WHAT DOES EXTINCTION LOOK LIKE? 

Bill Bakke

Bill Bakke is Executive Director of Oregon Trout. He is a well-known outdoor writer, a widely-recognized authority on wild fish conservation issues and a consummate flyfisher. Bill last appeared in these pages in Issues 4 and 5 and we welcome him back.

Nineteen eighty-nine was a dry year. Full of wildfire danger. And it happened at the worst possible time for the Grande Ronde spring chinook. The Turner Gulch fire started on July 26, 1989, and then it rained. Rained hard. Forty miles of the upper Grand Ronde River became a mud slurry following the fire. The river flowed like black jelly. All the adult chinook were killed before they were able to spawn. All the juveniles from the 1989 spawning were killed too. Two year classes of spring chinook were eliminated in one day.

The Grande Ronde spring chinook were already in trouble in 1957, when the declining run was 7,123 fish. But in 1989 the run had diminished to 338. When a run is so depleted all its resilience is sapped. One natural event can wipe it out and it did.

This is the precarious position the Snake River salmon have been delivered to by decades of watershed development and neglect. Snake River fall chinook have plunged from 27,700 in 1962 to 600 in 1989. Summer chinook have endured a similar decline: In 1969 the run was 30,900; in 1989 it fell to 4,200.

In the mid-1970's the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) began a status review of upper Columbia River salmon and steelhead under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). But NMFS took no action because pending passage of the Northwest Power Planning Act in 1980 promised the means and the funding to recover these salmon runs.

By 1992 the fish and wildlife program under the Power Council will have been in effect for 10 years and will have expended nearly $1 billion dollars in the Columbia Basin to recover the salmon and steelhead.

In April 1990, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes filed under the ESA to classify Snake River sockeye as endangered. In June Oregon Trout filed to so classify Snake River spring, summer and fall chinook and the lower Columbia River coho salmon.

At a June 30 congressional field hearing held jointly by Oregon's Senator Hatfield and Congressman Wyden, the fish-and-power-management agencies were asked hard questions about the salmon decline. Representative Wyden said: "Our ecosystem is out of balance; the hatchery runs go up while the wild runs go down."

He asked why the wild runs continue to decline.

The regional director for NMFS, Rollie Schmitt, replied: We have focused too much on harvest augmentation; now we have to provide quality (wild) fish."

Randy Fisher, director for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, said: "Hatcheries are not the solution and the fish are paying for our learning curve."

Since the formation of the Power Council's fish and wildlife program, the fish management agencies and tribes have had one agenda, to build more hatcheries with public dollars.

These agencies have never advocated a restoration plan for the wild salmon and steelhead. The recovery of wild stocks has been left up to public groups like Oregon Trout and our efforts have been thwarted by the agencies all the way.

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EXTINCTION
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We have made some gains however. A major one has been the emphasis in the Power Council’s program on conserving genetic resources and the requirement to evaluate the genetic risks associated with projects such as the proposed Yakima River hatchery. But the Umatilla River Hatchery, the first to be approved by the Council, got the go-ahead without a requirement to assess genetic risks.

The fish agencies and tribes want to release hatchery fish into every stream. This activity needs to be a top management priority. The review also states that “Plans to double anadromous fish runs in the Columbia River Basin... may be placing too much emphasis on hatchery production. This effort may continue to erode the genetic integrity of wild stock.”

Oregon Trout petitioned under the ESA because the administrative process not only continues to ignore the restoration of wild runs but it also threatens to further undermine the productivity of those wild runs by releasing domesticated salmon into streams where they will compete with and genetically alter the wild fish. You may hear the agencies say now that they are committed to the restoration of the wild runs whether the runs are listed under the ESA or not. But their every action does not lend confidence to this promise.

The Power Council has initiated a gene conservation program for the first time for West Coast salmon and steelhead. However, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission cast a lone veto on a research project aimed at measuring the relative survival rates of hatchery and wild salmon. A tribal scientist said we already know that hatchery salmon do not survive as well as wild salmon. The tribes remain a principal advocate for stocking hatchery salmon into rivers where they will compete and breed with wild salmon. The tribes also have objected to the Power Council’s budget for gene conservation of salmon. They do not want a gene conservation program funded. They argue it discriminates against tribal hatchery projects.

Most of the fuss is over the protection of Snake River chinook because saving the salmon could be more of a burden than commercial water users and the fishery management agencies want to bear. They would have to modify their activities to recover native salmon stocks.

Lower Columbia River coho salmon are in deep trouble. The native spawners have declined to less than one per mile in 1989; in 1951 there were 70 per mile. On Oregon’s Pacific coast the spawning escapement objective is 29 coho spawning per mile; on the lower Columbia’s spawning streams no spawning escapement is required. Oregon’s fishery agency decided that if it were to maximize harvest of hatchery coho, a spawning escapement objective for native stocks would be inconvenient.

The only scientific assessment of threatened salmon and trout on the West Coast of North America has been done by a national organization of fish biologists called the American Fisheries Society (AFS). The AFS has circulated a draft report that identifies 133 threatened anadromous fish in California, Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

The states, the tribes and the federal fish agencies do not routinely conduct studies to evaluate the status of native fish species and the condition of their habitats. But without this information it is difficult to manage the resource for long term benefits to society. The fish agencies are set up to allocate harvests, not to protect native fish populations. However, the only way to prevent action under the ESA is to manage for the protection of native fish populations.

The public, however, expects the fish management agencies to shout alarm when a fish population is endangered. The public expects fish management authorities to act to save a run from extinction. But they don’t. They lack the will, not the authority, and in most cases the data, to make effective conservation action to rescue an endangered stock.

If the governmental agencies are unwilling to protect native salmon then the public must initiate action.

The public has had to learn this lesson the (Continued on page 3.)
hard way. For example, Snake coho salmon became extinct in 1987. Snake sockeye became functionally extinct in 1989, when only two adults returned to the Snake River.

In both cases the agencies disregarded these salmon stocks. They set no escapement objectives. They permitted intensive harvests on these stocks when the fish passage records at Snake River dams showed these salmon stocks heading for extinction. The agencies did nothing to save those fish. Asked by Senator Hatfield why the National Marine Fisheries Service took no action to save the sockeye, Rollie Schmit, NMFS regional director, said that the sockeye are considered to be a minor stock.

The Endangered Species Act has been called the law of last resort. Oregon Trout, however, refers to it as the law of accountability. Salmon and trout become threatened and go extinct because people are not paying attention, assuming that somehow hatchery technology can save us. It hasn’t worked.

Conserving wild salmon teaches how apparently unrelated actions cause cumulative impacts that degrade the genetic health of the stock, destroy habitat, lower productivity and commit us to the sorry road to extinction. Government ought to perpetuate natural resources and the economic and cultural benefits they supply. The stewardship of government ideally concerns

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### THE CARNAGE CONTINUES

- The Snake River Sockeye run, 4,000 fish in 1955, has deteriorated to only TWO fish at last count and is functionally extinct.
- Lower river Coho have diminished from a spawning density of 70 fish per mile in 1952 to less than one fish per mile today.
- The Grande Ronde Chinook, with a severely depleted run of 12,000 in 1957, today number less than 400, not enough to be a viable breeding unit.
- The upriver fall Chinook run has declined to 8% of its 1965 run size—dropping from 12,000 fish to only 965 fish.

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The salmon populations that have been petitioned for protection under the ESA may not be listed; and if they are they may not be saved.

The outcome is really up to us. We live within and share the salmon’s habitat. When we extend a helping hand to the salmon we are doing it in part for ourselves and our own future. If the salmon cannot survive in its ancestral home, how bright and interesting will our children’s lives be?

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### GENOCIDE FOR WILD COLUMBIA RIVER SALMON & STEELHEAD

Marty Sherman

Marty Sherman is editor of Flyfishing Magazine and we welcome him to these pages. Marty is an avid steelheader, a strong northwest voice for wild fish conservation and a hecklava fisherman. This article originally appeared in the July-October issue of Flyfishing. It treats the question whether hatcheries are more a problem than an answer.

The wild populations of salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River and its tributaries are in danger of being rendered extinct. This is an example of what happens when harvest demands drive the management policy and restoration plan.

Two-thirds of the spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous fish in the Columbia basin has been lost or destroyed due to hydro development, logging, agricultural activities and urban growth. Some of those areas lost provided large percentages of the total basin production.

As a well-intentioned effort to re-establish large runs of salmon and steelhead to the system, the Northwest Power Planning Council is attempting to double current runs. The problem with the way this is taking place is that nearly every basin plan is developing programs for heavy hatchery production, with increased harvest as a goal. Many of these plans appear to be reasonable in the fact that they intend to use wild brood to maintain genetic integrity. But the problem with this is that the increased hatchery production will create an increased

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### QUICKLY . . . .

NEW HATCHERY FOR SKAGIT

The Department of Wildlife hopes to build a new $4.9 million dollar steelhead hatchery. To be located at Grandy Creek, a tributary of the Skagit River, the hatchery’s purpose would be to augment winter-returning Skagit fish by spreading the run time. The Wildcat Steelhead Club of Sedro-Woolley promoted the project and has committed in-kind assistance (labor and “willing hands”) and possibly some money. State representative Haugen (D, Camano Island), also has supported the project.

Feasibility studies have been completed by professional engineers and have favorably determined that enough good water is available for the hatchery. If the budget request is approved by the legislature and the governor, (Continued on page 12.)
GENOCIDE
(Continued from page 3.)

demand for harvest. Harvest in the Columbia is done primarily with gill nets. It is a non-selective method employed by both white commercial and treaty Indian fishermen. The projected increased numbers in hatchery fish available for harvest will cause an over harvest of the wild fish which will also be present at the time the net fishery takes place. The result will be the possibility of pushing wild stocks to extinction.

In several instances, certain Columbia River tributaries have evidenced remarkable increases in fish run size which has been accomplished by habitat repair and protection. One tributary experienced an increase in the size of its steelhead run from near 3,000 fish in the early 1980’s to over 30,000 fish in 1989. This was done without the use of planting hatchery fish, without the expense of hatchery construction, without the liability of hatchery maintenance, and without risk of new disease.

In the Yakima basin the budget for hatchery construction is around $34,000,000. In the Klickitat it is over $9,000,000. On top of this initial cost there will be long-term maintenance cost to keep these facilities operating. Where will the money come from? What if the hatchery fish don’t survive and the more dependable, more fit wild fish are eliminated in over harvest?

Wild fish have exhibited a remarkable ability to rebound from depressed numbers if they are given a healthy spawning and rearing habitat and if they are given the ability to migrate to and from the ocean without obstacles. The idea of spending over $43 million is merely the tip of the financial iceberg that we as taxpayers and electricity rate payers will be carrying. Wouldn’t it be more cost effective, reasonable and responsible to first attempt to boost naturally spawning wild fish to their full capacity before engaging those expensive projects?

If you are concerned about the protection of the wild salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River basin let it be known by writing: The Northwest Power Planning Council, 851 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1100, Portland, Oregon 97204-1348, Chairman Tom Trulove.

THE CHAIRMAN’S MEND

Pete Soverel is Chairman, Northwest Steelhead Committee. He expects to contribute in this space, from time to time, his thoughts on major issues of interest to this newsletter. A recently retired U.S. Navy captain and a widely fished steelheader, his biggest problem will be finding time to get off the river.

From time to time, I am reminded of how resilient steelhead are. Fishing recently where a brook enters the Puget Sound, I hooked a 6-8 pound steelhead. As I released her, I could not help but wonder if she would find a mate. This tiny creek is typical of thousands of once productive small coastal streams from Tijuana to Kodiak. They all used to host runs of steelhead. All still could as my fish demonstrated.

Destructive human practices and hatchery production have had terrible impacts on steelhead.

Hatchery production to compensate for annihilation of wild fish has made a terrible situation desperate. Hatchery runs mask the precipitous decline of wild fish caused by habitat destruction and over-exploitation of the fishery. Hatchery production aims at putting fish in major river systems. Hatchery managers ignore the damage their efforts do to creek-specific wild stocks in numerous, small tributaries or in stand-alone creeks draining into the salt. The loss of genetic diversity caused by hatchery programs is well documented and alarming.

Some examples:

A. Columbia River salmonid stocks are thought to be about 25 percent of historic levels. But almost all the returning salmonids are hatchery, not wild, fish. Columbia river wild fish are less than 2 percent of historic abundance and numerous stocks were already extinct. Many other up-river runs are in danger of extinction (see Bill Bakke’s article in this issue).

IN THE TOLT RIVER NEAR SEATTLE, THE SPAWNING ESCAPEMENT OF WILD SUMMER RUNS HAS CRASHED SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF SKAMANIA-STOCK FISH. FEWER THAN 20 WILD FISH ESCAPED LAST YEAR.

B. The once prolific California steelhead systems from the San Joaquin to the Kalamath are faint shadows of former glory. They have been dammed, diverted and dewatered. Wild steelhead have paid the price. They have been replaced by hatchery clones.

C. Skamania-strain summer-run steelhead have been planted in numerous systems in Washington and Oregon, with predictable consequences for wild summer steelhead. With the artificial abundance of hatchery summerruns, the kill of wild fish has jumped dramatically. Many of these wild stocks are in jeopardy.

In the Tolt River near Seattle, the spawning escapement of wild summer runs has crashed since the introduction of Skamania-stock fish. Fewer than 20 wild fish escaped last year to spawning areas—perhaps 5 percent of historic levels. These numbers are not guesses but are the work of NW Steelhead Committee member Kurt Breslie, who has marked the river during the spring, summer and fall to count wild fish.

D. In the wild steelhead’s last bastion, summer steelhead in northern British Columbia and Southeast Alaska are being harvested in huge numbers by commercial salmon fishermen. SE Alaskan commercial salmon fishermen alone harvest over 40,000 steelhead a year. In B.C.’s Skeena estuary, mixed stock commercial fishing has all but eliminated stocking of early returning summer runs through steelhead interception rates of over 80 percent during the salmon fishing season. No effective action has been taken by either U.S. or Canadian authorities to halt the destruction of the largest remaining wild steelhead runs in the world. But talk of hatchery augmentation rises.

We must insist that wild steelhead receive the HIGHEST priority in the management (Continued on page 5.)
THE MEND
(Continued from page 4.)
hierarchy. Hatcheries cannot substitute for wild fish.

We know from experience that by requiring wild-fish release the year round, by treating watersheds properly, by reducing or eliminating commercial exploitation and reducing our addiction to hatchery fish, wild runs will revive.

Where enlightened management practices have been adopted, wild steelhead respond strongly and quickly.

On B.C.'s Vancouver Island, the catch of wild steelhead has risen over 500 percent in just 10 years since the institution of year-round, wild-fish release. In Washington and Oregon, wild steelhead have responded strongly in rivers managed for catch and release.

I urge each of us to renew our commitment to release ALL wild steelhead, year round, no matter where captured. Yes some of these fish will be killed by other anglers, but some will make it to their spawning gravels. We cannot control what other fishermen do but we can control what we do. I also urge us all to involve ourselves in wild fish management like Kurt Beardslee did, to help save fisheries that once lost can never be restored.

EDITORIAL:
UNSHEATHING EXCALIBUR

In this issue Bill Baitke of Oregon Trout writes about the actions to invoke the Endangered Species Act to try to force federal, state and other agencies to preserve endangered runs of wild salmon on the Columbia-Snake Rivers systems.

Steelheaders are all aware that the fate of wild salmon runs and the fate of wild steelhead runs are inextricably linked: what kills the salmon also kills steelhead; what will preserve, restore and multiply the salmon will also preserve, restore and multiply steelhead in the same water systems. Beyond that, all Pacific salmon will come to the fly. More and more of us angle for them as excellent sport fish worthy of the same high esteem and hook-and-release practices that we bestow on steelhead.

To summon the powers of the Endangered Species Act is to summon great forces.

Conservationists through great political and legal effort have invoked the act off behalf of the northern spotted owl in Washington, Oregon and northern California. The owl is the indicator species for old growth forests, the forests of amazing ecological complexity that began growing before the British thought it worthwhile to put a tax on colonial tea. If the owl is not surviving, all the other creatures dependent upon the entire old-growth ecosystem are not likely to survive—not as wild creatures. That includes steelhead, salmon and cutthroat and other sea-run trout.

In the debate over spotted owls, fisheries are rarely part of the focus. Instead it's trees and owls versus loggers' jobs, mill owners' profits and the export riches of Weyerhaeuser and the other giant timber companies. But fisheries will benefit greatly if the pernicious effects of clear-cut logging of old growth forests is stopped or dampened. The logging along near streamside is bad enough. Shade disappears. Creeks get chewed to pieces by heavy equipment. Jammed debris under the force of storm waters creates "blowouts" that bulldoze creek channels and spawning habitats, straighten out meanders and increase the downhill pitch of creeks. The intense and often crude road building necessitated by loggers streams, increases runoffs, erodes hillside and avalanches huge piles of dirt, rock and trees into water courses.

IT'S AMAZING HOW NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN TO GET SERIOUS WHEN THAT SWORD IS BRANDISHED. ITS BRIGHT TIP TENDS TO CONCENTRATE THE ATTENTION OF THOSE WHO THINK THE EARTH WAS CREATED FOR THEM TO RIP UP AS THEY WANT.

Moderating the damage from logging cannot but help our fisheries.

But the spotted owl controversy and the controversy beginning to brew on how to manage the Columbia and Snake Rivers to save salmon have called up some nasty spirits. These have to be reckoned with before anyone says, easily, let's use the Endangered Species Act.

The timber interests and new farming and power interests on the Columbia-Snake system are shaking their fingers at "elitists"—that is, anyone who disagrees with them. Fly anglers are well acquainted with the term. Seek to banish bait fishing in trout waters? You are an elitist, against the common man. Seek to preserve wild fisheries? You are an elitist. Ask for stock-and-release fisheries? You are an elitist.

It is an argument to expect and to be met. If it is elitist to preserve wild fisheries and old growth forests so that they will exist long after all of us are dead, then so be it: Elitism then is an honorable, moral activity.

Timber interests and suddenly agriculturalists and industrialists also are now beginning an intense effort to have Congress change the Endangered Species Act, so that economic interests have to be considered equally with the interests of a species about to disappear. The aim is to turn the act into an Endangered Loggers Act or an Endangered Irrigators Act or an Endangered Aluminum Workers Act.

That effort has to be faced, fought and overpowered.

The Endangered Species Act is our act of last resort, the best and last power we can call up when science, logic and morality otherwise fail before the power of special economic interests willing to sacrifice entire ecosystems and the fish and other animals in them to dictates of personal profit.

The act is our sword. As long as we have it, we do not always have to draw it in order to persuade others to listen to our concerns, the preservation of anadromous fish and the ecosystems that nurture them. And if we must, as we have on the Columbia-Snake system, we can unseat the act. It's amazing how negotiations begin to get serious when that sword is brandished. Its bright tip tends to concentrate the attention of those who think the earth was created for them to rip up as they want.
GUIDES: PART OF THE PROBLEM?

I have neither fished B.C.'s famous steelhead streams, nor flyfished with a paid guide. After reading John Farrar's vituperative response to Stan Young's observations in "B.C. Rule Changes Miss the Mark" (The Osprey, Issue No. 7), I plan to keep it that way.

In short, I am going to do my best to avoid being part of the problem, which Mr. Farrar himself describes as "too few fish to divide between too many anglers. . ." For now, I'll stay away from "Steelhead Paradise" and search for quieter waters, without a guide.

I don't expect Mr. Farrar to lie awake at night, wondering if I'll reconsider. With the new B.C. angling policy going into effect, I'm sure his business is thriving. As we all know, the theory of supply and demand is well represented in all aspects of our sport.

I would hope, however, that Mr. Farrar will henceforth spare us the self-emolishing prose, extolling the virtue of the professional guide. He works for a buck just like the rest of us. That doesn't excuse his demand for his angi-occupation or his customers, but because he earns his living commercially exploiting flyfishing and the steelhead resource, he deserves to shoulder part of the blame for the problems of our sport and its prized resource. Based on the absence of letters from other guides, "senior" or otherwise, my guess is that Mr. Farrar's peers had the humility to accept their share of the this blame with grace.

Incidentally, Mr. Farrar's personal invective against Stan Young was misplaced and contrary to my conception of the steelhead flyfisherman's tradition. A modicum of civility has to be our standard, both on the water and off. Stan deserves much credit and many thanks for attempting to preserve a fragile resource and the beauty and mystique of a sport that is rapidly sinking in an ugly, muddled river of endless new products, glossy brochures, videos, books . . . and professional guides. We would all do well to learn from Stan's example.

Charlie DeJong
Wenatchee, Washington

Ed's Note: The Osprey welcomes contributions and letters from its readers. We solicit pieces about steelhead and related anadromous fisheries that aim to inform our readers with facts. We are interested in news about the fisheries and events that affect them. We are interested in science about the fisheries. We are interested in the politics of the fisheries. We are interested in profiles of persons who have labored to improve the fisheries and fishing techniques. We are interested in new angling methods. We are not interested in Joe- and I-went-fishing stories.

A MOST GENEROUS OFFER

I am strongly in favor of The Osprey's call for an international steelhead conservation organization. I agree with you that it should be comprised of interested anglers (and others) regardless of how they fish. It should have the welfare of the steelhead as its goal.

If such an organization is formed I pledge the following for a minimum of five years:

1. $500 per year personal/company membership.

2. $750 per year in retail value of steelhead and other fishing related books for use at auctions, banquets, etc. for fund raising.

3. Free advertising space in Salmon Trout Steelheader and Flyfishing magazines to the tune of several thousand dollars.

4. Occasional use of the mailing lists of both magazines at no charge for fund raising for specific conservation goals. This list is about 50,000 anglers, the majority of which have fished for steelhead.

Currently there are many fine fisheries conservation groups but not one that is specifically dedicated to steelhead, with the possible exception of the Steelhead Society.

The steelhead is doing surprisingly well considering the threats that face it. There are great numbers of fish available to anglers. But the problem seems to be a continual encroachment of hatchery fish in place of wild fish. This appears to be very serious in respect to long term health of the resource.

I want to see an organization with teeth, even something approaching Greenpeace in dedication to its goals. It should be political and not afraid to take on big enemies.

Frank W. Amato
Frank Amato Publications
Portland, Oregon

Our address: The Osprey
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All submissions, including letters, should be typed, triple-spaced, with generous margins. Please include a short biography with each manuscript. No manuscripts will be returned; so keep a copy. Illustrations will be returned if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

We pay only in good will and pride of authorship. We are a small volunteer outfit with little time and no secretarial help, so we cannot indulge a letter exchange about the parsing of your prose. Therefore, we shall edit for space, accuracy, and of course, for libel and invasion of privacy.

We look for letters with a keen point and information to impart.
Ralph Huth, a member of FFF, represents the Washington Fly Fishing Club on the board of the Washington Environmental Council. The Council is a prime sponsor of Initiative 547. Ralph argues around the West for steelhead and other trout.

What do we do when our elected representatives fail to take adequate steps to save the environment, when government leadership fails or caves in to special interests?

We raise hell, write letters, picket the capitol and let politicians know that their days in office are numbered. We need to do these things. Political activity is good citizenship. And who knows, a few legislators might pay attention.

Another, and possibly more effective, course of action seen with increasing frequency in Washington State is the citizens’ initiative. One which recently met the certification requirements for inclusion on Washington’s November ballot is Initiative 547.

Called the Balanced Growth Enabling Act, Initiative 547’s official ballot title will be:

“Shall state growth and environmental protection goals be implemented by measures including local comprehensive land use planning and development fees?”

In effect, voters will choose between the initiative and the Growth Management Act (GMA-HB2929) passed in Washington’s last legislative session.

Space prohibits a detailed discussion here of both Initiative 547 and the GMA, but we can highlight a few fish-critical differences which may assist Washington voters in making a good decision on election day.

Let’s look first at wetlands protection:

Wetlands are one of Washington’s most important assets. They provide the benefits, among others, of fish and wildlife habitat, flood control, open space, recreational facilities and water quality enhancement. Under current federal, state and local regulations, Washington continues to lose up to 2,000 acres of wetlands each year. Half of the state’s wetlands have already been lost to agriculture, commercial and residential development.

Despite a concentrated effort by numerous citizens’ groups, the Washington legislature failed to pass a wetlands bill during its last session. Instead it passed the GMA. The GMA addresses wetlands as “critical lands” and leaves their definition and designation to county discretion, with “guidelines” for their protection to be provided by the Department of Community Development.

Initiative 547 uses the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service definition of wetlands. It broadly describes them as lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems and specifies attributes which can be used to identify lands in question.

Critics of Initiative 547 claim that this definition is too broad for regulatory purposes. They would rather use the more restrictive U.S. Army Corps of Engineers/EPA definition (“swamps, marshes and bogs”) which severely limits lands eligible for protection.

To prevent further wetland loss and restore wetlands and environmentally sensitive lands (including fish and wildlife habitat), Initiative 457 requires statewide planning in conformance with definite goals and policies. Each local government would have to develop a wetland activities permit program applicable to activities, buffer zones and associated streams. The initiative carefully spells out activities to be regulated.

To prevent potential conflicts between preservation and development, the initiative further directs the Department of Ecology to develop a four-tiered wetlands inventory rating system. The top tier would contain wetlands of statewide, regional or national significance, and in all probability would include areas like the Nisqually Delta, Padilla Bay and Bowerman Basin. While the initiative leaves further definition of each of the remaining tiers to the Department of Ecology, it anticipates that the remaining three tiers would identify wetlands with characteristics in a descending order of significance, based upon functional value and vegetative diversity.

Initiative 547’s concern for wetlands preservation is further demonstrated by its directive that the Forest Practices Board and the Department of Ecology shall jointly adopt, within 24 months of the initiative’s effective date, appropriate forest practices rules to protect wetlands. The initiative’s conservation goals are worth of repeating here:

- To use water resources in an efficient manner consistent with the public interest.
- To protect and improve air and water quality.
- To conserve, protect and use environmentally sensitive lands wisely.
- To conserve and restore fish and wildlife habitat, including riparian and migration corridors, to prevent loss of native fauna and flora, and to assure bountiful and diverse wildlife for generations to come.
- To manage surface waters to protect stream channels and water quality from altered runoff patterns and storms.
- To prevent overburdening the optimal carrying capacity of the local environmental resource systems, such as soil, biological production, diversity, fresh and salt waters, air quality, food and power supplies.

So, how does Initiative 547 differ from the Growth Management Act?

The most significant difference is that the initiative’s planning goals apply statewide, and...
INITIATIVE 547
(Continued from page 7.)

are immediately effective and enforceable at the time of the initiative's passage. The GMA's goals are advisory and apply only to 12 counties within the state.

The initiative creates a regional growth management panel for each side of the Cascades to review and approve comprehensive plans prepared by counties, cities and other local governments within those regions. The GMA provides no independent review of local plans to assure conformance. Wetlands receive much attention in the Initiative. No effective wetlands program exist in the GMA. Initiative 547 encourages local governments to develop joint and regional plans. In the GMA, regional planning exists only for transportation.

Initiative 547 requires that development regulations achieve compliance with the goals and elements of the Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan. The GMA contains no comparable provision.

Initiative 547 requires adoption, by 1992, of wetland protection regulations for forest practices. Wetland protection regulations are not addressed in the GMA.

The initiative removes many of the restrictions that the GMA places on the imposition of developer-paid impact fees and permits reassessment.

According to David Bricklin, environmental attorney and a principal drafter of Initiative 547, the thousands of voters who petitioned to get the initiative on the ballot are telling special interests and slow-moving bureaucracies that Washington voters want growth management right now.

"The days of waiting until next year to do a little bit of work now and then to improve our environment—those days are over."

NYMPHING FOR WINTER STEELIES

John Sager, as associate editor of The Osprey, helps produce the newsletter with desktop publishing routines, barely understood. His editing function requires an occasional check of the editor's spelling amid much soft cursing at the mysteries of software programs. Better to leave such work to youngsters, and go fishing.

Come the first week of December and most steelhead flyfishers are off the river. The fish are slow to move to the fly, the water is too cold or too deep, or too fast, on and on go the excuses.

Nonsense. The big rainbows are crazy for deeply-fished nymph patterns and I have taken some big fish in 34 degree water that fought as well as any summer fish.

I learned in New Zealand that all the good fishers there fish winter rainbows with nymphs. And they do extremely well. In two winters of nymphing for steelies in the Northwest I've seen no reason to doubt that the method works just as well here.

There is a major difference, however, having to do with the number of fish in the rivers. Kiwi winter rainbow populations number in the tens of thousands whereas our steelhead numbers are severely depressed. Which means that water selection is extremely important: The flyfisher must be willing to search out his favorite stream to find spots that will reliably hold fish when he's fishing.

Nymphing is not a swing-and-search method; the fly must come pretty close to the fish, else hookups are rare. This may be easier said than done as it requires lots of walking and patient searching, particularly along rivers whose courses and bottom contours tend to change from year to year. And small rivers are best, such as Washington'sRaging, Wallace, Sultan, Carbon and Hoko, to name some that I have fished or scouted.

Presentation and line control are the rest of it. (I have no evidence that the nymph size

A COUPLE OF TANGLED LOOPS IN YOUR LEFT HAND WHEN A 12-POUND WILD HEN IS SLASHING DOWN AND AWAy CAN CAUSE NOTHING BUT GRIEF.

A couple of tangled loops in your left hand when a 12-pound wild hen is slashing down and away can cause nothing but grief. But the take is soft and gentle, the indicator usually moves only slightly. As it is moving toward the angler it is essential to have minimum slack in the line between rod tip and the fish; thus the need for fast and smooth line retrieval and this probably requires as much practice as any part of the routine. A couple of tangled loops in your left hand when a 12-pound wild hen is slashing down and away can cause nothing but grief. On the other hand, having nearly all of these takes occur (Continued on page 9.)
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT:
THE VIEW FROM THE TOP

John C. McGlenn is Chairman, Washington Wildlife Commission. As one might expect, he is an avid hunter and fisher, yet one deeply concerned about the many non-game aspects of wildlife management. John has a personal passion for wild fish in small streams. As commission chairman and a principal in a major northwest engineering firm, he finds scant time to pursue steelhead with his flyrod. So we are especially grateful for his willingness to provide this article, typically dashed off late one weekend when he might have been fishing. (Readers are reminded that in Washington the Wildlife Department manages only steelhead and trout, among anadromous species, not salmon, the latter being the province of the Department of Fisheries.)


The Washington Department of Wildlife has been going through an important evolutionary process during the past ten years. The two driving forces have been the need for greater funding and for broad-spectrum resource management in a rapidly developing region. It is clear that we must succeed in both areas if we are to maintain our Northwest quality of life as many of us know it.

Washington is the latest experiment among the 50 states where industrialized society is being challenged to genuinely save its precious natural resources in the face of well financed development. The states that have lost include California, Florida, New Jersey and many other eastern and midwestern states. Two states that seem close to winning are Missouri and Oregon but they haven't yet faced the intense development pressures that Washington is feeling.

The Wildlife Commission has some clear positions that it thinks can make our state a winner, but only if the public agrees and chooses to support these positions.

Our October 1988 Wildlife Action Agenda stated that "The state of our wildlife is a sentinel, a warning to us of the condition of our environment. Its value must become pervasive, so everyone will come to appreciate its importance to our quality of life." It went on to say that all citizens should support wildlife financially at a basic level and that wildlife should be elevated to a higher level of importance in land use decisions.

Let's look briefly at funding. It not only makes sense that if the department is doing what the public wishes, people will tell their legislators to support greater funding for the department. However, we are confronted with a "chicken or egg" situation because without additional funding, the department each year becomes more restricted.

Since 1933, the department has been funded primarily by "users" fees, i.e. hunting and fishing licenses and taxes on sporting goods. Today this accounts for about 70 percent of the wildlife budget but the "users" are only 20 percent of our population. The other 80 percent, through the general fund, contribute less than 15 percent of the total. But because everyone benefits from wildlife—imagine Washington without it—the department needs "baseline funding," i.e. funding from the general population of at least the same magnitude as that generated by the traditional "users," the license buyers.

Here we have a major state agency charged with the responsibility to understand and be guardians of more than 600 native wildlife species, many of which are threatened and endangered, but the state provides only one-tenth of one percent of its general fund to pay for these responsibilities. We cannot manage all of the state's wildlife resources by relying primarily on license fees. That day is gone. We must quickly rectify this inequity.

Now let's shift to the other side of the equation, the broad spectrum of resource management that must be visible to earn the confidence and support of the public. Since it is impossible without new funding to implement needed programs to show the public, we must rely on the mechanism that is available to us. That is the commission process of setting goals, policies and objectives for the department.

After failure, in 1986, of an initiative to fund wildlife projects, the department helped support

John C. McGlenn

Nymphing (Continued from page 8.)
within ten to thirty feet of the angler is one of the principal joys of this fishing method.

My own records are brief, covering only one season, but the numbers are reassuring and I plan to do a lot more. Here are some stats:

Dates logged: January 20 thru March 30
Number of outings: 8 (6 hours max. each)
Fish hooked: 20+
Fish lost after five minutes or more: 7
Fish off within 30 seconds but well seen: 4
Fish landed/released: 7
Size range of released fish: 8 to 16 lbs (est.)
Fish type: all wild hens.

Nymph patterns/sizes: Halfback, Damsel, TDC, Hare's Ear, Hare & Copper, Black Widow, Olive Dun, 8s through 14s.

Best days: six different nymphs hooked six fish.

Oddity: Smallest fly (#14 TDC) hooked largest fish in coldest water (34°).

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WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT
(Continued from page 9.)

A successful bill that made the department's
director part of the governor's cabinet, provided
some general funding for operations and
strengthened the Wildlife Commission's role
in setting department priorities.

The commission then listened to the public,
department employees, leaders in organized
conservation groups and in state government.
From this testimony and our own strong
feelings about natural resource management
and recreation, we developed goals, policies
and objectives to provide direction for the
department.

Various quarters evidenced strong feelings.
Some traditional hunting and fishing groups
feared loss of emphasis on the sports they
cherished. Other wildlife enthusiasts, the non-
hunting/fishing groups, did not believe that their
concerns would ever receive proper
consideration from an agency which was
traditionally focused on hunting and fishing.

Both were wrong. In truth, each of the six
commissioners is absolutely committed to
traditional hunting and fishing pursued in an
ethical and responsible manner.

We all absolutely agree that the Department
must care for all species and that depends upon
maintaining habitat and controlling harvest.

We are asking the people of Washington to
rally with us to achieve our goals and
policies. We also ask that they aid us in
refining and updating what we want the Wildlife
Department to do. The Commission links the
citizens to the Department of Wildlife. We
are pledged to faithfully represent the public
with enlightened management of our wildlife
resources.

The Commission agrees that protection and
rehabilitation of habitat is the number one
wildlife issue. We prefer natural production
of wildlife to artificial. We want to protect the
Genetic integrity of the various wild races of
fish and mammals in our state.

Personally, I have long championed
protection of the small streams and rivers and
their wild fish populations. I believe that these
are the arteries of our ecosystem. It is here
we can win the war to protect our environment.
If we can develop our land for living, farming
and industry and still maintain healthy stream
systems, then we truly understand and practice
good land and water use and resource harvest
principles. We have made progress in this
arena but have a long way to go. More public
action is needed.

I also believe that we should expect
responsible outdoor ethics from all citizens.
We must elevate wildlife to a higher level of
importance. We must emphasize each citizen's
stewardship for wildlife and habitat. This
sounds idealistic. But it is achievable. It should
be tackled aggressively.

Readers who might want to contact any of
the commissioners may do so by calling our
staff in Olympia at (206) 753-3070. We
welcome personal contacts with the public.

THE SKAGIT RIVER:
KEEPING IT WILD AND SCENIC

Phil Wallen is executive director of River
Network. A Stanford University graduate, he
has worked tirelessly to obtain funding for river
lands acquisition to help make the Wild and
Scenic Rivers program a reality. Phil shows
us the workings of this unsung program and
provides reason why we should get behind it.

Nineteen seventy eight was a good year
for Washington's Skagit River. Congress
designated it a National Wild and Scenic River,
together with its tributaries the Sauk, Suiattle
and Cascade.

It didn't come easy. It took a long campaign
by the Skagit River League, a congregation
of anglers, boaters, environmentalists and local
residents. They were responding to some very
big threats to the world-famous river: dams,
nuclear power plants, housing subdivisions.
They got a lot of support from people who
cared about steelhead, salmon, eagles and a
beautiful stream.

When Congress acted, the people in the
League breathed easier. Acting upon the
designation, the Forest Service established a
Wild and Scenic River corridor from Bacon
Creek down to Sedro-Woolley, averaging about
1/2 mile in width. In 1983 the Forest Service
came out with its River Management Plan,
calling for a series of measures to protect the
world-class qualities of the Skagit.

That, essentially, was the last that was heard
of the Wild and Scenic River.

The River Management Plan was laid on
the shelf. Skagit County continued to approve
housing subdivisions, cabins continued to sprout
along the river, and timber companies
proceeded to clear-cut within the river corridor.
(With the Japanese log market booming, even
the elder that predominates along the Skagit
is merchandized.)

Winter-time traffic on the river proliferated,
to the point that commercial rafters, drift-
boaters, jet boaters, fly-fishers and eagle-
watchers began to jostle each other. By 1990
it was clear that Wild and Scenic designation,
by itself, was not sufficient to protect the Skagit
River and its tributaries. Even though the
Forest Service had finally designated a single
ranger to "manage" the four rivers, the Forest
Service didn't seem to have a formula for
protecting the resource. Because the Wild and
Scenic corridor on the Skagit was entirely
private land, the Forest Service had no power
to regulate land-use. Their program was pretty
much limited to communicating with user
groups, civic groups, and county and state
agencies.

The Skagit River has become a classic
element of the great dilemma of river
conservation today: the inadequacy of the
National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act as a
means for conserving private land river
corridors.

The act was designed to protect rivers from
dams, diversions, and other facilities that
require a federal permit. It does that job very
well. However, it gave the managing agency
(whether the Forest Service, BLM, or National
Park Service) no powers whatsoever to limit
or regulate private land uses, including forestry,
mining and home-building. The Forest Service
cannot zone private lands, cannot require
building permits, cannot prevent a clear-cut
on private land, not even within the Wild and
Scenic River corridor. In fact, some have called
Wild and Scenic a "sheep in wolf's clothing":
It scares private land-owners to death, but it
gives the government no powers over them.

With one exception: Wild and Scenic
designation does give the managing agency
(Continued on page 11.)
WILD AND SCENIC
(Continued from page 10.)
authority to purchase lands and conservation
casements.

This authority is severely limited, however, in four ways: (1) lands can only be purchased
within a narrow corridor, (23) they may not exceed an average of 100 acres per mile, (3)
purchase funds must be appropriated by Congress, and (4) in areas where government
ownership already exceeds 50 percent of total land ownership, the Act forbids condemnation.

(Very little land has been condemned under
the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Indeed, the
Act has been one of the nation’s great
preventers of condemnation. By preventing
dams and reservoirs, Wild and Scenic
designation has saved millions of acres of land
from condemnation by the Corps of Engineers
and others.)

The land acquisition tool has been used very
sparingly on Wild and Scenic rivers. However,
the Skagit River League felt that it might be
the best hope for conserving the Skagit. How
ever else to protect privately owned lands that are
critical for eagle habitat, for fishing and boating
access, or to protect the natural beauty of the
skagit shoreline? If the public wants to keep
such lands in their natural state, or wants to
use them actively, then perhaps the public must
be prepared to pay the price.

On the Skagit, there are several public
agencies that might have an interest in
acquiring lands: the U.S. Forest Service,
Washington State Parks, the Washington
Department of Wildlife.

The Skagit River League elected to focus
its efforts on the Forest Service. Their
reasoning was that Congress had mandated
the Forest Service to protect the Wild and
Scenic River, and land acquisition was the only
effective tool the Forest Service possessed.
The League began to encourage the Forest
Service to purchase selected lands on the
natural shoreline of the Skagit.

The League was agreed, however, that lands
on the Wild and Scenic River should only be
purchased from willing sellers. There should
be no condemnation. If an individual or
company owned an eagle roost on the Skagit,
and the public felt that land should not be
developed, then the landowner should have
the option of selling to the public.

In January of 1990, that exact situation arose.

Libby Mills, a wildlife biologist working in
the Skagit Valley, learned that Crown Pacific,
Ltd. was planning to cut an eagle roosting site
within the Wild and Scenic corridor, near the
confluence of the Sauk and Skagit Rivers. Libby
notified River Network.

We met with Crown Pacific to negotiate a
purchase of the land. During our discussions,
we learned that Crown Pacific owned eight
different sites on the Wild and Scenic river,
including a couple that were commonly used
by anglers and boaters. Crown Pacific didn’t
want to cut within the Wild and Scenic corridor,
but neither did they want to manage their lands
for wildlife and recreation.

The solution: Crown Pacific gave River
Network an option to purchase eight properties
on the Sauk and Skagit. (One involved the
purchase of a conservation easement only.)

Basically, Crown Pacific gave River Network
a year and a half in which to come up with
public funding to buy any or all of Crown
Pacific’s lands.

River Network took this proposal to the
Forest Service, the Skagit River League, and
Congress.

The League embraced the proposal
enthusiastically as a good first land acquisition
by the Forest Service:

The lands are a valuable resource; they are
cheap, they would conserve about 10 miles of
Skagit and Sauk River shoreline; they are
offered by a willing seller, and if they aren’t
acquired by the public they will be cut.

The Forest Service, surprisingly, was less
supportive. They were reluctant to acquire
lands on the Skagit because the very concept of
Wild and Scenic rivers has become
controversial.

Together, River Network and the Skagit
River League approached the Washington
dlegation to Congress, requesting an
appropriation of $1.5 million from the Land
and Water Conservation Fund to enable the
Forest Service to purchase the Crown Pacific
lands under option.

The project received good support from
Congressmen Al Swift and Norm Dicks of
Washington and was funded by the House
Appropriations Committee.

The Senate soon will conduct its hearings
on the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

We hope it will match the House by
appropriating funds for the Skagit National
Wild and Scenic River. Senator Brock Adams,
who sits on the Appropriations Committee,
will be the key. His support is vital to move
this project along.

If the Forest Service acts, it will not have
to carry the whole burden.

Seattle City Light is also in the business
of conserving lands on the Skagit River. As a
condition for the relicensing of its dams on the
river, the utility will be spending approximately
$26 million to purchase and conserve several
key areas that are critical for wildlife and
fisheries.

Add to that continuing purchases by The
Nature Conservancy, Washington State Parks
and the Department of Wildlife.

All in all, there are grounds to be optimistic
about the future of the Skagit River and its
tributaries.

It all comes down to citizen action: The
rebirth of the Skagit River League gives the
river a voice and a champion. By blending the
energies of anglers, boaters, eagle-watchers,
environmentalists and local residents, the
League can halt the downward slide of the
Skagit River environment and begin to restore
its world-class quality.

(Interested readers may contact the Skagit
River League c/o Herb Sarge, 1605 Bow Hill
Road, Bow, WA 98232. Ed.)
QUICKLY . . .
(Continued from page 3.)
The earliest the hatchery could come on-line is late 1993. The $4.9 million is for construction only; operating costs would come from a later budget request.

Heavy hatchery plants, already going on in the Skagit, have been Chambers Creek fish and Chambers Creek eggs would be used at the new facility. Biologists intend that the returning adults would not compete with late winter wild fish nor those hatchery fish already coming in the summer . . .

SKAGIT EAGLES
The Forest Service has completed a study of the effects of recreational activities on wintering bald eagles along the Skagit River. After internal review, the study will be opened to public comment. Conducted from 1984 to 1989 by Dr. Mark V. Stalnaker, the study grew out of the 1978 decision to place the Skagit in the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers program and the eagle’s classification as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act. The study’s findings will influence Forest Service planning for public use of the river, including eagle observation. The law gives the Forest Service authority to regulate surface water uses in coordination with other government agencies, to meet Wild and Scenic River objectives. The Skagit now has the largest concentration of wintering bald eagles in the lower 48 states and therein lies a problem.

IN THIS ISSUE:
- Extinction on the Columbia?
- NPPC and Hatcheries
- Hatchery Hallucinogens
- Unwrapping the ESA
- Growth Management
- Nymphaing for Winter Steelies
- The Commissioner Speaks
- Wild and Scenic Skagit
- Letters
- Quickly (News)

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There is mounting concern among knowledgeable eagle-watchers that the great birds are now in danger of being loved to death. Recent winters have seen an ever-larger number of commercial float trips making the run from Marblemount to Rockport, with enthusiastic, paying birders aboard. The object is to see as many eagles as possible, close up as they feed on salmon from the gravel bars. But the human presence forces the birds to retreat to their riverside perches, or to seek haven even further inland, and seriously interferes with their feeding routines. Juveniles are doubly impaired as their mating and bonding rituals—vital at this stage of their development—are thrown out of whack.

The experts don’t yet fully understand these behavioral patterns, but there is little doubt that the constant procession of well-intended boats poses a real problem for the birds. These winter feeding and mating rites are believed to be critical for an eagle population that is struggling to come back from dangerously depressed numbers. One way to address the issue would be to ban floats and restrict eagle-watching to the banks . . .