



The Adipose

The Newsletter of the Wild Steelhead Coalition
Volume 3, Issue 5

October 2003

The President's Run

"...to wade and cast, wade and cast for hours or even days on end without so much as the sign of even a single fish-and then to experience the explosive, helpless, breath-robbing excitement that comes in the split second when a steelhead finally does take with a strike that shakes your arms all the way to their sockets, to see the unforgettable sight of the fish's first cart wheeling leap, its sides flashing with a brighter light than day.

*All these things, and more, are part of the steelhead tradition. **Long may it continue.**"*—Steve Raymond, Steelhead Country (1991)

Long may wild steelhead fill the rivers of the Pacific Northwest! I hope everyone had a great summer and are looking forward with renewed spirit towards the coming seasons and the work to be done for wild steelhead. I believe the work for wild steelhead is somewhat mirrored in the persistence of the above quote and the victories as exciting as the take.

As one of the founding board members of the WSC I am honored and look forward to the opportunity to serve as your new President. I am especially proud of the organization that we have developed and the way it has grown into a voice for wild steelhead that is pushing for changes in policies affecting them. I also feel privileged for all the great members I have the opportunity to be associated with and to learn from.

I truly believe our second year has been another huge success under the leadership and guidance of Jack Berryman as well as our board members Dick Burge, Peter Dorn, Richard Hunt, Nate Mantua, Dee Norton, Don Peterson and Todd Ripley. I would also like to thank Dave Bailey who continues to tirelessly lead our successful Steelhead Summits. And thanks to Preston Singletary for serving as the Adipose Editor. My hat is also off to incoming board members Jeff Johnson and Bob Young who volunteered to step up to the challenge and serve on the board for the 03-04 term. I am also pleased and grateful that Jack Berryman will continue on in the new board position of Past President. This position will surely keep a smooth continuity going with the board.

Your board members are currently very busy planning important events for the coming year that support our action plan and the goals of the WSC. Steelhead Summit 3 is scheduled to take place on November 8, at the Hilton in Bellevue, Washington. These summits are turning into a true working together relationship with other organizations to have a stronger voice for steelhead. The WDFW major rules proposal meeting is December 6, at Fort Worden State Park in Port Townsend, Washington. The WSC board is currently formulating its strategy and planning to attend to push again for statewide release of all wild steelhead -- no exceptions. We urge our membership to spread the word and participate by attending the meeting and testifying. We are also in the process of planning the WSC's first chili feed and fundraiser on October 1st at the Bothell American Legion Hall. We hope you make plans to attend this event and mail in your reservation form as space will be limited. Our VP of Fundraising, Peter Dorn has developed an impressive list of donations that include fishing gear and guided fishing trips to raffle and auction off. And of course there are the other important activities that we continue to work on in accordance with the WSC action plan.

I would also like to say a word about participation. The board appreciates the effort that many members have made. Thank-you! I know we are all busy with work, fishing, family, and time is a rare commodity, but I challenge more members to volunteer and help out on an activity, even if it's just to write a letter or take 5 minutes to make a phone call to a legislator on a issue the WSC is pursuing. We really need more members involved to help accomplish our goals and objectives. Please do what you can to enlist new members and make an effort to get personally involved with WSC projects. Wild steelhead need your help! We are in current need of an editor for the Adipose and could use some support for our board members. Also remember this is your organization and if there is a project or idea you would like to take on please do not hesitate to call or email one of the board members.

Finally, if you have the opportunity, take time to educate another angler, take a youngster fishing or talk with your legislator and share with them the value and legacy of wild steelhead and why it is important to have them in our future. Here's a toast to a new chapter in the future of wild steelhead! ***May they long continue!***

Sincerely, Rich Simms, WSC Board President



North Country Wild Steelhead

photo by Carl Ostberg

WSC CHILI FEED AND FUNDRAISER

Friends please come join the Wild Steelhead Coalition's First Annual Chili Feed Auction. This promises to be a fun and exciting evening. This years Chili Feed Auction will be held Wednesday, October 1, 2003 at the American Legion Hall 127, 19213 Bothell Way NE, Bothell, WA. This will be a grand occasion to meet and enjoy the company of others who share a common concern for the wild native steelhead of the great Northwest.

You must make a reservation, as the dinner will be catered. It is not necessary to prepay for the reservation. Many truly outstanding items are being offered in the raffle, and live auctions including **guided trips, rods and reels, artwork and /or mounted flies, all the fishing gear** that you could ever want and some new non-fishing items for the family. The donation is only \$25.00 per person.

So, won't you join us? Bring a friend or two. Help support the cause for wild steelhead by making this year's Chili Feed Auction a big success:

6 PM to 7 PM: WET YOUR WHISTLE/SILENT AUCTION
7 PM to 8 PM: DINNER
8 PM: RAFFLE & AUCTION

**For RSVP & information call Peter Dorn;
VP of Fundraising, Wild Steelhead Coalition
425-451-3133 Email: dorn440@hotmail.com**

September 03 Wild Steelhead Coalition Meeting Report

"Fishing our way to recovery: Puget Sound's Comprehensive Chinook Fishery Management Plan"

Guest Speaker: Curt Kraemer, WDFW Region 4 Freshwater Fisheries Program Manager

For the 3rd consecutive year, Curt Kraemer spent 2+ hours speaking about his presentation topic and answering questions from an inquisitive audience. Curt's presentation provided a detailed description of the methods used by the state and tribal co-managers for developing Puget Sound harvest plans for salmon and steelhead.

How can we have harvest salmon and steelhead fisheries in the presence of salmon listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA)? This was the key question facing the state and tribal co-managers after the 1999 ESA listing of Puget Sound chinook. Because Puget Sound chinook are listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), the co-managers are required to submit recovery and harvest plans to NOAA Fisheries (formerly the National Marine Fisheries Service).

The co-managers have been developing their harvest management plans for Puget Sound chinook for the past 5 years. Curt used the case of Skykomish River wild chinook to illustrate the basic approaches now being used to offer fishing and harvest opportunities for relatively abundant stocks that swim alongside the ESA listed stocks. The goal is to provide harvest and recreation opportunities without jeopardizing the recovery of ESA listed stocks. The methods used now rely on computer simulation modeling that identifies the highest harvest rate that will result in an 80% probability of meeting Maximum Sustained Yield (MSY) escapement goals. This level of fishing is termed the “Recovery Exploitation Rate” (RER).

The next 3 paragraphs detailing the RER concept were taken directly from Curt’s slides.

RECOVERY EXPLOITATION RATE

The recovery exploitation rate (RER) is the highest allowable (“ceiling”) exploitation rate for the population under normal conditions of stock abundance. **This rate is designed to meet the objective that, compared to a hypothetical situation of zero harvest impact, the impact of harvest under the plan will not significantly impede the opportunity for the population to grow towards the recovery goal.**

The RER is to account for all fishing mortalities (direct and indirect) defined in terms of adult equivalents (AEQ). AEQ is the potential contribution of fish of a given age to the spawning escapement, in absence of fishing. Because not all unharvested fish will survive to contribute to spawning escapement, a two-year-old chinook has a lower probability of surviving to spawn, in the absence of fishing, than does a five-year-old. Therefore, these two age classes have different “adult equivalents”.

The RER was evaluated with Monte Carlo projections of the near-term future performance of the population under current productivity conditions, in other words, **assuming that hatchery and habitat management as well as current low marine survivals remain as they are now.**

Said another way, this approach is designed to identify a harvest rate that, even in the presence of observed “worst-case productivity”, will allow the population to meet the recovery goals in 80% of 1000 simulations. They run 1000 simulations to reflect the large uncertainty that exists in the unpredictable factors that impact chinook production (things like unpredictable sequences of floods, drought, El Niño’s, etc.).

Once an RER is identified, the allowable harvest then depends on a pre-season run-size forecast. The allowable harvest is then carved up between various user groups in the annual North of Falcon process, what Curt described as a “political wrestling match”. Y

For wild Skykomish chinook, the lowest escapement was observed in 1993, with just 942 spawners. Chinook escapements (natural spawners only) have generally increased in the past decade, with ~2000 spawners estimated for 2000 and again in 2001. This near doubling in the escapements for natural spawners has coincided with a near tripling of hatchery chinook escapements, a situation that suggests something other than harvest continues to limit natural chinook production. Recall that harvest rates in recent years were just half to one-third what they were in the late 1970s and 1980s. There have been even larger differences in escapements of “hatchery supplementation” versus natural-origin chinook in the North Fork Stillaguamish and North Fork Nooksack Rivers. The basic picture is one where the hatchery spawned populations have increased more than the natural origin spawning populations.

These observations lead Curt to believe that “if we just quit fishing, everything will not be

fine.” True recovery for the natural spawners requires habitat improvements in Puget Sound streams and estuaries. The problems with degraded habitat are well known: heavy silted rivers, a lack of root wads and other woody debris, fewer boulder gardens and cobbles, very large losses of off-channel flood plain habitat, and the diking and draining of Puget Sound estuaries. Curt stated that WDFW has no mandate to focus on habitat, and to change that will require a lot of political pressure. That pointed the finger right back at the angling community, a challenge that requires our undivided attention.

Here are just a few additional interesting facts that Curt shared with us:

- harvest rates (combined Pacific Ocean+Puget Sound+in-river for sport, tribal and commercial) for Skykomish River chinook were near 75% in the late 1970's, and around 50-65% in the 1980's. As fish managers witnessed plummeting Skykomish chinook returns in the 1980's and early 1990's they began drastic reductions in harvests. By 1992 harvest rates for Puget Sound chinook were down to ~25% and they have remained near that level.
- From 1980-86, about ~30% of the total Snohomish system chinook run was harvested in Canadian fisheries, about ~20% of the run was caught by Puget Sound sport fisheries, Washington ocean fisheries caught just a few percent, and net fisheries (tribal + commercial) in Puget Sound harvested about 20% of the run.
- In 2000, the harvest plan called for a total Snohomish chinook harvest rate of 27%. Of that 27%, Puget Sound sport fishers were allocated ~15%, Canada was allocated the next largest share (~5%), the rest being split between ocean harvest off the Washington coast and commercial + tribal net fisheries in Puget Sound. The bottom line: sports fishers were granted the largest allocation and impact.
- Curt also noted that the North of Falcon process can be influenced by sports anglers, as long as they make the effort to attend meetings and voice their opinions. He said that a single angler from Monroe was able to argue for, and get, an in-river chinook fishery on the Skykomish for the past couple years.
- Sampling during the June/July selective chinook fishery on the lower Skykomish found that about 50% of the chinook caught (either kept or released) were incidental catches by anglers targeting summer steelhead.
- Recent surveys show 30-50% hatchery chinook stray rates on Skykomish River spawning beds. This observation led Curt to lobby the co-managers to allow for increased harvest opportunities for fin-clipped Skykomish chinook in order to help reduce stray spawners.

All in all, it was once again a very informative evening packed with more information than I can include in this brief recap. Speaking for those in attendance, I offer a hearty Thank You to Curt for once again sharing his expertise and perspectives on some of the major fishery management issues that impact the way we fish and attempt to recover depleted stocks here in the Northwest.

Nate Mantua, WSC VP Education/Science



Skeena River, BC

photo by Mike Morgan

Wild Steelhead Coalition October Membership Report

The WSC would like to extend a warm welcome and thanks to its new members:

Mike Morgan, Member, Bainbridge Island, WA

Dennis Worley, Member, Bellevue, WA

Thank-you this month!

Special thanks to **Frank Amato** for his recent donation to the WSC

Special thanks to **Microsoft Giving Campaign**, which included **an Anonymous Giver** for their recent donation to the WSC.

News & Bits- What's going on in & around the WSC?

WDFW Rules Proposals- Please take the opportunity to read Dick Burge's Proposal Perspective in this issue of the Adipose. WSC Board of Directors strongly urge it's membership to attend the WDFW public proposal testimony in December.

Steelhead Summit 3- Steelhead Summit 3 has been scheduled for November 8 at the Hilton in Bellevue, WA. Once again the Hilton will be offering discount rooms for those representatives attending from out of town. If you know of a group that will be interested in participating please contact Dick Burge @ 360-765-3815, email: fskibum@olympen.com or Dave Bailey @ 360-681-7043, email: captain@olympen.com We are truly developing a strong voice for steelhead!

WSC October Fundraiser- The WSC is currently planning it's first fundraiser for the October 1st WSC meeting. The fundraiser will include a chili feed and combination raffle and auction. If you have items or services you would like to donate to the WSC for the fundraiser please contact Peter Dorn at 425-451-3133 or email at peter.dorn@morganstanley.com Be sure to RSVP as soon as possible, space maybe limited for this great event!

C&R Project- Initial planning and design is taking place on developing a step by step pictorial process of correct C&R procedure for wild steelhead. If you would like more information regarding this project or would like to help out contact Rich Simms at 425-880-4254 or email at wscmembership@yahoo.com.

WSC Brochures- WSC brochures will be available soon. The artwork has been proofed at the printers and should be done in time for the October fundraiser. If you would like copies for distribution please contact Rich Simms at 425-880-4254 or email at wscmembership@yahoo.com

New WSC Officers Elected

At the September 3rd General Membership meeting, the slate of new WSC officers was approved. Thanks to all who voted in person or via the mail ballot that was sent to all members. Our new Treasurer is **Bob Young**, who replaces **Don Peterson**. Thanks to Don for doing a fine job. Bob will also continue to publish the Adipose. **Jeff Johnson** will replace **Rich Simms** as our 1st VP of Membership. Rich is our new President and we want to congratulate him and wish him well in the year to come. **Jack Berryman**, last year's President, assumes the newly created Board position of Past-President. Those Board members elected to another term are: **Peter Dorn**, VP of Fundraising; **Dick Burge**, VP of Conservation; **Dee Norton**, VP of Communications; **Nate Mantua**, VP of Science & Education; **Todd Ripley**, VP of Political Affairs; and, **Richard Hunt**, Secretary.

November Meeting Speaker

We are please to announce that the speaker for the November 5th WSC meeting will be Pete Van Gytenbeek. Pete is a current Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife commissioner, and will present a program on the Rule Change process currently employed employed by the commission.

Mr. Van Gytenbeek served as Executive Director of Trout Unlimited and was publisher of Fly Fishing Salt Waters Magazine.

A Perspective on Sport Fishing Rule Proposals

WDFW recently change their process for allowing sport fishers to submit regulation proposals from every other year to every third year. That makes this year even more important to fight hard for wild steelhead and our goal of achieving statewide release of all wild steelhead, no exceptions. Many members of our organization submitted the C&R proposal to WDFW in July for action this year. Here is the timing for the rest of this year's sport fishing rule change process:

Late October---WDFW will mail out a list of the proposals they approved for the submission to the Fish and Wildlife Commission. This mail out will include proposals made by the Regional WDFW Fisheries Managers and those submitted by sport fishers. We will have the opportunity of sending in written comments to WDFW before the December Commission meeting.

November 21-22---The Commission will hold a workshop in the Tri-Cities area to receive a briefing from the WDFW managers on all proposals. Normally the Commission does not take testimony or comments from the public at workshops so it's only a listening format for us. I don't see a need for us to be there.

December 5 and 6 (Friday and Saturday) ---The Commission will hold a public hearing in Port Townsend on all sport regulation proposals. These are the dates when we can make the biggest impact on rules to help wild fish in the next three years. Tell everyone you know who supports our goal to put these dates on their calendar and be there. We usually know in advance which day specific proposals will be heard, so it should mean just one of these days and my guess right now is that it will be on Saturday, because usually the most important changes are on a weekend day. We can hopefully get the word out to you before the hearing to know which day to attend.

February 2004 ---Sometime in February the Commission will hold a adoption hearing on the sport fishing proposals. The adopted changes will go into effect in May of 2004.

A Short Note on Testifying- It's real important for everyone to testify, even if you don't like addressing audiences or Commissions. Some of you are experience in testifying and don't need to read further. For those that shake pretty good in front of audiences---don't worry-- you don't have to be a big smooth talker. You can deliver an oral message to the Commission in just few seconds that counts just as much as the one the big talker gives the Commission. Remember that the Commission more or less counts those for and those against and uses that scale as a big part in their decision making process. So if our messages can outweigh those opposed to C&R by a wide enough margin, the Commissioners will feel pretty much obligated to act in favor of the wild fish.

Actually--all you have to say is my name "Speedy Gonzales" and I Support Catch and Release for all wild steelhead, statewide. If you want to add more, tell them in a few words why. Such as wild steelhead are doing poorly in virtually all rivers in the state and need this protection until stocks rebuild, statewide. And that statement counts as much as old smoothie who goes over his allotted time (maybe even more if that guy irritates the chair for going too long!).

Dick Burge, WSC VP of Conservation

Legislative and Political News

Sauk/Suiattle to Add Enforcement

The United States Dept. of Justice, through its Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) has awarded a \$1.1M grant to the Sauk/Suiattle Tribe. The money will be used to hire four new natural resources officers (3 FT, 1 PT), and purchase three new boats (a 27' cutter for patrolling Puget Sound areas, and two 16' drift boats for river patrols).

Through interagency cross commissioning, two of the new officers will be patrolling Snohomish County waters, including the Sauk, Stillaguamish, and Suiattle Rivers, and portions of Puget Sound.

One of the goals of the COPS program is to "Improve the crime fighting and criminal/juvenile justice system capabilities of state, tribal, and local governments". The Sauk/Suiattle tribe is taking advantage of this goal by using the funds to protect the fish and wildlife, not only on its small reservation, but also on the waters and lands that support the reservation wildlife. This ought to be a welcome opportunity for those who fish those waters and lament the lack of enforcement that takes place there, especially during the spring steelhead fisheries.

Hearings on Gov. Mike Leavitt's Bid to Become EPA Chief

Gov. Mike Leavitt, R.-Utah, will be facing the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee the week of 9/22, going from there to full senate confirmation hearings if approved by the committee. The three term governor is looking to replace former EPA Chief Christine Todd Whitman, who left in May.

While environmentalists decry his poor environmental record in Utah, Leavitt claims to be a balanced, middle of the road, environmentalist.

His pass from Committee to Senate seems to be a lock (11 reps., 8 dems., and 1 independent on the committee), but Senate democrats have vowed to make it a very difficult proposition to get confirmed.

Todd Ripley, WSC VP of Political Affairs

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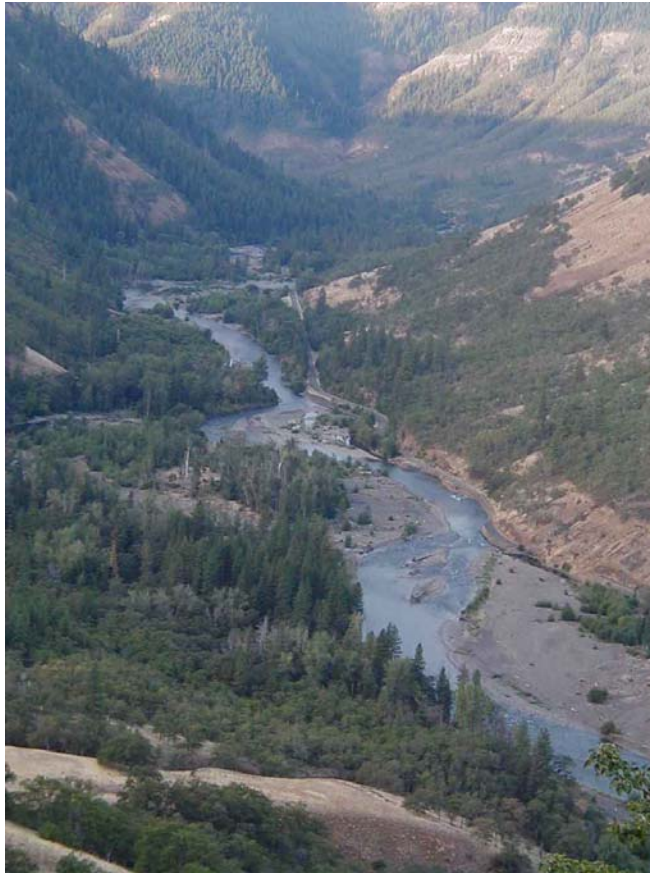
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Eastern Washington Steelhead Stream, Photo by Rich Simms

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.

Wild Steelhead Coalition

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