

# *Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission*

# NEWS



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# Hope, Sadness On 25th Anniversary Of Boldt

**By Billy Frank Jr.  
NWIFC Chairman**

This is a time of sadness and hope. On the 25th anniversary of the Boldt Decision we are saddened that eight Pacific Northwest salmon stocks have recently been listed as “threatened” and one as “endangered” under the Endangered Species Act. Three of those stocks can be found in our own backyard: Puget Sound chinook, Hood Canal summer chum and Lake Ozette sockeye.



We are hopeful that the recent announcement will be a strong step toward their restoration.

To simply prevent these salmon from becoming extinct is not enough. Our goal must be to rebuild threatened wild salmon runs to levels that can again support harvest.

We need salmon to catch. We need salmon to eat. We need salmon for our ceremonies. We need salmon. All of us.

It is also important to understand that not all salmon are endangered. Most stocks are healthy and can be safely harvested without harming weak wild runs.

You will see tribal fishermen exercising their treaty rights this summer and autumn in the waters of western Washington. Tribal fisheries management is based on science, not public perception. If identifiable surpluses of salmon can be safely harvested in western Washington, the tribes will

fish. Non-Indians should fish, too. It isn’t bad to fish, and it isn’t wrong. Fishing is the desirable outcome of good fish management that is consistent with the productivity of salmon populations.

The Boldt Decision established the tribes as co-managers of the salmon resource. In the 25 years that have followed that historic decision, the tribes have clearly demonstrated that they are good managers.

Treaty tribes have voluntarily reduced harvests for the past decade in response to declining wild salmon stocks. Tribal fisheries have been reduced 80-90 percent in the past decade alone.

The tribes also have worked hard to improve and protect salmon habitat, minimized impacts of hatchery salmon on weak wild stocks and taken many other actions in response to the needs of wild salmon stocks.

For 1999, treaty Indian tribes will adopt another extremely conservative package of fisheries regulations that will protect weak stocks while allowing an appropriate level of harvest on healthy stocks. These fisheries will mostly target healthy returns of hatchery salmon.

We have fought too hard for too long to let the salmon and our cultures become extinct. Together, we can ensure that there will be salmon for all.

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**On The Cover:** Upper Skagit Tribal fisherman Scott Schuyler hoists a fat steelhead aboard his boat while fishing for subsistence and for tribal elders in March on the Skagit River. Related story on page 6. *Photo: L. Harris*

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## Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission News

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# Wild Salmon Recovery A Matter Of Will

## *Nine West Coast Salmon Stocks Listed Under ESA*

It's not a question of whether we can restore several salmon populations in Washington that were recently listed as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act, says NWIFC chairman Billy Frank Jr. It really is a question of whether we have the will.

"We can restore these salmon stocks if we have the will," he said. "We need the political will of the governor and state legislators, and we need the will of all those who care about salmon. If we have that, we can do it."

The National Marine Fisheries Service in mid-March announced that three northwest Washington salmon populations: Puget Sound chinook, Hood Canal summer chum and Lake Ozette sockeye will be listed as "threatened" under the ESA. Five other stocks in Washington and Oregon were also listed as "threatened," while one, the upper Columbia River spring chinook run, was listed as "endangered." The listing kicks off a yearlong process of consultations and rulemaking, capped by definition of critical habitat areas for the threatened stocks.

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'We have to be willing to dedicate a lifetime to saving these salmon. Then we have to be willing to dedicate another...'

— Billy Frank Jr.,  
NWIFC Chairman

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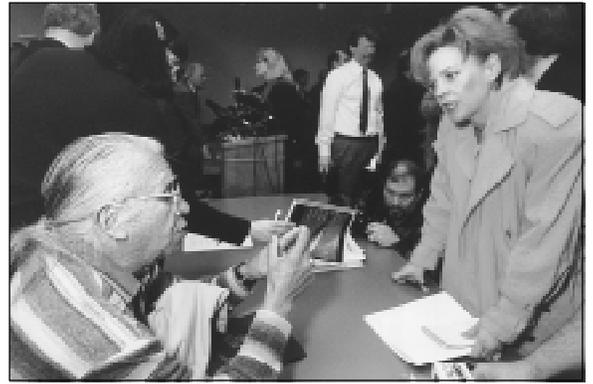
Recovery efforts already were under way by tribal, federal, state and local governments, industry, user groups and others in anticipation of the listings. One response by the tribal and state co-managers over the past several years has been to improve fisheries management planning processes. Comprehensive Coho and Comprehensive Puget Sound Chinook management plans are aimed at restoring the

productivity, production and diversity of salmon stocks to levels that can sustain harvest. This can be accomplished through a three-pronged approach that includes protection of habitat; responsible management of fisheries which ensures that an adequate number of returning adults reach the spawning grounds; and hatchery programs that provide fishery benefits and enhance the productivity of natural stocks.

"We are setting the bar too low if our goal is only to satisfy the ESA requirement that we prevent these fish from becoming extinct," Frank said. "We must rebuild these stocks so that they can again sustain harvest."

Restoring and protecting habitat is the key to wild salmon recovery, Frank said. "There are no more easy answers left. We cannot reduce fisheries enough to make up for the loss and degradation of salmon spawning and rearing habitat. We must focus on giving the salmon a good home in our rivers, streams and estuaries."

That sentiment was echoed by Jeffrey Koenings, director of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. "Despite the sacrifices already made by tribal and non-tribal fishers, many wild fish runs remain in jeop-



NWIFC Chairman Billy Frank Jr. talks with KOMO-TV reporter Tracy Vedder following the announcement that nine Pacific Northwest salmon stocks would be listed under the Endangered Species Act. Photo: D. Preston

ardy. In the months and years ahead, efforts must focus on applying the best science available to rebuild fish habitat. This will be the key to recovery."

The recent ESA listing is the first of its kind in a heavily urbanized region such as Puget Sound. The listing will spark a review of all activities contributing to the decline of "threatened" stocks, which could force sharp changes in agricultural, forest and land-use practices. Residents can expect higher water and sewer bills. Home prices likely will rise, too, as tougher regulations to protect the threatened salmon drive development costs higher.

"Over the last hundred years we've forced the salmon to adjust to us," said William Ruckelshaus, former administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, who now leads a group of state business and environmental organizations that is monitoring salmon recovery efforts. "This will force us to adjust to the fish."

Recovery of "threatened" wild salmon stocks will take decades, Frank said. "We have to be willing to dedicate a lifetime to saving these salmon," he said. "Then we have to be willing to dedicate another lifetime, and another."

— T. Meyer

# Cameras Reveal Secrets Of River's Flow

The Dungeness River is really two streams sharing the same riverbed. One stream is of water, the other of gravel. Both flow from the Olympic Mountains to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and both play life-or-death roles in the continued survival of salmon stocks.

Fisheries and habitat biologists are studying the relationships between the river of water and the river of gravel, as well as their effects on weak wild salmon stocks. The Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe is using remote automatic cameras in three locations to photograph the Dungeness to see how the river handles its gravel over a period of several months.

The river is an appropriate candidate for study, as the Dungeness recently became one of just a handful of rivers in western Washington with two salmon stocks on the federal endangered species list. Hood Canal/eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca summer chum and Puget Sound chinook were both given Endangered Species Act protection from the National Marine Fisheries Service in mid-March.

"We are coming to believe that gravel movement may be a limiting factor in salmon production," said Mike Reed, habitat biologist for the tribe. "It's possible that unstable spawning grounds are a much more significant factor in the decline of salmon in the Pacific Northwest than we had ever imagined."

Once a day, every day, snapshots are made of an ever-changing Dungeness River landscape. Later this year, after all of the film is developed and compiled into a video, a viewer will be able to watch the Dungeness River rise, fall, erode its riverbed, and build new channels as it constantly remakes itself during its northward flow to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The cameras have been in place since fall and will be snapping away until the end of spring.

The cameras, on loan to the tribe from the National Park Service, are positioned to photograph specific stretches of the river at exactly the same time each day.

Later this year Reed will be swapping his remote cameras for a sledgehammer as the tribe embarks on another type of study to determine the amount of gravel movement in the river.

Biologists use "scour chains" to determine changes in the riverbed, particularly how deep the riverbed scours. The devices consist of a cement weight with a length of thin cable attached. Threaded onto the cable are a number of plastic golf balls. The entire arrangement is buried deep during late summer low flow conditions with just the tip of the cable showing above the riverbed.

When the high flows of winter and spring come and scour the channel, some of the golf balls attached to the wire will be exposed and float to the end of the cable. Reed will return to the scour chain sites the following summer to record the data.

"The last scour chain study gave us a great deal of data," Reed said. "We put 30 of the scour chains alongside a number of redds (salmon nests), and every redd had been destroyed by the movement of gravel. This time, we plan to put 80 scour chains in. The research we are accumulating in these projects can be useful for all rivers, big and small, throughout the Pacific Northwest." – D. Williams



Mike Reed, habitat biologist for the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, checks a remote camera on the Dungeness River. Photo: D. Williams



## Coho Exit

Curtis Sansom, Quinault fisheries technician, pumps wild coho into a holding pool near Queets in early March. The young coho, the offspring of wild coho captured and spawned in a tribal hatchery to supplement the wild run, spend about a month in the ponds along their home stream before being released. Photo: D. Preston

# Carcass Distribution Aids Nature

A hundred years ago, great numbers of salmon returned to the Puyallup River where they spawned and died. Their decomposing carcasses provided a valuable source of food and nutrients to many of the animals and plants inhabiting the river's ecosystem.

While today's salmon returns are far smaller, the Puyallup Tribe has for the past nine years continued to aid nature by seeding a portion of the Puyallup River with carcasses from adult chum salmon returning to its Diru Creek Hatchery.

"We normally distribute about 23,000 pounds of mostly chum salmon along the river, but this year's returns were so large that we were able to distribute about 23 tons," said Blake Smith, tribal hatchery manager.

The tribe used to sell the carcasses for a nickle a pound after obtaining eggs and sperm to produce more fish at the tribal facility. "The nutrient value and the benefit to the river far outweigh the five cents per pound that we were getting for the carcasses," Smith said.

Instead of being turned into pet food or commercial fertilizers, the fish carcasses become natural fertilizer for plants living in and along the stream. They also are a source of food for aquatic insects, eagles, river otters and even other fish. "The entire ecosystem benefits from the carcass distribution," Smith said.

Young coho salmon, steelhead and cutthroat trout especially benefit from the carcasses, Smith said. "They have a feast. The food and nutrients supplied by the carcasses helps the young salmon grow larger and healthier. That translates into improved survival and larger returns of adult fish."



Mike John, Puyallup tribal fisheries technician, flings a salmon carcass along the bank of the Puyallup River near Orting. *Photo: D. Preston*

Before being distributed along a section of the river's mainstem just south of Orting, the carcasses are examined to ensure that they are disease-free. "We want to make sure that the fish aren't bringing back a virus that could be passed on to other fish in the watershed when the carcasses are distributed," Smith said.

"We know the carcass distribution is the right thing to do. It just makes sense to help out the river," Smith said. "Ideally, you would have large natural returns of salmon that would provide this source of food and nutrients. In the meantime, while we are trying to rebuild fragile stocks, we can help them along by improving their survival in the river."

– T. Meyer

## The Ear Bone's Connected...

Bill Lawrence, Makah fisheries technician, cuts the otolith, or ear bone, from a halibut as Gwen Swan records data about the fish. The otolith tells the age of the fish, and when combined with other data, helps provide a picture of halibut populations along the coast. *Photo: D. Preston*



# *Enforcement Key To Good Fisheries Management*

It's steelhead season on the Skagit River and Jerry Marsicek is slogging down a muddy bank. Below, Upper Skagit tribal fisherman Scott Schuyler has tied off his boat and is pulling several large chrome-bright fish from a drift net.

A fisheries enforcement officer for Skagit System Cooperative (SSC) – the fisheries management consortium of the Swinomish, Upper Skagit and Sauk-Suiattle tribes – Marsicek is conducting a routine check. Everything looks good on Schuyler's boat. All tribal fishing regulations are being followed – proper catch area, fishing schedule, gear and net monitoring.

The steelheading is pretty good too, says Schuyler, who is fishing for subsistence and for tribal elders. He catches 12 fish in just a few drifts on this day.

"I don't view it as a hassle," said Schuyler of Marsicek's enforcement presence. "In fact, I view it just the opposite – it's a demonstration of the tribes effectively fulfilling the obligations of the Boldt Decision. I think the tribes have been more consistent in providing law enforcement protection for fish on the Skagit River than the state has."

Indeed, due to a \$17 million budget shortfall last year, enforcement by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has diminished at the same time many fish runs dwindle. Sport fishermen who don't know the rules, or worse – those who willingly commit violations – often go unchecked on the massive Skagit. While SSC has three fisheries enforcement officers on staff, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has one officer working the Skagit region and his duties include wildlife enforcement.

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'A responsible treaty fishery is important to good salmon and steelhead management and to the spirit of tribal fishing, and law enforcement is a part of that.'

– Scott Schuyler,  
Natural Resources Policy  
Coordinator, Upper Skagit Tribe

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Jerry Marsicek, a Skagit System Cooperative tribal fisheries enforcement officer, checks to see if fisherman Scott Schuyler is following regulations. *Photo: L. Harris*

The problem prompted the state, SSC, U.S. Forest Service, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to coordinate a program last year specifically aimed at encouraging the public to report illegal fishing on the Skagit.

Schuyler points out that, even with little authority over non-tribal fishermen or fishermen from non-associated tribes, uniformed SSC officers provide a much-needed law enforcement presence both on the Skagit River and in Skagit Bay. They are able to report violations to state personnel or to another tribe's fisheries department.

Tribal fisheries enforcement officers work with state officers on projects designed to catch or deter criminal behavior, such as poaching incidents and property damage.

Schuyler, who is also Natural Resource Policy Coordinator for the Upper Skagit Tribe, notes that tribal enforcement is valuable in other ways to fisheries management. "They help us out by letting us know what the tribal fishing effort is each week on their patrols," he said.

Tribal enforcement officers often find themselves in an educational role, informing tribal members of changes in fishing regulations and educating sport fishermen and the public about tribal fishing.

In the event Marsicek finds a tribal fisherman who is fishing in violation of tribal regulations, he is obligated to issue a citation or warning. If a citation is issued, the case is referred to tribal court. Fishermen found in violation of tribal regulations are subject to fines and/or loss of fishing privileges.

"A responsible treaty fishery is important to good salmon and steelhead management and to the spirit of tribal fishing, and law enforcement is a part of that," Schuyler said.

– L. Harris

# A Conversation With Wm. 'Ron' Allen

**Boldt**  
25  
1974-1999

A quarter century has passed since a conservative Eisenhower-appointed judge leveled western Washington's salmon management playing field when he ruled that 125-year-old treaties between the tribes and the federal government were valid.

Judge George Boldt's decision Feb. 12, 1974 made him a hero to Indians throughout the nation. The judge said the tribes have a right to an equal share of returning salmon and steelhead, and a say in the way fish are managed in western Washington.

The initial result of Boldt's ruling was physical and verbal abuse by non-Indians who wanted to continue their domination of the salmon resource. Indian fishing nets were sabotaged, truck windows were smashed and tires were slashed.

Much has changed since those early years. Western Washington's population has skyrocketed. Now the salmon are beginning to suffer as a result. The National Marine Fisheries Service has recently added Puget Sound chinook, Hood Canal/Strait of Juan de Fuca summer chum and Lake Ozette sockeye to the list of protected species under the Endangered Species Act.

The *NWIFC News* is looking back to note the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Boldt Decision as well as ahead toward the new millennium with a series of interviews with tribal leaders. The first interview is with Wm. "Ron" Allen, chairman of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and an active participant in natural resources management.

As if being the leader of a federally recognized tribe isn't enough work, Allen is also the United States' tribal representative to the Pacific

Salmon Commission, and President of the National Congress of American Indians.

As the slogan goes, the S'Klallam are the Strong People, and as the leader of the J a m e s t o w n S'Klallams, Ron Allen has proven to be up to the task.

Allen believes the tribes' greatest achievement since the Boldt Decision has been to show non-Indians, both the general public and government, that tribal leadership has the experience and capacity to manage natural resources.

"We've proven to everyone that we can make positive contributions both in the short term and the long term by using our traditional experience," he said.

While he concedes the ESA's presence in western Washington will change the way both Indian and non-Indian fisheries managers operate, Allen believes it would be wrong to pin too much blame for weak stocks solely on fisheries.

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'In 25 years we will have achieved a better balance...'

— Ron Allen,  
Chairman, Jamestown  
S'Klallam Tribe

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"The ESA's impact to fishery resources is a result of other factors outside the tribes' control. Timber harvests, agricultural practices, development activities taking place in the watersheds, as well as point and



Wm. 'Ron' Allen, chairman, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe.  
Photo: D. Williams

non-point pollution impacts have caused the greatest degradation of the resource itself," he said.

Will the public, which has little knowledge of the intricacies of fisheries management, make the sacrifices necessary to restore weak salmon stocks? Allen believes so.

"The knowledge and awareness of the general public on this issue has grown incredibly. I think there is a sincere willingness on their part to pay a higher price for the habitat's needs," he said. "Developers, too, are going to have to pay a higher price for doing business."

Allen thinks there could be radical changes in the way non-Indian fisheries are managed.

"The tribes will still be fishing in another 25 years, but commercial fishing will probably be more methodically controlled than ever before, and the non-Indian commercial fishery will probably be under heavy scrutiny and maybe more prioritized toward recreational fisheries," he said.

"In 25 years we will have achieved a better balance with agriculture, with growth and development, and with timber practices. These will be better balanced with the needs of the fish. It's going to be a tremendous challenge on all levels."  
— D. Williams

# *S'Klallams Welcome Ancestors Home*

Hastened by a late fall breeze, a bald eagle swept along the cliff line of Port Gamble Bay. The bird wheeled on a broad wing and circled twice over a knot of people standing aside a freshly dug grave in the S'Klallam Cemetery. Gliding above wind-bent fir and alder, the eagle was swept out of sight, leaving the group just as swiftly and silently as it had come.

Gathered below the eagle were Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribal members and guests performing a ceremony that was part homecoming and part farewell to four S'Klallam ancestors. They were the latest in a long series of Indian ancestors from museums and government collections to be returned to their tribes for re-burial.

It is Kathy Duncan's job to make that happen. A member of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Duncan is the Native

American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) representative for the three bands of the S'Klallam. She has just orchestrated the return of 14 sets of remains to the Elwha, Jamestown and Port Gamble S'Klallams. Most of the remains have been identified as fairly recent burials, all coming from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

NAGPRA was enacted in 1990 and requires museums and federal agencies to make thorough lists of their Native American human remains and funeral objects.

More than 1 million sets of Native American, Native Alaskan and Native Hawaiian remains and burial artifacts are thought to be still in the possession of various collectors, museums, and county, state and federal agencies.

Bones buried in the recent ceremonies came from places as close as the



Shaker minister Gene Jones and his wife, Marilyn, help perform a re-burial ceremony of recently returned remains. Photo: D. Williams

Clallam County Museum in Port Angeles and as far away as the Peabody Museum at Harvard University.

Traditional burials came in several styles, Duncan said. Bodies were sometimes placed upon a platform, or in a canoe on the outskirts of a village. Small children would often be placed in a basket and set in a tree. Others would be buried on the beach and swept away with the encroaching sea.

The recent re-burials at Port Gamble were conducted by two S'Klallam pastors, Shaker minister Gene Jones and the Rev. Floyd Jones. After some traditional songs were sung, the four simple cedar boxes, each containing the fragmented remains of a S'Klallam, were placed in a single grave. The cedar plank marking their grave says simply "S'Klallam Ancestors."

The significance of the solitary eagle appearing at the ceremony was not lost on tribal members at the re-burial. In S'Klallam legend, the eagle comes to pay its respects and to ensure re-burial is done in the traditional way, with participants showing proper respect to their ancestors. Rarely is a ceremony conducted without an eagle witnessing the event.

– D. Williams



## Historic Site

Marie Hebert, Port Gamble S'Klallam cultural resources coordinator, stands at the site of the signing of the Treaty of Point No Point. The tribe has joined a local effort to acquire the lighthouse site for public access and hopes to build an interpretive center.

Photo: D. Williams

# Makahs Want Tug Stationed Full-Time

Makah environmental director Chad Bowechop didn't need the grounding of the *New Carissa* near Coos Bay, Oregon to remind him of the reasons he has been working so many years to get a rescue tug permanently stationed at Neah Bay.

The Makah Tribe got a nasty reminder of what a spill is like when more than 100,000 gallons of fuel oil from the *Tenyo Maru* fouled coastal beaches in 1991, killing wildlife and threatening depressed fish stocks. The *New Carissa*, in comparison, lost an estimated 70,000 gallons of fuel oil. Both of these incidents avoided what the Makah Nation fears is imminent: A catastrophic spill like the *Exxon Valdez* which spilled 10.8 million gallons of oil in Alaska's Prince William Sound. Canada's pink salmon runs are still being affected by that spill 10 years later, according to a recent study.

"The irony is that if we had a catastrophic spill, we'd get both a tug stationed here and tug escorts for all traffic coming into the Strait of Juan de Fuca. We don't want to wait for that to happen. We're asking for prevention in the form of one tug. Given the alternative, we don't think it's much to ask," said Bowechop.

"If an oil spill (of that magnitude) were to happen, the impact on treaty resources would be devastating," he said. "Along with the *New Carissa*, there were three near-misses here in the past few weeks and two others off Vancouver



The *Sea Valiant*, an emergency rescue tug, patrols waters in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Photo: D. Preston

Island. What more proof is needed that permanent response is needed here in Neah Bay?"

The tribe applauds the temporary stationing of the tug *Sea Valiant* for 60 days beginning March 1, but maintains the permanent stationing of a tug to protect important marine resources will provide the best solution.

Fog, heavy seas, high winds and heavy traffic all factor into the increased chance for another oil spill near Neah Bay. "It's just a matter of time," Bowechop said.

— D. Preston

## Makah Tribe Continues Preparations For Whale Hunt

The Makah people of Neah Bay are on their guard against strangers after whale hunt protestors tried to infiltrate the community disguised as visitors. News reporters also continue to overwhelm tribal members with requests for interviews.

"We had protestors put surfboards on their vehicles in an attempt to hide their true purpose and get on the reservation. It's very unfortunate because now that casts suspicion on surfers who have been coming here for years," said Denise Dailey, Makah whaling commission director.

Since the International Whaling Commission granted the tribe a hunting quota in 1997 of an average of four gray whales a year for five years,

there has been an invasion of strangers intent on disrupting the hunt or obtaining a quick news story.

As the spring migration of whales heading north has started, the whaling crew has stepped up practice sessions and the tribe is braced for the next onslaught of protestors and media.

"Nothing has changed. We're still going whaling. It just really make me sad to see our people unable to trust odd faces," Dailey said. "I'm afraid it will fester and carry on past these events. Here we are at the end of the 20th Century wondering what the white man is going to do to us again. It's another event in a common series of ethnocentrism and some of it is just plain racist."

The tribe reserved the right to hunt

whales in their treaty, but stopped more than 75 years ago when non-tribal commercial whaling decimated the whale population. When the whale was removed from the endangered species list in 1994, the tribe sought to re-establish a ceremonial and subsistence hunt. As stipulated in the quota, the tribe will not sell any whale meat.

The population was recently estimated at 26,600 by the National Marine Mammal Laboratory in Seattle. The recent counts indicate gray whale populations along the West Coast have returned to historic levels.

The Makah hunt is not expected to affect the overall health of the gray whale population. — D. Preston

# Deer Creek Slide

## *Cedar Trees Will Help Speed Watershed's Recovery*



A thick canopy of alder trees has replaced large conifers after a massive landslide on Deer Creek in the Stillaguamish watershed.

After years spent simply trying to slow a massive Deer Creek landslide and preserve what salmon and steelhead remained in the DeForest Creek Basin, the Stillaguamish Tribe and others are now working on habitat projects to boost fish numbers that are beginning to bounce back.

The latest is a project designed to reintroduce to the basin large conifer trees, which provide important shade and contribute the large log-jams needed to create deep pools in the stream leading to the North Fork of the Stillaguamish River.

“The idea is to speed up the process of recovering this damaged basin,” said Priscilla Shipley, Stillaguamish Tribal Chair.

For the past 15 years, the Stillaguamish and Tulalip tribes, state and federal agencies, timber interests and sportfishing groups have worked to stabilize the landslide in the DeForest Creek Basin.

Blamed on already unstable slopes made worse by logging and roadbuilding activities, more than 3 million cubic yards of sediment have entered Deer Creek since the landslide began in 1983. Salmon spawning, rearing and resting habitat was destroyed when stream channels were graded and the deep pools fish need to rest were filled in by sediment.

The large conifers – primarily western red cedars – critical to the basin’s riparian (streamside) zone were blown out by the slide or previously logged, and thin alder trees have grown in their place. This has led to warmer water temperatures that are also bad for fish.

Deer Creek was once world-famous for its summer steelhead runs, but fish habitat was in such poor shape prior to 1990 that the creek’s steelhead run was decreasing by 50 percent per generation and fish managers were predicting the run would be extinct by 2000.

Erosion continues, but the volume has decreased significantly in recent years, helped in part by U.S. Forest Service efforts to limit logging above the slide, retire unused logging roads and improve mainline roads with bridges and culverts.

Coupled with flooding events that actually benefitted the stream by scouring out sediment, Deer Creek’s fish habitat has begun to improve and steelhead and salmon numbers have reversed their downward trend.

The Stillaguamish Tribe is paying for the silviculture project with money from a \$500,000 State Centennial grant from the state Department of Ecology. “Our hearts were saddened when Deer Creek was so greatly damaged, but we are encouraged to see that it will be protected in the future,” said Shipley.

– L. Harris

## *Tribes Focus On Hunter Safety*

Treaty Indian tribes in western Washington want to make sure their hunters stay safe when exercising their treaty right. That’s why some 20 individuals representing more than a dozen tribes recently completed the first phase of training to become state-certified hunter education instructors.

The future instructors, mostly tribal law enforcement personnel, completed a two-day training class offered by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

“Our hunters, especially tribal youth, will have a good understanding of how to handle a firearm, ethical considerations and the reasons behind tribal hunting regulations,” said Todd Wilbur, manager of the Swinomish Tribe’s wildlife program and chair of the Inter-tribal Wildlife Committee of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. Some tribes already have incorporated hunter education into their wildlife management programs, he said.

In addition to teaching the core lessons of hunter education, such as firearm safety, tribal hunting instructors also will be able to provide information they couldn’t receive in a state-offered class. “Tribes will be able to add to the curriculum to discuss the tribal cultural aspects of hunting, as well as treaty hunting rights,” Wilbur said.

“At the Swinomish Tribe, it is our responsibility as a sovereign government to provide this training, especially to our tribal youth. We also think that our young people will be more attentive if they are in a class with their peers. The bottom line, though, is that we want to make sure our tribal hunters are safe,” he said.

– T. Meyer

# Coordinating Council At Core Of Hood Canal Salmon Recovery Effort

From a satellite view, Hood Canal resembles a jagged fishhook. Its shank runs for four dozen miles, a deep blue line that's slightly skewed north-south from Admiralty Inlet to Potlatch. From there the hook's bend cants to the northeast, ending ingloriously in the mud of Belfair and completing the Canal's 61-mile mainstem length.

The satellite image reveals something else: The green shades of forest are slowly being carved away, replaced by the brown shade of clearcuts and the hair-thin gray lines of roads. The counties with shoreline along the Canal – Kitsap, Mason, and Jefferson – are all atop the annual list of counties with the highest growth rates in the state.

This is the backdrop for two intensive salmon recovery efforts. When the National Marine Fisheries Service this March announced its list of salmon stocks weak

enough to garner federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection, Hood Canal had the dubious honor of being the only place in the Puget Sound region with two species on the list. Hood Canal/eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca summer chum and Puget Sound chinook were both proposed for listing as “threatened.”

That's the bad news. The good news is that the region's natural resource managers – the Indian tribes and state – have been working cooperatively for a decade to strengthen weak stocks. At the core of salmon recovery planning efforts is the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC), an active participant in natural resource issues.

Jay Watson, former director of natural resources for the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, now heads the HCCC, a multi-jurisdictional body that has been working on environmental and water quality issues since its inception.



Jay Watson

“This is a place where governments can come together and discuss the issues,”

Watson said. “Our goal is to recover salmon to harvestable levels, not just to comply with the Endangered Species Act.”

The two tribes with reservations along the Canal – the Port Gamble S'Klallam and Skokomish – have been active in the Coordinating Council since the beginning in 1987. Currently, Marie Hebert from the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, and Joseph Pavel, the Skokomish Tribe's general council president, sit on the Council.

“I think they can be effective,” said Pavel. “They already have some infrastructure there, and they're plugged in to the process.”

Although the chinook is considered a more “important” species for its contribution to treaty Indian and non-Indian fisheries, the Coordinating Council is first working on a comprehensive summer chum salmon recovery plan.

“We've focused ourselves on going after summer chum salmon restoration first, rather than chinook, because we don't know as much about chinook,” Watson said. “Less data exists (on chinook), but in some ways, chinook will be a simpler fix than summer chum. Chinook tend to spawn in the upper reaches of the rivers where there are fewer people and less private property to deal with.”

The council has 13 voting members, including three county commissioners each from Mason, Kitsap, and Jefferson counties, plus the tribes. There is also a long list of ex-officio members on the HCCC, including representatives from state and federal agencies.

– D. Williams

## Donations Help Fuel Salmon Recovery Effort

The salmon recovery efforts of two Olympic Peninsula Indian tribes have been bolstered with financial donations from a charitable organization.

Sustainable Solutions Foundation, a non-profit organization, awarded \$30,000 to the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and \$20,000 to the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe for salmon restoration projects. Jamestown tribal member Joe Bowen, who sits on the Foundation's board of directors, said he is interested in helping out a local organization involved in cooperative restoration work.

“The tribe plans to use these funds to put large woody debris back into the river channel,” said Mike Reed, habitat biologist for the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. “We believe that the removal of wood from the river is a leading factor in the riverbed's instability. Wood helps the channel stabilize, and it is proving to be an excellent streamside buffer.”

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe is planning on using its portion of the funds as matching money for restoration projects either in the Elwha River itself, or in other western Strait of Juan de Fuca streams, said Mike McHenry, habitat biologist for the tribe.

“These generous donations will really help the tribes accomplish a great deal,” said Pat Crain, fisheries manager for the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe.

– D. Williams

# Tribes Released 40 Million Salmon In '98

Puget Sound and coastal treaty Indian tribes released more than 40 million hatchery fish in 1998, according to recently compiled statistics.

Released on streams and rivers throughout western Washington, the fish are harvested by both Indian and non-Indian fishermen.

Of the 40,945,842 fish released, 13.2 million were fall chinook; 1.8 million were spring/summer chinook; 12.9 million were coho; 11.4 million were chum; and 1.2 million were steelhead.

An additional 232,000 pink and sockeye salmon were also released. Of that number, 187,756 were sockeye released from the Makah tribal hatchery.

Some of the fish were produced through cooperative enhancement efforts of the tribes, state Department of Fish and Wildlife, state regional enhancement groups, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and sport or community organizations.

"Tribal hatchery programs are careful to minimize potential effects on

wild stocks," said Billy Frank Jr., NWIFC chairman.

Releases of hatchery salmon, for example, are precisely timed to reduce competition with wild stocks for food and habitat. Tribal hatcheries also enforce strict disease control policies to reduce possible effects on wild stocks.

"The goal of tribal hatchery production is to supplement, not replace, wild salmon stocks," Frank said.

Hatchery production provides for a meaningful level of harvest for both Indian and non-Indian fishermen that would not otherwise occur.

Some hatcheries are used solely to restore wild salmon stocks through broodstocking and supplementation programs. Through these programs, wild salmon are captured and spawned in a hatchery. Their offspring is then reared in the facility and later released at various locations. These programs help perpetuate and rebuild wild runs that might otherwise disappear.

Dams, agricultural and forest practices, urbanization, past overfishing and other factors have all contributed to the decline of wild salmon populations. Tribes, as co-managers of the salmon resource with the state, continue to work on the front line of efforts to restore habitat as well as protect and enhance wild fish runs, Frank said.



## Sharing The Salmon

Ivan and Agnes Willup thank Joe McDonald for a sack of smoked salmon. The Swinomish Fisheries Department distributed about 4,200 pounds of smoked fish to tribal members in December.

*Photo: L. Harris*

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