

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

NEWS

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A Wake-Up Call

**By Billy Frank Jr.
NWIFC Chairman**



Wake up. Whoever you are, wake up. The alarm is going off and you've already hit the snooze button several times. The Pacific Northwest salmon and its habitat are critically important to you, and they are in trouble.

Open your eyes. Listen very carefully. Your quality of life is at stake. You are directly affected by the health of the salmon.

"But I don't even like salmon,"

a few of you might say. It doesn't matter. "But I drive a cab" or "I teach school." It doesn't matter who you are or what you do. Salmon have a major impact on your income, on your spiritual strength, the water you drink and the air you breathe. And you have a major impact on the salmon. There is a definite connection.

Your home is built on the salmon's traditional homeland. Toilets, lights, solid waste and lawns and gardens all affect him in a negative way. It may be difficult to perceive of these things, since you are just one individual. But multiply yourself by several million times and you begin to get the idea. In fact, the population of this state is growing by

half a million people every five years. Forests are still being converted to condominiums. Hydropower is still being sucked out of dams at the expense of ancient salmon runs so you can watch your television set and run your computer. Ever-diminishing water supplies are being demanded in ever-increasing volumes to embellish the financial portfolios of out-of-state investors. The price you will have to pay to line their pockets remains to be seen. But the water the salmon depends on, you depend on. The trees they depend on, you depend on. The beauty they provide are a precious gift to us all.

Please. Don't lose track of these simple facts. To the degree that you do, you disconnect yourself from the nourishment of Mother Earth. Salmon are provided to us for a reason. They are here to feed our bodies, and thus become part of us. They are here, as well, to provide us opportunities to prove ourselves capable of respecting and protecting resources that are supposed to last forever.

So whether you are rich or poor, brown, white or black, please wake up to your responsibilities, before it is too late. To learn more about how to care for salmon, I strongly suggest you contact the tribe nearest you. Tribal members have cared for this land for thousands of years. They know what it takes better than anyone.

On The Cover: Lummi Nation youngsters pull the Lady Rose to victory at the 51st Lummi Stommish Water Festival championship war canoe races on June 15. The Lady Rose won the 11-buckskin canoe, 16-under division. Coastal and Puget Sound tribes compete with British Columbia tribes in the annual Lummi Bay war canoe competition. *Photo: L. Harris*

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission News

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Makah 360-645-2205	Quileute 360-374-6163	Suquamish 360-598-3311
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1996 Hatchery Releases Top 46 Million

More than 41 million healthy salmon and steelhead raised in tribal hatchery facilities were released into western Washington rivers and streams last year. The hatchery releases represent the 12th straight year in which the tribes have produced and released better than 40 million salmon and steelhead.

“Everyone benefits from the tribes’ fisheries enhancement efforts,” said Billy Frank Jr., chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. “These releases provide very significant contributions to fisheries throughout the region — tribal, sport and commercial.”

Of the 41,578,968 fish released from tribal facilities last year, nearly 16 million were chinook and 11.5 million

were coho. The tribes released some 12.5 million chum, 69,000 sockeye, 200,000 pinks and 1.4 million steelhead. Some of the fish were produced through cooperative enhancement efforts by the tribes, state Department of Fish and Wildlife, state Regional Enhancement Groups, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and sport or community organizations.

Frank emphasized that the goal of tribal hatchery production is to supplement, not replace, wild salmon stocks. Dams, agricultural and forest practices, urbanization, past overfishing and other factors have contributed to the decline of wild salmon and steelhead populations, he said.

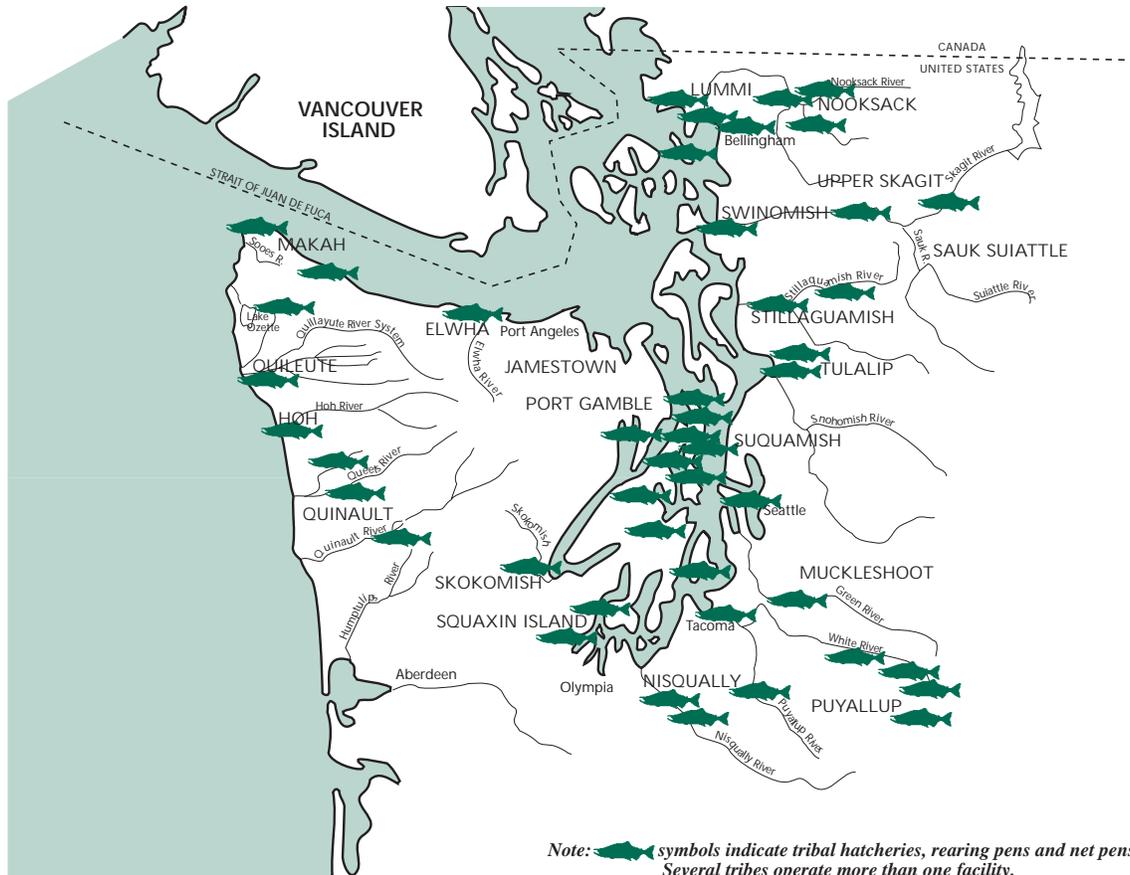
“Tribal hatchery production helps reduce fishing pressure on wild stocks

while helping to provide meaningful harvest opportunities for Indian and non-Indian fishermen,” Frank said.

Meanwhile, the tribes and state, as co-managers of the salmon resource, are working hard together to restore and protect wild salmon stocks and their habitat, Frank said. The tribes and state created the Wild Stock Restoration Initiative in 1991 to address the decline of wild salmon and steelhead. The cooperative effort’s focus includes inventorying the status of wild stocks and their habitat, reviewing management strategies and developing recovery and management plans.

“A balanced approach to fishery resource management includes both hatchery production and wild stock recovery efforts,” Frank said.

Tribal Salmon Enhancement Facilities In Western Washington



Mass Marking To Resume

Coho Management Agreement Reached

A number of treaty Indian tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife have agreed on a comprehensive, cooperative framework to implement hatchery coho mass marking and selective fisheries that will help conserve the resource while also providing harvest opportunities. The National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also have approved the agreement.

The agreement clears the way for the resumption this spring of fin-clipping coho reared in state hatcheries. About 3.2 million young Puget Sound coho will have their adipose fin (the fleshy fin near the tail) removed so that they can be distinguished from wild coho. Fin-clipping or mass marking could provide increased opportunities for fishermen to harvest hatchery fish while minimizing impacts to wild salmon stocks.

‘We are pleased that the tribes and state, as co-managers, have been able to work out our concerns regarding mass marking.’
— Billy Frank Jr.

“This agreement reiterates our strong desire to build on our relationship with the tribes and work together in a cooperative, productive fashion,” said Department of Fish and Wildlife Director Bern Shanks. “I’m extremely pleased this joint agreement has been worked out and we can jointly move forward with our cooperative coho management efforts.”

“We are pleased that the tribes and state, as co-managers, have been able to work out our concerns regarding mass marking,” said Billy Frank Jr., Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission chairman. “However, this plan will have little value in the years to come if we don’t address habitat loss and degradation. The tribes are eager to move forward with the state and others to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to protect weak wild salmon stocks.”

While current fisheries harvest management efforts are conserving wild salmon stocks, one of the costs often is reduced fishing opportunities for hatchery fish. This is especially true in mixed stock fishing areas, such as the Strait of Juan de Fuca and north coast, where hatchery stocks mingle with depressed wild stocks before each seeks out



A young salmon has its adipose fin clipped before receiving a coded wire tag. *Photo: D. Williams*

its stream of origin. In recent years, fishing in these areas has been severely reduced to protect weak wild stocks.

Mass marking and selective fisheries provide fishing opportunities in mixed stock areas while maintaining the ability to conserve wild stocks. Anglers are able to identify and keep the fin-clipped hatchery fish, while releasing the unmarked wild fish.

Under the agreement a process and schedule have been established to reach agreement or resolve disputes about marking the rest of Puget Sound hatchery fish this fall. Beginning in 1998 proposed coho selective fisheries will be evaluated individually, and will be implemented only as part of agreed annual fishery management plans that address a wide range of fisheries issues.

Treaty tribes obtained a court order last fall to stop the mass marking program — mandated by the state Legislature — because of its potential harm to the coastwide coded wire tagging program. The state proposed to use the same fin-clip for mass marking that is used by tribal, state and federal hatcheries along the West Coast to mark hatchery and wild fish that have had the coded wire tags inserted in their snouts. The tribes, federal agencies and Canada were concerned that the mass marking program would compromise the accuracy of data obtained through the tagging program. That data forms the foundation of domestic fisheries management in the region, is critical to implementation of the Pacific Salmon Treaty with Canada, and is needed to evaluate the effects of selective fisheries on wild salmon stocks.

Under terms of the agreement, tribal, state and federal fisheries managers will work together, as well as with Canada, to ensure that the coded wire tagging program continues to be implemented as an integral part of overall coho management. The framework also calls for the state and tribes to improve scientific procedures, adopt consistent, coordinated management procedures and voluntarily resolve any differences that may arise.

Judges Hear Appeals In Shellfish Case

Although far from over, final resolution of western Washington tribal shellfish harvesting rights is one step closer. On May 5, a U.S. Court of Appeals three-judge panel heard testimony and rebuttal from attorneys for the tribes, the United States, the State of Washington, commercial shellfish growers and private property owners. Each group was looking for changes in U.S. District Court Judge Edward Rafeedie's December 1994 ruling and his subsequent implementation plan.

In marked contrast to the original shellfish trial, which lasted 13 days in April and May of 1994, the appeals hearing lasted just 3 ½ hours. Stephen Trott of the Ninth Circuit was the presiding judge. Senior judges Robert Beezer, also of the Ninth Circuit, and Donald Lay, a visiting judge from the Eighth Circuit, also heard the appeals.

As was the case in the Boldt Decision, the tribes' shellfishing rights stem from a series of treaties signed in 1854-55 with federal government representatives that promised them the right to harvest fish and shellfish in all "usual and accustomed grounds and stations." Much of the 1994 shellfish trial dealt with treaty language, particularly the "shellfish proviso" which states that the tribes "shall not take shell fish from any beds staked or cultivated by citizens."

The argument was divided into two parts. The court first heard argument on the defendants' appeal of Judge Rafeedie's initial ruling re-affirming the tribes' treaty shellfish rights. Then the court heard the tribes' and United States' cross-appeal of Rafeedie's 1995 implementation decision limiting tribal access to private tidelands, plus Rafeedie's definition of cultivated beds to benefit commercial shellfish growers, and his decision that one-half pound per square foot is the minimum density of manila clams necessary to establish existence of a natural bed.

The state argued that the tribes have the right to harvest only those species they harvested at treaty time, and only at specific places, while an attorney representing commercial shellfish growers argued that any shellfish bed, whether a naturally occurring bed or not, was "staked or cultivated" if a grower did anything to improve the bed or simply marked the bed's boundaries with stakes.

It's uncertain when the Appeals Court will render a decision, although a decision may come before the end of 1997. Lead tribal attorney Phil Katzen from Columbia Legal Services said in complicated cases such as this, a year or more can pass before a decision is reached. — *D. Williams*

Tribes, State Dive Into Geoduck Population Surveys

Cooperation between western Washington treaty Indian tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has reached new depths in a program where shellfish biologists from state and tribal agencies are conducting cooperative diving surveys to assess geoduck populations.



Geoduck, North America's largest burrowing clam, are a delicacy in the Far East. *Photo: D. Williams*

The purpose of the joint diving program is to estimate the amount of harvestable geoduck clams on tracts where both Indian and non-Indian divers harvest the giant clams. It's an essential step in the overall shellfish management programs of both the treaty Indian tribes and WDFW.

Prior to last year, all geoduck tract surveys were conducted by WDFW personnel. Now tribal biologists are also conducting surveys as part of co-management responsibilities.

The joint dive crew is surveying a 300-acre portion of the 1,200-acre Jamestown tract, located outside Sequim Bay in Clallam County, and about 200 acres of another tract in Jefferson County's Discovery Bay.

"Some survey data is 25 years old, so the work we're doing on these tracts is confirming those numbers," said Richard Childers, shellfish biologist for the Point No Point Treaty Council, and one of the divers. "The primary purpose for conducting surveys is to keep the information on geoduck populations in Puget Sound current and accurate. It's an ongoing process, and we have to keep surveying to keep the numbers updated." — *D. Williams*

Renewal:

Tulalips Can Once Again Harvest Their Own Spring Chinook For First Salmon Ceremony

The irony of having to purchase Alaskan chinook salmon for the Tulalip First Salmon Ceremony — a vital tribal cultural and spiritual celebration that honors the return of the year’s first salmon runs to Tulalip Bay and nearby rivers — was as glaring as it was heartbreaking to Tulalip Tribal Chairman Stanley Jones Sr.

“Something is very wrong if we have to buy our fish for the First Salmon Ceremony,” said Jones.

Until this year, Tulalip was forced to buy its fish because the Snohomish River, just south of Tulalip Bay, no longer supports the native spring chinook runs that supplied Tulalip ceremonies for centuries. The tribe has acquired spring chinook from other sources, like Alaska or the Columbia River, since Jones helped revive the First Salmon Ceremony in 1978.

No longer.

This year — if only on a small hatchery run — the tribe was able to catch its own spring chinook once again in Tulalip Bay and use it in the 1997 First Salmon Ceremony, June 14. The newly-returning salmon run has helped boost pride immeasurably within the Tulalip membership.

“It’s wonderful. We really take a lot of cultural and spiritual pride in using our own salmon,” Jones said.

The ceremony honors the First Salmon, a scout for the Salmon People. Tribal legend teaches that if he is well received and treated with proper respect, he will return to his salmon people and bring them back to the tribe’s waters in abundance.

“This is very important to our people. We are trying to follow our ancestors and do things the way they used to do,” said Jones, who was instrumental in reviving the ceremony.

The tribe began acquiring spring chinook salmon eggs four years ago from the state Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Marblemount Hatchery on the Skagit River. This year marks the first return of four-year-old adult fish since the agreement with the state began. An average of about 40,000 yearlings have been released from the Tulalip Hatchery for the last three years, including 42,000 initially. The tribe expects a return of just a few hundred fish per year to the bay, but the program is designed only to provide fish for tribal ceremonial purposes.

Jones fondly recalls fishing Snohomish native spring chinook as a youngster when the big fish returned in great numbers to the river. But the spring run, popular with Indian and non-Indian fishers, began to diminish in the 1950s. As the situation grew worse, and more and more habitat was lost to development and logging, the Tulalip Tribes quit fishing on Snohomish springs more than 30 years ago and pressed for conservation measures on other fisheries. Restrictions were never imposed until it was too late.

“It was really heartbreaking spiritually for our people,” said Jones. “It was just like losing a family member, you know. We tried to preserve the natural run and help them build back up, but they never did. They just faded right out.”

— L. Harris



Tulalip tribal members Tony Hatch and Stan Jones III carry the ‘first salmon’ from Tulalip Bay during the tribe’s First Salmon Ceremony on June 14.

Photo: L. Harris



Fishin' Fun

Curtis Fernando, 5, proudly displays a large rainbow trout he caught at the Upper Skagit Tribe's Kids Fishing Derby in June. The tribe received 400 trout from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Sulphur Springs Hatchery on Baker Lake. More than 75 children fished the trout out of holding ponds at the Upper Skagit Hatchery. All surplus fish were released into Baker Lake.

Photo: L. Harris

Quileutes To Host A-KA'Lat Gathering In LaPush Aug. 11-12

Indigenous people from throughout the Pacific Rim will be making their way to the A-KA'Lat Gathering, Paddle to LaPush - 1997, an event celebrating the restoration of native traditions. Scores of canoes from Indian nations in Washington and British Columbia will gather on the beach of the Quileute Indian Reservation at the mouth of the Quillayute River just west of Forks, Aug. 11-12 for the event.

The host Quileute Tribe will be joined by the other coastal tribes: Quinault, Hoh and Makah in welcoming participants. The event, held every four years, began with the Paddle to Seattle and was followed by a similar gathering in Bella Bella, B.C.

A-KA'Lat, the Quileute word for nearby James Island, meaning "at the top of the hill," comes on the heels of a large gathering of canoes at the Commonwealth Games scheduled Aug. 1-6 in Victoria, B.C. Many of the tribal canoes venturing to the games will continue their paddle to Port Angeles and Neah Bay before ending their journey in LaPush.

Limited accommodations are available at area motels and campgrounds. More information is available by contacting the A-KA'Lat Gathering Committee, PO Box 279, LaPush, WA, 98350; or by contacting Edwin Poulin via FAX at (360) 374-6311.



Tribes Applaud ESA Secretarial Order

Western Washington Indian tribes voiced strong support for an order issued June 5 by the secretaries of Commerce and Interior defining the special relationship between treaty Indian tribes, the federal government and the Endangered Species Act. The order recognizes tribal sovereignty and provides the framework within which the tribes and federal government can work cooperatively to develop holistic recovery plans for species listed under the ESA.

“While we don’t fully agree with everything the order contains, we believe it is a good document that we can build upon,” said Billy Frank Jr., NWIFC Chairman, at a recent signing ceremony for the order.

“The Endangered Species Act is a powerful tool to prevent additional plant and animal species from slipping into extinction,” Frank said. “However, it cannot be used to trample the treaty rights and sovereignty of Indian tribes. We are willing to do our part in conserving and restoring weak species, but we won’t shoulder an unfair share of the conservation responsibility.”

The signing ceremony was the culmination of a year-long effort involving tribes from across the United States who met several times to develop language for the secretarial order. The resulting policy significantly improves the working relationship between tribes and the federal government, said Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt.

“We want to substitute affirmative programs for the old-style regulation,” Babbitt said. “For too long we have failed to recognize the needs of Indian tribes to be consulted and part of the process from the beginning, and the traditional knowledge they can share about species, habitat and conservation.”

The secretarial order says the government “shall give deference to tribal conservation and management plans for tribal trust resources that govern activities on Indian lands and address the conservation needs of the listed species.”

It also recognizes tribal concerns regarding access to uses of eagle feathers, animal parts, “and other natural products for Indian and religious purposes.”

Some tribes have had traditional fisheries severely curtailed or even eliminated because of weak stock concerns. And although ESA listings of western Washington salmon stocks have not yet occurred, Frank said the tribes have been working hard to strengthen vulnerable stocks.

“The tribes have helped develop many tools to help us



NWIFC Chairman Billy Frank Jr. speaks at the signing ceremony for the ESA Secretarial Order. At right are Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Commerce Secretary William Daley (far right). *Photo: D. Williams*

rebuild salmon stocks as co-managers with the State of Washington,” he said. “We have worked with the state for the past six years developing a Wild Stock Restoration Initiative that takes a holistic approach to salmon restoration. We have developed early action recovery plans for weak salmon stocks. We have demonstrated time and again that we are capable managers of our treaty-protected resources, and that we can work with state and federal governments in efforts to protect weak or endangered species.

“We are not interested in preserving salmon runs as museum pieces,” he said. “We are fishermen – we always have been, and we always will be. We need fish to harvest. We need healthy salmon runs and ecosystems so we can continue to live as we have for thousands of years.”

The signing ceremony occurred in the old executive office building, next door to the White House. Tribal leaders from across the nation gathered in the

Indian Treaty Room, an ornate, two-story room with intricately designed stone inlay floors and rich tapestries on the walls. Ironically, Babbitt said his staff discovered that no treaties between an Indian tribe and the government had ever been signed in the room, which was completed in 1880.

“By signing the equivalent of a treaty here today gives new meaning to the name,” Babbitt said. “It is my hope from this day on that we will banish forever the traditional treaty process that has been one-sided, overbearing and not infrequently unfair.”

‘We are not interested in preserving salmon runs as museum pieces.’

—Billy Frank Jr.

Lummi Nation Jump Starts Conifer Forest

Albert Toby is pinning fabric mulch around a small cedar seedling he planted along the Upper South Fork of the Nooksack River. A hundred years from now, Toby reasons, perhaps this and many other conifer trees will thrive and line the river just as an ancient forest once did here.

Clear-cut logging took away the big trees around World War I; second-growth was logged again in the early 1980s. Massive stumps are all that remain of the old growth. In their place have grown a canopy of thin alder trees and salmonberry bushes — not nearly enough to secure the river drainage’s unstable banks and flood plain, or provide shade the way the old cedar, hemlock and spruce trees could.

“It takes hundreds of years for these trees to evolve. We want to jump start the process,” said Toby, a Lummi tribal member whose family owns the construction company performing the work.

Fisheries experts believe the South Fork’s inferior riparian (streamside vegetation) zones are largely to blame for depressed native chinook salmon runs in the Nooksack. The runs were listed as “critical” in a 1992 state/tribal inventory of wild salmon stocks.

Toby’s seedling is one of more than 11,000 cedar, hemlock and spruce trees the Lummi Nation Natural Resources Department has planted on 83 acres in the Upper South

‘Our job is to nursemaid them along until they get maybe five years old.’

— Albert Toby

Fork in southern Whatcom County since 1996. The ambitious large-scale project spans more than seven river miles. Lummi will plant another 36 acres in the spring of 1998.

“If natural habitat in the Nooksack River drainage can be recovered by our efforts, then we must make the effort.” said Merle Jefferson, Natural Resources Director for the tribe.



Lummi tribal member Albert Toby pins fabric mulch around a cedar seedling. *Photo: L. Harris*

The tribe moves ahead with the project knowing its trees aren’t likely to be logged. Seattle City Light purchased the land to protect it as an environmental set-aside as mitigation for impacts from its hydroelectric dams on the Skagit River system.

In an exhaustive process, crews from Toby Construction thin out the alders and salmonberry, opening the canopy to provide enough light for the seedlings to grow. Extensive site preparation includes grubbing out the root systems of salmonberry and other brush.

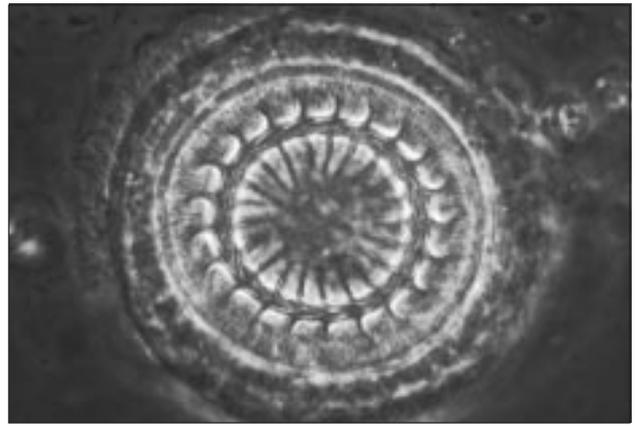
“Our job is to nursemaid them along until they get maybe five years old,” said Toby.

It’s an holistic, labor-intensive riparian restoration approach. For that reason, it’s the kind of rehabilitation project that wouldn’t get done if the land was still being managed for commercial purposes, because costs would offset any timber profits. Lummi doesn’t see the project that way.

“We feel it’s worth more for what it can do for salmon than the potential value in cutting the trees down,” said Jim Hansen, Lummi watershed restoration specialist. “It may be extremely cost-effective in the long run.”

— L. Harris

Disease In Wild Stocks Is Focus Of Conference



Trichodina is a parasitic organism that can irritate and damage the skin, fins and gills of fish. *Photo: C. Olson*

Loss of habitat gets a lot of attention as fish managers struggle with dwindling wild fish stocks, but more than 300 people gathered in Portland in June to consider another important management dilemma — fish diseases.

The symposium, “Pathogens and Diseases of Fish in Aquatic Ecosystems: Implications in Fish Management,” dealt with diseases in wild fish and their implications on fisheries management. Fish health scientists, managers, fish farmers, fishermen and other participants gathered to explore current knowledge, discuss the issues and try to make progress toward solutions today and for the future.

One problem scientists encounter is that most knowledge regarding fish pathogens, diseases and their control is derived from captive rearing. Monitoring of wild populations is problematic, so there is little known of disease occurrences and their impact on wild populations. Scientists know that pathogens and disease occur in natural ecosystems, but little is known about the interactions and risks associated between wild and cultured stocks.

Terry Wright, Enhancement Services Manager for the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC), who was one of several speakers representing Northwest tribes, noted hatcheries are often blamed for what ails wild fish even though few documented cases exist where hatchery fish have transmitted diseases to wild fish. “It’s not so much the hatcheries as hatchery prac-

tices, and for the most part we’re doing an excellent

job. We define success as healthy wild *and* hatchery stocks,” Wright said.

The symposium was sponsored by the Pacific Northwest Fish Health Protection Committee. Co-sponsors included the Squaxin Island, Nisqually, Muckleshoot and Suquamish tribes and the NWIFC.

Treaty tribes in western Washington have long known how fish diseases can threaten entire fish runs and, at the least, complicate efforts to rebuild fish stocks.

Outbreaks of the viral disease Infectious Hematopoietic Necrosis have hampered efforts to rebuild a depressed run of sockeye salmon in Baker Lake in the North Cascades. Construction of the Baker Dam in the 1950s limited available spawning

‘Science is no substitute for nature.’

—Ted Strong

habitat. Elwha River chinook on the North Olympic Peninsula are decimated every summer by the parasite *Dermocystidium* due to warm temperatures and a reduction of in-river flows caused by two power dams on the river.

Both are good examples of a central theme of the symposium — the relation-

ship between the host (e.g., the salmon), the pathogen and the environment in the disease process. Both examples highlight situations where naturally occurring pathogens have taken advantage of an altered environment and have now become limiting factors to sustaining these fish populations.

Treaty tribes in western Washington put a high priority on the health of both cultured and wild stocks. The NWIFC Tribal Fish Health Center helps each tribe monitor the health of their fish populations and provides continuing educational programs to tribal enhancement staff.

As co-managers of the salmon resource, the tribes have also worked with state and federal agencies to develop the Salmon Disease Control Policy. And the tribes are also working on a Regional Salmon Recovery Policy that will establish a multi-disciplinary approach to rehabilitating wild stocks in their watersheds.

Ted Strong, Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission Executive Director, challenged the gathering of fish health experts to correct the bad science of the past — science that led to the construction of the Columbia River dams and the dwindling wild salmon runs there. “Science is no substitute for nature,” he said. “If a salmon were here looking out over this assemblage of great minds, what the salmon would see are pathogens.” — *L. Harris*

Improvements At Dam Aid Fish Spawning

Up a creek is a good thing for several Skagit River salmon and steelhead runs that historically found themselves attracted to a hydroelectric dam's tailrace instead.

Now, with an agreement between Seattle City Light and a group of tribes and agencies concerned with fisheries issues, pink and chinook salmon, along with steelhead, will get the water and habitat they need to spawn more effectively in Newhalem Creek.

"This agreement shows how a utility and agencies can work together to accomplish habitat rehabilitation," said Stan Walsh, Skagit System Cooperative (SSC) fisheries biologist. SSC is the fisheries management consortium of the Swinomish, Upper Skagit and Sauk-Suiattle tribes.

The utility agreed to compromise on water flow issues and install a fish barrier on the tailrace as conditions for receiving a new operational license for the dam earlier this year from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

The agencies pushing for the habitat improvements included SSC, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Marine Fisheries Service. Leverage also came from the state Department of Ecology, which refused to issue water certification without adequate flow guarantees.

"This project will force fish into the main channel of Newhalem Creek instead of the tailrace," Walsh said. "And, with increased flows going into the creek, it provides stable habitat. Basically we are getting a new half mile of good quality habitat."

Dickey, Sol Duc Rivers Focus Of Watershed Analysis

Can fishing and logging exist on the same river? A team of scientists from tribes, private timber companies, and government agencies are working together in a demonstration of the possibilities.

The Dickey and the Sol Duc are two major rivers in Clallam County that flow from the western flanks of the Olympic Mountains and join with the Quillayute River just a few miles from the Pacific Ocean.

In the past, these rivers have provided some of the best salmon and steelhead fishing in the state. Successive timber harvests have also occurred in each watershed. Recent projects by teams of scientists drawn from Rayonier, the Quileute Tribe, and state and federal agencies suggest that successful co-existence is not only possible but practical in determining the future of both watersheds.

The team is working together in a first step called "Watershed Analysis" (WSA), a process that will point the way to habitat restoration, monitoring and new methods of forest practices.

The East and West Forks of the Dickey River are currently undergoing a state watershed analysis, as the Rayonier Timber Company prepares to forecast harvest potential on its lands. Existing data on the river is combined with field studies to evaluate water quality, erosion, channel and riparian (streamside) conditions and fish habitat. Initiated by Rayonier, this intense scrutiny includes the Quileute Tribe as co-managers of the resource by treaty and under the Timber/Fish/Wildlife (TFW) Agreement of 1984. They are joined in the project with other TFW stakeholders: The state departments of Natural Resources, Ecology and Fish and Wildlife; the Washington Environmental Council; and the U.S. Forest Service as an adviser on vegetation.

The Sol Duc Project, by contrast, is further along in the watershed analysis process because of a previous federally-funded WSA project completed by the tribe in 1995. Several sites were identified by the tribe that would benefit from restoration activities such as culvert replacement, channel improvements and streambank stabilization.

"These efforts will pay big dividends in restored fishing opportunity and improved equipment. The entire community, Indian and non-Indian, will see economic, environmental and cultural benefits into the next century," said Mel Moon, director of the Quileute Natural Resources Department.

"Our children will be the beneficiaries of this habitat work."



Katie Krueger, Quileute Tribe, Tom Sargent, Rayonier, Gerry Gorsline, Washington Environmental Council and Ed Von Grey, Quileute Tribe, examine a sample of peat in a bog on the Dickey River. Photo: K. Boysen, QNRD

Tulalips Assess Damage From Winter Floods

The Tulalip Tribes now know the toll of a major New Year's Day flood on its hatchery coho salmon — the loss of more than 400,000 fish.

The Tulalip Hatchery staff had to wait until the release of the coho this spring to learn the exact extent of losses caused by last winter's devastating New Year's Day flood. Upper Tulalip Creek Pond is located behind an old dam that was overtopped by extremely high water on Jan. 1, 1997. Tens of thousands of coho rearing in the pond were carried over the dam and Totem Beach Road, into the stones and brush below.

Little, if any, survival is expected from the spilled coho. Any of these fish which might have managed to reach Tulalip Bay were biologically unprepared for the early entry into saltwater. Added to the flood problems, coho rearing in the semi-natural rearing pond have also suffered high bird predation this year.

Fisheries staff expect the decreased coho release to translate into cutbacks in tribal coho fishing when this brood year of salmon return in the fall of 1998.

The flood losses also mean fewer fish for non-Indian coho salmon fishers in the region.

Passages

Laura E. Wilbur



Laura E. Wilbur

More than 500 people gathered at Sacred Heart Church in La Conner June 6 to honor and remember Laura Wilbur, one of the most respected and prominent elders within the Swinomish Tribe and whose long list of accomplishments included helping to create Skagit System Cooperative in 1974.

Wilbur passed away June 2 at age 93 after a battle with cancer.

With her late husband, Tandy Wilbur, Sr., Laura helped secure the funding that founded the Swinomish Tribal government. Affectionately known as Grandma Laura Wilbur, she served 50 years on the tribal senate before retiring last year.

A sampling of her legacy includes pivotal roles in establishing the Swinomish Housing Authority, fish plant, Community Services Building, gymnasium, bingo hall and casino, smokehouse, and dental/medical clinic.

Her legacy extends well beyond Swinomish. Wilbur was one of the founding members of the National Congress of American Indians and the Northwest Affiliated Tribes, which helped preserve tribal governments and tribal sovereignty for Indian people across the country. Involved in Indian politics since the 1930s, her lobbying efforts for tribal rights made her close friends with U.S. Sen. Henry "Scoop" Jackson. But when visiting Washington, D.C., she would always sit with her tribal members.

She also served the town of La Conner, Skagit County and state of Washington, and earned an honorary doctoral degree in humanities from Seattle University.

Born in La Conner Dec. 26, 1903, she went to Chemawa Indian School and had lived in La Conner since.

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