## Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

## NEVVS

Vol. XVIII No. 3 Summer 1998



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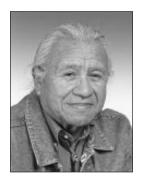
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#### Let's Celebrate Our Lives Together

By Billy Frank Jr. NWIFC Chairman

Celebration of the salmon, Salmon Homecoming style, is a practice that has thrived in this part of the world for thousands of years. Our elders have taught us that celebration in this traditional sense is an opportunity — an opportunity to show respect for the gifts nature provides for us, for the life we have been given and for the many natu-



ral treasures we enjoy. It is also an opportunity for us to share ideas, and to learn from one another.

We are all busy looking for answers to the challenges of salmon recovery. We have technicians who are studying the fish, lawyers ready to help us defend our rights in court, and policy makers struggling to devise solutions that restore and protect natural resources as they provide employment and economic stability.

All of these efforts are important. But the truth is that none of them alone will get us where we need to go.

Our number-one objective in this life must be to find com-

mon ground. We must rededicate ourselves to the spirit of celebration. It does us no good to forge forward in the struggle to survive if we forget that we must all fit in the same canoe. We share this land. We share these resources. We share a common future. If we learn to paddle in the same direction, we can enter the next millenium with dignity and mutual respect.

We have tried over and again to help people realize that the tribes are here to stay. We may seem different, and so we are. Our customs and traditions may not fit into the same molds that embrace western society, but that doesn't make them wrong. It makes them different.

If we are to paddle the river of life together, we must all learn to understand, appreciate, and, yes, celebrate these differences.

We do not begrudge you the things that the treaties enabled you to do — to live here, be employed here and raise your children here. Do not begrudge us the right to be who we are. Instead, let's learn to live together — to respect one another's legacies and rights. Let's rededicate ourselves to these basic rights. Let's celebrate our lives together.

On The Cover: Eric Johnson, right, and Micah McCarty, members of the Makah whaling canoe team, head for the Strait of Juan de Fuca during a recent practice paddle. Sometime after Oct. 1, the crew will attempt the first Makah whale hunt in more than 70 years. The whale is central to Makah culture. The tribe received a quota of an average of four gray whales per year for five years from the International Whaling Commission. Related story on page 9. *Photo: D. Preston* 

#### **Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission News**

The NWIFC News is published quarterly on behalf of the treaty Indian tribes in western Washington by the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, 6730 Martin Way E., Olympia, WA 98516. Complimentary subscriptions are available. Articles in NWIFC News may be reprinted.

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## 1998 Salmon Homecoming Called Most Successful Yet

The sixth annual Salmon Homecoming Celebration, held on the Seattle waterfront Sept. 10-13, has been described by tribal and nontribal participants alike as the most successful Salmon Homecoming yet.

It began on a hot September Thursday, when a diverse group of volunteers associated with Salmon Homecoming, in concert with the People For Salmon program, rolled up their sleeves and went to work on a cooperative habitat resto-

ration project on the Skykomish River.

The restoration project was followed by a reception at the Seattle Aquarium at which King County Executive Ron Sims was presented the Seventh Generation Legacy Award for his work supporting positive Indian/non-Indian relations and cooperative spirit in natural resource management.

"The Sustainable Way To Salmon Recovery" was a highlight of Fridav's events. The forum, attended by about 300 people, was dedicated to the exchange of ideas about sustainability of the Pacific Northwest economy as it connects with salmon and other natural resources. Panels focused on issues ranging from regulatory to voluntary salmon recovery efforts. Break-out sessions provided participants an opportunity to identify priority obstacles and solutions related to salmon recovery. Results of the brainstorm sessions are available on the Internet www.seattleaquarium.org.

A Saturday morning Salmon Homecoming Teachers' Forum attracted 125 teachers who heard presentations related to natural resource management.

Hundreds of children participated in salmon education programs. Traditional



Vice President AI Gore chats with Terry Williams, Tulalip Tribes natural resources director, during a roundtable discussion on salmon recovery. *Photo: D. Williams* 

vironmental displays.

performances and ceremonies, ranging from the Northwest Gathering and the Canoe Welcoming to the Salmon Homecoming Pow Wow, the Salmon Bake and the 5K Salmon Run drew thousands of visitors, along with tribal carving projects, arts and crafts vendors and en-

Vice President Al Gore used the Salmon Homecoming venue for a roundtable discussion on salmon recovery. Among other things, he pledged a single funding proposal for Pacific Northwest salmon recovery will be included in the Clinton administration's proposed budget for 2000.

The panel discussion featured state, county, city, and and high ranking business officials, as well as federal officials such as Congressman Norm Dicks and Kathleen McGinty, the White House's Council on Environmental Quality Director. Tribal participants included Lummi Nation Chairman Henry Cagey, Quinault President Pearl Capoeman-Baller, and NWIFC Chairman Billy Frank Jr.

Nothing is more vital to the tribes than salmon recovery, Frank said.

"We are salmon people. Salmon runs in our blood veins," he said. "I don't know how long I'm going to be here if there's no more salmon."

Gore called salmon an indicator for whether common sense will survive into the 20th Century. "The extinction of salmon is not an option," he said.

Gore said a new approach to salmon restoration planning is needed, "one that rejects the polarization and the failed lawsuits of the past." He wants the National Marine Fisheries Service to take the lead in developing a holistic West Coast response to ESA listings.

Gore also pledged his continued involvement in the Pacific Salmon Treaty process between the United States and Canada. "We're very deeply involved with that process, both personally and institutionally," he said.



Tribal canoes visit the Salmon Homecoming site on the Seattle waterfront. *Photo: D. Preston* 

#### Tough Management Pays Off

## Strong Hood Canal Coho Returns Expected

In a year dominated with talk of weak salmon stocks and Endangered Species Act listings, it's easy to overlook the fact that some runs are actually healthier than they've been in years.

Nowhere is this more evident than Hood Canal, where Indian and non-Indian fishermen have the opportunity to harvest a bumper crop of coho salmon this fall.

The total projected harvest for Indian and non-Indian fisheries this year in the canal is 70,000 to 80,000 coho, leaving an estimated 78,000 fish for spawning. That's nearly three times the maximum number of fish needed to fully seed all of the spawning grounds.



Tribal fishermen are enjoying a full-fledged coho fishery in Hood Canal this year. *Photo: D. Williams* 

Wild Hood Canal coho was one of the key weak stocks tribal and state fisheries managers have sport years trying not to catch. But shout 100,000

agers have spent years trying *not* to catch. But about 100,000 coho made it back to the spawning gravel last year, and nearly 80,000 are expected back to the grounds this year.

There are two main reasons for the turnaround in the coho's fortune, said Dave Herrera, fisheries manager for

'It's going to be tough for some of the fishermen...A lot of them don't have nets and gear ready to go...,'

— Dave Herrera, Skokomish Tribe

the Skokomish Indian Tribe. One is the weakening of El Nino, the weather phenomenon that plays havoc with fish survival rates in both ocean and freshwater environments.

The second reason is severe management actions taken by both tribal and state fisheries managers in Hood Canal for nearly the past decade. Immediately after 1988's coho crash, the co-managers formed a joint technical committee to analyze data and recommend rebuilding actions.

Hood Canal coho became a controlling stock during

the preseason fisheries management process. Federal, tribal, and state fisheries managers designing fisheries on healthy stocks in the Pacific Ocean, Strait of Juan de Fuca and northern Puget Sound had to minimize impacts to weak Hood Canal coho. This often meant reducing harvests of healthy stocks.

Tribal fishers targeting abundant hatchery and wild coho in Quilcene Bay this year will likely encounter some Hood Canal summer chum salmon. Summer chum are proposed to be protected under the federal Endangered Species Act, and have been the subject of a rigorous rebuilding project involving tribal, federal, and state fisheries managers. Their relative abundance in the bay as they return to the Quilcene National Fish Hatchery means some will be probably be harvested.

Now that coho are plentiful again, it might take a year or two for the Hood Canal tribal fishing fleet to gear up, Herrera said.

"It's going to be tough for some of the fishermen who haven't gone coho fishing for several years. A lot of them don't have nets and gear ready to go, and it's going to cost them several thousand dollars to get new gear," Herrera said. "There does seem to be a lot of interest in this fishery, however. The more we can fish for coho, the more interest there will be for it." — D. Williams

# Dam Fight Headed To Federal Court

The Skokomish Indian Tribe's decades-old fight against two unlicensed, fish-killing dams on the North Fork Skokomish River is finally headed to the courts.

On July 29 the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) granted the license for the City of Tacoma to continue operating the Cushman hydroelectric project dams and powerhouses, which were built more than 70 years ago without a federal license, and have been operated ever since without license or regulation. The dams were built without fish passage facilities and currently divert 96 percent of the North Fork's flow out of the watershed.

The tribe and federal agencies plan to challenge FERC's license order in the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals on the basis that the commission has shirked its legal responsibilities to protect the tribe and general public interest in order to benefit Tacoma's pocketbook.

The tribe also plans to sue both the city and the federal government to recover past damages from the Cushman Project, including revenue lost from fisheries wiped out by the hydro project. Tribal officials peg the economic damage to the tribe at more than \$5 billion in the seven decades the project has been operating.

While the license would require Tacoma to make changes to its current operating practices, it would allow an unacceptable level of damage to fish and shellfish habitat, the Skokomish Indian Reservation, and the tribe's treaty-protected rights and interests, said Skokomish Tribal



For more than 50 years, the North Fork Skokomish River has had all of its water diverted by the Cushman hydroelectric project. *Photo: Tacoma Public Utilities* 

Chairman Gordon James. For example, more than 70 percent of the North Fork's flow would still be piped out of the watershed to generate power at Tacoma's Hoodsport hydro plant.

The Skokomish River was once considered one of the most important and valuable salmon spawning streams in the state, and the North Fork contained the system's most productive fish habitat. The river was the tribe's most important source of fish.

"The tribe is very disappointed that environmental safeguards proposed by FERC are totally inadequate to protect the tribe and the general public," said James.

Tribal consultant Victor Martino said Tacoma may not accept the license because of the conditions FERC is placing on the city. In addition to increasing minimum river flow from 30 cubic feet per second to 240 cfs, the city would also have to build a fish passage facility around the project's two dams, and build a new fish hatchery.

Martino said FERC refused to re-

quire the city to meet license conditions mandated by federal agencies to minimally protect the tribe and fish resources.

"For perspective, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Department of the Interior's recommendation for Cushman minimum flows would have required an average of 80 percent of the annual average flow," he said. "This arrangement as it stands won't help the mainstem at all."

Not only has the Cushman project all but wiped out the river's salmon and steelhead stocks, but it continues harming the tribe and all other Skokomish Valley residents. Flooding has plagued the valley, and the once-rich Skokomish estuary has been hurt by a lack of freshwater, degrading its role as a nursery for juvenile salmon and damaging its shellfish resources.

"FERC gives the illusion that they're going to do something for the mainstem," Martino said. "But this license itself won't do anything. What they should have done would actively improve the river. If they would have required increased flows, flooding would be decreased." — D. Williams

## Fish Loss Results In More Fish On Nisqually River

The Nisqually Tribe and City of Centralia are turning an accidental fish kill into a long-term cooperative salmon enhancement effort.

In 1989, about 36,000 yearling coho were killed when screens at the city's Centralia Diversion Dam on the Nisqually River failed to prevent the fish from entering turbines at a hydroelectric power plant downstream. State government levied a \$36,000 fine against the city for causing the fish kill.

Rather than simply paying the fine, however, the tribe and city convinced state government to allow the money to be earmarked for producing more fish in the Nisqually River.

A 50,000-gallon fiberglass rearing pond was moved from the tribe's Kalama Creek Hatchery and installed at the city's hydroelectric plant. Nearby springs were used to supply water for the pond, which was fenced and covered with netting to keep out predators.

Recently, 12,500 yearling coho from the tribe's Clear Creek Hatchery were transported to the new rearing site for release next spring; beginning next year, at least 15,000 will be released annually.

While only required to mitigate for the 36,000 young coho killed in 1989, the city is committed to the project for the long term, said David Troutt, Nisqually Natural Resources Director. "They will release many more fish than were killed in the original event," he said.

"We want to continue rearing fish, not just stop once the debt is paid," said Bill Cummings, director of Centralia City Light Dept. "We are very proud and excited about this project. We look forward to many years of its operation."



Bill St. Jean, Nisqually Tribe Clear Creek Hatchery Biologist, transfers yearling coho to a new rearing pond at the City of Centralia's hydroelectric plant on the Nisqually River. *Photo: T. Meyer* 

Troutt said the new rearing site, 13 miles up from the river's mouth, helps spread salmon production farther up into the Nisqually River system.

Power plant staff will feed and provide daily care for the fish. Tribal staff will provide technical assistance and make periodic visits to ensure the fish remain healthy.

"Feeding and rearing these fish will make employees at the (hydroelectric) facility more sensitive to the needs of salmon," said Georgianna Kautz, tribal fisheries manager. "They will be thinking about them when they do their jobs." — *T. Meyer* 

#### Tribes, State Developing Joint Wildlife Management Plan

Tribal and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife officials are continuing to make progress on development of a joint hunting management plan.

The state and tribes have been meeting since January to develop the plan. The first draft of the plan is expected to be completed later this fall.

"Tribes and the state are finding common ground for cooperative management of wildlife resources through development of the joint wildlife management plan," said Todd Wilbur, chair of the Intertribal Wildlife Committee of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. "There has been significant progress on the plan which is encouraging, especially given the number of parties involved and the complexity of the issues," said Phil Anderson, interjurisdictional program director for the state agency. "Cooperative hunting management is an important tool in the effort to maintain healthy herds of elk and other game animals for meaningful future hunting opportunities."

The plan would provide a general framework for cooperative statewide hunting management. Management of local wildlife populations would be addressed on a regional basis through development of individual herd plans.

## Invasive Green Crab Continues March

Dave Molenaar is looking for clues to unravel the mysteries of the European green crab.

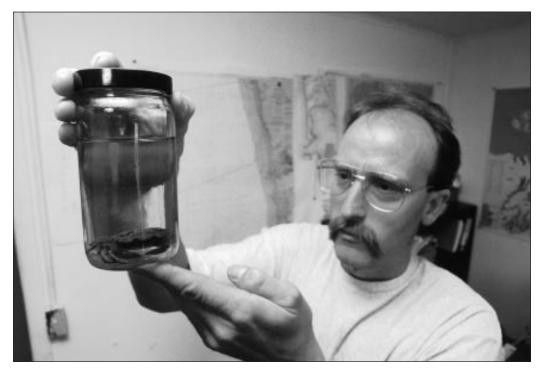
Molenaar, Quinault Nation marine shellfish biologist, is trying to capture and study the invasive crustaceans because he knows they are a potential threat to the native Dungeness crab populations that the Quinaults rely on economically and culturally. A number of the fast-reproducing green crabs have been trapped in Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay this year. Although most grow to a mere three inches in width, the green crab can eat 150 different types of plants and animals. It thrives in waters both salty and fresh

and in a range of temperatures. It adapts quickly to new environments.

In California, damage to shellfish populations was documented with the arrival of the green crab. Washington and Oregon have a much larger and more diverse shellfish industry, so there is more concern about potential damage.

Dungeness crab is a significant fishery for tribal members. In the fall and winter of 1997/98, Quinault Nation fisherman harvested an estimated 380,000 pounds of crab.

"We're looking for some information about how the green crab interact with Dungeness crab up here. We don't have any conclusive observations of those interactions in the natural environment," Molenaar said. "Green crabs may not be nearly as aggressive toward Dungeness as reported, but there are concerns about competition between them for space and food. So far, in some limited observations, it seems the green crab displaces the Dungeness crab, but it's inconclusive. We need more data and observation," he said.



Dave Molenaar, Quinault Nation shelfish biologist, eyes a European green crab. Molenaar is looking at the possible effects that the invading crab might have on native Dungeness crab. *Photo: D. Preston* 

Green crabs are often found in dense aquatic vegetation and ironically seem to like another exotic pest, spartina. The non-native aquatic plant is found in Willapa Bay and to a much lesser extent in Grays Harbor. Spartina displaces natural aquatic vegetation and traps sediment, which over time destroys the estuary environment on which shellfish and fish depend.

"Razor clams would be the other species of concern as far as green crabs go," Molenaar said. "But razor clams are found in the high energy, open areas on the coast so we aren't too worried about them." The open coast is the only place green crabs don't seem to like.

"We do not have specific funds for a green crab monitoring/assessment program right now, so any monitoring efforts we make come as a result of water quality, razor clam sampling and harvest monitoring activities the Quinault Fisheries Division is already doing," he said. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife provided traps which Molenaar placed in the Copalis River estuary and Point Grenville Cove this summer. These areas represent the most likely places for green crabs to establish themselves. Molenaar also participated in the state surveys of Grays Harbor where a number of the crabs were trapped, mostly in the higher intertidal areas.

"Fortunately, I haven't trapped any so far at Copalis or Point Grenville," Molenaar said. "The idea for setting traps along the coast north of Grays Harbor is to check for early warnings that the crabs are expanding northward into the small coastal estuaries and protected portions of the open coast. We may see some green crabs in the traps next summer if there was successful transport of green crab larvae from Grays Harbor this year. They will be big enough to trap next summer." — D. Preston

## Study Eyes Seal Populations, Predation Rates

If there was ever a boot camp for marine biologists, this could be the final test: Encircle a herd of a dozen harbor seals on a mud-slickened beach with a heavy net, capture them, then untangle each animal from the net to attach identification tags and radio transmitters and collect blood samples. Do all of that without being bitten.

Several Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists, National Marine Fisheries Service biologist Harriet Huber, Point No Point Treaty Council wildlife biologist Paul Anderson, and volunteers did just that in late summer at the mouth of the Dosewallips River on Hood Canal.

Biologists believe the method used for determining the overall seal population in Puget Sound may not work in Hood Canal. The standard method for counting seals is to fly along the shoreline and count the number of animals out of the water. The number is multiplied by a correction factor to account for animals in the water, and the result is the total population estimate.

Simply put, the Hood Canal seal capture and tagging was intended to correct the correction factor.

Doe-eyed seal pups might look cuddly and tame, but a full-grown 220-pound male can be a rough customer. Each animal was placed in a hoop net and kept wet with buckets of saltwater while waiting its turn. Researchers weighed, took blood samples and attached ID tags on the animals. A few had small radio transmitters attached to a back flipper to give managers a better glimpse at movement patterns. The whole operation took just a few hours to complete.

The study now shifts from all the excitement of capturing seals to the boredom of sitting in cold, wet camouflage blinds to count seal snouts. Biologists have set up blinds on the estuaries of the Quilcene, Dosewallips, Duckabush, Hamma Hamma and Skokomish rivers. From mid-September until the end of the fall chum runs in December, Anderson, a state biologist, and a University of Washington graduate student will spend several days a week in the blinds to find out how many fish the sea mammals are consuming each day.

"We'll be pulling six-hour shifts counting the number of times seals come up with a fish," Anderson said. "We're expecting that seal predation on salmon and other anadromous fish could be significant."

The data biologists collect is important because of growing concerns over the fate of two Hood Canal salmon stocks - chinook and summer chum. Both stocks are proposed for federal protection under the Endangered Species Act.

"Seals eat squid, herring, bottomfish, and salmon, so it would be difficult for them to really have any kind of upper population limit," Anderson said. "If one of their food sources is diminished, then they'd just shift over to another source."



A harbor seal pup, with a plastic identification disc on its head, is readied for release. *Photo: D. Williams* 

It is thought that roughly 1,000 harbor seals live in Hood Canal, and with no natural predators, it is believed the population is growing. The killer whale is their only predator, and and an orca pod hasn't been seen in Hood Canal for better than three decades. Anderson said the Hood Canal Floating Bridge, near the Canal's entrance, keeps the whales from entering the 61-mile-long fjord. — *D. Williams* 



#### Sharing The First Salmon

Squaxin Island Tribe member B.J. Whitener offers a taste of the First Salmon to Gary Marshall and son at the tribe's annual First Salmon Ceremony on Arcadia Beach. The ceremony honors the First Salmon, a scout for the Salmon People. Tradition holds that if the First Salmon is well treated, he will lead his people to the tribe's waters in abundance. *Photo: T. Meyer* 

## Makah Festival Peaceful

Peaceful gatherings of family and friends and traditional tribal ceremonies weren't what more than 50 journalists expected during Makah Days in August.

The media came to Neah Bay in anticipation of thousands protesting the Makah's impending traditional gray whale hunt. Hundreds of additional law enforcement officials, including 800 members of the Washington National Guard, were called in response to death threats received by telephone at the tribal center and rumors of hundreds of protestors coming to disrupt the festival.

The Makah Tribe plans to hunt a gray whale after Oct. 1. The tribe received a quota of an average of four gray whales annually for five years from the International Whaling Commission in October 1997.

About 8,000 people attended the three-day festival. That's the average annual attendance, Makah officials said. National Guard units called in by Gov. Gary Locke remained mostly out of sight during the festival. The most visible police presence was provided by Makah Tribal Police and state and county enforcement officers.

"Even if we can't prove it, I feel like having the National Guard here deterred people who were thinking of coming here and disrupting our festivities," Makah Tribal Chairman Ben Johnson Jr., wrote in a letter of thanks to Washington Gov. Gary Locke.

When the expected confrontations failed to materialize, many journalists turned their focus to Makah culture, history and family ties.

"Makah Days has nothing to do with whaling. It's about seeing family and friends I haven't seen from years past," said Wayne Johnson, Makah whaling commission member.



Members of the Washington National Guard screened visitors at the annual Makah Days celebration. Rumored whaling protests didn't materialize. *Photo: D. Preston* 

Wayne Johnson said he expected a lot of media attention when the tribe decided to hunt whales again, but he was still surprised by the numbers and diversity.

"I'm getting kind of used to it now, but I was surprised by the number of reporters from different countries. But it's part of what we have to go through."

He is getting excited about the first hunt in nearly a century. "We have seen some whales near Neah Bay in the last week. I'm feeling proud of this group, getting through the hardships," said Johnson. "The hardest part has been the politics, like the different lawsuits to stop the hunt and the whole process of going to the International Whaling Commission."

Denise Dailey, Makah Whaling Commisson director, is fielding media requests from all over the world. "We've had media from France, Canada, Japan, South Africa, Australia, Sweden and Norway. The South Africans were comparing our situation with their interaction with animal rights groups who opposed traditional hunting of elephants," said Dailey. — D. Preston

#### Suit To Stop Whale Harvest Denied

A suit filed in U.S. District Court in Tacoma seeking to stop the Makah whale hunt was denied Sept. 21 by U.S. District Judge Frank Burgess.

In his opinion, Burgess rejected the plaintiff's argument that the U.S. Department of Commerce had not properly considered the environmental impact of the hunt before supporting the tribe's request at the meeting of the International Whaling Commission. The group filing the suit included U.S. Rep. Jack Metcalf, R-Wash., as well as national and international animal rights groups.

"I must agree that overall, the (Commerce) Secretary took a hard look at the environmental issues raised by the question of Makah whaling," said Burgess.

Tribal members were confident that their treaty rights would be upheld in court. Whaling Commission President Keith Johnson Jr. said the win was just a part of the continuing fight to live their culture rather than view it in a museum. "The tribal council is pleased and our people are pleased," Johnson said.

## 'Engineered Log Jams' Helping To Rehabilitate River

It turns out nature knows what it's doing after all.

After decades spent ridding streams and rivers of natural woody debris and logjams — in many cases believing the wood was harmful to salmon and steelhead migration — scientists, engineers and river managers now wholeheartedly agree such logjams are critical to the survival of salmon. Fish biologists stress that wood naturally falling into rivers creates important rearing pools for young fish and resting pools for adult salmon ready to spawn.

All well and good, but the problem now is that many rivers and streams in western Washington no longer support the streamside timber needed to create natural logjams due to past old-growth harvest practices.

To resolve that quandary in a troubled Stillaguamish River stretch, a group composed of Indian tribes, county, state and federal agencies, and private landowners, is using science in an effort to get back to nature. Partners in the project, including the Tulalip and Stillaguamish tribes, trucked in more than 400 large cedar, hemlock and spruce trees and strategically secured them in the river at five sites in an effort to enhance a prime stretch of salmon habitat. The project is located about 20 miles east of Arlington.

"The idea is to make it like it was in historical conditions—back when there were big woods along the river," said Pat Stevenson, environmental coordinator for the Stillaguamish Tribe.

Complete with massive rootwads, the "engineered logjams" were designed by Tim Abbe, a PhD candidate at the University of Washington's Geology Department.

The five logjams — built to withstand heavy winter storms — were designed to reduce water speed, collect gravel and create pools and side channels that provide refuge for fish. In addition, the project is designed to force the river to stay in its channel and prevent bank erosion.

After roughly two weeks of in-water installation work, the project was completed at the end of July.

George Pess, stream ecologist for the Tulalip Tribes and a project coordinator, is already seeing benefits to the project. "In snorkel surveys, we've already seen chinook holding in the upper three jams," he said.

Participating in the project were the two tribes, University of Washington, the county's Surface Water Management division, state departments of Ecology and of Fish and Wildlife, the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the two private landowners — Arbor Pacific Forest Resources, Inc., and Higgins Mountain Bed and Breakfast. — *L. Harris* 



Crews lower logs to be anchored in the Stillaguamish River to create fish habitat. *Photo: L. Harris* 



#### Touching The Past

David Jo McLuke-Joseph, 2, in the arms of his sister, Angelina Margaret Ann Joseph, 11, reaches out to a monument honoring the Sauk Suiattle Tribe's hereditary chiefs. The monument was unveiled at the Celebration of Generations, an elders and youth gathering and naming ceremony held in June.

Photo: L. Harris

## **Cooperation Key To Restoring Habitat**

Indian tribes and public agencies can try to restore the troubled Nooksack River watershed all they like, but true recovery is unlikely without the help of private landowners in the region.

Nearly all the land adjacent the lower 20 miles of the Nooksack's North Fork — where wild salmon runs are in peril — is in private hands (the upper 25 miles pass through U.S. Forest Service land), making public-private partnerships essential to any effective watershed recovery.

Thankfully, more riverside landowners are joining the battle to save salmon and their ecosystems and realizing wise stewardship doesn't have to come at the expense of livelihoods. A good example is what is happening on a 103-acre former farm near Maple Falls, owned by White Miller and Gary Gehling. The pair had originally planned to divide the land and build homes.

"I build homes. That's how I make my living," said Gehling. "But coming here, it didn't seem to fit to have this little piece of paradise chopped into five-acre pieces."

Instead, Gehling and Miller are joining Lummi Nation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife's (USFWS) "Jobs In The Woods" program in a project to restore salmon habitat on the property. Gehling said the habitat improvements are expected to add value to the property and will blend with new plans to develop an outdoor amphitheater for weddings, retreats and special events.

"This seemed like a win-win situation – it enhances our property, it's good for fish and it's providing jobs," said Gehling.

Tribes and agencies know it takes incentives beyond doing the right thing to get some landowners on board. Matching money and manpower that helps improve property is one incentive. Landowners may also enjoy tax benefits by providing environmental easements on their land, said Jim

Hansen, habitat restoration coordinator for Lummi Natural Resources.

"We're looking for more partners," he said. "Hopefully this big project will help us encourage others to do what Gary and White are doing."

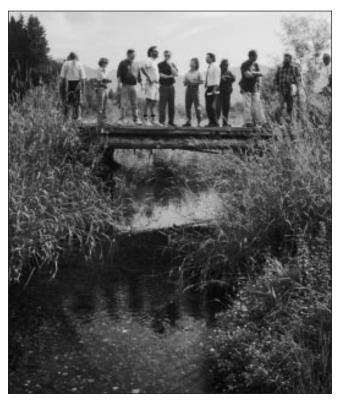
The Gehling and Miller project is located at Maple Creek, which feeds into the North Fork iust south of the intersection of Mount Baker Highway and Silver Creek Road. The creek meanders through a field on Gehling and Miller's property, which was converted to farmland decades ago. There are no large

trees beside the creek and sections are overrun by invasive non-native plants.

There are two phases to the project, both of which improve the critical band of riparian (streamside vegetation) buffer bordering the river and stream. One phase involves re-establishing native vegetation along Maple Creek where invasive reed canarygrass and blackberry have taken over, while another involves replanting conifer trees on 14 acres of existing riparian buffer along the North Fork.

"I've planted thousands of trees on my own," said Miller. "You get a real satisfied feeling from doing it, there's no doubt about it."

Native streamside trees and plants are extremely important for cooling streams, providing cover for fish, stabilizing banks, and contributing logjams that create spawning and rearing habitat. Maple Creek has historically



Tribal, federal, state and Whatcom County officials survey a habitat restoration project on Maple Creek. *Photo: L. Harris* 

supported chinook, steelhead, coho, chum and trout.

The Lummi Nation worked with the landowners to design the project and obtain funding. USFWS assisted in project development and provided the bulk of the funding though the "Jobs In The Woods" program — a federal program aimed at helping displaced natural-resource workers find new work and training.

"We come from the cedars, the salmon — without that we will perish," said Tom Edwards Jr., Timber Fish and Wildlife technician for Lummi Natural Resources. "So it is a true honor to see projects like this going on. It is important to the Lummi community to get the word out that we must walk together as one to protect and restore our natural resources." — L. Harris

## A Perfect Perch

Naomi Thomas of the Nanaimo First Nation in British Columbia perches in the bow of a canoe as it arrives at Owens Beach near Tacoma as part of the Power Paddle to Puyallup. The event drew nearly two dozen canoes from tribes and bands throughout Puget Sound, the Washington coast and British Columbia. Connecting young people to tribal traditions is a primary focus of the annual canoe journeys, which began in 1989 with the Paddle to Seattle. Photo: T. Meyer



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