Patty Murray, Washington’s junior senator, has been an ardent protagonist for assuring federal protection for the Columbia River’s Hanford Reach under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Sen. Murray updates her position to include her impressions of the June 21, 1997, Mattawa U.S. Senate field hearing. The editors wish to thank the senator for responding to The Osprey’s invitation to use these pages for her important message. Readers are encouraged to write to the senator to support her efforts and also to express their views to the state’s senior senator, Slade Gorton, who has been less enthusiastic about federal stewardship for the Reach.

Every so often we are faced with an opportunity to leave a truly lasting legacy for future generations in our state. These moments have defined our state’s rich history. We have just such an opportunity now.

The people, river, and lands at Hanford are at a critical point. We have the chance to give the last free-flowing stretch of the Columbia River the national recognition it deserves. We have an opportunity to preserve a natural treasure for our children and grandchildren by offering the best possible protection to the Hanford Reach: We can declare it a Wild and Scenic River.

On June 21, nearly 900 people came to Mattawa, Washington, for a U.S. Senate field hearing on S.200, my legislation to name the Reach a Recreational River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

I have been pushing for an official Senate hearing to discuss ways to protect this valuable resource for two years, and was pleased we could finally have all views aired on this issue.

Witnesses testifying at the hearing included local residents, commercial fishermen, irrigators, scientists, conservationists, and other experts representing all sides of the issue. In addition, more than 125 people signed up to speak during the public comment session.

My bill was developed two years ago by a diverse panel of local people who wanted
the best protection for the Hanford Reach and the area’s economy. The group developed a bill that established a Wild and Scenic River, expanded interpretative and recreational opportunities, and created other river enhancements. It suggested an advisory group comprised entirely of local people to guide the Fish and Wildlife Service in management of the Reach.

I recognized many years ago that the Hanford Reach was an issue that would challenge the people of central Washington, and one that would require foresight and leadership. I have been impressed with the response of the community. Now is our chance to do the right thing for the Tri-Cities. Never again will this area have an opportunity to define itself in such a fundamental way.

The question is not whether we should protect the Reach. Everyone is in agreement on that. The question is the level of protection we should give it. Will a Wild and Scenic designation offer more protection, or will a state-owned river managed by a commission with four of the seven members from county government offer more protection? I think there is little doubt that national designation is the proper way to go.

Management of a Recreational River under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is very simple and straightforward. The Fish and Wildlife Service is required to protect the “Outstanding Features” of the river. The White Bluffs, islands, archeological sites, and Chinook spawning beds all qualify as Outstanding Features of the Hanford Reach.

The real purpose of a state-county plan is to ensure maximum flexibility to protect near-term economic development opportunities—not environmental resources. We don’t have the luxury of looking into a crystal ball and predicting what changes will occur in this region of our state in the future; however, even with the best intentions of the current local government, commissioners change, economic pressures increase, and strong protection plans can be jeopardized.

Allowing incremental uses of the Reach, such as development, to fund other vital state and county programs, would reduce protection of this area. The Wild and Scenic Rivers System, which has been around for nearly thirty years, is a stable alternative that would not be endangered as time goes on.

It is critical that we promote a strong economic vision for the mid-Columbia communities and the whole state. We all want the Tri-Cities to prosper with a diversified economy. Will a Wild and Scenic River designation help or hurt that prospect? I believe S.200 offers not only the best environmental protection, but the best economic package, too. It does so because it specifically protects existing irrigation outfalls, existing transmission lines, existing roads, existing dam licenses, existing water rights and instream flows, and other existing uses. It provides expansion of recreational, educational and tourist activities. And it provides an enormous “quality of life” draw to businesses and families seeking an affordable, clean, beautiful place to live.

A Wild and Scenic River designation also helps the Northwest economy. We are facing tremendous costs associated with protecting threatened salmon species. Offering the strongest, most certain protection for the Reach gives a virtually free way to save wild salmon in the Columbia/Snake river basin. If these salmon runs have a permanent home on the Reach, science has shown they can potentially re-colonize streams that are less healthy throughout interior Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. This will bolster our fishing industry in the river, along the coast and up to Alaska. It will help us resolve disputes with our Canadian neighbors regarding salmon allocation. And it will help fulfill the treaty obligations of the federal government to Native Americans.

Another economic consideration is the Grant County Public Utility District, which provides low cost power that is also key to attracting business. The Vernita Bar Agreement, entered into by the PUD, federal and state authorities, provides necessary river flow to optimize salmon habitat. By building on the foundation of the Vernita Bar Agreement, S.200 protects PUD interests in salmon recovery.

There is one other issue to keep in mind: farming on the North Slope. Alternative legislation would decry this area to the counties. If we all agree on the need to protect the Reach, then we must be very careful about the adjacent lands, particularly the areas near the White Bluffs. Anyone who has boated the Reach or flown over it has seen the damage caused by irrigation and/or leaking irrigation canals.

At the very least, it is vital we maintain protection of the lands inside the “Red Zone,” the area designated by the Bureau of Reclamation as too sensitive to be developed. Through that protection, we will not only bolster the Reach, we will also be conserving habitat for dozens of sensitive and threatened species. Scientists have already discovered more than thirty new plants and insect species found nowhere else on earth. My bill does not address the issue of adjacent lands, but I am willing to discuss the options in the course of our debate.

The support for designating the Reach as a Wild and Scenic River is growing. Last year, the governors of Washington, Oregon and Alaska endorsed federal Reach protection. The Northwest Power Planning Council has endorsed this designation. Likewise, a number of Tribal governments have supported continuing federal protection of the Reach. Many other wildlife and conservation groups, including Trout Unlimited, the Nature Conservancy, American Rivers, and the Audubon Society have also joined the effort to save this stretch of the Columbia.

We’re at a crossroads.

Protecting the Hanford Reach is not about local vs. federal control. It is about giving a national treasure the best possible protection we can and promoting our long-term economic and cultural interests. Let us seize this opportunity to offer the best and highest form of protection to the Hanford Reach. Let us enact legislation establishing the Reach as a Recreational River within the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

We need to think ahead. We need to act in a responsible manner. Only then can we be sure the Reach is preserved in such a way as to be enjoyed by people long into the future. The hearing in Mattawa showed there is as great deal of common ground on this issue. I felt a very strong case was made
WASHINGTON STATE'S WILD SALMONID POLICY: THE GENETIC UNDERPINNINGS

Bruce Crawford, Assistant Director of the Washington Fish and Wildlife Department, is head of the department's Fish Management Program. In this article he responds to an invitation from The Osprey in which we offered the Department an opportunity to articulate the major components of the new Wild Salmonid Policy for an audience of interested and involved stakeholders, i.e., our readers.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has been developing criteria for a Wild Salmonid Policy (WSP) for the past several years. These efforts have involved public input and workshops as well as discussion with other government agencies, tribal representatives, and within our agency. The Osprey has invited us to continue these discussions in a series of articles.

The development of the WSP is just the first step in the process. Determining the best paths for implementation need continued discussion and public input.

One important criterion for determining appropriate fish management strategies is a basic understanding of the available scientific data. WDFW began studies of the genetic population structure of steelhead in the late 1980s. More than 200 collections from naturally spawning steelhead populations were taken, primarily from the western part of Washington.

This article will describe the results of that work and serve as basis for subsequent articles.

Genetic Diversity

For the past several years the Department has been characterizing the genetic diversity of steelhead and rainbow trout throughout the state. Electrophoretic analysis has been the primary genetic methodology used in this effort. Pacific salmonids also exhibit a hierarchical pattern of genetic diversity. We divided the two steelhead MALs into genetic diversity units (GDUs). A genetic diversity unit is a group of genetically similar stocks that is genetically distinct from other such groups. The stocks typically exhibit similar life histories and occupy ecologically, geographically, and geologically similar habitats.

The coastal MAL was divided into five GDUs. The southwest Washington coast GDU is comprised of Grays Harbor, Willapa Bay, and the Columbia River streams draining the Willapa Hills. The Columbia River streams were included in this group based primarily on geography. The south Puget Sound GDU contains steelhead stocks found east of the Elwha River up through the Snohomish River. The lower Columbia River GDU includes the stocks from the Cowlitz River east through the Wind River. The north Puget Sound GDU, which includes the stocks in the Stillaguamish River northward, was originally combined with the other Puget Sound steelhead. But, as further collections were made, we felt that these stocks warranted separate GDU status. The Nooksack River collections were the most distinct within this group. The fifth GDU is the north coast which contains all the rivers from the Elwha River west and down the coast to Grays Harbor.

The inland MAL was divided into four GDUs. The mid-Columbia GDU includes the Wind and Klickitat rivers. The stocks within the Yakima River comprise a GDU. The Walla Walla and Snake River stocks in Washington form another GDU, and the remaining Columbia River steelhead were put into a single GDU.

In general, the genetic diversity patterns among the coastal MAL collections do not form discrete boundaries by geographic region. Also, the genetic distances among collections are not large compared to the steelhead in the inland MAL. Possible reasons for this high overall similarity are usually due to intermingling of steelhead populations in the Columbia River system.
currently being debated, but include the homogenizing of allele frequencies due to gene flow from hatchery-origin steelhead.

**Relationships of Summer-Run and Winter-Run Types**

Steelhead GDUs that have both summer-run and winter-run steelhead are primarily northern Puget Sound and lower Columbia River. We have a single mixed summer/winter-run collection from the north coast. The three Deer Creek summer-run collections were genetically more similar to north Puget Sound winter-run stocks than to summer-run stocks in other GDUs. The summer-run and winter-run relationships among collections in lower Columbia River are similar to those in northern Puget Sound. The two run timings are more similar to each other than to collections in other GDUs. Our interpretation of the genetic relationships is that summer-run and winter-run types are polyphyletic, i.e., that run timing characteristics developed multiple times in the places where they occur. We concluded that the run timing characteristics of coastal MAL steelhead have evolved from a single evolutionary line. Even though steelhead with summer- and winter-run timing are from the same evolutionary line, significant allele frequency differences indicate that they should be treated as distinct stocks.

**Using Collections from the 1970s to Examine Hatchery Gene Flow**

Steelhead from Washington were one of the first salmonids to be studied for genetic population structure using protein electrophoresis. Some of the collections from the Ph.D. work of Fred Allendorf and NMFS occurred before locations were stocked heavily. Even though some locations were planted with hatchery fish before genetic sampling could occur, the amount of successful gene flow (introgression) over the last 20 years can be examined by comparing the genetic distance between the primary hatchery source, Chambers Creek Hatchery (CCH), and collections made approximately 20 years apart in similar locations. Thus, we can examine the genetic impacts due to the interbreeding of hatchery and wild fish as a result of the management practices of stocking hatchery origin steelhead into wild populations.

One situation that would make the genetic distance between the hatchery and wild collections appear smaller is the sampling of progeny of hatchery X hatchery crosses that appear wild. If these fish do not interbreed, but are included in the collection, the genetic distance would appear smaller than its true value.

If the genetic distance between the CCH collection made by WDFW in 1993 (CCH 93) and the most recent collections made from 1993 - 1996 are smaller than the genetic distances between CCH93 and the collections made in the early 1970s, then it is likely that gene flow from the CCH strain into the wild population has been greater than the genetic drift or selective forces that are responsible for the differences. On the other hand, if the genetic distances between CCH93 and the 1990s collections are about the same or greater, then gene flow from CCH into those populations has been small relative to other forces shaping allele frequency characteristics of populations.

We chose wild-fish collections from Allendorf in four GDUs: northern Puget Sound (six collections), north coast (eight collections), south coast (one collection), and lower Columbia River (two collections). We calculated genetic distance between the CCH steelhead strain and the wild steelhead collections based on seven variable loci.

The genetic distance comparisons between CCH93 and wild collections from Allendorf and WDFW varied between geographic regions. In general, the WDFW Strait of Juan de Fuca collections are more similar to CCH93 than those of Allendorf, but many of the WDFW collections in other geographic areas had genetic distances equal to or greater than the distances between CCH93 and the earlier collections. The genetic distance between coastal MAL steelhead populations and the CCH strain has not become markedly smaller over the past 20 years.

This indicates that the amount of interbreeding between hatchery and wild steelhead has been at an insufficient level to increase the genetic similarity of hatchery and wild steelhead in most areas. However, several exceptions do exist.

**Loss of Among-Stock Diversity Due to Hatchery Introgression in the Lower Columbia River**

We have just completed a basic look at this issue. The among-stock diversity is often measured through gene diversity analysis. However, for many of the GDUs there are divergent subgroups. Because of this, the gene diversity as measured overall would be greatly influenced. Another way to get quick assessment of among-stock diversity is to examine the genetic distance at which collections cluster together on a dendrogram (one-dimensional picture of genetic distances). If most of the among-stock diversity had been lost in a GDU, the collection branches would all come together near the far right of the dendrogram.

There does not appear to be any noticeable difference in the amount of among-stock diversity in seven of the GDUs. The upper Columbia River and Snake/Walla Walla GDUs did not contain enough collections to make a comparison.

**Examining Gene Flow Between Resident and Anadromous O. mykiss.**

Little is known about the amount of gene flow between resident (freshwater) and anadromous forms of O. mykiss (rainbow trout and steelhead). Understanding whether these two life-history types represent sympatric forms of O. mykiss populations is important for conserving the genetic diversity of this species.

Documenting the amount of interbreeding between these two forms is part of the challenge in defining Genetic Diversity Units and is major question in defining ESUs. In general it has been thought that where there is more or less unrestricted access to marine waters, the anadromous form of this species would predominate. However, it has been suggested that angling has removed older resident fish and freshwater habitat degradation has not favored long freshwater residency.
Past work has documented that the resident form of *O. mykiss* developed from the anadromous form. The evidence for that conclusion was the greater similarity of the two forms within MAUs and GDUs than with the same life history types in different locations.

We used genic disequilibrium analysis to examine 22 collections from locations identified by WDFW biologists where resident and anadromous forms of *O. mykiss* may coexist. Because most of the collections we analyzed consisted of juveniles, the life history of the parents, whether anadromous or resident, is unknown. This analysis looks for nonrandom association of alleles at loci. Significant results may indicate assortative mating of the same life history type (summer-run, winter-run, resident, anadromous) but also could be due to the sampling of progeny from a few adults and other factors.

We found nine significant tests which is much more than expected by chance. Further analyses, such as the strontium level from the otolith core (noted below for one collection) may provide the data to determine the cause of the disequilibrium.

Another tool is being developed by WDFW staff to determine whether a juvenile's mother was resident or anadromous. Significantly more strontium is deposited in the eggs of mothers who have been anadromous. Thus, the juvenile fish can be classified by the life-history of the mother by the core strontium level of the otolith (ear bone). The paternal life-history cannot be determined in this manner.

The reproductive relationships between anadromous and resident forms of *O. mykiss* are still unclear. Some of the streams we have characterized show no evidence for reproductive isolation between resident and anadromous forms, while in other streams there appears to be evidence for distinct gene pools. The amount of gene flow may vary among streams and the amount of genetic differentiation could be dependent on genetic drift.

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**FEDERAL STEELHEAD LISTINGS VS STATE RECOVERY PLANS: WHAT’S WRONG WITH “VOLUNTARY COOPERATION”?**

**Pete Sovern**

Pete Sovern is past chairman of the FFF Steelhead Committee.

On August 11, 1997, responding to petitions from a host of conservation groups, including the Federation of Fly Fishers, the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service listed many West Coast steelhead stocks as threatened, endangered or candidates for such listings under the Endangered Species Act:

- southern and central California stocks endangered
- upper Columbia River stocks endangered
- Snake River stocks threatened

For the listed stocks, NMFS must immediately begin developing recovery plans. Equally significant, NMFS delayed listing decisions until December on the remaining West Coast steelhead stocks. Officially, NMFS delayed action to gather additional data. More realistically, the delay may permit maturation of steelhead conservation plans being developed by Washington and Oregon which could provide a fig leaf for NMFS to avoid listing stocks in the lower Columbia, some areas of Washington, and coastal Oregon.

NMFS's decision to delay is troubling, but not surprising or unprecedented. NMFS did not want to list steelhead and had shown itself willing to use smoke screens to avoid listings. As one might expect, the states, harvesters, hatchery operators, timber and agricultural barons, irrigation districts, hydro power and other powerful interests share NMFS's aversion to listings: They wish not to change the way they do business. Conservation and environmental organizations are frustrated when NMFS hides behind voluntary, unproven, unenforceable and non-scientific steelhead conservation plans offered as substitutes for biologically warranted listings.

Oregon and Washington have been developing voluntary conservation plans. Optimists applaud the state initiatives. Realists, including the Steelhead Committee of the Federation of Fly Fishers, see a darker motive—heading off listings which would entail a significant level of federal intervention, mandatory standards, enforceable recovery plans, and restrictions on land use practices, hatchery programs, harvest regimes and so on.

In Washington, the Fish & Wildlife Commission approved unanimously a visionary draft Wild Salmonid Policy (WSP) to recover wild stocks. Under the proposed WSP, the state commits to increased protection for wild stocks and a more active role in habitat/land use management. The WDF&W will manage for spawner escapement rather than harvest. Further, to reduce genetic risks and harvest pressure on wild stocks in mixed stock fisheries, the state will reduce dramatically hatchery programs and subject the remainder to cost/benefit analysis. Although much of what the WSP proposes to fix is outside WDF&W’s statutory authority, the WSP commits the fish and wildlife department to no revisions in those areas where it does exercise authority, such as harvest, hatcheries and hydrology permits. Still, the WSP depends ultimately upon voluntary compliance in many of the steps critical to salmon/steelhead conservation and recovery.

Oregon's plan, Governor Kittherber's Salmon Recovery Plan, like its Washington counterpart, is built on promises and commitments to cooperation between government, private enterprise, agriculture/timber interests and citizens. Additionally, the state commits some $35 million to recover coho. Conspicuously, the plan is not endorsed by the American Fisheries Society or any other organization of professional scientists or fisheries biologists.
The real question is whether voluntary, community-based programs are responsible substitutes for federal protection under the Endangered Species Act based upon the biological status of the fish. After all, salmon and steelhead are in trouble because of what we have done to them and their habitat. The ESA provides mechanisms for enforcing the courts if necessary, to force changes that benefit listed species.

The Steelhead Committee of the FFF and many other conservation organizations have supported both the Washington WSP and Oregon’s Kitzhaber Plan as necessary steps, complementing listings where biologically warranted, to wild salmon recovery. Both plans sound great. But they are inadequate substitutes for listings because neither contains enforceable standards, nor criteria for decision-making, resolution authority, clear responsibilities, decision-making mechanisms, compulsory dispute resolution procedures and most importantly, a real voice for salmon.

Federal listings, on the other hand, mean standards, enforceable actions and, if necessary, court mandated resolution procedures.

Oregon and Washington officials were encouraged by Oregon’s success in heading off coho listings with Kitzhaber’s Plan. It provided NMFS a convenient cover, an exit ramp, to listing coho. NMFS kept Oregon happy and avoided upsetting any of the big culprits in the salmon crisis—timber, agriculture, irrigation, hydro, urban development, wet-land conversion, hatchery programs, etc.

If it worked for coho, why not steelhead? Oregon is now busily transforming the “Salmon Recovery Plan” into a “Steelhead Recovery Plan” through the simple expedient of replacing coho with steelhead where appearing throughout the salmon plan. NMFS has encouraged that conclusion by postponing the listing decisions for most of Oregon and Washington steelhead stocks—a clear signal that NMFS will accept gladly the voluntary approach on steelhead as a substitute for listings.

When you think about it, in practice, what is so new about Oregon’s voluntary, stake-holder plan? Isn’t that what we already have? Interest groups push their programs in various forums. In the past, irrigation districts, timber harvesters, commercial fishers, urban developers and hydro managers lobbied local, state and federal regulatory bodies and offered “balanced” proposals to use rivers, forests, uplands and fish. The petitioners always offered some sacrifice on their part (albeit very small). They got their way and salmon and steelhead gave a lot.

Under the Oregon “new” approach, interest groups will dickor among themselves, give a little when necessary, “share the pain,” factor in economic dislocation and inconvenience and then keep on doing what they were doing to begin with. As before, salmon or steelhead are not at the table. There are no performance criteria or standards, nor even any mechanisms to compel compliance with any voluntary plans adopted in this cooperative, community based, share-the-pain process. Significantly, there is also no accountability for failure, even for extirpations.

Thus, unless the defenders of habitats and salmonids are aggressive and wide awake, business as usual proceeds as usual—the petitioners get all or most of what they sought; the fish get what’s left. What’s left has not been enough in the past—that is why hundreds of salmon and steelhead stocks are already extinct. There is no reason to believe it will be enough in the future—which is why the rest will someday be gone.

The Oregon plan commits money to salmon recovery—$35 million. You and I could go to lunch on $35M, but let’s put this in perspective.

Bonneville Power Administration claims to have been spending something on the order of $370 million a year for the past ten years for Columbia salmon/steelhead. The Columbia and Snake have fewer salmon and steelhead today than ten years ago, even after spending $3.5 billion????????? Pardon me if I am a bit skeptical about the impact of Oregon’s commitment of $35 million. If it is anything like BPA’s money, not much of it will get to the fish or to fish-friendly activity.

The Oregon plan has a nice ring, “Salmon Recovery Plan,” but the proof is in the sauce. It looks like the same old apple sauce to me. Let’s see if Oregon walks the talk. To secure acceptance of the Oregon Plan as a substitute for coho listings, Kitzhaber promised to push his coho team to develop more detailed plans for protecting key coho habitat in state forests and to revise the membership of the scientific panel for the Oregon Board of Forestry. Talk is easy. Action is what counts. So it is instructional to look at this same Board of Forestry’s action in the case of Oregon’s management of the Tillamook and Clatsop state forests, under the Plan.

The Board’s legislative mandate is to manage the Tillamook and Clatsop forests for “greatest permanent value for Oregon.” But with the plan’s ink hardly dry, and the governor’s promises fresh in memory (promises to protect coho habitat and to include fisheries scientists in the decision making), the Board set aside this mandate and designated timber production as the management goal! It also ignored the governor’s inconvenient commitment to salmon and promise to NMFS, not to mention the citizens of the region. The Board also specifically rejected pleas from individuals, and from virtually every important conservation organization, to include fish and wildlife values in the management goals for the forest.

So much for voluntary plans.

In discussions with Oregon state officials, the Steelhead Committee has been told to take heart—there is still plenty of time to make input to specific forest management decisions and cut blocks to protect fish.

Let’s get this right: The state offers a salmon recovery plan, acceptable to NMFS, to avoid listing. Then in its first official
"Steelhead should be listed and we should recognize that listings are not the end objective but rather the beginning."

actions taken after NMFS accepts the plan, the state simply sets the plan off to one side (it is inconvenient, after all) and proceeds with business as usual. With this kind of recovery plan nobody will have to worry about salmon or steelhead for long—they will become extinct.

At least in the Washington WSP, WDF&W, backed by a determined Fish & Wildlife Commission, developed a science-backed policy with criteria and standards. The Fish & Wildlife Department and Commission committed to a real recovery plan. The WSP, unlike the Oregon Plan, the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission plan ("Gravel to Gravel") or any of the NMFS recovery efforts, has been subjected to peer review by the American Fisheries Society. At a minimum, before accepting any voluntary plans, NMFS should subject those plans to rigorous, science based, peer review.

Cooperation and burden-sharing are essential to salmon and steelhead recoveries, but the management plans must be based upon sound science and the biological needs of salmon and steelhead. The insuperable obstacle for voluntary, cooperative plans is that they ARE VOLUNTARY. Without standards, criteria, accountability, dispute resolution procedures and enforcement mechanisms, salmon and steelhead simply won’t make it. Steelhead should be listed and we should recognize that listings are not the end objective but rather the beginning.

Listings are precursors to recovery plans with standards and criteria, enforceable, if necessary, through the courts.

A salmon recovery plan that permits unbalanced management of state forestlands to the detriment of salmon, or fails to implement specific promises made to NMFS in order for the plan to substitute for listings, as in the case of Oregon's Kitzhaber Plan, is a fiction. Oregon's experience demonstrates perfectly why voluntary, so-called community based salmon recovery plans are insufficient, stand-alone strategies for salmon and steelhead recovery. Such plans are no substitute for federal threatened/endangered listings.

The Kitzhaber Plan is the same old system. It is simply an updated version of methods that western states have perfected—promise change; reassure the public that state agencies have “learned” and that the present situation is a “wake-up call." Then simply continue with business as usual. Voluntary plans, such as Kitzhaber's, may try to look like a new wave, but, in reality they are just aused car with a fresh coat, adjusted odometer and after-market cruise control.

The Washington Wild Salmonid Policy, although a step in the right direction, is untested. Further, the level of gubernatorial and legislative support in Washington is, at best, uncertain. Disquietingly, Governor Locke (Washington) has not been a strong friend of salmon in his first months in office. He has not displayed a commitment to wild fish, responsible management and expanded funding for the Wildlife Department. Additionally, Locke failed to re-appoint Roger Contor, the commissioner who led the fight for a responsible WSP. The governor’s office has made no secret of Locke’s desire to replace the current Director of Fish & Wildlife (Bern Shanks, Ph.D., appointed by the commission, not the governor) with a director more compliant to the governor’s office and tribal and commercial harvesters. Shanks has been a driving force behind the science-based WSP and strong protection for Washington’s wild salmon, steelhead and trout stocks.

Voluntary plans are not sufficient in and of themselves nor are they acceptable substitutes for the biological status of stocks. Simply put, neither the Washington nor Oregon plans cut it. If there is pressure to mow down Oregon’s trees (the state's most valuable and "permanent" natural resource), imagine the pressure to continue business as usual in agriculture, urban development, hydro operations and other exploitative enterprises.

The decision to list Washington and Oregon salmon and steelhead should be based on the biology of the fish—not political expediency. ▲

IN REMEMBRANCE
OF BRUCE GERHART

Pete Soverel

My friend Bruce Gerhart a featured author in this issue of The Osprey. Bruce died on Sunday, November 9, 1997. With his passing, steelhead lost a defender.

Steelheaders mourn the passing of an enthusiastic, accomplished angler, legendary caster and fearless wader. I lost a friend. His family asks remembrances be sent to The Steelhead Society of British Columbia (240 1140 Austin Avenue, Coquitlam, BC V3K 3P5).

Bruce resisted my invitation to write a reminisce about Vancouver Island:

"What should I write about."
"I'm not a polished writer."
"What can I say that hasn't already been said."

I insisted. I did not know and he did not share how sick he was. Bruce has written about his favorite river—his secret, best loved river—the exquisitely beautiful and most challenging river in all of steelheaddom—the Heber. It is typical that Bruce would share with steelheaders everywhere this wonderful stream.

Nine years ago, as Sean Gallagher, Howard Johnson, Jerry Bullet and I prepared for a month long sampler of Vancouver Island summer steelhead fishing. Bruce generously shared with us the most complete guide to summer steelhead on the Island I have seen—ANYWHERE. Bruce shared all his secret spots, learned in decades of angling and as a timber cruiser walking the island surveying timber—little streams and bigger ones, individual holes, hidden deep in the woods. He annotated each river or spot with cryptic side bars:

"Haven't been there in years, but, it used to fill up with little silver bullets about..."

"This is a ROUGH canyon to get down into—take someone else's rod—but when you get down there will be steelhead anytime after June 1..."

"It used to be a wonderful spot, but..."

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THE NEW CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE 

Howard Johnson

The FFF Steelhead Committee has agreed to give our outgoing and charismatic chairman Pete Soverel a somewhat reduced role in our activities. We are greatly indebted to him for his effective and energetic leadership in support of wild salmonids. We know he has spent countless hours in these efforts that could have been used for more enjoyable activities, e.g. fishing. We know he will not abandon the cause but certainly he has earned a little respite. Thanks, Pete.

So I have taken the job, not to replace Pete (an impossible task), but to try to continue the legacy that he has promulgated. Where do I hope the Committee will expand its efforts in the future?

I could simply say work to save the wild salmonids. How do we do this? First we should work to have the Wild Salmonid Policy adopted by supporting Bern Shanks and the Fish and Wildlife Department and pressuring the politicians and the Wildlife Commission to approve Alternatives 2 or 3. This is a minimum effort if we hope to save our wild runs.

Secondly, we need to see that regulations are adopted that will support the principles of the Policy. An essential part of this effort is to get the legislature and the department to budget and organize an effective enforcement section. The enforcement effort has been chronically underfunded with our enforcement agents spread too thin and overworked. Thirdly, we need to have a strong political and educational organization with all our allies: the fly fishing clubs, Washington Trout, and other environmental organizations that have views similar to ours. In the past our efforts have often been fragmented and have not had the political power we should have had. An example of what we can do when we are well organized was the passage of Referendum 45. It passed in every county in the state.

Fourth, and last for now, is that we need to maintain our excellent, informative publication, The Osprey. This newsletter has been called the best of its kind to describe the real problems that our wild runs face and what is needed to save them. Such excellence must be maintained.

So much for now. I will talk about these and other areas that our committee will be concentrating on in future issues of The Osprey. Collectively we have accomplished much in the past but we still have much work to do.

REMINISCENCE:
VANCOUVER ISLAND'S HEBER RIVER 

Bruce Gerhart

Bruce Gerhart, a long-time resident of Campbell River, British Columbia, is an outdoorsman, a noted angler and a retired timber cruiser. He had already fished most of Vancouver Island's streams and rivers before they saw the chainsaw. This is his account of how it really used to be.

For me, rivers of all sizes and shapes, and even creeks and rivulets, have always been a source of wonder and fascination.

Living where I do, in Campbell River, British Columbia, there has been plenty of opportunity to sample other venues, lakes, the ocean or estuary. But the call of moving water around large round boulders, sections of pocket water to test casting accuracy, and deep emerald-green pools which hold fish when the run is in — this is simply too much to resist and I am committed to yet another day on one of these Island streams.

Actually there are several small to medium sized rivers that fit this description but the stream I talk about here is the Heber River, located about 50 miles west of my home in Campbell River. The Heber begins, or at one time began, right on the east/west divide of the island with a small creek known as Crest Creek. Unfortunately for the Heber watershed Crest Creek has been diverted for industrial purposes into the Campbell River water supply. The upper Heber above the Gold River highway also has been diverted by the construction of an earth filled dam, but apparently this flow of water is controlled. Below the highway several creeks find their way into the valley and the Heber takes on a truer form.

The fish of the Heber are wild summer steelhead with an occasional stray hatchery fish from other systems.

Now that the logging slash has regenerated, it is no longer possible to spot fish from steep access points: One must approach the pools more closely.

The fishing in the Heber starts immediately above the lower canyon which is close to angling year around. There are nine or ten pools from this point to the base of the upper canyon which can only be fished properly by actually swimming the stream at a few strategic places, a mean trick if the river is at anything much more than a low summer flow. Above this upper canyon are at least another eight to ten holding pools most of which also hold fish when the run is properly in.

Our Ministry of Environment has snorkel surveyed the Heber since the mid 1970s and one of the highest counts was nearly 700 fish in the mid 1980s. Since that time some counts have fluctuated between 170 and 400 fish. Summer 1996 produced a swim count of better than 350 fish so perhaps we will have an upswing for the next few seasons.
These numbers may seem low to some but it should be remembered that there are only three or four miles of river in which to look for the fish. The Heber in good flow would probably support four to eight rods without one feeling greatly crowded.

Angling methodology is unrestricted with the exception of a ban on all organic bait. The season is also regulated by a complete angling closure from November 1st to May 1st. This is up to now probably the best thing that has happened to the Heber as its summer steelhead were at one time harvested all winter long.

Of course catch and release angling of all wild steelhead in British Columbia is now mandatory.

I have had numerous opportunities over the past thirty years or more to visit the Heber and I like to think that I’ve learned a few things about its summer steelhead.

My first few visits there were conducted with a full complement of gear almost none of which was related to my present day methodology. There were spoons, spinners, imitative baits (salmon eggs, etc.) and various concoctions of blended wool tied to hooks.

Having had several experiences with fish rising at my float, even rising at the V created by the mainline cutting the surface of a particular pool, I got to thinking more and more about the use of flies. But, do I was, I just kept merrily catching fish on gear that didn’t allow them to show themselves at their best.

It wasn’t until 1973 that I decided to adopt fly fishing in its various forms and exploit the true potential of the Heber summer runs. And with the help of mentors like Rod Haig-Brown, Martin Touey and others, many new opportunities came my way.

Heber steelhead demand a certain amount of respect with regard to their disposition, as a spooked fish in the head or tail of a pool will most certainly put any others on their guard and will be extremely difficult to raise to any sort of fly.

"...his very first cast was accepted with a completely confident head and tail rise by what proved to be about a 4 lb female."

In the low clear water of summer and early fall I believe the single most effective method to approach the fish is to stalk them from downstream with low floating dry flies fished dead drift. An alternative to this is still from downstream but with a weighted nymph also fished dead drift. Should these two methods fail it is usually advisable to give the fish rest and move on. The fish is now marked and can always be looked up later in the day for another attempt.

At certain times a lone fish may be found resting in a pocket or small pool, usually near or in the streamy water at the head. A carefully placed cast with almost any buggy looking dry fly (Steelhead Bee, Irresistible, Humpy, etc.) will usually produce a leisurely head and tail rise.

The fish of the Heber are not large, it is a rare fish indeed that exceeds 10 pounds, in fact I have found that eight pounds is a large fish for this stream. However even the 3 1/2 to 5 lb average fish can keep one’s hands very full and his mind racing to match their attempts to escape.

Sensible gear for the flyfisher on the Heber would probably be rod and reel combinations in sizes four to seven with a floating line and probably a spare reel spool with a sink tip line. I like longish leaders in true lower summer water of the Heber and for the larger quieter pools use 12 ft or more with points usually 2 or 3X.

In the early 1980s I began guiding occasional guests on the Heber and this led me to an ever more fascinating realm on this beautiful stream. I was now able to step back and watch others perform.

One day—I remember it indelibly—a somewhat elderly chap in his early seventies decided he wanted me to take him to the Heber and catch a steelhead on the fly. He didn’t tell me until we were better than an hour’s drive from home that he had a “bit of a heart condition“ and wasn’t able to cover too much ground, which of course is often necessary on the Heber. We arrived at one of the more accessible spots on the river, got out of the truck, looked over the bank and were astounded to see better than a dozen fish lying in the pool right below the road. I took the old gent by the hand and helped him down the rather steep and brush covered bank and got him into position so he could cover the first two or three fish in the tail of the pool. We had spoken of his casting ability while travelling and he assured me he was entirely capable of putting his fly gently over the nearest fish. I left him then and went back up to a higher vantage point to watch the fish’s reaction and to direct my guest’s cast by hand signals and verbal instructions.

I needn’t have bothered because his very first cast was accepted with a completely confident head and tail rise by what proved to be about a 4 lb female. My guest of course was so taken aback by the fish’s response that his reaction turned out to be perfect; he did nothing at all except stare, mesmerized. I was not as like-minded and bellowed at him to tighten his line. He did this with what I thought to be disarming expertise, came tight to the fish and played it as well as anyone but the most advanced expert could have done. I knew my guest had some years of trout fishing experience but his handling of a very scrappy summer run rather surprised me.

We rested the pool then as it had been disturbed a good deal by the antics of the hooked fish. Twenty minutes or so later we were back in position as before and my guest began placing his fly over the nearest fish; first one drift, then another, then several more with no response. I instructed him to stay low if he could and work his way on up past the two or three fish in the tailout toward the body and head of the pool. For some reason none of the fish seemed to be spooking even though my guest made one or two sloppy presentations and sure enough when he got properly into the body of the pool and threw up into the streamy water another fish raced out and took his fly down. This time the pool was really disturbed as fish began
swimming all over it with a couple even exiting the tailout.

It would be a gross understatement to say my guest was happy with two summer steelhead taken on floating flies. By this time we were both fearing for his “bit of a heart condition” and took time out to have a long lunch celebration in the town of Gold River. Lunch over, we decided to do a short bit of water just a few hundred meters above the first scene of action. By the time we had fished that distance it was plainly evident that my guest had had a full day and we decided to head back to Campbell River.

Of course this sort of day is not a common occurrence in pursuit of Heber summer runs. There are all too often many days when nothing seems to be right and no fish are risen, but even on the fishless days the Heber is as interesting a place to be as any I know.

Among the many experiences I have enjoyed is another guest I had, this time from Japan and his name Y. Saito. I asked him what the Y stood for and he repeated at least three times to me that it stood for Y, pronounced “Y” or “why.”

This chap had learned to flyfish for small trout and to a lesser extent cherry salmon in his homeland. But just to be sure we visited a grassy ballfield in Gold River to check out his casting ability. Finding him not badly wanting in this, I gave some brief instruction on the handling of hooked fish.

Off to the river we went, only to find it desperately low and the fish literally afraid of their own shadows. The river had had almost no rain for nearly two months and to raise steelhead in it to any sort of fly was no doubt going to be a chore of large proportion. Try we did however and fished and scouted pool after pool in the hot September sun, some with a fewullen-looking fish nervously cruising up and down; even a maple bud landing on the pool surface would create unhappy movement.

We took a break from the Heber then and went out into Discovery Passage near Campbell River to look for some early fall salmon. Near evening of the second day long awaited storm clouds gathered over the North Island and it rained hard all night long.

Next morning in the predawn mist we were on our way back to the Heber. Upon arriving we found the river to be somewhat higher but still nearly six or eight inches below good fishing height. Of course we had to try anyway and to our surprise found that at least some fish had moved from their previous stations into sections of pocket water and minor pools where no fish were seen two days before. Saito’s casting spotted at least three fish out of these temporary holds before we came to yet another fish we found lying in a small pocket.

A number of drifts with dry flies brought no response from this fish, so Saito decided as long as it stayed where it was he would continue to try. We tied a No. 8 weighted Spade to his tippet and he got on to his hands and knees and got into position slightly above the fish and began a series of casts and drifts. After a good 15 minutes of this with no response I wandered off a little way upstream to “Polaroid” more likely looking water. I must have been 10 minutes into my investigations when I looked up and there was Saito doing battle with that fish which turned out to be a 5 lb male. Truly a case where persistence paid off in spades. That incident taught us a lot about staying with a fish as long as it showed no sign of spooking.

We caught other fish on Mr. Saito’s tour of Island steelhead streams but we both agreed on the last day of his trip that his memories of the Heber ranked highest in his mind.

Of course his last day on the Heber contributed heavily to his state of mind as more fall rain had brought the river up to really good fishing height and the fish responded beautifully to the new conditions by eagerly accepting small wet flies fished dead drift with a floating line or short sink tip.

One final incident on that day capped what turned out to be a really great week for my guest. We found a fish lying in very shallow water under a logging bridge in the upper river. We figured the best plan of action would be a well placed dry fly from below the fish. Many drifts later the fish showed no response, even when a Spade fly was drifted over it a number of times.

My guest took a new position above the fish and tried a small dark wet fly. When this failed to work I hollered from the bridge for Saito to try an orange fly. This he did but the fly was a huge Practitioner on a 2/0 hook and the first drift to the fish set it off like a lightning bolt. I couldn’t even follow it with my eye.

We left the bridge then and carried on downstream where Saito rose a half-dozen or more fish, beaching four of them with one male being eight pounds or more, a really good fish for the Heber.

It was getting late so we headed back upstream toward the logging bridge, on the other side of which our vehicle was parked.

Upon crossing the bridge we decided to check and see if our friend the fish had found its way back to its original lie, and sure enough there she was, right in the same place.

As time was closing in on us I suggested we present the fly (a weighted Spade) right from the bridge. This we did by swinging the short sink tip like a pendulum and depressing it two or three yards above the fish. We watched the little fly tumble along the bottom toward the fish, lost sight of the fly momentarily but saw the fish working its jaws. Saito lifted rod on instinct and had his fish hooked.

The problem of landing the fish was simple. I just held the rod while Saito ran to the far bank, climbed through the brush into the river and I dropped the rod down to him where he finished playing the fish.

These are only two stories about the Heber River and its possibilities. For some, only big water and big fish represent an ideal, but I know of very few small to medium summer steelhead streams where the fish can be observed being themselves in the low clear water.

Heber River is a treasure that must never be taken for granted. With a rapidly growing population on Vancouver Island and elsewhere we must try to restore lost water back to the mainstem and possibly establish a fly-only regulation as well.
Editor,

I read with some concern your “Chairman’s Mend” in the May 1997 issue. For the record I would like to attempt to give your readers a slightly different perspective.

The issue we presently face in attempting to manage the steelhead sport fisheries on world renowned rivers such as the Bulkley, Kispiox, and Babine is maintenance of the quality of the angling experience that attracts us all there initially. It’s not about fish, although without them there is obviously nothing to debate. It’s about limiting the numbers of anglers so we don’t follow the inevitable path that so many have warned us about: more anglers, more guides, more boats (bigger and faster ones at that), more illegal guides, etc. — all competing for a fixed supply of fish and space.

It would be a simple matter to avoid all the controversy about licence fees, the “right” number of guided and non-guided rod days, and resident vs non-resident use by simply walking away from classified waters legislation, leaving those rivers to find their own equilibrium in the market place. Believe me, the idea is not unattractive to those of us who are charged with the responsibility of fixing everyone’s problem(s). But, who would win under those circumstances? Would you be happy to have the Bulkley no different than the Vedder or the Cowichan or the Alice? Would you continue to fish here or would you abandon us in favor of Kamchatka or Chile where quality sport is still available? Are the streams which support the largest wild steelhead on the planet worth something extra or do we homogenize them too?

In dealing with the Skeena steelhead issues we must not forget the evolutionary pathway of the 1990’s. Classified waters legislation was enacted in 1990, largely in response to rapidly escalating speculation in guide licences pursuant to the unprecedented steelhead returns of the mid to late 80’s. The ink was no sooner dry on the legislation when the runs crashed and the fish supply issue was catapulted into the spotlight. The total preoccupation for first half of this decade then became the supply, rather than the demand side of the equation, as you have alluded to in your article. Thankfully, the steelhead runs have rebounded modestly in the past two years, largely as a result of Mother Nature rather than the lobbyist inspired restrictions imposed on the commercial salmon fishery. Anglers have responded as well. We now have far more of them than ever before, all competing for the best times and places. At least half of those anglers fall into the class of non-guided, non-residents. In the minds of many residents there are too many and we are told we must address that concern.

The proposals now in circulation speak to maintaining reasonable numbers of anglers so that expectations of a quality experience can be met. We must move away from the all too frequent situation where out of country anglers “camp” on the prime waters for extended periods, often to the exclusion of locals. Furthermore, we are definitely going to lessen the flexibility around the current system which allows non-resident anglers to purchase any number of days on any classified waters within a two week period. That latitude has been abused badly by a disturbing number of anglers who purchase only a day or two but fish most or all days in the interval. We are talking about opportunities for all classes of licensees. However, according to our policy directives, resident anglers will get priority. The system envisioned would not be unlike that in effect for the Dean River whereby out of country anglers apply for their preferred week. Perhaps I am mistaken, but, I understood most of your members were quite pleased with how that system had manifested itself.

In a world now gone there were more fish, fewer anglers, more quiet space and folks were generally happier. The constant struggle is to maintain as much of that experience as possible. No one wants less and most want someone else to make the sacrifices. We hope to find a fair and reasonable balance where no one is denied, administratively or financially, at least an opportunity to participate in world class fisheries.

Sincerely,
R.S. Hooton
British Columbia Fisheries Section Head

Editor,
Pete Soverel made an excellent case against British Columbia’s desire to price the “average” steelheader out of the Province by raising fees too high (Osprey 29). As Pete points out so well, it was with the help of hundreds if not thousands of Americans that pressure was put on government fisheries management agencies in Canada to stop the steelhead slaughter at the mouth of the Skeena River.

American supporters of steelhead contributed tens of thousands of dollars along with merchandise and numerous letters and faxes to help organize the opposition. It is said indeed that the Province is being swayed by a few B.C. residents who can not see beyond their noses.

Sincerely,
Frank W. Amato
Portland, OR

Editor,
Regarding The Chairman's Mend article in your May issue. I started reading this and began feeling shame at being Canadian. And while I still feel it and fully understand where Mr. Soverel is coming from, I do regret that he has added greatly to the creation of enmity that he began his article by decrying. There were many questionable innuendoes and some very poor research. Thompson steelhead for example, are not intercepted during the Fraser sockeye runs but during the later run of chum salmon. Statements such as this do nothing for the cause of reasonable access for all, let alone the perception your readers might have of the on-going talks on the Pacific salmon treaty.

But let's get back to the shame. Yes, I am ashamed that this message got out at all.
We have the desperation of a tax hungry government combined with the selfishness of whoever their advisors were. I can tell you, however, that they had very few advisors and this whole $40 fee (in Canadian funds by the way) has been shelved. Why? Because of the fuss and stink kicked up by the residents of B.C. It seems that precious few had ever been consulted about this latest tax grab. Residents and businesses from my own town of Spences Bridge on the Thompson were among the many small towns, organizations and individuals who stood up and said "No. That's not right."

There will always be those who want to keep everything for themselves but hopefully, they'll always be in the minority. Fuel added to this fire will get us nowhere. Far better for every U.S. angler who ever came or planned on coming to B.C. to write to the Premier and to the environment minister and state clearly that at $40 a day they will be curtailing if not eliminating future trips here. Let's hope it doesn't come to that.

Jim Ryan
Spences Bridge, B.C.

Please write to:
Premier Glen Clark
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Honorable Cathy McGregor
Minister of Environment, Lands/Parks
Room 337, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Editor,
The Osprey, issue #29, May 1997.

I would like to express my opinion against the proposed ($40 Can., $28 U.S. plus GST) per day angling fee for non-resident Canadians on classified waters in British Columbia.

It would appear that very little logic or rationale was used in formulating this proposed regulation. The fact that it was rescinded shortly after being introduced for the 1997-98 angling season would substantiate this. The ramifications of this proposed regulation will have some very adverse effects. We will, from a conservation standpoint, lose support from our non-resident anglers. We will, from an economic standpoint, lose from those small communities — those so badly needing tourist dollars (Spences Bridge, Houston, Smithers, Terrace, Kispiox.) It makes no sense with a catch and release fishery to protect small interest groups. This regulation discriminated against people coming to British Columbia to fish. To think that all anglers coming to B.C. to fish are rich is a very stupid assumption. I know very few of my friends that could afford $42.80 per day to fish on top of their other expenses. We in North America have never subscribed to this form of regulation in our fishing and hunting and hopefully, never will. The fact that in Europe they have to pay to fish (or estate fishing) at a very high price is not a fair parallel. This is a practice developed over hundreds of years. I think it would be fair to assume a generous amount of these monies derived go directly back to their individual rivers for conservation and enhancement. This is definitely not the case in British Columbia (i.e. General Funds).

I do not think, as the government puts it, that this regulation reflects the feelings of the concerned conservationist — a dedicated steelhead fisher in British Columbia. It has been my great pleasure for the past 25 years to fish with my American fly fishing friends. I know it has been the pleasure of my peer group as well. We know how dedicated to the cause our American neighbors have been. I personally have always recognized your efforts as an outstanding contribution to our cause. To prohibit non-residents from coming here to fish by implementing these ridiculous fees is a sorry insult.

I find it very easy and with great pleasure to think back 25 years ago. I was a young man, fishing the great Skeena and Thompson River drainages for steelhead. I remember meeting and fishing with other young men of my age. They came from all over the world. They fished by the "ass of their pants." I know by relative terms they would never have been able to afford these fees that we are proposing. We must make sure that we never deprive those young men the pleasure of fishing these public waters that we have so enjoyed.

I shall hope for and do my best to influence a positive decision for the future of this regulation for 1998-9 angling season.

Please continue to keep up your great efforts and concerns for our common cause — the wild steelhead.

Ian Carruthers
Qualicum Beach
British Columbia

Editor,
Thanks to you and The Osprey staff for continuing to produce a great newsletter on steelhead conservation. Enclosed I have included a long overdue check to help support your efforts.

It appears that the state of Washington is extremely lucky to have a Department of Fish and Wildlife Director such as Bern Shanks. I only hope that Oregon's new Director will turn out to be half the fisheries advocate that Shanks appears to be.

Shank's article about steelhead management in Washington state was very interesting. I do have one question. On page two, the third paragraph, "...the entire upper Columbia may have seen a total of approximately 5,000 steelhead each year." Were there some zeroes omitted, I hope?

Shanks also states that, "Many critical problems, such as the operation of Columbia River dams, are outside the jurisdiction of WDFW." That is certainly true, but dams that kill wild salmon and steelhead, clear-cut timber harvests that destroy watersheds and water withdrawals that leave streams dry are only symptoms of the real problem; over population.

This is a problem that no one seems to want to face. As long as we continue to experience the present population growth rates, I feel we have little hope to save much of any of our natural resources, wood, oil, water, etc. Water will especially become a
very high demand item. Currently, on the Oregon Coast, communities charge head-
long into development plans without an adequate water supply. When the develop-
ment is complete the community goes to the State and claims an emergency. That way
they get to ignore environmental laws.

I recently heard a prediction that by 2020
the United States will depend on imports for
the majority of its food. Our farmland is
being covered and poisoned with asphalt.
Just two examples of what increased popu-
lation and the demands of growth are doing
to the Earth.

If the Federation of Fly Fishers and
the Steelhead Committee really wants to
have wild fish in the future, they would
probably do better to put all of their efforts
into population control. We are quickly
approaching the point where the Earth will
not sustain all the resources we value.

Sincerely,
Marty Sherman
Portland, OR

P.S. Here is a little something written by
Roderick Haig-Brown.

"It is the history of civilizations that
conservationists are always defeated,
boomers always win, and civilizations al-
ways die. I think there has never been, in any
state, a conservation government, because
there has never yet been a people with suffi-
cient humility to take conservation seriously.
This is natural enough. No man is intimately
concerned with more than his lifetime, com-
paratively few men concern themselves seri-
sously with more than a fraction of that
time; in the last analysis all governments
reflect the concerns of the people they gov-
ern, and most modern democratic govern-
ments are more deeply concerned with some
brief, set term of office than with anything
else. Conservation means fair and honest
dealing with the future, usually at some cost
to the immediate present. It is a simple
morality, with little to offset the glamour and
quick material rewards of the North Ameri-
can deity, 'Progress.'"

Editor,
Having read one of your recent publica-
tions, I have come to these conclusions…
your claim to be devout preservationist of
wild steelhead, but yet you exploit the catch
and release of the fish to the point where
perhaps you are creating more damage than
good. Catch and release practices for wild
steelhead have become increasingly absurd
by those wishing to catch as many as they
can, play god so to speak, let them go thinking
they're all right, and then brag about it to
everyone to include excessive handling as
shown in photographs. To the point, you
people make me sick! If you are really
interested in preserving wild steelhead, then
practice true conservation. Don't go fishing
for them if indeed they are becoming en-
dangered. Leave them alone especially when
they are over redds or about then. To advo-
cate a constant fishing pressure with no
sanctuary time such as catch and release
throughout the year is a shameful practice.
It should be outlawed! I believe your news-
letter is extremely deceitful on this
matter. Those of you who would
try fowl are only fooling yourself with
such antics. Indeed the hidden agenda of
selfishness.

Dr. T. J. Rathman,
Clearview, WA

Editor,
I would like to receive your steelhead
newsletter, The Osprey. I found out about
this newsletter on the Native Fish Society
homepage, when Bill Bakke gave it a rating of
"the best" in regards to steelhead, I
thought I had better check it out.

Ian Tattam
Portland, OR

Editor,
The Osprey is a splendid example of
informing the various groups and individual
fly fishers about the problems facing our
Northwestern steelhead and in many cases
providing direction towards solutions.

Yours sincerely,
R.H. Taylor
Vancouver, B.C.

Bruce's directions led us around the is-
land. Howard and I slayed 'em on the Tzitika.
I caught three other native steelhead in a
month. I have never had more fun.

Bruce's willingness to share these pristi-
ne spots with me (us) changed completely
my whole outlook on conservation. In 1989,
I wouldn't have shared as Bruce had. In
those days, I believed that secret spots needed
to stay secret. Bruce clearly thought other-
wise. He had watched as one after another of
his favorite places were ruined by
anglers, and by rapacious logging and land
use practices. Bruce held that secret spots
had no defenders because they were secret.
He told us about those special places in the
expectation that we would do something to
save them and their steelhead.

Bruce was right and I was wrong. The
lesson arising from his generous sharing has
guided me and my thinking on steelhead
conservation ever since.

One of the last times I fished with Bruce,
we shared a memorable day on the Thomp-
son in mid-October a couple of years ago.
The river was choked with pink salmon.
Dozens would swim past each minute often
times bumping into your fly line, resting in
the eddy downstream from your legs—they
were just everywhere. Steelhead and pinks
do not mix and, as is often the case when
there are lots of pinks around, steelhead
fishing in the traditional lies had been un-
productive. My own theory is that pinks
smell bad and steelhead do not like to be
near them, but I had learned quite by acci-
dent that steelhead love to hold in very
shallow water down stream of spawning
pinks to eat eggs and nymphs stirred up by
the spawning salmon.

I coaxed Bruce into going up to Martel
and floating down to the bar on the other side
of the river. I was sure that there would be
thousands of pinks spawning there. Sure
enough, the tailout was alive with pinks
spawning, fighting, splashing and cavort-
ing. Bruce, as always, insisted I fish through
first. Nothing in the usual water, but as my
fly swung across the shallow tailout in twelve
to sixteen inches of water, a huge buck
steelhead engulfed the waking fly before
bolting off across stream scattering pinks and other steelhead like a covey flush of chukars. The fish never slowed down and I broke it off as it headed down the heavy white water chute out of the run. An 18 pounder crushed my new fly on the next cast. The steelhead were thick in the Martel tailout.

On the first pass, we landed three, broke off a couple and were worked by several more. We repaired to the bank to catch our breath. I had never seen anything like it (before or since) on the Thompson where a fish or two a week is pretty good. Bruce suggested we “save” the fishing for the next day.

After all, we had hooked more fish in a morning than you could expect in a week. Bruce suggested that eight or ten to the fly was enough. Like Hell.

Not for me! “Bruce, the fish are in here. I have never had fishing like this in my life. We have the run to ourselves. I am going to keep fishing until I go through the run without a bite. You can watch, take the boat back to the boat launch or fish with me.”

Bruce watched for an hour or so and then joined me in the water and we kept fishing. We hooked fish—fifteen or twenty of them, all big, hot, early Thompson fish—until it got dark. It was less fun at the end then it had been in the morning.

Every time I drive by Martel, I think of that day remembering my friend Bruce Gerhart acknowledging to myself that, again, Bruce had been right. I had been wrong. Quality does not depend upon quantity.

I miss you friend. Save a run or two for me. ▲

...Hanford, continued from page 2 for Wild and Scenic protection, and I am committed to working toward that goal with real local input.

I will push Congress to take up my bill. I am confident we can work out some amendments to provide the best possible protection of the Reach. I pledge to work with my congressional colleagues so we can move toward that goal.

This is my highest priority, and I will do whatever it takes to ensure that this valuable resource is protected. ▲