

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

NEWS

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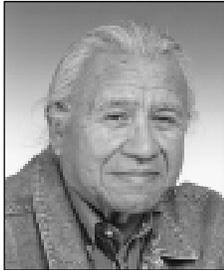
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Everyone Should Celebrate Makah Whale Hunt

By Billy Frank Jr.
NWIFC Chairman

Whoever you are, you should join the Makah Tribe in celebrating its harvest of a gray whale. Celebrate the return of a sacred practice to some of the most culturally connected people in the world. Celebrate the return of justice to a tribe that has been repressed for more than a century. Celebrate the recovery of gray whale populations to historic levels.



For 70 years the Makah did not exercise their treaty right to harvest gray whales because non-Indian commercial hunters had greedily overharvested the resource. The Makahs chose not to hunt gray whales because they are responsible natural resource managers. Now, the whale populations have recovered, and the Makah can again exercise their treaty right and cultural traditions in the same responsible manner.

Those who do not understand these things will question the logic of hunting an animal that means so much to the Makah. Yet the principle is the same for all tribes, and for all species of fish and wildlife. While scenes of the whale's harvest may have been disturbing to some, there is no difference between harvesting a whale or harvesting a salmon, deer or elk. The whale gave itself to the Makah, and the

Makah people respect that whale in ways many non-Indians cannot understand. The spirit of the whale lives on in the Makah people.

The harvest of the whale and the celebration of the Makah people revived an important cultural tradition through the exercising of a treaty right. In their wisdom, the tribal leaders who signed the treaties with the U.S. government in the 1850s reserved those things that were most important for the tribe's continued physical, spiritual and cultural survival: fish, shellfish, game and in the Makah's case, whales. It's important to understand that the tribes kept these rights when they signed the treaties. They never gave them up.

Even though the tribe had a clear treaty right to hunt whales, the Makah chose to work through accepted channels, obtaining permission and a quota of up to four whales per year for five years through the International Whaling Commission in 1997. The tribe received its quota from a portion of a quota granted to a group of indigenous Russian people. As stipulated in the quota agreement, the Makah will not sell any of the whale meat.

What people saw on television was a living culture exercising a tradition. Just because it is a different tradition than those practiced by non-Indians doesn't make it wrong, just different.

On The Cover: Makah whaling crew member Bruce Gonzales, dressed in a traditional cedar vest and hat, tastes the blubber of the first whale successfully hunted by the tribe in more than 70 years. *Photo: D. Preston*

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission News

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U.S. Supreme Court Upholds Shellfish Right

Treaty Indian tribes in western Washington celebrated the U.S. Supreme Court's recent announcement that it will not review the landmark lower court decision that restored their shellfish harvesting rights.

"The Supreme Court did the right thing in deciding not to hear this case," said Billy Frank Jr., chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. "Once again, the Supreme Court has made it clear that the tribes' treaty-reserved rights to natural resources in western Washington are as valid today as the day the treaties were signed. This is a great victory."

The Supreme Court's decision not to review the case means that U.S. District Court Judge Edward Rafeedie's December 1994 ruling and a subsequent Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals review will be allowed to stand. Both rulings upheld the tribes' reserved rights to harvest naturally occurring shellfish, including inter-tidal, deep water and free-swimming species, throughout their usual and accustomed harvest areas in western Washington.

The decision comes on the heels of a March 24 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court which upheld the treaty rights of the Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa Indians to hunt and fish on state lands in Minnesota.

The tribes and state have been implementing Rafeedie's 1994 decision while the case worked its way through the federal court system. Tribal shellfish managers have developed harvest management and supplementation plans, and harvest data is collected and shared with other tribes and the state co-managers. No shellfish harvesting is allowed on beaches that have not

Washington Supreme Court Recognizes Hunting Right

Tribal officials welcomed the positive aspects of a recent ruling by the state Supreme Court in the Buchanan hunting case, but cautioned against state court attempts to limit treaty hunting rights.

"Our treaty hunting rights were reserved in treaties with the United States and it will be the federal courts that will have the last say on the scope of those rights," said Todd Wilbur, a Swinomish tribal member who chairs the Inter-tribal Wildlife Committee of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. Wilbur said tribes are considering bringing a treaty hunting rights case to the federal courts for a declaration of the scope of that right if necessary. Those courts have consistently upheld the treaty-reserved rights of the tribes. Most recently, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the tribes' treaty right to half of the harvestable shellfish in Washington waters.

The state Supreme Court's ruling means Nooksack tribal member Donald Buchanan will go back to district court in Yakima for another trial on charges for harvesting two elk in the Oak Creek Wildlife Area in 1995. Among the issues to be determined is whether the area in which he was hunting was a traditional area for his tribe. Two lower courts ruled that Buchanan was simply exercising his reserved right under the Treaty of Point Elliott to hunt on "open and unclaimed" land when he harvested the two bull elk.

The state Supreme Court Thursday upheld that treaty tribes may hunt within original tribal lands and traditional areas and also said that the state-owned Oak Creek Wildlife Area was "open and unclaimed" land within the meaning of the treaties. The court threw out the state's argument treaty rights were eliminated when Washington became a state, saying that only the federal government can abrogate a treaty right.

"The tribes believe in good management of the resource, and have been working hard with the state through the Department of Fish and Wildlife to coordinate management activities," said Billy Frank Jr., NWIFC chairman. "We want those efforts to continue. Cooperation is key to the success of natural resource management."

– T. Meyer

been certified as safe by the tribes and state Department of Health.

It is also important to note that there have been few, if any, problems with tribes harvesting shellfish on private tidelands, Frank said. In fact, some private tideland owners have developed management agreements with tribes that include provisions for population surveys, harvest planning,

and enhancement projects.

"We would hope that this will put an end to the pointless attacks on tribal sovereignty and our treaty rights," said Frank. "It has been proven time after time that the tribes are willing and able to work cooperatively with our state co-managers in carrying out orderly, biologically sound harvests of both fish and shellfish." – T. Meyer

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A Living Culture

Makah Whale Harvest Unites Tribes

As the Makah village gathered on the beach to wait for the landing of the first whale hunted by Makah men in more than 70 years, two young boys played out a revealing imaginary scene.

They drew the outline of a canoe in the sand. One used a stick to paddle the imaginary canoe. The other practiced his harpoon thrusts. The Makah are historically renowned for their whaling prowess, and the resurrection of the whale hunt has given young men a goal: to be spiritually, physically and culturally ready to become part of a whaling crew.

“There has been a tremendous surge of pride and enthusiasm regarding our culture,” Makah tribal member and whaling commissioner Ed Claplanahoo said following the tribe's successful whale harvest May 17. “The initial renaissance was the discovery of Ozette (an ancient Makah village), which showed the ingenuity of our ancestors and how important whaling was to us. And now we have new enthusiasm and pride. We need to build on that pride. There has been a real interest in learning the language and the songs. When that harpoon was driven into the whale, history was being made. Everyone will remember that day,” he said.

It's that pride in the children – and adults – that confirms Tribal Chairman Ben Johnson's belief that enduring and overcoming the insults, threats and opposition has been worth the end result.

“The pride all the kids have shown is really important,” said Johnson. “You could see it as they prepared for the hunt and you could really see it after we got the whale. We have a living culture and we completed it,” he said. “It's done wonders for all native people.”

Hunting canoe member Bruce Gonzales' experience also seemed to reflect what the elders had envisioned: spiritual and personal growth from practicing what he had learned about his culture.

“It feels good to know my history. I feel good about myself. I like being a whaler with these guys and I think I'm going to stick with it from now on,” he said.

The hunt has also become a symbol of the struggle to maintain cultural identity for many indigenous people throughout the world.

More than 3,000 native people from all over the U.S. and several countries gathered in Neah Bay May 22 to celebrate the tribe's success. Many repeated the theme that the Makah had spoken for all indigenous people by claiming their

treaty right with cultural ritual when the tribe's whaling crew harpooned a 30-foot gray whale.

“Today is the day we are all Makah,” said Billy Frank Jr., Nisqually tribal member and Chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. “There is hope for all of us here – this is hope right here.”

A Masai tribal member from Tanzania, Africa attended the celebration in full regalia and spoke of the similarities among all indigenous people.

“The struggle is one struggle - the difficulty the same - it is the survival of our culture,” said Oldoniyo Laetoli Lebaaisa.

Similar comments of support continue to pour into the Makah Tribal Center, countering a flood of hate-filled and often threatening phone calls received by the tribe since they received a quota of an average of four gray whales a year from the International Whaling Commission in 1997.

The tribe voluntarily stopped hunting the whale more than 70 years ago when non-tribal commercial fishermen had hunted the gray whale to near-extinction. The gray whale was removed from the Endangered Species Act list in 1994. Scientists estimate the population is now above 26,000 animals, which is at or above numbers before commercial



The Makah whaling crew, assisted by other Northwest tribes, tows the whale to the beach where villagers await. *Photo: D. Preston*



Makah tribal member Spencer McCarty Jr. cuts whale blubber for those who want a taste May 17. The meat was distributed to tribal members and served to the more than 3,000 guests at a potlatch May 22. *Photo: D. Preston*



Boes from several other
h where a jubilant crowd

whaling. The next available hunting period is this fall when the gray whales migrate from Alaska to Mexico.

“Before the hunt, I really didn’t have any thoughts about what this might mean to other tribes, but it’s moved a lot of people,” said Johnson. “It has united tribes. It was very moving to see all those people come out to Neah Bay to support us.”

Following tradition, the meat was shared with the guests at the potlatch as well as distributed to tribal members. The bones of this first historic whale will be re-assembled and displayed at the Makah Cultural and Research Center. One of the themes common to all indigenous cultures is the spiritual preparation before, during and after hunt-

ing traditional food. Whaling crew member Dan Greene did his best to honor the cultural practice of keeping those preparations mostly private, while giving the public an understanding of this critical part of the whale hunt.

“The sea provides a natural atmosphere to send prayers to the Creator. We are a spiritual people,” Greene said during the community potlatch. He spoke of the considerable spiritual ritual each crew member went through daily during the year of preparation and during the hunt.

“After our hunt on Saturday, when we came close to taking a whale, we could feel the spiritual growth. By Monday morning, the spiritual energy was so strong, we knew we would be successful, Greene said. “It went as our Creator intended. We were alone with our Creator and the whale and we were able to escort our guest (the whale) to the village.”

It is those kinds of reports from crew members and village residents that tell Makah Whaling Commission Director Denise Dailey that the goals of resurrecting cultural and subsistence whaling have been met.

“I see a lot of affirmation of what I personally had envisioned as the goals of this project,” she said. “It brought about a wholeness, physically, emotionally and spiritually.”

– D. Preston

U.S./Canada Agreement Offers Base To Build On

After several months of government-to-government discussions, a comprehensive, long-term fisheries management agreement was reached in early June under the U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty. The agreement offers a solid foundation upon which recovery of weak salmon stocks can be built, said officials of treaty Indian tribes in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

“This agreement creates a strong base on which salmon and salmon habitat can be protected and restored. It is a conservation-based approach to salmon fisheries management,” said Wm. Ron Allen, Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) representative for the treaty Indian tribes.

Ensuring sustainable salmon harvest levels is the goal of the management agreement, which works to protect many of the West Coast salmon species listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Spe-

cies Act. Strict harvest controls designed to protect weak salmon stocks are at the heart of the agreement, which includes a commitment by the two countries to identify habitat concerns affecting salmon.

“For generations, tribes have worked to protect salmon and salmon habitat. This agreement protects the future of salmon in the Pacific Northwest, as well as tribal treaty rights,” said Lorraine Loomis, Swinomish Tribe fisheries manager and PSC Fraser River Panel member.

In response to declining salmon stocks, tribes have voluntarily reduced harvests for decades, up to 80-90 percent in some cases. Still, the tribes made additional sacrifices to forge the long-term agreement.

As part of the agreement, the U.S. will reduce harvest levels on chinook stocks in southern fisheries to sustainable levels on depressed stocks that will ensure optimum production of

chinook stocks over time. Harvests of coho and chum salmon will be shaped to reflect the conservation-based approach to the agreement.

“Salmon is our livelihood,” said Loomis. “Tribal opportunities for economic development are extremely limited. Fishing is often the basis of many tribal economies. State governments, however, have almost unlimited opportunities for economic advancement.”

As part of the agreement, tribes primarily dependent on Fraser River sockeye agreed to additional harvest cuts. “Any further reductions would have left our tribal fisheries no longer economically viable, and all but eliminated our treaty right,” said Loomis.

“The hardships to the tribes are worthwhile because the sacrifices will ensure salmon for future generations,” said Terry Williams, natural resources director for the Tulalip Tribes and a PSC Southern Panel member.

Boldt 25: *A Look Back...Today's C*

It has been 25 years since Judge George Boldt issued his landmark ruling in U.S. vs. Washington, which re-affirmed the tribes' treaty-reserved fishing rights and established the tribes as co-managers of the resource. At the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission's annual meeting in May, tribal representatives gathered to share thoughts and stories about the treaty rights struggle, the status of natural resources in western Washington today, and what the future may hold. Following are excerpts from their comments.

Phil Hamilton, Muckleshoot, remembered a time when, as a teenager, he was sitting in his grandmother's house as a treaty rights fishing protest was being planned.

"They were planning fish-ins, deciding who would be the sacrificial lambs...who were the ones who would be going to jail for what we believed in."

Nancy Games, Puyallup, remembered growing up on the Nisqually River during the late 1960s, the height of the fight for treaty rights. She remembered her father and six others being arrested for exercising their treaty rights and being sentenced to 60 days in the Pierce County Jail.

"These men worked. They went fishing. They worked farm jobs to feed their families.

"This time when they were in jail it was the women who went fishing, trying to find a way to feed their kids," she said. "There were eight kids in my family."

She remembered going to visit her dad in jail.

"They had this little window...and they opened it up...and I saw my dad's face...and I cried. You can only imagine what they must have gone through trying to provide for their families."

Ed Johnstone, Quinault, remembered fishing on the Hoh River as a boy.

"Before sun-up...two Thermoses and a lunch bag...and up the river we would go in a canoe. I would fall asleep in the bow of the canoe. I would wake up and we would be at the mouth of the Hoh River. We would have a canoe full of salmon, not two or three or six, but a canoe load."



Phil Hamilton



Nancy Games



Ed Johnstone

Georgiana Kautz, Nisqually, told how her husband would try to explain why he was sent to jail for trying to exercise his treaty rights.

"When our husbands went to jail, people would ask them why they were in jail, and they would say, 'because I am a fisherman,' and the people would ask, 'what does that have to do with anything?'"



Georgiana Kautz

The 25th anniversary of the Boldt Decision is both a sad time and a happy time, said Randy Kinley, Lummi.

"The sad thing is the situation that our people are facing right now. The happy side is that if it weren't for the shellfish decision, what would our people be doing? Look at the resources in fisheries. Our people can hardly survive."



Randy Kinley

The lessons of the past 25 years have not come easily, said Terry Williams, Tulalip.

"We have had times when we had to stand together on the firing line. We have had challenges with the state, whether fisheries or forestry, but we learned how to work together, and we are still working.

"We are in a cultural survival battle. We are trying to preserve our culture into the 21st Century."



Terry Williams

The success of the treaty tribes has come because they are united in a common cause, said Lorraine Loomis, Swinomish.

"The tribes went through a lot in those years," she said. "We learned a lot and we are still learning. We look for solutions."



Lorraine Loomis

If the tribes are going to survive, the salmon must survive too, said Andy Whitener, Squaxin Island Tribe.

"The fish have always taken care of the Indian people," he said. "We have to take care of them. It's the only thing that's going to keep us going."



Andy Whitener

challenges...What The Future May Hold

Today, treaty Indian tribes in the Pacific Northwest are known internationally as leaders, said Dave Sones, Makah.

“While we are catching salmon, we are protecting salmon. We are trying to enhance and rebuild the habitat in which they live, not only for ourselves, but for the future of the state and the rest of the nation.

“We are trying to build partnerships with different people who impact the resource, trying to bring them together so we can have development and industry, and still maintain our natural resources in a viable manner as we move into the future. We’ve accomplished a lot in 25 years, but there is still a lot of work out there.”



Dave Sones

Billy Frank Jr., NWIFC Chairman and Nisqually tribal member, summed up the past 25 years this way:

“Twenty-five years after the Boldt Decision and the tribes are still here. We’re still implementing Judge Boldt’s decision every day.

“I can remember when our people would all meet in the berry fields, or the hop fields, or the clam beds. We were sneaking around digging clams because we weren’t able to dig clams out in broad daylight. Today we are managing those clam beds.

“It took a long time to do that. We don’t have to hide anymore, but we have to make sure those clams and oysters are going to be here from now on.

“Twenty-five years is not very long. We are only on this earth a short time, walking through this life, to try to make a difference. And we are going to make a difference. We already have made a difference.” – *T. Meyer*



Billy Frank Jr.



Child's Play

Children are the most precious resource of any tribe. Logan Harris, NWIFC North Sound information officer, found some tribal children enjoying themselves in a couple of pastimes recently. At right, Nooksack tribal members Cody Bailey, 2, and Terrance Charlie, 8, dance during the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe's Celebration of Generations and Circle of Friends Traditional Powwow in June. Above, Swinomish preschooler Donovan George, 4, peers closely at a rainbow trout he caught at the Upper Skagit Kids Fishing Derby in May. *Photos: L. Harris*



Tulalips Return To Hat Island For Shellfish, C

Tribal Members, Property Owners Dig Clams Together

The sounds of busy shovels and clam forks against rock, sand and shell made for sweet music to Tulalip Tribal members participating in the most significant Hat Island tribal shellfish harvest in a decade.

The mid-June harvest occurred in stark contrast to the beach confrontations and threats of violence that had characterized previous tribal efforts to dig on the privately-owned island since 1989. This time Indians and even a few private landowners peacefully dug clams side by side.

"It feels really good," said Tulalip member Alan Cortez. "Seeing our people coming out and exercising their rights here again without problems — you feel it coming from your heart."

The difference? A U.S. Supreme Court ruling this May ended all legal appeals challenging the treaty right to harvest shellfish on public and private tidelands.

'I think the Tulalips have done their damnedest to try to work with the landowners.' —

*Greg Morris,
Hat Island
landowner*

"Nobody likes losing in court, but it happened and we've got to learn to live with it," said Greg Morris, a Hat Island landowner who was among the

most vocal critics of tribal harvests there. "Both sides are trying to get along and make it work."

Despite centuries of sacred ceremonial and subsistence harvests on the island, the tribes were prevented from digging clams in 1989 by a group of property owners who contended the tribes were trespassing on the private island.

"The last time I came out here on a harvest (in 1989) there was a nasty confrontation — we had police helicopters and sheriff's deputies," said Cortez. "It might have been worse if (then-Tulalip Chairman) Stan Jones hadn't walked up and talked to the residents."

Repeated attempts were made to come to an agreement with the landowners, but the talks always broke down. The issue was supposedly cleared by the 1994 Rafeedie Decision — which concluded the tribes' treaty shellfishing rights were never extinguished by the state's land sales — but more beach confrontations ensued when the tribes attempted a limited harvest in 1997.

The tribes' spiritual bond with Hat Island is deep-rooted. This sacred relationship was cemented by a natural disaster there a century ago that claimed the lives of many tribal members. A massive overhanging portion of Camano Head, several miles north of Hat Island, collapsed and buried dozens of Tulalip clam diggers. Many more who were gathering clams on Hat Island were lost when a resulting enormous wave swept them away.

Hat Island is not only a culturally-important site, it's a productive one for butter clams and littlenecks. "I'd rather

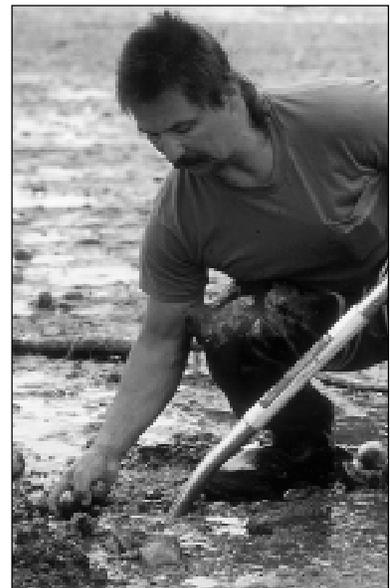
dig here than Camano or Langley," said Cortez, displaying the results of a single clam fork plunge. "Look at that, 14 clams in one pull."

No more than 14 tribal diggers in a single day participated in the four-day June harvest. Tribal members harvested about 3,000 pounds of clams, or only about 15 percent of the 20,000 harvestable pounds available on 810 feet of surveyed shoreline.

U.S. District Court Judge Edward Rafeedie ruled on Dec. 20, 1994 that the tribes have a right to dig up to 50 percent of the harvestable shellfish on western Washington beaches, ex-



Tulalip tribal members peacefully harvest clams alongside landowners. *Photo: L. Harris*



Tulalip tribal member Alan Cortez digs clams on Hat Island. *Photo: L. Harris*

Cultural Revival



Hat Island

cept shellfish from artificial beds. The ruling was an extension of the 1974 Boldt Decision, which affirmed the treaty-reserved tribal right to half the harvestable salmon catch. The Rafeedie Decision withstood a series of appeals, finally advancing to the Supreme Court this year, which denied a petition for rehearing the case.

The Tulalips have tried to work with the landowners beyond what is necessary under the Rafeedie Decision, which requires tribes to follow several time, place and manner restrictions. Among them are the need to conduct accurate shellfish surveys and inform property owners of their intent to harvest well in advance.

“I think the Tulalips have done their damndest to try to work with the landowners,” said Morris. “I appreciate them filling in the holes and looking after the beaches as we would ourselves.”

The tribe’s hope is to sign shellfish management agreements with all the landowners on Hat Island, which would include provisions for populations surveys, harvest planning and potential cooperative shellfish enhancement activities.

“We want to make these harvests as convenient as possible for the landowners and for the tribal harvesters,” said Derrick Toba, Tulalip Shellfish Biologist.

The Tulalip Tribes’ “good neighbor” policy is also evidenced on Camano Head, another culturally-important shellfishing site. In 1994 the Tulalip Tribes purchased the Camano Head tidelands and they allow all people, Indian and non-Indian alike, to dig clams at Camano Head. The Tulalip Tribes shellfish program manages healthy populations of littlenecks, butter clams, horse clams, and cockles at the site.

– L. Harris

Port Gamble Bay Tidelands Gain Shellfish Re-Certification

The closure of a small portion of Port Gamble Bay tidelands to shellfish harvesting because of pollution three summers ago was a shock to the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe. The bay is the heart of the tribe’s usual and accustomed harvest area for finfish and shellfish, and its shores have always produced a bounty of shellfish for tribal members. Just the thought of losing clams and oysters to pollution compelled the tribe to take the lead in the tidelands’ clean-up.

The tribe joined with the Washington State Department of Health, the state Department of Ecology, and Kitsap County to form a shellfish closure response team to find the source of the problem, make the necessary changes, and get the 15-acre stretch of tidelands open to harvesting once again.

Cedar Cove, which lies near the mouth of Martha John Creek, was closed to shellfish harvesting about three years ago when routine water testing revealed high levels of fecal coliform in the water that exceeded state health standards. The water testing results set into motion a lengthy, detailed restoration program. The affected beach is privately owned and lies at the mouth of Martha John Creek, just south of the S’Klallam’s reservation.

“A beach closure has never happened before in Port Gamble Bay, and there it was, happening right down the beach from the reservation,” said Scott Brewer, natural resources director for the tribe. “We certainly didn’t want this pollution to come up the bay and affect any of the on-reservation beaches. This closure also meant that if the tribe wanted to exercise its off-reservation shellfish harvesting rights there, it couldn’t.”

The multi-agency team conducted water testing that revealed the primary source of high bacteria levels was livestock waste. The stream flows through a quilt work of hobby farms whose owners were allowing cows and horses access to the stream for drinking water. That, combined with poorly functioning septic systems from a nearby housing development, led to increased bacteria counts.

The team secured funding to help property owners fence off the stream to control livestock access. A major inspection of septic systems within the watershed was done, and failing systems were identified for repair.

With the fixes in place, the bacteria levels in Cedar Cove have once again returned to safe levels. Ongoing water quality monitoring will be done to ensure the bay remains a safe place to harvest shellfish.

The tribe harvests clams, oysters, geoduck, and other shellfish from the bay, as well as salmon. The tribe operates a salmon hatchery near the head of the bay, as well as net pens near the middle of the bay. Oyster, clam and geoduck enhancement projects have all been successful on the reservation. The tribe is also beginning an aquaculture project to grow Mediterranean mussels in the bay.

– D. Williams

Nooksack Tribe, Lummi Nation Project

Salmon Recovery ‘Measuring Stick’ Installed

Lummi Nation and Nooksack tribal fisheries officials know spring chinook salmon production in the Nooksack River’s South Fork is bad. What they’ve needed is a way to accurately measure how bad and gauge the effectiveness of extensive salmon restoration efforts already under way in the watershed.

Now they’ve got the measuring stick — a \$30,000 smolt trap placed in the South Fork about a mile above the confluence of the North and South forks. The trap, installed in May, enables the tribes to more accurately count numbers of native spring chinook originating from the South Fork, which are considered among the most distressed of all the Puget Sound chinook stocks listed in March as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

The “screw” trap will provide the kind of information essential to finding local recovery solutions to the salmon crisis, said Bob Kelly, Director of Natural Resource for the Nooksack Tribe. The two tribes are working with Whatcom County and others to develop restoration strategies with the hope of one day recovering



Merle Jefferson, Lummi Nation, left, and Bob Kelly, Nooksack Tribe, remove salmon smolts from a new screw trap on the South Fork of the Nooksack River. *Photo: L. Harris*

harvestable numbers of salmon in the Nooksack basin.

“We don’t have a handle at all on the production in the South Fork,” said Kelly. “This will give us that. It becomes especially important when we are trying to measure the effects of the differ-

ent restoration efforts we are making.”

The trap is similar in design to one already in operation on the North Fork for the past five years.

Merle Jefferson, Natural Resources Director for the Lummi Nation, said destructive land use practices in the South Fork have wreaked havoc on spring chinook stocks. “South Fork stocks are in critical condition,” he said. “This is where we need the information the most.”

Unlike the North Fork, the South Fork is not glacier fed and habitat is more vulnerable to the historical land use in the watershed, including heavy logging and conversion of much of the area to agriculture. River temperatures regularly reach a salmon-deadly 75 degrees in the summer.

Whatcom County Public Utility District No. 1 paid for the trap’s construction.

“We take a lot of water out of the river for industrial purposes, and when the river gets low everybody’s in trouble,” said Bob Ebright, a PUD commissioner. “Whatever we can do to get the data put together on the chinook will be of value.”

– *L. Harris*

Jamestown S’Klallams, Irrigators Win Award

A decade of cooperative work between the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe and area irrigators has gone a long way toward filling the needs of both fish and farms. The two groups have now received national recognition from *Renew America* and President Clinton’s Council on Sustainable Development for their work. The tribe and Sequim-Dungeness Valley Agricultural Water Users Association were honored at a ceremony in Detroit on May 3 as part of a national town meeting on sustainable resources.

Ann Seiter, natural resources director for the tribe, said area irrigators have improved their canal network’s “conveyance efficiency.” That means the canals don’t leak as much water as they used to, mainly because ditches

have been lined and valves improved. Efficient ditches means less water needs to come out of the river in the first place.

“One project alone saved nearly 500 gallons per minute from being wasted,” Seiter said.

“These awards recognize all of the work that the tribe and irrigators have done over the past decade,” Seiter said. “The tribe has secured \$1 million in grants for water conservation projects in the valley, and it’s working. Overall, there has been a 15 percent reduction in the total water withdrawal from the river, and a 30 percent reduction during the chinook salmon spawning time in late fall.”

– *D. Williams*

Removing Wood From Gravel Bars Harms Fish Habitat

Doing something right for salmon may be as simple as being selective about where you get your firewood. If it comes from a gravel bar in a river, you're removing a key component of fish habitat – and it's illegal.

Combating years of “we've always done it this way” isn't easy, but the Hoh and Quileute tribes, Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife are starting an education campaign regarding the importance of trees, especially large trees, in the river. Education will be followed by stiffer enforcement of existing laws that prohibit removal of wood from state waters without a hydraulic permit.

“Large wood is twice as important on the Hoh River because there isn't a whole lot of it left to start with,” said Jim Jorgensen, fisheries manager for the Hoh Tribe. The Hoh tribal reservation is located at the mouth of the Hoh River on the Pacific Coast of the Olympic Peninsula.

Large trees that are taken into the river channel as a result of natural channel migrations become the key building blocks for wood jams that create deep pools behind the jams. Fish eat and rest in the pools where dead organic material provides food for aquatic insects important to fish.

Large trees also create gravel bars that split the river channel and increase areas for fish to rest in when water flows are high in the main channel of the river.



Jim Jorgensen, Hoh Tribal Fisheries Manager, stands next to a large downed tree on a gravel bar in the Hoh River. *Photo: D. Preston*

On the Quillayute River system, which includes the Sol Duc, Dickey, Bogachiel and Calawah rivers, the problem is sport fisherman cutting logs out of the way of their boats. “We just want fishermen to understand that the fish need those log jams to create pools. In the end, it's better for fishermen too because there are more fish if there is better habitat,” said Trevin Taylor, biologist for the Quileute Tribe.

There are many inexpensive, alternative areas to obtain firewood. The DNR issues free firewood permits to those cutting wood for personal use.

“We've learned a lot about the importance of wood in the function of a river and how important it is to fish, but we need to educate the public about it,” said Jim Springer, Forest Practices District Manager for the DNR.

– *D. Preston*

Elwha Hatchery Pond Goes Wild For Coho Experiment

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe hatchery crew is trying to build a better fish.

They've turned an old earthen pond – one that hasn't been used to raise fish for years – into something of a laboratory. Their test subjects are 100,000 coho. The fish will be reared in the more natural setting of the pond to see if they act more like their wild cousins.

The traditional method for rearing hatchery fish is to place juveniles in circular Fiberglass tanks or narrow “raceways” with hatchery personnel tossing food to them several times a day. The fish can grow accustomed to shadows representing food. In nature,



Heavy machinery is used to place a stump in a rearing pond as part of the Nature's Project. *Photo: D. Williams.*

it's the other way around: The shadow can be a bird or another predator, and the fish itself is the food.

In the “Nature's Project,” not only

will the fish rear in a more natural environment of a pond, complete with stumps and rocks for hiding cover, but their food will come from the bottom of the pond via a time-release system.

“Research indicates that there is significantly greater survival in the short term of fish reared in the natural setting,” said Larry Ward, tribal hatchery manager.

The Nature's Project represents a fraction of the Elwha hatchery's total salmon production. The tribe's goal is to release 750,000 coho, 120,000 steelhead, and 75,000 chum salmon every year. – *D. Williams*

Summer Chum Habitat Recovery Plan Released

Summer chum salmon from Hood Canal and the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca were given federal protection under the Endangered Species Act this past March – the same time that Puget Sound chinook were put on the endangered species list.

While the summer chum might not have the glamour of the chinook, which is much bigger, fights better when hooked, and arguably tastes better fresh off the backyard grill, summer chum are ahead in at least one category: recovery planning. The first part of a comprehensive, four-part plan for restoring Hood Canal/eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca summer chum salmon has been completed, and the remaining pieces of the recovery puzzle aren't far from being finished.

Treaty Indian tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) have developed their final draft recovery plan for the restoration of habitat crucial to the summer chum, which were listed as "threatened," along with chinook, as well as Lake Ozette sockeye salmon.

The plan assesses the current limiting factors in the habitats of 20 separate watersheds within Hood Canal and the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca, as well as specific recommendations for improving that crucial habitat. The plan was developed by WDFW and the Point No Point Treaty Coun-



Wild summer chum are brought to the Quilcene National Fish Hatchery for spawning. Their young are returned to the Quilcene River to continue the cycle.

Photo: D. Williams

cil (PNPTC), a natural resources consortium of federally recognized Indian tribes within the affected area, and it's only one part of a holistic recovery plan for summer chum.

Other components of the overall plan include artificial production, which is being reviewed now; harvest management, which has gone through many drafts and is nearing finalization; and an integration plan, which will describe how all the different pieces will fit together.

The loss of good quality spawning and rearing habitat has played a key role in the fish's decline, and will be a major problem with the recovery of the species, said Byron Rot, PNPTC senior habitat biologist. Summer chum tend to spawn in the lower reaches of the streams along the Canal and eastern Strait, and most of those habitats are severely degraded.

Rot said it took a full year to analyze and write the habitat component of the overall recovery plan. "Each different life stage of summer chum salmon has its own suite of habitat conditions," he said. "The team studied each life stage of the fish and determined limiting habitat factors for every watershed, then developed restoration and protection strategies for each specific condition."

While the harvest portion of the report has yet to be finalized, the tribes long ago modified fisheries to reduce impacts to weak summer chum stocks. Commercial fisheries directed at summer chum salmon have not occurred for many years, and the incidental harvest of summer chum in other U.S. fisheries is at or below 10 percent.

Coho net fisheries in Quilcene Bay have benefitted efforts to restore summer chum populations. Tribal fishermen using beach seine nets are able to cull live summer chum from the heavy nets and turn them over to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service crews for use in a population rebuilding program based at the Service's Quilcene National Fish Hatchery on the Quilcene River. – *D. Williams*

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