufficiently robust in the face of a changing natural environment in the Pacific Northwest. Second, we do not feel that you have considered adequately the potential effects of such a high harvest rate on wild fish diversity, a critical component of population health.

With regard to our first point of contention, modeling of population productivity based on habitat capacity is inherently a backwards looking exercise. It relies on existing and in many cases older data on habitat capacity and smolt production rates to forecast the future. We submit that this implicit presumption is no longer viable in the face of what is likely to be increasingly rapid environmental change in the Pacific Northwest. We may not be able to count on a high level of intrinsic productivity in the future as a changing climate exerts its influence on the hydrologic regime and stream temperatures of our rivers. A 30% harvest rate is perilously close to the factor of safety bounds that you have defined around this population without taking future uncertainty into effect.

With regard to our second point, we again agree that ODFW has developed an excellent base of information for estimating the abundance and productivity of Umpqua winter steelhead. However, we must point out that these are only two of the four elements that constitute a robust population. The spatial structure and, perhaps most importantly, the diversity of the population must be considered as well. These four elements are key criteria in recovery planning under the Endangered Species Act, and they will ultimately define performance goals that your agency will be required to pursue.

Your own fisheries scientists have acknowledged the importance of diversity to population health. On page 6 of the document cited above the authors state:

"(Genetic diversity is partitioned within and between stocks and populations. It provides the essential resource upon which natural selection acts in the face of changing environmental conditions, thereby allowing future adaptation to each stock's local environment."

ODFW has provided no information regarding how a 20% to 30% harvest rate on Umpqua River wild steelhead would affect the diversity of this stock. The biological assessment suggests that harvest pressure may be distorting population diversity. Your fisheries scientists have acknowledged that harvest practices affecting a particular segment of a stock in time or space may lead to genetic changes (pg. 7), and note that the high percentage of repeat spawners in the Smith River stock relative to the other stocks in the basin may be attributable to the reduced

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angling pressure that this stock receives (pg. 15). This is intuitively logical. Repeat spawners are typically the larger trophy fish that anglers find desirable. It is no leap to state that these trophy fish are disproportionately impacted by wild kill fisheries, and that this effect would be extended to other components of the population.

Repeat spawning is not the only aspect of population diversity that needs consideration. Your productivity focused modeling approach does not appear to provide any accommodation for disproportionate effects on stock components with early and late run timing. It is well known that high harvest rates on early run wild fish mixed with hatchery returns have effectively eliminated this component of population diversity from many wild steelhead populations in Washington State.

We also note that wild South Fork Umpqua fish will be taken in the main stem at a rate that can't be defined based on current information. This run has been declining, and since they receive no protection from harvest until they reach the South Fork we will not know the incidental impact of main stem harvest fisheries. This presents the potential for disproportionate impacts on a segment of the run representing unique spatial structure, and perhaps adaptation to specialized environmental conditions. Again, we must argue that as we look forward to a changing environment, every effort must be made to ensure that these critical components of population diversity are fully and adequately considered in our management decisions.

In summary, we feel that ODFW has not adequately considered the effects of a wild kill fishery on the population diversity of wild Umpqua steelhead. Your data and modeling have been organized and presented to support a maximum sustained yield approach to managing this population. Experience throughout the range of west coast wild steelhead shows that managing for MSY escapement goals has proven to be unsustainable for far too many wild steelhead stocks, and instead we support more conservative harvest management schemes that err on the side of spawning escapements that far exceed MSY escapement goals. In implementing this precautionary approach, we must also argue for the protection of key elements of population diversity that will allow our steelhead to adapt to environmental change. ODFW needs to consider this argument not only from the standpoint of responsible management, but also in recognition of requirements imposed by the Endangered Species Act.

The harvest rule for the main stem and North Fork Umpqua was passed in a time of very good runs, yet now the runs have dropped and the impact of harvest fisheries will likely pose greater risks to the affected populations. We find this to pose unacceptable and unnecessary risks to one of the last completely wild runs of steelhead left in the Northwest. We recommend the complete ban on any wild steelhead kill fishery on the Umpqua system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Wild Steelhead Coalition
Rich Simms
President
www.wildsteelheadcoalition.com

WSC President Rich Simms received the following letter:

Dear Rich,

I attended the August 3rd meeting of the ODFW Commission and was one of many members of The Steam-boaters who testified in favor of the proposed no kill regulations on the Umpqua system regarding wild Winter fish. You will be happy to know that the proposed regulation changes were adopted by the Commission on a 4 to 3 vote. As I reviewed your very good letter on behalf of the WSC to the Commission there is no doubt in

(cont.on pg 3)

Wild Steelhead Coalition
218 Main St. Box 264
Kirkland, WA 98033

The Wild Steelhead Coalition (WSC) is an organization dedicated to increasing the return of wild steelhead to the waters and rivers of the Pacific Northwest.



August, 2007

Meeting Announcement

Wednesday, Sept. 5th, 6:30-9:30 pm

Again, this month our meeting place will be at the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture on the Union Bay Campus. We will be gathering in the Douglas Classroom. Maps with driving directions (as pdfs) and the buildings are on the web at: <http://depts.washington.edu/urbhort/html/info/facilities.html>

This meeting will be our annual membership drive kickoff and steelhead celebration Bar-B-Que. For more details see page 4.