



WSC History 2000-2008

Nov 2000

A group of anglers meet at Ted's Sporting Goods, in Lynnwood, WA, to discuss the announced catch and release season closure of North Puget Sound streams by WDFW because of forecasted low escapement numbers. The group wanted to understand how we got to this situation and it is determined to form an organization for wild steelhead conservation.

Jan 2001

First formal meeting by an organizing group called the "Wild Steelhead Coalition" met at American Legion Hall in Bothell, WA with featured speaker, Curt Kramer, WDFW District 4 Head Biologist to hear and discuss the reasons and justification for the closure.

Jan-Mar 2001

Interim Board is established and work begins in establishing new organization, including planning strategy for a wild steelhead release, no exceptions regulation, filing paper work with the state and developing bylaws:

Duggan Harman

Rich Simms

Ryan Petzold

Todd Ripley

Dee Norton

Carl Ostberg

Dave Bailey

Les Johnson

Jim Starkes

Kevin Kent

Trustees are sought and named

John McGlenn

Jim Tuggle

Jim Lichatowich

Frank Amato

Dennis Dickson

Bill Bakke
Jack Berryman

April 2001

Wild Steelhead Coalition is registered as a non-profit 501c3; Work begins on the WSC's first white paper titled "The Biological and Economic Benefits of Wild Steelhead Release"

Dec 2001

White Paper is printed and delivered to WDFW Department Staff and Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission and is presented as the WSC's formal testimony and argument for "wild steelhead release, state wide, no exceptions" at the Commission hearing in Vancouver, WA.

Feb 2002

Commission and WDFW announce final ruling; annual limit reduction from 30 wild steelhead per year on rivers deemed "healthy" enough to support harvest to 5 per year. At the time there were 15 rivers in the state that were deemed healthy enough to support harvest, since then it has been reduced.

March 2002

Jack Berryman becomes president of the board. Dick Burge joins the board along with Nate Mantua, Richard Hunt, Don Peterson. Work begins planning the first Steelhead Summit, with the intent to bring conservation and sportsmen's groups together as a unified voice for wild steelhead. The WSC also begins work with WSC member Larry Doyle in developing charts to graph the run trends of wild steelhead across western Washington.

Nov 2002

The WSC sponsors and organizes the first Steelhead Summit, the first of its kind that brought together both angling and conservation groups together with a unified goal to build broader coalition and create a stronger voice for steelhead conservation. The organization will go on to sponsor or support the agenda for future summits on a bi yearly basis, with American River taking ownership to develop summits in Portland, OR. WSC editorial article appears in STS titled "Why Wild Steelhead Matter" in response to another editorial about no difference between hatchery fish and wild fish.

Oct 2003

The WSC holds its first fundraiser at the Bothell American Legion Hall. The Chili Feed and Auction nets the organization approximately \$5,000. The event was successfully organized by VP of Fundraising Peter Dorn.

Nov 2003

The WSC Board established two new awards this year to support research work

and recognition in conservation towards wild steelhead. The "**Conservation Award**" is presented to an individual or group that, through their actions and/or accomplishments, have made significant and noteworthy contributions to the protection and propagation of wild steelhead. The "**Scholarship Award**" is presented to an individual or group that, through their research and scholarship, recognizes the significance of wild steelhead for Northwest culture and/or the scientific importance of wild steelhead in the management of all steelhead for optimal propagation and survival. John Honea at the Center for Water and Watershed Studies and College of Forest Resources at the UW was the first scholarship recipient for his work and research on the effect of marine-derived nutrients in salmonid spawning streams.

Dec 2003

At the Public Fish and Wildlife Commission Hearings in Port Townsend, in December, the WSC and others commented on new rules proposals, but also provided strong points and very compelling testimony stating that the continued harvest of wild steelhead is not acceptable and the wrong direction for steelhead recovery. The WSC presents each Commissioner and WDFW Leadership with David Montgomery's Book "**King of Fish; 1000 Year Run of Salmon**".

Jan 2004

After the Commission hearing the WSC scheduled personal meetings with each Commissioner and traveled to share charts, data and facts of Washington's declining wild steelhead runs. All data is collected from the WDFW. The goal is to share, visually, with Commissioners the true plight of wild steelhead and why it is important to act now. This information will be compiled and formatted into the WSC second white paper titled: "**The Status of Wild Steelhead in Western Washington and Their Status**". Major authors include Dick Burge, Nate Mantua and Jack Berryman.

Feb 2004

Commission votes to impose a two-year moratorium on the intentional harvest of wild steelhead in state waters. The WSC hopes that this "cease fire" will allow opportunity for the WDFW to develop more progressive management plans for wild steelhead. The WSC begin working on developing ideas for a more conservative management plan for wild steelhead, with the plan this document will be shared with WDFW. The news of the moratorium also provides the WSC much visibility to be interviewed in articles for regional newspapers as well as an Associated Press article that was widely distributed.

Feb 2004

The WSC Composes Steelhead Fact Sheet that provides statistics and facts of the current plight of wild steelhead in the state of Washington.

March 2004

The WSC has also developed a Hatchery Reform Policy draft, which was shared with membership and the Summit Hatchery Reform Committee. The WSC have also been involved in reviewing the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) hatchery recommendations, and along with many other organizations we recently signed onto a letter to the state and tribal co-management leadership that supports full implementation of the HSRG recommendations for reform. Nate Mantua, our VP of Science and Education, has represented the WSC at recent hatchery reform meetings and has ensured that the WSC's input is heard and developed the WSC policy on hatcheries that parallel the recommendations of the HSRG.

April 2004

The tribes and harvest minded anglers challenge the Commission and WDFW that the moratorium ruling was done out of process and was not on the rules proposal. The Commission makes a decision to have a public hearing in August 2004 in Bremerton WA. The WSC has also become more politically active, recently forming a political affairs committee led by Todd Ripley. The WSC has worked on important issues opposing the proposed increase commercial by-catch of ESA listed steelhead on the Columbia River, the expansion of the Storedahl gravel mine on the East Fork of the Lewis River, supporting slide protection work for the North Fork Stillaguamish and supporting increased protection for in stream flows in our NW rivers in partnership with American Rivers. The WSC was also featured in an opinion-editorial piece regarding the importance of establishing in stream protection in the Columbian newspaper in Vancouver WA. Frank Moore is awarded the first ever WSC Honorary Membership Award

July 2004

Developed and provided in-depth Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Proposed Skagit River Steelhead Rearing and Acclimation Facility. The WSC chief concern with the DEIS is, in fact, its failure to explicitly present clear and convincing evidence that the proposed hatchery acclimation project reflects an effective implementation of main Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) principals for hatchery reform which include clearly stated goals, scientifically defensible programs and informed decision making.

Aug 2004

Steelhead advocates converge on Bremerton, WA to testify on the two-year moratorium on steelhead harvest set in place by the Fish and Wildlife Commission. Over 80% who provided testimony were in favor to keeping the moratorium in place. In the end the tribes complained to the state that they were not consulted by this move as co-managers. The Commission caved into the tribes, base on the Attorney General's opinion and finally ruled " One wild steelhead per year on rivers deemed healthy enough for harvest". But the Commission also mandated to the WDFW to develop a "comprehensive, conservation base, steelhead plan and science paper that will be the guiding policy for steelhead management in the state "

Nov 2004

The WSC second fundraising banquet raised approximately \$9,000 and was a huge success with Trey Combs providing a great slide presentation on steelhead in Russia. Bill Redman received the first WSC Conservation Award, recognizing his fine work and perseverance as Chair of the Federation of Fly Fishers Steelhead Committee.

2005-2006

Worked and partnered with American Rivers to support their annual listing of America's Ten Most Endangered Rivers, which this year featured the Skykomish River. The listing of the "Sky" brings attention to the continuing loss of habitat and run away development in the Skykomish River valley urging county commission to place stronger regulations to protect habitat and tributaries and wetlands.

Provided two \$500 scholarship awards; One to Michael Dauber, a doctoral student at the University of Washington. Michael is continuing the project started by Jennifer McLean on steelhead genetics in Forks Creek, a tributary of the Willapa River. The second scholarship went to Jon Honea, Center for Streamside Studies and College of Forest Resources, University of Washington for his doctoral dissertation: Effect of Marine-Derived Nutrients on Macroinvertebrate Production in Salmon Spawning Streams.

WSC Steelhead Paper The WSC published our second research white paper titled "The Status of Wild Steelhead and Their Management in Western Washington: Strategies for Conservation and Recreation" The paper provides a status of wild steelhead on the West Coast with a focus on the ESU's of Washington. An examination of harvest practices and impacts, considerations for new policies, recommendations by the WSC and a proposed conservation based wild steelhead management plan. Information from this paper was reviewed and shared with WDFW and were implemented into their steelhead paper. The WSC Wild Steelhead has also mailed copies to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission and to state and federal legislators.

Wild steelhead benefited from Abel Quality Products, which is offering a collectors' edition of 100 numbered Super 7 reels artistically anodized to replicate the endangered fish. Abel steelhead reels, inspired by author/artist James Prosek, will include his laser engraved signature. A signed copy of Prosek's book, Fly-Fishing the 41st Parallel, will accompany the reel. Abel is donating a portion of the proceeds from the sale of this collectors' edition reel to assist the efforts of the Wild Steelhead Coalition, Kirkland, Wash., to further their efforts in sponsoring and sustaining the Steelhead Summit Alliance. The organization has produced "position papers" on specific issues directly impacting wild steelhead.

The WSC Donated \$6000 to support an acoustic tagging study for wild steelhead in the Skagit River. This steelhead tagging study is one of several studies planned for Puget Sound and Georgia Basin salmonids and is being done in collaborative effort

between WDFW, Seattle City Light, Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA Fisheries, UW, Tribes and Pacific Ocean Salmon Tracking project. For more information on the project got to the following website address: <http://www.postcoml.org>

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The Board was also very busy this year with work and traveling to testify against the proposed raising of the 2% commercial by-catch of ESA listed wild steelhead to 6% on the Columbia River spring chinook commercial fishery. Even though there was disappointment with Washington's Commission vote to raise the rate to 4%, Board Member Todd Ripley tirelessly traveled to Oregon and hooked up with our Oregon Regional Rep Shane Stewart, Trustee Bill Bakke and others to convince the Oregon Commissioners not to raise the by catch impact rate. The good news was that our strong resolve convinced Oregon's Fish and Wildlife Commission to decide against raising the impact rate, and Washington was forced to go along with Oregon's decision.

Submitted Editorial to media and attended hearings to oppose the issue of NOAA Fisheries and the Bush administration's proposal to lump wild steelhead and salmon together with hatchery fish, and if accepted, would seriously erode protections for wild steelhead and salmon under the Endangered Species Act. Editorial was picked up Seattle Times, The Columbian and Salmon Trout and Steelheader.

Nov 2005

The WSC third fundraising banquet was a huge success and brought in \$11,000 with an inspiring reading, written just for the WSC, by renowned angling author Steve Raymond. Jeff Bright designed and provided a beautiful slide show celebrating steelhead. Bill Bakke received the second WSC Conservation Award, recognizing his life's work and perseverance as a wild steelhead advocate and Bill McMillan provided a reading on Bill's behalf.

2006

The WSC finished publishing our second research white paper titled "The Status of Wild Steelhead and Their Management in Western Washington: Strategies for Conservation and Recreation" The paper provides a status of wild steelhead on the West Coast with a focus on the ESU's of Washington. An examination of harvest practices and impacts, considerations for new policies, recommendations by the WSC and a proposed conservation based wild steelhead management plan. Information from this paper was reviewed and shared with WDFW and were implemented into their steelhead paper. The WSC Wild Steelhead has also mailed

copies to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission and to state and federal legislators. Follow up meetings are in works to talk face to face with decision makers. The WSC Steelhead Management Plan information was include This paper was a large undertaking and consumed much time for various members of the board, but in the end it has and will continue to have tremendous impact for improved conservation for wild steelhead. Dick Burge, Nate Mantua, Jack Berryman and Larry Doyle are publically thanked for their strong resolve in bringing this important document to its completion.

The WSC Board of Directors has also focused on many conservation issues this year that will benefit wild steelhead. The following are some highlights: Produced and sent a letters to Restaurants Unlimited, Schwartz Brothers Restaurants, Red Apple Markets requesting that they discontinue the sale of wild steelhead on all of their respective restaurants and markets immediately and in the future. Information with the letter was provided to educate their leadership on the plight of wild steelhead and they should not be served. A letter was also sent to GI Joes Sporting Good Stores requesting that they discontinue allowing wild steelhead to be included in their store sponsor Winter Steelhead Derby. A follow up letter was also sent the following year to remind them not to include wild steelhead in this year's derby

. Signed and financially supported litigation with Earth Justice and other conservation groups regarding the Upper Columbia River ESU Endangered Species Act Listing regarding delisting wild steelhead and allowing hatchery steelhead to be counted as the same as wild steelhead. A year a later success is achieved with court ruling that hatchery fish will not counted the same a wild fish when considering ESA listings.

The board also voted and sent a \$500 donation to the Friends of Wild Salmon <http://www.friendsofwildsalmon.ca/> in Terrace, British Columbia in their fight of atlantic salmon farming expansion at the Skeena River mouth. And a \$500 donation and membership was sent to the Hoh River Trust <http://www.hohrivertrust.org/index.html> in support of securing land along the Hoh River for habitat protection and preserve the Hoh River valley in public trust.

The WSC also submitted conservation editorials and letters to NW Fly Fishing, Salmon, Trout and Steelheader and Salmon and Steelhead Journal magazines regarding the status and plight of wild steelhead.

The organization continues to battle the Stohrdahl mine expansion proposal along the East Fork of the Lewis River in SW Washington which, allowed to happen, will further degrade habitat along this famous steelhead river. We also continue to monitor the Columbia River commercial by-catch of ESA listed wild steelhead in the Columbia River spring chinook commercial fishery to ensure that the percentage of by catch is not allowed to be raised.

The WSC also submitted comprehensive input to WDFW Major Rules Cycle, which contained some important issues regarding steelhead. And provide the same comprehensive input to the Olympic National Parks rules proposals and requesting the ONP to stay the course on the wild steelhead harvest moratorium, in which we have been successful to keep the moratorium in tact in Olympic National Park.

2007

The WSC fourth fundraising banquet was a huge success with a presentation by Steve Probasco, Editor of Northwest Fly Fishing Magazine. Frank Amato received the third WSC Conservation Award, recognizing his life's work and advocacy for wild steelhead. The event raised approximately \$22,000 for the organization

Various members of the board spent the year attending WDFW stakeholder meetings developing the State's "Wild Steelhead Management Plan" Members of our Science/Conservation Committee works with WDFW staff to 'infuse' as much conservation directions in the plan as possible based on our white paper "The Status of Wild Steelhead and Their Management in Western Washington: Strategies for Conservation and Recreation"

The WSC also funds two independent Scientists to peer review the State's Steelhead Management plan recommendations and provide a strong analysis of what is missing or not taking into account into the management plan.

Tragedy of Steelhead article is published in Wild on The Fly magazine and gain great acclaim as an article that puts the situation all in one place. Article is written by WSC Trustee Dylan Tomine. Electronic rights are purchased by the WSC and Dylan goes on to provide readings at various venues to engage anglers in steelhead conservation.

2008

In January The WSC Board and representatives of membership testify at the Commission meeting requesting that many conservation points are missing

The WSC fifth fundraising and awards banquet was a huge success with a beautiful presentation by Jeff Bright titled "House of Mykiss". Frank Moore received the fourth WSC Conservation Award, recognizing his life's work and advocacy for wild steelhead. The event raised approximately \$15,000 for the organization

The WSC recognizes Yvonn Chouinard, Owner and President of Patagonia as an Honorary Member.

The WSC provides another \$500 donation to the Hoh River Trust. The WSC attends

meeting with WDFW staff and begin groundwork to make the case for the Hoh River.

The WSC also partner's with American River in Seattle Times, "expose" type story in Pacific Magazine, September 28 exploring the question and requesting that their be more "Wild and Scenic Rivers" designated in Washington to gain further protection for steelhead rivers.

WSC supports efforts to eliminate kill on the Umpqua River in Oregon, in which a successful decision is made by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to enact an all wild steelhead must be released.

The WSC partners with the FlyBoys in their film "Raising the Ghost" which weave and important conservation message in the film with the intent to bring wild steelhead conservation issues to a wider audience. The WSC also participates in the Save Wild Steelhead Festival in Bozeman, MT with WSC Trustee Dylan Tomine, Member Jeff Bright and Trustee Rob Masonis providing presentations. WSC President, Rich Simms receives a donation from Patagonia of \$5,000 followed up by a personal donation by Yvonn Chouinard of another \$5,000.

Work continues on the Resource Management Plans for wild steelhead in Puget Sound streams with other streams in the state to follow.

A letter prepared and to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission regarding Hoh River steelhead conservation and management issues. Along with an issue paper with a more complete description of the problems that we and the wild fish face with WDFWs present management practices of Hoh River steelhead. The letter was prepared for sign on by anglers and organizations that seek a change in how WDFW has neglected the 2004 Commission decision for improved conservation to help save Washington steelhead runs from depletion and listing. This letter is intended to rally supporters to testify to the Commission on Dec. 13.

Letter in completed regarding the tragedy of the Hoh River, by Dick Burge, which is delivered to the FFF Osprey and Salmon, Trout & Steelheader. Article will also be sent to other decision makers.

Letters are sent urging that the Elwha River is not propagated the hatchery fish once the dams are deconstructed and let it go back to a true wild river and allow this as an opportunity to study how a river can come back on it's own.

2009

Here we come...

