

November/December 2004

The Adipose



The Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the Wild Steelhead Coalition

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The President's Run

As I write this piece, autumn is slowly making its way to winter. The first early wild winter run steelhead, we cherish so much, are nosing into the river estuaries, moving in and out with the rhythm of tides waiting for a freshet to call them home again. Time has indeed been flying by, my twin sons are six months old already and before we know it the holiday season will be here and, once again, we will be scheming how to spend time with family and sneak off for some steelhead fishing.

As usual the WSC Board has been very busy completing and moving forward with various projects, most notably the WSC Fundraiser, the NOAA proposal to list hatchery fish with wild fish, the fifth Steelhead Summit Alliance and the WSC Steelhead Management Plan. We are also prospecting for some support and relief for our busy Board members. We are really in need of another Board Member with a fisheries science background to work with our two board members, Dick Burge, VP Conservation, and Nate Mantua, VP of Education. If you are interested in helping out, or know of a potential candidate please contact me at 425-880-4254.

Work continues on the WSC Steelhead Management Plan which has been reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors to move forward and presented in concept to membership for comment at the October General Meeting. It is also in the process of being sent out via email to general membership soon and we urge you to send back your comments on this important document to be shared with WDFW as they develop their new steelhead management plan. The WSC plan is also the basis for the harvest policy committee at the Steelhead Summit Alliance.

The WSC has just completed hosting and sponsoring the fifth Steelhead Summit Alliance (SSA) Meeting on November 6. These Summits continue to grow and make progress in creating a unified voice for steelhead. Five SSA policy papers are presently going through the approval process, which include Endangered Species Act (ESA), River Flows, Passage Barriers, Hydropower and Riparian Zones. The ESA policy paper has been approved by over twenty organizations with more to come and was sent to National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in regards to NOAA's Fisheries proposed policy to list hatchery salmonids the same as wild salmonids. Other SSA Policy Papers under development include By Catch, Harvest Management, and Hatchery Reform. A SSA Steering Committee has been formed as well as Subject Committees regarding Education and Public Outreach, Wild Salmonid Policy,

Enforcement and Atlantic Salmon/Aquaculture. A special thanks to Dave Bailey who continues to be our Summit Coordinator and Dick Burge for organizing the speakers and preparing the Summit agenda.

As you read this article, NOAA Fisheries and the Bush administration are proposing to lump wild steelhead and salmon together with hatchery fish raised in concrete tanks. If the administration's policy is implemented, it would seriously erode protections for wild steelhead and salmon under the Endangered Species Act. Absent these protections, salmon and steelhead streams would be open to more destructive logging, development, agricultural practices, damming, and over-fishing - the reasons salmon and steelhead had to be listed as endangered in the first place.

The essence of this proposal has been with us for over a century-that we can pump our rivers full of hatchery fish to replace what's been lost in wild salmon and steelhead production. Yet for over 100 years hatcheries have never realized such lofty promises. The new NOAA Fisheries policy to equate hatchery and wild salmon threatens to weaken the common sense land use and clean water protections needed to sustain healthy rivers and salmon and steelhead populations. If you have not done so please take the time ASAP to tell NOAA that science should prevail over politics when trying to protect wild steelhead and salmon.

Finally the WSC Fundraiser was a huge success and I would like to thank Peter Dorn, our VP of Fundraising for a job well done along with outstanding support from the Berryman Family. A good time was had by all and it was great to see many familiar and new faces in attendance. Trey Combs provided a great slide presentation on steelhead in Russia and Bill Redman received the first WSC Conservation Award, recognizing his work and perseverance as Chair of the FFF Steelhead Committee. Also many thanks to the individuals, shops and companies who donated to our successful event! The monies generated by this fundraiser will help the WSC continue working on our mission.

In closing I would also like to take this opportunity to wish everyone happy holidays. May there be joy and warmth with your family and friends as well as a few cold days steelheadin'.

Cheers,

*Richs Simms
President
Wild Steelhead Coalition*

WSC September 8, 2004 General Meeting

Guest Speakers: Fred Goetz, US Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle, WA

Presentation:

“Bull Trout in the Snohomish, Skagit and Whidbey Basins”

Where: Bothell American Legion Hall
19213 Bothell Way NE, Bothell, WA
Time 7-9 PM

Fred Goetz has worked as a fish biologist and restoration ecologist for the Army Corps of Engineers for the past 12 years. He currently studies salmon and trout life histories and habitat relationships in river, estuary and near shore areas. He is a federal science co-lead for an ecosystem restoration assessment of the Puget Sound nearshore. He has led an acoustic tracking program to study bull trout for the past 3 years in the Puget Sound near shore and major river deltas. He and Ed Connor, Seattle City Light, will be co-managing this study for the fourth year in 2005, which includes 45 monitoring stations located along the near shore of Central and North Puget Sound.

Steelhead Stock Status in Washington State

The Western Pacific Coastal States, including Washington, Oregon, and California, are divided into sixteen different steelhead ESUs. Beginning in California, there are four ESUs listed as *Threatened*, one listed as *Endangered*, and one *Not Warranted* for listing that resides both in northern California and southern Oregon. The Oregon coast is listed as *Candidate* while the Upper Willamette is listed as *Threatened*. The three steelhead ESUs bordering Washington and Oregon are along the Columbia River and are currently listed as *Threatened*. One ESU in Washington is listed as *Endangered* and three ESUs are currently *Not Warranted* for listing along the coastal and Puget Sound region.

According to the Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) Salmonid Stock Inventory (SaSI), there are several wild steelhead stocks within the Puget Sound ESU that maintain a status of *Depressed* or *Critical*. However, the majority of stocks within the Olympic Peninsula and along the Southwest Washington coast remain *Healthy* according to SaSI status. This ESU has maintained the highest number of healthy wild steelhead stocks in Washington State.

The Lower Columbia ESU is listed as *Threatened* by NOAA fisheries. This and other Columbia River ESUs contain the highest number of Depressed or Unknown stocks (mainly summer steelhead) within Washington State according to the SaSI ratings.

The number of *Healthy* steelhead stocks in Washington State has declined in recent years. The number of wild steelhead stock listed as *Depressed* has decreased slightly while the number of stocks rated *Critical* has remained the same. Unfortunately, a number of steelhead stocks with known status in 1992 have reverted to *Unknown* status in 2002 due to the lack of abundance trend data. Previous data (typically harvest data) is no longer available due to wild steelhead season closures and release regulations. Often wild steelhead stocks are not monitored for escapement. SaSI maintains very little escapement data for wild summer steelhead runs often due to nearly impossible weather and river conditions during spring surveys.

In conclusion, the status for wild steelhead stocks in Washington State continues to be a challenge for Washington biologists, fisheries managers and co-managers as well as the public in an attempt to improve habitat and find a balance between harvest and preserving our native steelhead resource.

Amilee Wilson

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

(Presentation to the Steelhead Summit Alliance, Summit V, Bellevue, WA, Nov. 6, 2004)

WSC Fund Raiser a Huge Success!

The Second Annual Wild Steelhead Coalition's Fund Raiser was held this past October 23rd at the Bellevue Sheraton Hotel. Once again it was a huge success. The evening started with cocktails. As everybody arrived we mingled and had an opportunity to view many of items for auction and raffle.

The Bellevue Sheraton catered a wonderful dinner. London broil or Stuffed Chicken were our choices of entrée's, followed by coffee and poached pear desert. As desert got underway, Mr. Trey Combs, our keynote speaker, gave an impressive and celebratory presentation of wild steelhead. Trey's speech was accompanied by a slide show and commentary of his latest trip to the Kamchatka peninsula in Russia.

After the conclusion of Trey's presentation Rich Simms, our President presented our first WSC Conservation Award. The award was presented to Mr. Bill Redman. Bill, a Past President of the Washington Fly Fishing Club and a dedicated advocate for steelhead, was honored for his many years of conservation efforts and fighting for enhancement and protection of wild steelhead. Thank you Mr. Bill Redman!

We were fortunate to once again have Captain Keith Robbins as our auctioneer for the evening. Captain Keith was accompanied by his wonderful assistant Ms. Cindy Konkell. Together they made the auction spirited and energetic. The combined raffle and auction raised almost six thousand dollars. The proceeds of the fundraiser will go along ways to benefit our dedication to increasing the return of wild steelhead to the rivers and waters of the Pacific Northwest!

Sincerely,

Peter Dorn

VP of Fundraising

Wild Steelhead Coalition

Contributors to the 2004 WSC Fundraiser

The WSC would like to thank the following individuals and businesses that helped make our fundraiser such a success:

Bob Aid, John Farrar-River Guide, Mike Mathis, Dave Vedder, Dennis & Ellie Worley, Bob Triggs- Little Stone Fly Fisher, Doug McQuilliams-Swedens, JD Love-Guide Service, Rob Endsley-Kulshun Guide Service, Rob Tibbet-Orvis, Nathan Keen-Avid Angler, Trey Combs-Thomas & Thomas Fly Rods, Sage Fly Rods, Les Johnson, Steve Worley-Worley Bugger Fly Shop, Peter Corbet-Creekside Fly Shop, Kaufmann's Streamboarn, Dee Snodgrass, Bob Young, Jack & Elaine Berryman, Bellevue Sheraton Hotel-Andrea Larson, Frank Amato Books, Pablo Nadeau, Todd Ripley & Juli Adams-Entheogen Studios, Brian Simonseth, Duggan Harman, Ryan Petzold, Frank & Jeanne Moore, Lamiglass, Leland Miyawaki, Mark Boyle, Islander Reels, Freixenet Vineyards, Mike Combs-Outdoor Empourium.

WSC Guest Essay:

The Pursuit

It is the peace of mind that comes during the o'dark-thirty drive to the river. The cool feeling against your legs as waders meet water for the first time that day. The heightened palette of senses that compliment the day's first run and the sense of sensory detachment in the ones that follow. It is the ritual of checking the river level before bed and at first rise. The comfort of a new length of tippet to replace the one that has gotten a bit too short. The contrast of the reel's ratchet against the gentle gurgle of the current. The joy in watching the flight of the first swallows of spring, the last bats of dawn or the upriver blow of emerging March browns. It is the smell of rotting salmon in the fall, snow crisp mornings in winter and the budding salmonberry in spring.

It is the first taste off the flask in the morning mist and the way that gas station coffee and deli-sandwiches can taste like 5-star cuisine on the water. It is the gentle lap of water against the side of the boat and the low rumble as the oars slide down into the locks. It is the discomfort of the pinhole in your waders and the relief when you finally get it patched. It is the dissonance of finding joy in drizzle and distain in sun. It is the frustration that the river is never just right and the confidence that if it was, "boy would we be catching them". It is the understanding that the fly matters little but the sudden "knowing" that you need to use a particular pattern on a run. It is the priceless solitude of a day alone on the water and the almost loving camaraderie of a

day spent with a small group of similar affected peers. It is the small smile as a powerful cast unfurls pulling a click of line off the reel. It is the rhythmic swim of a deeply sunk fly and the erratic surface chug of a surface pattern.

It is all these things and countless more that draw me back day after day. Draw me back through month long dry spells and weeks where the fish seem to come to hand daily. These are the thoughts that fill my head before sleep. These are the things that define not why I fish for steelhead, but why I am a steelheader.

Duggan Harman
9-14-04

“Duggan Harman is a current Trustee of the Wild Steelhead Coalition. He is also the WSC’s first President and one of the founding Board Members. Duggan makes his home with his wife and two sons in Bothell, Wa. and is one of the earliest rising “steelheaders” I have the pleasure of knowing”-ed.

News Bits

“What’s going on in and around the WSC”

New Commissioner Named- Dr. Kenneth Chew , Seattle (Western Washington), Occupation: Fisheries Scientist was appointed new Washington Fish and Wildlife Commissioner. Dr. Chew , replaces Pete Van Gytenbeek. His term began on 11/01/04.

Help Wanted- The WSC is currently seeking a Board Member with a fisheries science background to fill the new VP of Science position. This member will work with the VP of Conservation and VP of Education. If you are interested in getting involved to help the plight of wild steelhead, please call 425-880-4254 or email at wscmembership@yahoo.com.

Steelhead/Cutthroat Advisory Position Opportunity- The WDFW is currently seeking nominations for positions on it’s public Steelhead/Cutthroat Advisory Panel. We urge conservation minded anglers to seek a position on this panel. To find out more please access the follow : <http://wdfw.wa.gov/do/oct04/oct1804b.htm>

WSC Signs onto Wild Sky Wilderness Letter- The WSC has signed onto a public letter produced by Washington Wilderness Coalition urging members of the Washington Congressional Delegation to urging Congress to resolve wilderness legislation in the final days of the congressional session. The letter was featured in the Seattle PI on November 11.

Thompson River Steelhead Threatened- Commercial Chum fisheries on the Fraser River in British Columbia have put the magnificent Thompson River wild steelhead at risk. Please read the article in this issue of the Adipose.

NOAA Fisheries Fiasco- NOAA Fisheries is considering a proposal from the Bush Administration to classify hatchery salmonids the same as wild salmonids. This is a case of politics trumping science, with the interests of industry winning out over those of fishermen and others who value a healthy environment. If you have not done so, please contact NOAA Fisheries and let them know that wild steelhead and hatchery steelhead should not be considered the same fish when listing fish under ESA. The WSC had a guest commentary and was featured in the Seattle PI on November 18 you can access it at the following link: <http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/opinion/200054_salmon18.html>

WSC Provides Presentation at Evergreen FF- The WSC provided a presentation to the Evergreen Fly Fishing Club in Everett Washington and was presented with a donation check of \$200. The WSC appreciates Evergreen's support and involvement in our work for wild steelhead!

WSC Conservation Award Winner- Bill Redman was named as the WSC first ever Conservation Award winner at the WSC Fundraising Dinner. Bill was presented with a plaque and standing ovation. Bill was recognized for his years of service at the helm of the FFF Steelhead Committee and pioneering the attention and work for wild steelhead.

New WSC Members!

Individual Memberships

Jim Traner from Edmonds, WA

Ken Hunter from Bothell, WA

Pete Castellanos from Santa Barbara, CA

Adam Castellanos from Concord, CA

Peter Castellanos from Ketchum, ID

Stephen Warren from Spokane, WA

Lynn Goodwin from Quilcene, WA

Jay Coulter from Bozeman, MT

Sponser Membership

Eric DeJong from Seattle, WA



WSC Guest Column
Thompson River Steelhead Under Siege

The flagship of BC's world famous steelhead fishery, the Thompson River is in grave danger. Without a doubt the major culprit is the presently less than ideal ocean conditions of the North Pacific. However, oversubscribed and un-enforced water licenses, commercial by-catch and general habitat degradation has created a long downward slide of the Thompson's glorious steelhead. We have reached a critical point – any further reduction of returns will put the population in danger of collapse.

To this end the Steelhead Society of British Columbia along with other groups and Provincial agencies have been waging a battle to ensure that when the ocean returns to a steelhead friendly condition that there will be enough Thompson steelhead left to ensure their recovery. So far this fight has resulted in some mixed success.

The Provincial Ministry of Water, Air and Land Protection (WLAP), which is responsible for fresh water fisheries and therefore the steelhead is on side. While WLAP fishery biologists clearly care about the Thompson steelhead, massively reduced funding and an environmentally unfriendly government seriously hamper them. Never the less, WLAP biologists have reached out to sports fishing and environmental groups to try to fight for the resource.

The first development was a Thompson River Recovery Plan meeting that was held in Spence's Bridge in September. All levels of government were in attendance as were the concerned user groups. In general, even traditionally fish unfriendly groups like the cattlemen seem to have at least some interest in improving the situation. As a result of this meeting the Province pledged \$50,000 to get the plan rolling and WLAP has initiated a series of meetings to look at a new way of using water in the critical Nicola and Deadman River spawning/rearing systems.

While all of this is good and is clearly moving in the right direction, it is also true that it is a long way from being accomplished and still further from dealing with the immediate issues that threaten the Thompson steelhead. Aside from water use issues in the spawning tributaries the greatest immediate threat to minimum spawner survival is by-catch interception in commercial and native gillnet fisheries in the Fraser and its approaches.

Historically these interceptions were significant, but as a result of relentless pressure and negotiations the Steelhead Society managed to get these fisheries halted – especially in key West Coast Vancouver Island locations, as well as during the critical peak migration period of October in the lower Fraser River. Up until very recently the commercial interception of Thompson bound steelhead had become secondary to habitat issues. About three years ago this began to change with the most recent evidence being the commercial chum opening this past October 20th.

The problem revolves around the division of powers between the senior levels of government in Canada. The Federal government's Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) manages saltwater fisheries which includes salmon and the Province's WLAP is in charge of freshwater designated fish such as steelhead. The two agencies do not see

eye to eye on many things, one of the casualties is steelhead. DFO sees its major client group as the commercial sector and for political reasons refuses to tackle Native fisheries. The result is that they have little concern for steelhead and sports fishing.

While WLAP has grave concerns over the survival of Thompson steelhead they do not have the power to stop DFO openings that threaten steelhead. Using results from the DFO test fishery at Albion on the lower Fraser WLAP has developed a model that they use to predict the Thompson run size and enable in-season management of the Thompson fishery. Last year they had serious concerns and were intent on closing the river in October. Intense local pressure from the town of Spence's Bridge and a late bump of fish at Albion kept the river open.

This prompted WLAP to take the unprecedented action of closing the river as of October 1st until such time as the test fishery indicated that minimum number of spawners had entered the river. That number has been set as 850 fish. This fall saw high water conditions on the Fraser, which make the test fishery a little less reliable, based on this WLAP was predicting fewer than 850 fish – so the river stayed closed. This was a clear message to DFO to manage the commercial and native fisheries in a manner that took into account the extreme concern that WLAP had for Thompson steelhead.

It was with shock and outrage that WLAP and the sports fishing community learned on October 18th, that in less than 48 hours the lower Fraser would be open for a 10 hour commercial fishery – this was the virtual peak of Thompson steelhead migrating through the lower river. At this the Steelhead Society reached out to its friends around the world using the power of the internet. The WSC's connections were extremely useful here. Within hours DFO managers were flooded with hundreds, if not thousands of angry e-mails and phone calls (they will not tell us how many) from Sweden, Norway, Japan, Eastern Canada as well as all over the United States. As well, the politicians who are in charge were included in the deluge. In all it was a very impressive action and is something that we need to make better use of in the future.

Unfortunately, DFO's ploy of extreme short warning of the opening resulted in the October 20th fishery going ahead anyway. Never the less, it did result in a second opening planned for the following week being cancelled and a third the week after that being relocated out of the river.

However, the damage may have been done. As the October 20th opening was occurring the first big push of Thompson steelhead were in the river. There were 126 gill-netters fishing and by DFO's estimate they indicate that 55 steelhead were intercepted (this was later downgraded to 47). How this number was reached is somewhat of a mystery. There were 11 on-board observers and 4 roving observers. Between them they saw 10 steelhead caught and of them 9 were released in "good shape", one was "not in good shape" – from this they arrive at 47 fish...

The next day the single Albion test boat making one drift got 3 Thompson steelhead and the next day it got 4. Yet 126 gill-netters making multiple sets for 10 hours only get 47 between them – it is hard to believe. The real number was probably triple that, maybe more.

The push of steelhead kept coming and as a result WLAP has estimated that the run now has at least 1200 and maybe as many as 1500 fish. This resulted in the river being

open to sports fishing on October 29th. While 1500 fish is a significant number when compared to 800, it is still a pitiful number for a river like the Thompson. The fight is a long way from over and the Steelhead Society of BC thanks you and your associate clubs for your valuable help and we are certain that we will be calling on you again – and soon.

Tight lines,

*Tyler Kushnir
Director of the Steelhead Society of BC*

“Tyler Kushnir is a high school teacher in Delta BC and a life long steelheader. He is presently a Director of the Steelhead Society of BC and the Vice President of the oldest private fishing club in BC - The Kingfishers Rod & Gun Club and has been active the Steelhead Summits.”

WSC Sponsors & Host Steelhead Summit Alliance V

Report on Steelhead Summit Five, Nov. 6, 2004, at the Sheraton Hotel, Bellevue, WA

Facilitator Jack Berryman gave his opening remarks, starting at 8:30 a.m. Jack said the Summit Alliance has made some gains in working to preserve and restore wild steelhead, has gotten the attention of several government agencies, but that there remains a lot to be done.

Summit co-chair Dave Bailey got things started. He said 36 people were in attendance, including three who flew from California and two from British Columbia. There also were three guest speakers from the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife and another from the federal National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries). Dave said several fly fishing clubs in California have shown an interest in the Alliance and have contacted him but were not present.

Dick Burge, program chairman, introduced Amilee Wilson, the first female to manage a state fish hatchery. She has been promoted several times and now is in charge of monitoring salmon stocks, including steelhead. She began a slide show that included maps of the western states on endangered, threatened, and not warranted stocks. These included Puget Sound, the Olympic Peninsula, showing the upper Columbia River as endangered. They were broken into smaller listings, including 137 stocks 36 threatened, 42 depressed, 1 critical in 1992. In 2002, 28 were threatened and 41 were depressed. She said production appears very poor for the Skagit River basin from 2000 to 2002. Surveys of the Snohomish River showed depressed stocks in 2002. The Green River was rated healthy. The Puyallup was rated depressed in 1992 and below escapement goals since 1994. The Tahuya River stocks were rated as depressed and below the escapement goal in 1999. The state has no data on the Skokomish River on data and escapement because it is not monitored. Data there was incomplete in 1992, 1993, 1996 and 1997 because of high water and is now rated as depressed. The Dungeness was rated as depressed in 1992 for the winter run but spawn timing is unknown for summer run.

Data from the Olympic Peninsula rivers including the Quillayute shows data because of low harvest numbers but the the Bogachiel was healthy in 1992 and in 2002. There is no

data on the Sol Duc for summer run but the winter run was healthy in both of those years. On the Calawah data on the summer run was unknown but the winter run was rated as healthy. There was no data on the summer run in the Queets because it is not monitored but the winter run was rated as healthy in 1992. The Quinault run has been healthy both years.

In southwest Washington, there has been no data on the summer runs and the winter runs have been in a long decline since 1986 but are now recovering, although in 2002 they were rated as depressed. There is no data from the Chehalis for summer the run and it is as rated unknown. The winter run there is rated healthy although escapements have been relatively stable from 1999 to 2004. The Wynoochee has been healthy both of those years and the Satsop winter run was found to be depressed both years. Research found chronically low abundance in the Northy and Smith Rivers but they have historically had a small number and now are rated as healthy. No escapement goals are listed for them. The Willapa River winter run had no monitoring before 1996 because of reduced spawning potential from logging and cattle farms. No data is available for the Cowlitz River. The east fork of the Lewis River was found to be depressed both times but it has a chronically low escapement. The Kalama River from 1998 to 2001 has met only 14 to 33 percent of goal. Its tributaries are rated 30 percent depressed, and 48 are rated unknown because the state has no data.

Berryman asked how volunteers could help. Ms. Wilson said the budget for department is cut every year. Her office, SASI, sets parameters for ratings but the tribes and regional people do the actual counting. Salmonscape is part of department web site and has this information.

It needs to be understood that this slide show went rapidly and Ms. Wilson spoke quickly, so there may be some glitches in this part of the report. If there are questions, the information should be checked with her.

The next speaker was Curt Kraemer, Department of Fish and Wildlife marine biologist for north Puget Sound. Kraemer used a series of graphs on an overhead projector to make his points. Explaining escapement goals, he showed graph samples and said it has three points. Two of them are carrying capacity and management for sustained yield. It is used as anchor point for evaluating runs and is mandated by federal court. It has a checkered history of failures and some successes. Made up of family of curves, carrying capacity is in some cases actually lower than the number of fish in the system. At one time, if there were three fish above MSY, it was believed the fish were wasted. It is known that marine survival varies widely from year to year and from river to river. Populations are dynamic and shift all over from time to time. He was asked about measuring rivers by smolts. Kurt said too expensive to count smolts on most rivers. Said Oregon bases estimates on carrying capacity, rather than MSY. On the Snohomish River, for example, the state started factoring in catch and release and numbers started to change for the worst. Carrying capacity has dropped well below 6,000 fish with biggest change in marine environment. The nature of the beast is that the resource flip-flops. The steelhead are rainbow trout but not all rainbow are steelhead. Management has not been able to remove rainbow trout from streams in the counting. In the north fork of Stillaguamish River, the steelhead catch was cut and the run increased and the reverse was true. In the north fork of the Skykomish River, bull trout, the state ruled to forbid keeping any bull trout less than 20 inches. Now there is a ten-fold increase in abundance and we are assured that all females spawn at least once. Water flows are so

high in the Skagit River that big rivers produced smolts in the main stem. In the Snohomish River, the goal for wild coho is 70,000 and now the count is 270,000 but three streams used to index streams have had no coho in them and this fall we will find out how many got upstream and will spawn in 2006 and 2008. In the Skykomish River we lost hell of a lot of chinook productivity but we can't move fish catches by not fishing. We have taken away the elasticity of our habitat productivity.

Jim Scott was the next speaker. He is the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife director of research and said he got into this work because we like fish, not to make a lot of money. The staff puts in 20 to 30 percent free time. Director Koenigs said he wanted to increase the role of science in department management policies. Recently he has spent most of his time on scientific recovery panel put together by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He said there sometimes is a lack of communication because there is difference of 15 to 20 years between science and management in the department.

He distributed a draft outline of a scientific paper and said it is extremely important to study the makeup of the populations. He said it is possible we have been managing at too gross a scale. Questions the panel has faced include how is productivity changing, what is the role of habitat and marine driven nutrients, how much habitat degradation has there been. He said we need to address habitat factors. He said there have been breakthroughs in habitat populations and the genetics tools to determine how many fish are produced. They need to learn what is the relative success of a hatchery fish spawning in the wild, is predation effecting production and to think about the role of spawners in maintaining runs. Answers to those questions probably have been a little too simple in the past considerations. He said that at a meeting Nate Mantua suggested looking at what is the goal of management. Part of the problem is to think about the agency's budget now because we don't have the staff we once had. One of the problems is how we can bring in more funding and do the assessments that we need. It does not look like natural resource agencies in the state will get any more money. The panel started work in March of last year and will send out a draft of a paper for comment by people within the department. The target date for release of the panel report is early next year, January possibly, for review by a broad audience. It is now well over 100- pages of text. He said WDFW wants to get the broadest review. It will be finalized soon after that. That is public review in early January. The plan is to complete early next spring and make it relevant to 2006. One of the questions is how to move forward with a management plan and we need to learn from it to show what we don't know. Something we need to focus on. He also said the state needs to prioritize its needs.

After lunch Kaitlin Lovell introduced Rob Walton of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He said one of the key questions will be how the government treats the environment. He said that will be one of the battlegrounds. He works in salmon recovery planning. Several issues he said his agency is working on include biological review team report, coastal proposed determinations, are based on two federal rulings, used proposed hatchery listing policy, etc. The agency has reaffirmed its commitment to natural ecosystems. He said that hatcheries can hurt. High abundance of one population by itself is not adequate to show that the environmentally sustainable unit is viable. Hatchery fish will be included in ESUs. He said emphasis is still on naturally spawning salmon and that hatcheries can't solve fundamental problems. He said a battle over which watersheds deserve priority will be a major fight. He said there is nothing I know that says you only need a hatchery system. Pedigree analysis will determine what we do with fish populations. To a question, he said the background

on hatchery decision was farther toward natural selection, definitely felt the need to go to Science Magazine to get it out. He said many scientists at NOAA said the review was good but went too far. He said there is enormous social pressure to be able to catch fish and that a lot of the criticism is of old hatchery practices. Cost effectiveness is so important we may never be able to fill positions at NOAA Northwest. A key question is does the public have the will to shut down hatcheries and fix the habitat and would the fish would be better off. NOAA says some hatchery systems produce fish close enough to natural fish and there is a huge amount of support for the old hatcheries. There is political support for old hatcheries because of expenses. The problem with rainbow trout is a two-edged sword. In a study in Oregon, there was more DNA coming in than going out because of resident rainbow. At some point the public will say don't go there, we want more funding for natural habitat.

Rob Masonis from American Rivers and chair of the habitat committee said several policy papers his committee has developed are good enough to be distributed. They address river flow, passage barriers, and riparian zones. His hydropower committee also submitted a final draft SSA policy on hydropower. These were all generally accepted by attendees, who are encouraged to have their organizations sign on to the policies for maximum clout.

Rob added that the Department of the Interior has proposed very bad rule that puts it in a position to challenge positions supporting the environment. Governor Locke yesterday signed a letter opposing it, and Rob will circulate a similar letter of opposition for SSA groups to sign, as well as a letter to the U.S. senators from Washington and Oregon, objecting to NOAA's new draft biological opinion regarding federal hydropower dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers.

Bill Redman's final draft, as chair of the ESA committee, was also presented to attendees, with 22 signatory SSA groups noted. This is to be submitted to NOAA-Fisheries by the November 12 deadline for comments.

Beth Kuhn, chair of the education and outreach committee, said it has not been very active but is about to set up meetings with key legislators and take policy papers from this group to them. She asked that members who are interested in helping with that contact her by email at elizabeth__kuhn@hotmail.com <mailto:elizabeth__kuhn@hotmail.com>.

Dick Burge and Nate Mantua of the harvest management committee said it has agreed on clear mission statement and developed a set of over-arching management goals and design policies that will achieve those goals. "To improve and protect the diversity, abundance, distribution and productivity of wild steelhead populations and work towards the development of sustainable fisheries." It also wants to increase the health of wild steelhead stocks, develop sustainable steelhead fisheries and reform hatchery policies by designing fisheries focused on maximum sustained recreation, not MSY. Steelhead are sport fish, not food fish, and MSY has not proven to be sustainable with many other fisheries. The alternative is to allow only catch and release fishing for wild steelhead when a run is projected to be between 100 and 150 of the escapement goal. Allow up to 10 percent of combined sport and tribal, allow only bank fishing and selective gear regulations between 100 and 110 percent, from selective gear regulations between 110 and 120, fishing from boats would be ok, from 120 to 150. These rules would apply if the prediction calls for a wild run below its escapement goal, but with selective gear

regulations for hatchery season. They also said new harvest models must be developed to redistribute wild steelhead harvest impacts away from early returning fish to allow early returning wild steelhead to rebuild their numbers. It may be necessary to close Olympic Peninsula and Puget Sound rivers to wild steelhead fishing between May 1 and January 31. The wild harvest season would be open only February 1 through April 30. This would reduce the negative impact of hatchery operations on wild steelhead, specifically in wild salmonid management zones and significant basins with no hatchery plants. Kraemer suggested Sauk river as one place to experiment with this approach. All of this will require monitoring and evaluation of wild stocks in creeks feeding the Snake River, Chehalis River tributaries, improved enforcement such as the Eyes In The Woods programs, and jaw tags issued for the number of fish available for harvest. It is better to protect resident fish and rear them in anadromous waters and use selective gear regulations from March 1 through October 31. Would need to raise the minimum size for rainbows and steelhead to 20 inches and allow additional time and area closures.

Dick Burge and Dave Bailey, Summit co-chairs, led a discussion on completing committee issue papers, on the variety of steelhead issues. Several, discussed above, have gained at least a majority acceptance within SSA. Others are still being processed in committee.

Dave went on to solicit comments on the three SSA "steering documents" that have been in the works for the past two Summits: Who We Are; Goal, Objectives and Strategies; and Policy Development and Adoption Procedures. No negative comments were heard, and these documents will be considered approved. The adoption procedures have been fairly effective, however success requires that all primary contacts move the drafts promptly through their organizations' approval processes. As for a central, electronic depository for all SSA issue papers and other documents, the Wild Steelhead Coalition will attempt to incorporate them into its Web site, at www.wildsteelheadcoalition.com, as soon as possible.

Poul Bech and Tyler Kushnir of the Steelhead Society of B.C. spoke briefly concerning several provincial issues negatively affecting steelhead, such as a short notice commercial chum salmon opener on the Thompson River system, on top of an already distressed run of steelhead. Despite the short notice, email alerts (including SSA's) led to an impressive number of complaints to their fish managers. Groups wishing to support our conservationist colleagues to the north should contact Poul at pbbech@shaw.ca.

All SSA member groups are reminded to recruit new steelhead advocacy groups, and to serve on as many issue committees as feasible. Consensus indicated that Summit meetings should continue on a semi-annual schedule. Summit VI is tentatively scheduled for May 7, 2005. Thus far, the meetings have been hosted by the Wild Steelhead Coalition, but other groups are welcome to host a Summit, or assist in any way. The approximate cost has been about \$1,000.

Summit V was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

***Proceedings recorded by
Dee Norton
Wild Steelhead Coalition***

Thanks for Supporting Wild Steelhead!

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.

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