The Naked Fish

A Publicaton of the May Valley Environmental Council — August - September 2003

King County Starts Major Cleaning of May Creek

Oh, how we wish the headline were true. A neighborhood stream is in the process of getting a major makeover, but it isn't May Creek. King County bureaucrats claim that due to state and federal regulations there is no way for them to allow May Creek to be cleaned. The picture shown above was taken on August 20, 2003. The trackhoe shown is sitting in the middle of Tibbetts Creek near Tibbetts Manor. After careful research we have determined that Tibbetts Creek is, indeed, in the same state and country as May Creek so how is that possible?

The portion of Tibbetts Creek being spruced up is in the city of Issaquah. The city of Issaquah has local politicians and a very sizeable bureaucracy that looks out for the best interests of the citizens of Issaquah. Their interpretation of state and federal laws allows creeks to be cleaned when the need arises. They recognize flood reduction and fish production as compatible goals.

The portion of May Creek that needs cleaning lies in rural unincorporated King County. There is no local government bureaucracy to look out for the citizen's best interest. There is only the regional King County bureaucracy controlled by far away urban Seattle. A main goal of the King County bureaucracy is to move as many unincorporated area residents out of King County and into the incorporated cities as possible so that King County will not have to provide any services – such as creek maintenance – to those taxpayers. They see flood maximization as a worthy goal.

King County has recently announced its intention to get rid of 218,000 unincorporated constituents by forcing them into adjacent cities. The carrot and stick approach is being used. King County is offering the first cities to sign up for the plan the tax money that is supposed to go for services to those constituents. The cities can use the money for anything they want. They won't have to spend it for services in the newly incorporated areas. Those people whose adjacent cities don't annex them will simply not receive any service from King County. At least that will put them on par with the 130,000 residents of rural unincorporated King County. The comprehensive plan already prevents them from receiving most services.

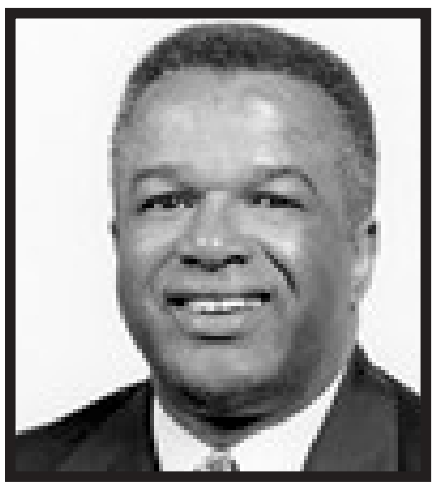
Rural Residents Snubbed Once Again By Sullivan, Sims, Maleng and Eadie

The most comprehensive look at county government since the approval of the King County Charter has been underway since February by the King County Commission on Governance. The nine-member panel was originally appointed jointly by Cynthia Sullivan, Chair of the Metropolitan King County Council; Ron Sims, the King County Executive; Norm Maleng, the King County Prosecuting Attorney; and Judge Richard Eadie, the Presiding Judge of King County Superior Court. The King County Council confirmed the appointees.

In keeping with the tradition of lack of representation for the rural areas, none of the original nine members resided in unincorporated King County. After strong protests by the Unincorporated Area Councils, the King County Council added two positions to the Commission. The positions were to be filled by a resident of urban unincorporated King County and a rural resident of unincorporated King County. The urban unincorporated member was chosen in early July.

It was not until sometime in August that the taxpayers of rural King County finally got a representative on the commission, even though several had applied for the position. Richard Bonewits, president of the Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council, now appears on the Commission's web site as a member. To the powers that be in King County, the 130,000 residents outside of the urban growth boundary are simply pimples on the backside of King County. As such they should be squeezed until they go away. Their only useful functions seem to be that of designated fall guy for the salmon recovery debacle and guarantors of open space for the use of the urban masses.

Cynthia Sullivan



Ron Sims

Norm Maleng

Richard Eadie

The urban elite that run King County are trying hard to rid themselves of any local government responsibilities and the costs that go with those responsibilities. They have already rid themselves of parks, pools, etc. They are now in the process of pawning off 218,000 residents of unincorporated King County via annexation into adjacent cities. By only appointing urban members, it is obvious that they want the Commission on Governance to rubber-stamp their continued neglect of their rural constituents.

The rural residents of King County tried hard to form their own county so that they could control their own local government functions. The Seattle elite would have none of it. They simply were not willing to give up the taxes collected from those rural residents and spent on regional, urban services. They created a comprehensive plan that prevents them from spending rural tax money on infrastructure services in the rural area. They have even gone so far as to spin the yarn that the cities subsidize what few rural services are provided. If that were the case, they would be forcing us out just as they are the urban unincorporated taxpayers. Taxation without representation is alive and well in King County.

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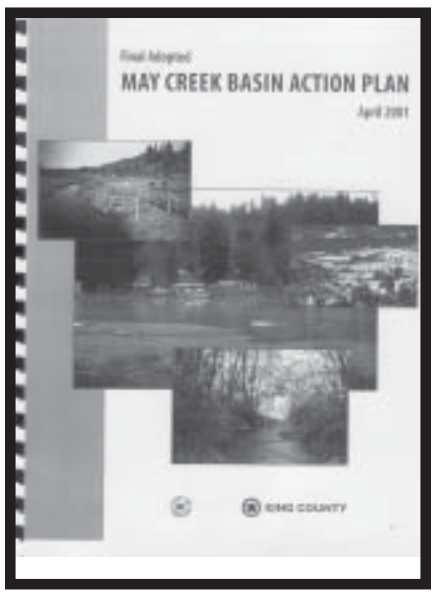
$1,127,643 and the Flooding is Worse

Listening to the politicians and bureaucrats that are King County talk about the great services they can no longer afford to provide would lead one to believe that the tax dollars we do pay them are well spent. After 40 years of dealing with King County, the property owners of May Valley know better. King County politicians and bureaucrats have been saying for years that they have the solution to the flooding problems in May Valley. The dirty little truth is that all they have provided in the way of "service" in all those years are studies, meetings, paper and new regulations that make the problem worse. When questioned about their lack of progress, they have some meetings and produce well written documents that purport to show what a good job they are doing for us. They even have the audacity to list how much money they spend on worthless projects that they pretend are helping. Meanwhile, they use the armed force of government to prevent landowners from doing what needs done.

In 1965 they couldn't find the $50,000 needed to clean the ditch. They found the money for the engineering needed to produce a plan, and they found the money to create easements to gain access to the creek, and they found the money to run an election and vote on the project, but they couldn't find the money to actually do the project.

In the mid-1970s they found the money to finance the River Basin Coordinating Committee (RIBCO) that found the money to study the problem and produce a report, but again they failed to do anything constructive.

In the late 1970s they spent money on major amounts of engineering, computer modeling, consultants, studies, public meetings and paper to produce the 1980 May Creek Basin Plan. But they didn't do any of the projects in the plan. They created some new regulations because that process doesn't require any new money, but ignored the real projects.



In 1983 they created a whole new department called Surface Water Management to solve our problems and used that as an excuse for a new tax on our properties. After 350 new bureaucrats and hundreds of millions collected from property owners, we flood worse than ever. Nothing substantive has been done. They have succeeded in spending over $1,000,000 dollars in our little valley but have still not fixed the problem. They simply consume our tax dollars to produce paper.

You can't really blame the bureaucrats. It's how they have been trained. Most have at least 17 years in our school systems. In those years they were never asked to do anything truly useful. Their job was to study and produce papers. Most do it well. It is only logical that they would transfer that training to their jobs within the bureaucracy. In recent years there has been a lot of emphasis on producing papers as a team. That increases the time needed for meetings and decreases the actual output but insures that no individual will have to take responsibility for the final product when it is used to set policy.

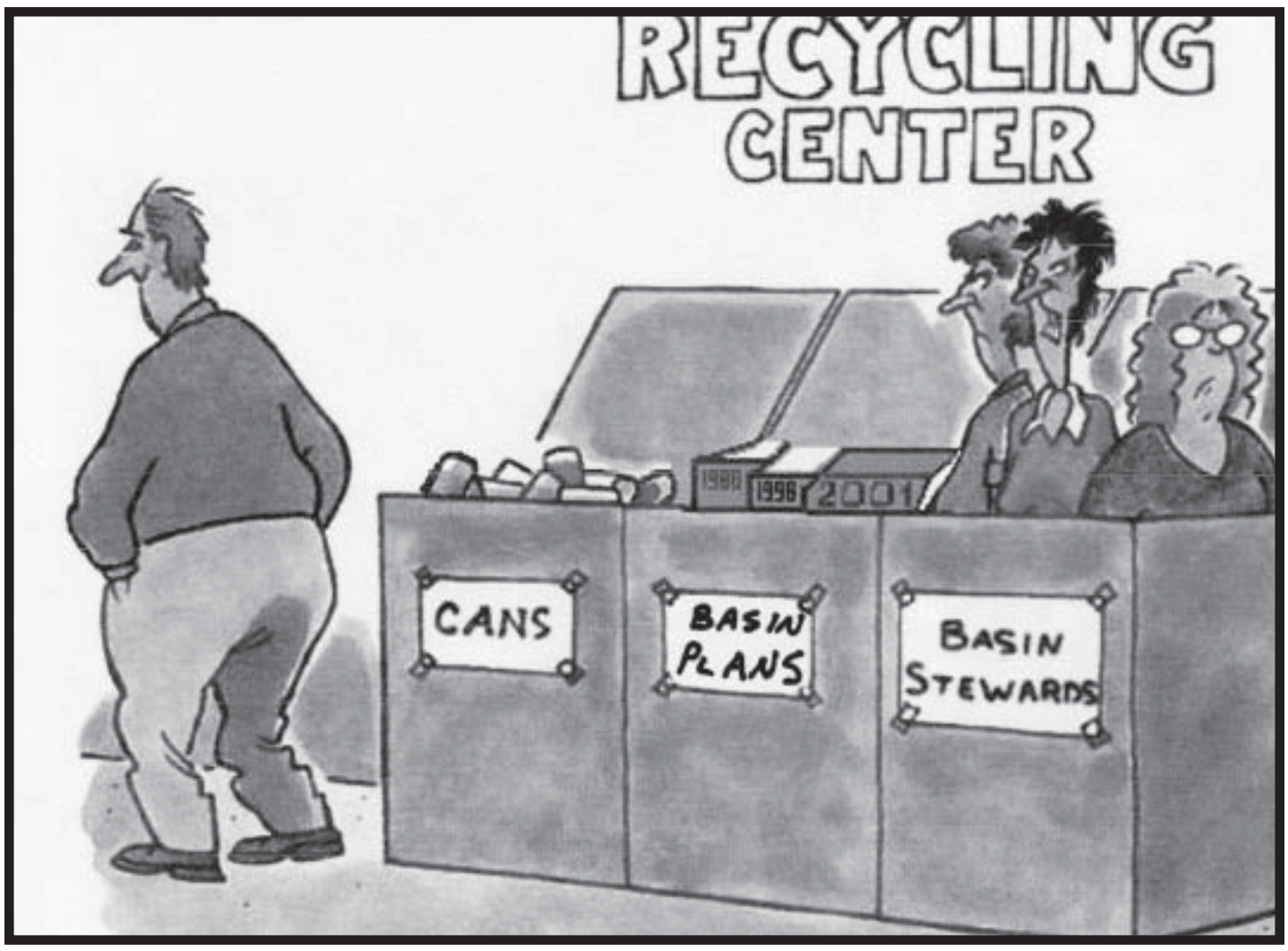
The Surface Water Management Division spent from 1996 to 2001 producing hundreds of pages of report they call the May Creek Basin Action Plan 2001 and its supporting documents. The various documents aren't worth the paper they are printed on, let alone the major cost to produce them. The documents get used to support expenditures that the bureaucrats are in favor of, but recommendations they are not in favor of are simply ignored. Meanwhile the flooding worsens.

King County conned Renton and Newcastle into helping it spend $275,000 to place logs in a stretch of May Creek canyon this summer. When reporters question them about the reasons for the project they say it will help reduce the flooding. All the flooding problems are upstream. Placing obstructions in the water downstream of flooding to mitigate the flooding is as stupid as planting trees on the north side of the creek to shade it – another of the bureaucrats bright ideas.

They have another $250,000 they would like to spend in May Valley but have been unable to find a small enough project. They would love to spend the money on "pilot" projects to show us how to plant some more trees to clog the creek. The landowners tend to frown on that so the money will likely be spent somewhere else. They do, after all, have to make payroll.

The article by Harry Browne on page 7 succinctly points out the fallacy of expecting government to solve our problems. Asking King County to solve flooding problems is pointless. It simply gives them an excuse to continue increasing their headcount and using our surface water management fees for the welfare payments they call paychecks. The bureaucracy spending our surface water management fees should be disbanded and King County should cease collecting the fees.

The King County Council needs to change the law so that property owners don't become criminals for maintaining their property. We can defend our property from vandalism and trespass and fire – why not flooding? Why is it politically correct and legal to destroy our property by flooding? Wouldn't burning us out be more efficient?



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We hope you enjoyed this issue and will join us in our attempt to bring some sense and sanity to environmental issues in King County.

Back issues of *The Naked Fish* are available at:

www.maycreek.com

Thinking cannot be carried on without the materials of thought; and the materials of thought are facts, or else assertions that are presented as facts. A mass of details stored up in the mind does not in itself make a thinker; but on the other hand thinking is absolutely impossible without that mass of details. And it is just this latter impossible operation of thinking without the materials of thought which is being advocated by modern pedagogy and is being put into practice only too well by modern students. In the presence of this tendency, we believe that facts and hard work ought again to be allowed to come to their rights: it is impossible to think with an empty mind.

J. Gresham Machen

The Naked Fish is published by May Valley Environmental Council (MVEC) a non-profit community group dedicated to sensible environmental management of private property. Articles in *The Naked Fish* cover subjects of concern both to local and national readers. We try to provide environmental information not commonly found in the major media. Articles with by-lines reflect the research, views and opinions of the author which may not reflect positions on the issues adopted by MVEC.

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Subscriptions are $10 per year. MVEC membership is $40 per year. Donations are gladly accepted.

May Creek Bombed with Large Woody Debris

Despite the efforts of local activist Chuck Pillon and others, King County used a helicopter to place logs and other woody debris in the reach of May Creek between Coal Creek Parkway and the mouth of Honey Creek on July 21, 2003. Even though some of the latest studies of King County streams (Larson, Morley) show "no substantial positive effect on biological condition," King County, Renton and Newcastle saw fit to spend $275,000 of their taxpayers money on the project. There is one known effect of large woody debris (LWD) placements in our streams and that is the very real public safety hazard. The LWD posses a threat to swimmers and boaters and the bureaucrats in charge know it. That threat was acknowledged by Hearing Examiner R.S. Titus in his ruling on an appeal brought by Roger Lowe, PE, in 1997.

King County, as the lead agency, has assured the politicians of the cities of Renton and Newcastle that there is no possibility of future liability because of the placements. While public safety risk is low on this particular project, it is certainly not non-existent. King County spokespersons also deny any knowledge of anyone trapped by King County-placed LWD even though Summer Stone is still not recovered from her near-death drowning in 2002 under a King County-placed LWD installation in the Cedar River.

Chuck Pillon lost his appeal last year due to procedural errors but has brought a new suit this year asking for an injunction against any more LWD in King County streams until a thorough review is done of both efficacy and safety of such installations. MVEC has agreed to administer any donations made to help pay attorney's costs in the suit. Such donations can be sent to: MVEC, 15125 SE May Valley Road, Renton, WA 98059.

Our Blundering Salmon Recovery Effort

By Roger Lowe, PE

SNYNOPSIS

Many of the people and organizations involved in Washington State's current Salmon Recovery effort have goals that conflict with restoring an abundance of wild salmon. Some people and organizations, are better served by scarcity of salmon than they are by abundance. People representing organizations benefiting from salmon scarcity are in key government positions. As a result, too much of our recovery effort is based on false science and false solutions.

Our recovery effort is concentrating on land use and habitat changes that have little to do with salmon recovery. We are ignoring proven solutions that could restore an abundance of wild salmon to our Puget Sound area rivers. We are not properly managing harvest so that the salmon needed in our rivers for wild reproduction and habitat enrichment, can escape harvest and perform their natural functions.

BACKGROUND

My views are based on my involvement in the salmon recovery effort since 1995, and my participation in the Tri-County effort and as a member of the Snohomish River Basin Forum. The Forum is a quasi governmental organization created by our state legislature to deal with recovery issues in Puget Sound area Water Resource Inventory Area 7.

My technical qualifications include training as an engineer and geologist, and 45 years of experience as a professional engineer and manager of complex Geotechnical and environmental investigations, including many involving river processes.

People who benefit from salmon scarcity include many on county staffs whose jobs would disappear if salmon were abundant, consultants and designers of "new" methods alleged to improve salmon habitat, those who employ the concern over scarcity to create land use restrictions and habitat changes, and Native American Tribes, who have and can obtain reparations payments for alleged damage to their historical and Court determined interests in salmon. Collectively these interests are a very powerful lobby with tens of millions of dollars to spend on influencing public perceptions and government policy.

In this paper, Salmon means all anadromous salmonids including steelhead and trout.

At the June 6, 2003, meeting of the Forum, Terry Williams, the Tulalip Tribes representative to the Forum, advised that Tribal interests include recreating historical physical conditions, including the forest canopy and the flora that had been utilized by the Tribe.

At our June 6, meeting the snohomish County staff, together with Tulalip Tribes' biologists, jointly presented their Ecological Analysis for salmonid Conservation (EASC). The EASC is proposed as the cornerstone of our salmon recovery effort. It deals solely with historical physical conditions in the Basin. Staff and tribal representatives made no mention of goals for productivity of juvenile salmon or of the effect of the EA5C on salmon productivity or abundance.

There is no evidence that restoring historical physical conditions would benefit salmon.

Because of rapid population and business growth in Washington, we need new sources of domestic, industrial and irrigation water. In many areas of the state, rivers are transportation corridors or are major sources of electrical power production. Salmon's need for water creates a powerful argument against water withdrawal or use of rivers for any purpose other than salmon. This conflict creates an opportunity for demanding compensation for alleged salmon resource damage allegedly caused by water withdrawal, damage allegedly caused by any use of rivers or water for any purpose other than salmon. These claims would have no substance if there is an abundance of salmon.

Chinook Salmon, and bull trout are listed by Federal agencies as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The listings trigger federal restrictions that are very costly to the areas affected, and magnify the power of people who benefit from scarcity of these species.

Salmon are anadromous fish. Anadromous fish spawn in fresh water and then migrate to the ocean and spend most of their lives there before returning to spawn. The young

Continued on page 7

Advertisement in the Seattle Times, August 6, 2003

An Interview With Carl Walters

Dr. Carl Walters is a Professor at the Fisheries Centre at the University of British Columbia. His areas of research include the development of rapid techniques for teaching systems analysis and mathematical modeling to biologists and resource managers. He mainly works on fish population dynamics, fisheries assessment and sustainable management. He believes the heart of fisheries is how to manage harvest: "The main thrust of my research is to figure out how to design management systems that are robust in an area of really high uncertainty." The following is an excerpt of an interview with Dr. Walters by Habitat Media. The full interview can be read at http://www.habitatmedia.org/tran-walters.html.

Q When the environmental conditions change, fisheries can suffer; fish populations go up and down. Do you think the fishing effort has, at times, made fishing populations more vulnerable to environmental changes?

A Oh, it absolutely does. One of the things that fishing does is to erode away the age structure of the population. It gets rid of a lot of the older fish. It reduces longevity of the fish. So when an environmental factor usually hits little fish harder, so when recruitment gets knocked down, normally, the fish are living long enough that they will just reproduce again and again till they fill the gap. But if they're not living long enough, that gap isn't filled.

So in practically every major fisheries collapse we have had around the world, we see a combination of fishing and environmental change hit them at the same time.

Q A good part of your book talks about top level management – top down management – how it's not working – how indecision becomes a fall-back. Could you say something about the natural fall back of a fishery manager is indecisiveness?

A No they only talk about indecisive ness or fisheries managers. There's two different things there. The indecision is rational choice as a universal. If you can, pass the buck and leave the problem to your successor to solve. People always do that. There was a wonderful radio show last night about how John F. Kennedy tried to pass the buck for funding of the space program, the man's space program that put a man on the moon – to his successors that way. So trying to pass the buck is particularly prevalent in human political affairs and is particularly easy in fisheries because usually we are dealing with changes that occur a little bit slowly, take a long time; they're hard to measure.

There's always uncertainty in how to interpret the noisy data that we get and we always get conflicted opinions amongst the scientists. It's a great soil for that kind of indecision to grow in; it's easy to make excuses.

Q Can you speak to how indecisive ness at top-level fisheries management ends up discouraging a field-level staff from proposing effective measures? How do politics end up making fisheries management less effective?

A This indecision as rational choice has its origin in the notion that every one of these decisions is a gamble. So, if the scientist comes forward to a politician and says: we got to close this fishery, the politician then faces a gamble. On the one side, he can believe the biologist and if he does, he knows he is going to take big time heat from the industry, right there on the spot. That is a certain outcome. If he gambles instead that the scientist is wrong, he'll take a little heat from the scientist, but his fishing constituents will support him.

And facing a choice like that, they are going to gamble on the easy side every time, until things become so bad that they can't ignore them. Or until some new political force, like the environmental groups today, starts to emerge as a worse threat if you don't act than the threat if you do. The environmental groups are having a powerful effect on reshaping fisheries policy-making, making it much more costly to do nothing.

Q Much more costly to do nothing – what does this mean?

A Well, to a politician, the main cost is heat. It's the bad publicity you'll get from various constituencies. In the old days, the only heat a politician faced was the heat he got from an outraged fishing industry if he tried to take away any of their jobs. And nowadays the heat he can get from a collection of environmental groups and the threats – the economic threats that can bring to bear, like getting people not to buy tuna that might be have been caught along with the dolphin. That's a different story. The threat structure has changed.

It would be nice if politicians wouldn't work that way, but if you've ever been involved in politics, then you know, that's not the way it works.

Q You speak about the tendency of top-level managers to advocate "window dressing" type of measures, rather than measures that would force fishermen to accept a painful period of slow catches along the road to recovery. Are hatcheries an example of that?

A In the Pacific Northeast at least, the salmon hatchery program is the worst kind of destructive quick fix that we have ever imagined in fisheries. It's being replaced today by another kind of quick fix – that pretense that we can restore damaged fish watersheds, of habitats and streams and restore productivity that way. But in the worst days of hatchery development, basically hatcheries were used as an excuse to allow fishermen to keep fishing when everybody knew they were catching too many. So they were the easy way out for everyone.

Q What about the salmon enhance ment programs and restoring habitat as being a potential window dressing project?

A Well an interesting thing here in Canada is that we had a self-monitored enhancement program called SEP. As the ineffectiveness of that program started to become evident, it's not an accident that the program has all the same people but under a new name: HRSEP – Habitat Restoration Self Monitored Enhancement. And an awful lot of the people that used to flog hatcheries as the fix are now flogging fixed streams. If loss of stream habitat were really the biggest problem for salmon, that'd be a noble change. But all the evidence we have is that the thing that is killing off our salmon today is something largely that is happening in the ocean, not in freshwater.

Q Are you saying that the biggest problem with salmon in British Colombia doesn't have to do with the destruction of their fresh water habitat?

A There's a large community of people today that are making their living by flogging the idea that we've lost all our salmon or are rapidly losing all of our salmon habitat and it's easy to flog that because you go out and look at streams where there has been excessive logging – it obviously effects the stream channels. The channels go unstable and there are these big gravel bars and horrible flooding and route wads, and the world looks terrible so it's easy to convince people that that's damaging the fish.

But when we actually sample the fish and ask the fish what they actually think about that world out there, they're not doing that bad. For example, in southern British Columbia, there's just as many juvenile Coho salmon going to sea today as there were twenty years ago, despite all of the supposed loss of habitat.

What's happening today that's different is that about 8 out of 10 of those fish that would have come back twenty years ago don't come back from the ocean. They're dying in the ocean, before they have a chance to get caught or anything else. And we don't know what's causing that. But we're not putting any money into it. It's easy to put the money into getting a lot of people to go help you fix up streams. It's an easy thing for people to get involved in publicly. And even if you know what doesn't work, it's really easy to be quiet about that side of the story.
The young salmon that are going to sea aren't coming back, so there's a problem out there and no one's addressing it and no one's putting money into it. Who does this serve?

Well, it's a gamble. If they were to spend money on the real cause of the decline, in probably the first few months of the fishes ocean life, there's a real good chance we'd find out it is something we couldn't do anything about – like the winding down of primary production of the algae in the ocean. But there's enough of a chance that it would turn out to be something we could control or help out with. Some predator that we might be able to do a short term control on, that it's probably a good gamble to at least try and find out and to spend some money on it.

What's really wrong though, is to keep trying to pump up the freshwater survival and production and dump even more fish into an ocean that isn't capable of supporting them. That's making things worse than better for the remaining wild populations; it's having exactly the opposite effect of what people intend; well-intentioned people.

Q What kind of things you are looking at as possible reasons as to what is happening to these juvenile salmon once they return to the ocean?

A Over the last forty or fifty years along the Pacific coast, there have been a lot of biologists running around collecting data. And we have largely interpreted the data in a pretty fragmentary way. So the oceanographers have their data, and the fish biologists have theirs, and the plankton biologists theirs. What we are starting to do today is to build computer models that represent what we think the mechanisms might be. We don't pretend they're right. We just say, let's put this mechanism in the computer. And then we compare them to the historical data and see whether or not they can successfully replay what we have already seen happen out there.

And by doing that, I think we have been able to narrow down the search for what is going wrong in this part of the ocean quite a bit. I think we can say with some confidence now that we cannot explain the history that we have seen without at least two effects in our computer. One of them is that hatcheries are having a severe deleterious effect on the survival rate of fish; there are too many hatchery fish out there. They are overstocking the capacity of the ocean to support them.

And the other thing is, the ocean's productivity in this area is dropping. It's evidence – not only in the salmon – we see it in almost all the top of the marine food chain in this region. Our birds are dropping in numbers; whales, other fishes beside salmon, like hake, declining in body sizes and now abundance. Herring is beginning to decline. And it's as though the whole food web were shrinking in on itself.

If it were just one species, or whatever, you could explain it away as maybe it got poisoned or maybe it got caught somewhere. But not when the whole shooting match starts to wind down. And our models say there's only one way that can happen, and that's if total productivity of the ocean has fallen a lot.

Q Any reasons or theories that you would be willing to discuss as to what might be causing the shrinking productivity of the ocean in this area?

A The strongest correlation that we have found with apparent changes of overall productivity is wind speed data. In this area off Vancouver and down into Puget Sound, for the last fifteen years it's been getting steadily less windy. It's about 40% as much what we call wind square – it's an energy measure. 40% less energy per year, stirring the surface of the ocean out there than there was fifteen years ago. And that really translates pretty directly into 40% less nutrients mixed into the surface water, and 40% less algae growth and that drop feeds right up the food chain.

So we're sure that productivity has fallen, nutrient delivery system has shut down, at least partly because of wind. What we're not sure about is exactly how that effect is fed up through the food chain. There are a lot of leaks in there.

Q Could you speak about this notion of "too little, too late"?

A There's a kind of modern view based largely on a bit of tropical experience that says if you protect little areas of seed sources for fish to spawn in, they'll re-seed areas around them. All of our tempered experience says that's nonsense. If anything, we should be thinking of fishing areas as the small areas and the ocean as closed to fishing. And our most successful fisheries, in fact, have been like that. Our salmon fisheries on the pacific coast that are holding up pretty good in general. The ocean is closed to salmon fishing out there, for commercial fishing at least except in a few real small openings for a few days each year.

Our herring fisheries – there are very valuable rural herring fisheries that have now been sustained for a long period of crashes from the bad old days. Those are very short fishery openings. Just a few little areas, and a few little places and the rest of the time you can't touch herring. Off the east coast of Canada, most of the cod stock that kept most of Newfoundland's culture and economy going for several hundred years wasn't available to them. 80 or 90% of the cod were in water too deep too far off shore at the wrong time of year to ever get at 'em. They were in an effective refuge from the technology available to the Newfoundlanders. So they might as well have had 80% of the ocean closed to fishing.

We've got other places where this erosion of economic or technological protection areas is occurring. One of the scariest ones is the tuna's. The old tuna fisheries that seemed so stable and sustainable were mainly concentrated pretty close to the coastlines where the tuna were spread out over the great open oceans. Now the technology is spreading out all over those oceans. And so the tuna in the can – the last thing you'd ever imagine would collapse. Can you imagine going down to your local *Safeway* and not being able to buy a can of tuna? It's a real possibility today.

Q In your book, *Fish on the Line*, you talk about how time and spatial closure are what are needed. That's tied to this notion to the ocean being closed to fishing and then smaller areas are opening and closing.

A Well, it comes down to the idea that in population dynamics of fish, the thing that determines whether you can sustain a harvest is whether you can limit the percentage of fish that get caught. If you can keep that percentage down, then that population has a chance to recover when it's low, and it'll come down if it's large. Because the catch will be larger when the same percentage is taken from a big stock, and it'll be less when it's little. So the key to success is keeping the harvest percentage rate – or we call it the fishing rate – low.

In the last ten years, our estimates of how high that safe rate is have dropped by about 50% for a lot of fish populations. We discovered we were too optimistic about the biology. But the key thing is keeping the percentage rate down. There are two ways to do that for a manger. One way is you pretend you know how many fish there are and then you set a quota that you think is the right percentage and then you let them go catch it. That's insanely dangerous because their estimates are no good. And the other way of managing it is you make sure enough of the stock is protected in time and space that no more than a safe percentage ever gets seen by the gear. That's the way the old fisheries worked. And that's the way our successful ones work today. It's not by good science. It's by making sure that we can live at that percentage that is exposed to risk.

Q You had mentioned that one of the big problems is that all these hatchery fish are going out into the ocean and that's overwhelming the carrying capacity of the ocean. That's hard for me, and probably for a lot of people to understand because these are tiny little fish. What are they doing – competing for a lot of the same food?

A What we are seeing with parent hatchery impact is mainly areas that are more like lakes. Like the Georgia Strait and Puget Sound that are partially closed off by islands so that the fish can't spread out as easily or as rapidly to exploit a larger ocean area. They're stuck in there for at least a while when they're little. And when they're stuck in there, there's only a small part of the water that they can feed in. They can only feed very close to the surface because they can't see down deep and often they're restricted to stay close to shorelines because big predators will nail them when they get away. So these fish have a real small window of the ocean that they can safely feed in. And it doesn't take all that many fish to fill that one little window. It's a big ocean, but from their point of view it's a little tiny ocean that's too filled with other little fish.

And you've got to think about numbers here. We're talking tens of millions of fish being released on these hatcheries. Tens of millions. And in a couple of species, it's up over a billion of them being released.

Q In *Fish on the Line*, you talk about other problems of hatcheries such as deletion of the gene pool, the fact that you're starting to select for a fish that does well in a hatcheries environment. I think they are displacing native stocks. Are those still issues you think are important with regard to hatcheries?

A Yes. I think that the business of hatchery fish displacing wild fish in fresh water habitats is disappearing. I think the hatcheries are being restricted from releasing fish into the streams where really intense competition would occur. We are seeing some of that effect in the ocean where the competition can be, we now discover, as intense as in freshwater. What we do see in hatcheries, at least here in Canada, the hatchery will come on line and survival will be great for a few years and then it will just kind of tail down. And we don't really understand the mechanism behind that. It may be partly genetics, it may be disease accumulations, disease organisms we don't understand and it may be, very simply, that mother nature doesn't like seeing huge numbers of fish out there and it just attracts predators. There's a whole bunch of critters that learn that May 15th is a really good time to the mouth of the river for a really good feed or for a really stupid fat fish. And that's actually probably our best bet – that the ecosystem detects that super abundance and tries to use it.

Q Do you support the idea of termi nal fisheries?

A The terminal fishing idea – the notion that if you pull back to the mouth of the river, the fish of different races that are different in their productivity and survival can be harvested each at its best rate. That works fine in some coastal areas where you have small streams and each stream has water to stocks in it but unfortunately, some of our dirtiest mixed stock fisheries are at the mouths of our big rivers. So right now, passing the mouth of the Fraser River outside here are about 60 races of sockeye salmon, about sixty races of Chinook salmon, a couple of dozen early races of Coho and the list just keeps going on. And they're all concentrated at that river mouth constantly at the same time, so some of our dirtiest fisheries, are in fact, ones at that river mouths. Getting to the river mouth isn't necessarily a solution to the problem at all.

There are other ideas about trying to mark fish in various ways so that further out at sea we can identify who is who. And if we have selective fishing methods where we can take a little extra time and look at the fish, we can avoid the harvest of some of them. But in these big river basins, which is where the bulk or our problems occur – Columbia, Fraser, Ghana. It's not clear there is an answer. You can't pull fisheries back up into coastal spawning areas where fish are actually separate. Fish have no value at that point. Their quality, their ability to spawn is – they've used it up.

So, I think we're going to have to live with mixed fishing problems forever. And try to just be as smart and as balanced about it as we can.

Q One thing your book makes clear is that it's expensive to collect the data that is essential to make a fishery viable and to make in season management a reality.

A If we were to try to monitor every salmon population in British Colombia – if we wanted an accurate estimate, how many fish spawned each year – the average cost per each population of fish would be about $50,000.00 a year. You got a try to block the stream, count the number of fish going by or put in electronic equipment; it's expensive. There are three to seven thousand of those stocks of fish. You add up the number. We are talking about spending many more of millions of dollars every year just to get that kind of basic data everywhere than the fishery ever brings in. I think there's already a question as to whether the public is being well served by even the amount of money that is being spent now, relative to the economic value of the fishery.

There's what I basically view as a spreading cancer in fisheries management today in which, at its heart, a concept called quota management. The notion there is that the fishery's agency sets the number of tons of fish that'll be allowed to be caught and then the quota holders take those in any way that's best for them economically – the best price, the best time and so on. And that certainly has economic advantages for fisheries. Predictably, you can take your quota to the bank for a loan or sell it – you're not competing with the other fisheries for it. And fisheries managers just love it. To set the quota, you've got to go to the scientists. And if they set the quota and the quota is too high, and it causes overfishing, you've got someone to blame on that side. On the other side, if something goes wrong with the fishing industry's economics, like if one big fat cat fries up the whole bloody industry and gets real rich and puts a lot of people out of work, you blame the economics. So fisheries managers just love this. It absolves them of all responsibility for wisdom in management. That's why it spread like hotcakes.

Q Are you talking here about TAC's or are you talking about IFQ's?

A The right hand pointing out there was the ITQ or the IFQ idea and the notion that each fisherman's right consists of a number of tons of fish that he's allowed to catch, or a percentage of the tons that are going to be available that year. Rather than the right to boat, or take the gear, or fishing time – it's tonage. That's the ITQ system.

There's been a lot of argument as about whether fisheries ever ought to be considered even a right at all. I think nowadays our thinking is these are public resources. And I don't mean that the fisherman who has a quota or license owns them, it means that you or I own them; they're ours; that's our resource. I think if you look at it from that point of view, that it's something we all have a stake in, and our kids have a stake in, you change your attitudes real fast about whether to do something dangerous such as a quota management system.

Q What's the alternative?

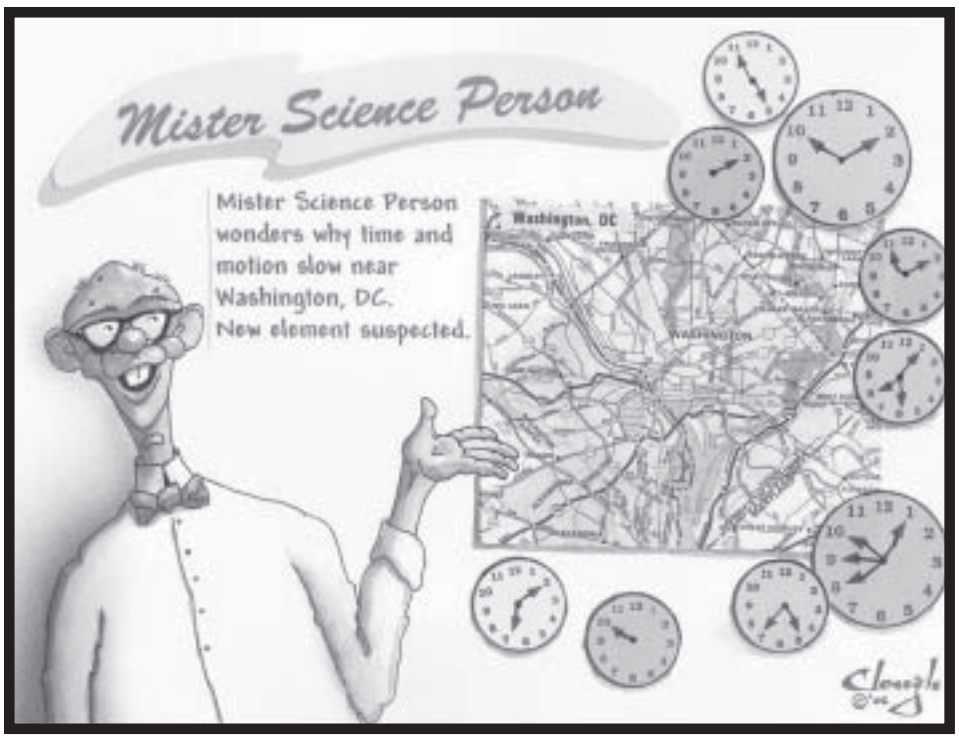
A Well, in a fundamental sense, we could simply privatize the ownership of the fisheries. You, the company owns this population of fish. It's up to you to husband its productive potential in the same way you would a herd of cattle, or anything else. Nowadays, I think from what we understand about interactions in ecosystems, we'd have to actually privatize whole ecosystems. There are places where I have personally advocated that – abalone fisheries along this coast. Abalone is severely over-fished in many areas. There' s huge incentive for poaching. I think the only way they'll ever be protected is if individual abalone fishermen each own a chunk of the resource, a chunk of the shoreline of the ocean, live there with a strong incentive to protect his little chunk of the resource.

There are other cases where maybe communities can do the same thing. The community of people who live at the mouth of a river can take a kind of ownership for fish that use that river and the ocean around it.

The other extreme from all this, is we go straight to the notion that fishing is a privilege. How can we, the public, make the most from our fish? Take away all the things we call fishing rights. That's scary stuff.

Wedding at "The Red Barn"

Dick Colasurdo's "The Red Barn" heard wedding bells Saturday, June 21, 2003. Stu and Anita Hillis were married in the aisleway at the barn during an afternoon ceremony. Following the ceremony a grand barbeque reception was held and a great time was had by all those attending. Stu, Anita and the three horses that board at The Red Barn are all moving to Mile City, Montana, to start their own farm.



God bless the internet and God bless Al Gore for inventing the internet. How else would I have known that weird science had recently identified the densest element in the Universe. It is tentatively being called "Administratium." It has no protons or electrons and therefore has the atomic number zero. It does, however, have one neutron, fifteen assistant neutrons, eighty-eight deputy neutrons, and 117 assistant deputy neutrons, giving it an atomic mass of 221. These 221 particles are held together by exchanges of even smaller particles called morons which, in turn, are surrounded by a cloud of thousands of satellite particles called peons.

Because Administratium has no electrons it is inert. Its presence can be detected by its retarting effect on every action that attempts to happen near it. For example, a reaction that would normally have completed itself in only three nanoseconds, required six days for completion when in the presence of a tiny bit of Administratium.

Administratium appears to be amazingly stable; it does not decay but undergoes continual reorganization. Consequently, some of the assistant neutrons, deputy neutrons and assistant deputy neutrons exchange places. Stranger still, Administratium's density will actually increase over time, since each reorganization causes some morons to become neutrons, creating new isodopes. This curious characteristic of moron promotion has led some deep thinkers to speculate that Administratium forms spontaneously whenever morons reach a certain concentration or "critical morass."

The amount of Administratium in the Universe is forever increasing. You'll know it when you see it!

–Thomas Clough at WeirdRepublic.com

Skagit County Proposes Balanced Critical Areas Ordinance

Skagit County is the front line in the war between fish production and more traditional agricultural production. What is ultimately resolved there will likely determine whether western Washington farmers can continue farming their land or be forced to convert to fish production to be harvested by others.

The Skagit County bureaucrats and politicians are trying hard to devise a critical areas ordinance that will allow both agriculture and fish production. Their current proposed ordinance is currently before the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board. The Swinomish Tribe as well as other environmental groups opposes their ordinance. The battle centers around buffers.

The Tribe and environmentalists want buffers, the bigger the better. They contend that the twelve-year-old Growth Management Act requires counties to protect fish and that the only way to do that is with buffers, large woody debris, shade, riffles and pools achieved through regulation of and active management of private property. Skagit County contends that such things do not constitute protection but enhancement. They point out a Washington State Superior Court ruling from earlier this year that the Growth Management Act doesn't require restoration or enhancement, only protection of existing conditions.

The County has changed from the position of assuming farmers are guilty of harming fish and therefore need to comply with a list of regulations, to the position of simply requiring farmers to not harm fish. Farmers can do what they want as long as they maintain adequate water quality.

No matter what the hearings board decides in the next couple of months, the ramifications will be felt throughout western Washington.

> It's discouraging to think how many people are shocked by honesty and how few by deceit.
>
> — Noel Coward

Forty days and forty nights of rain!
But what about the environment?

The 7 Vital Principles about Government

by Harry Browne

It's easy to think sometimes that a new government program, law, or regulation could cure a pressing social problem. .... But when you get that kind of thought, I hope you'll remember the seven principles that apply to all government programs – not just the ones you oppose.

1. Government is force.

Every government program, law, or regulation is a demand that someone do what he doesn't want to do, refrain from doing what he does want to do, or pay for something he doesn't want to pay for. And those demands are backed up by police with guns.

You expect that force to be used only against the guilty. But we can see how the Drug War, the foreign wars, asset forfeiture, the Patriot Act, and other government activities have used force just as often against the innocent – people who have not intruded on anyone else's person or property.

In fact, government force is used more often against the innocent than the guilty, because the guilty make it their business to understand the laws that apply to them and stay clear of them. Meanwhile, the innocent, thinking they've nothing to fear, suddenly find that they've innocently violated laws they never heard of.

2. Government is politics.

Whenever you turn over to the government a financial, social, medical, military, or commercial matter, it's automatically transformed into a political issue – to be decided by those with the most political influence. And that will never be you or I.

Politicians don't weigh their votes on the basis of ideology or social good. They think in terms of political power.

3. You don't control government.

It's easy to think of the perfect law that will stop the bad guys while leaving the good guys unhindered. But no law will be written the way you have in mind, it won't be administered the way you have in mind, and it won't be adjudicated the way you have in mind.

Your ideal law will be written by politicians for political purposes, administered by bureaucrats for political purposes, and adjudicated by judges appointed for political purposes. So don't be surprised if the new law turns out to do exactly the opposite of what you thought you were supporting.

4. Every government program will be more expensive and more expansive than anything you had in mind when you proposed it.

It will be applied in all sorts of ways you never dreamed of. When Medicare was initially passed in 1965, the politicians projected its cost in 1992 to be $3 billion – which is equivalent to $12 billion when adjusted for inflation to 1992 dollars. The actual cost in 1992 was $110 billion – nine times as much.

And when Medicare was enacted, Section 1801 of the original law specifically prohibited any bureaucratic interference with the practice of medicine. Today not one word of that protection still applies. The federal government owns the health-care industry lock, stock, and barrel.

The new program you support will eventually include all sorts of powers and privileges you can't even imagine right now.

5. Power will always be misused.

Give good people the power to do good and that power eventually will be in the hands of bad people to do bad. As Michael Cloud has pointed out, "The problem isn't the abuse of power; it's the power to abuse." Give politicians power and it certainly will be abused eventually – if not by today's politicians, then by their successors.

As P.J. O'Rourke said, "Giving money and power to politicians is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys."

6. Government doesn't work.

Because government is force, because government programs are designed to enrich the politically powerful, because you can't control government and make it do what's right, because every new government program soon wanders from its original purpose, and because politicians eventually misuse the power you give them, it is inevitable that no government program will deliver on the promises the politicians make for it.

For years, I've asked listeners during radio interviews to name a government program that has actually delivered on its promises, and no one has been able to do so. If you think there's a successful government program, you probably don't know how much it actually costs, aren't aware of all its destructive side-effects, have no idea how easily and inexpensively such a thing could be done outside of government, and/or are basing your view of its success on political propaganda.

It doesn't matter whether a program is supposed to do something you want or something you don't want, whether the program is something you consider a proper function of government or something beyond its limits, It won't work. Government programs always wind up disappointing you.

7. Government must be subject to absolute limits.

Because politicians have every incentive to expand government, and with it their power, there must be absolute limits on government. The Constitution provides the obvious limits we must reimpose upon the federal government. Until the Constitution is enforced, we have no hope of containing the federal government. The present system of unlimited power is like giving a drunken stranger a set of signed, blank checks on your bank account. You are reduced to relying on the honesty and integrity of people you don't even know – and they abuse that trust again and again.

Whether you think government should be bigger or smaller than the limits specified in the Constitution, the first step is to restore absolute limits, and then – if you like – work to change those limits to ones that would be more to your liking. ....

Our Blundering Salmon Recovery Effort

Continued from page 3

of most salmon species using Puget Sound's rivers migrate to the ocean immediately after hatching. A few species spend part of their young lives in our rivers and streams before migrating to the ocean.

In the ocean, salmon feed to gain strength and vigor for their eventual return to spawn. Both ocean conditions and river conditions influence the vigor and abundance of Salmon. Either ocean conditions or river conditions alone can greatly influence salmon abundance, and if severely adverse, could lead to extinction of a species.

We have no control over ocean conditions. Ocean conditions vary greatly, and appear to vary from good to poor in a roughly 20 year cycle. When conditions are good, there is and abundance of salmon growing to maturity and returning to our rivers to spawn.

Freshwater conditions, including estuary and brackish water habitats, also influence reproduction and survival of juveniles. We have greatly altered our freshwater habitats, and in some cases dams, impassable culverts and other obstacles block access to spawning areas. We have a great deal of influence over freshwater habitat conditions.

Harvest is another major influence on salmon abundance. By harvesting adults that potentially could return and spawn, we deny our rivers the ocean derived nutrients that are important to river habitat and to the food chain upon which river resident species depend. By some estimates 60 to 90 percent of adult salmon returning to spawn are harvested.

The number of salmon escaping harvest, usually referred to as escapement, is far below the levels needed. For the Snohomish River system, the state and tribes have set an escapement goal of 6000 adult Chinook Salmon. For the past 10 years escapement has been about 3600 adults. Only in 2002 has escapement reached a higher level, approximately 7200 adults. These escapements are insignificant compared to the goal of 25,000 adults determined by the National Marine Fisheries Service as necessary for a healthy Chinook salmon population.

For most of April and May, wild King Salmon have been advertised for sale in our super-market chains. King Salmon is another name for Chinook Salmon, which is a threatened species, but are also prized as food. Prices have been as low as $3.99 per pound for wild King salmon filets; well below the usual price.

The salmon are described as Alaskan salmon. King Salmon are Chinook Salmon by another name. Salmon spawning in Puget Sound rivers migrate to Alaskan water for their ocean rearing. It is likely that the salmon that are abundant in our supermarkets are the same salmon that are listed as threatened, and are perceived to be scarce.

Despite the importance of harvest on salmon abundance, there are no effective or independent controls on harvest, and no information on harvest is available to the public.

DISCUSSION

The capacity of the oceans to provide feed essential to salmon is not clear. It appears that this is a limiting factor, and that overproduction of juveniles could lead to competition among salmon of the same or different species that could be harmful to salmon abundance. Ocean conditions, including harvest, will alone control salm-

Continued on page 8

Our Blundering Salmon Recovery Effort

Continued from page 7

on abundance provided there is adequate reproduction in our rivers. Very little is known about the affect of ocean conditions and harvest on abundance. Improving freshwater conditions would be useless or even harmful when ocean conditions are controlling abundance, or if harvest simply negates the effect of freshwater improvements.

Fresh water habitat may not be an important factor in salmon abundance. Provided there are sufficient wild salmon returning to spawn; all that is necessary is to produce the number of juveniles matching the capacity of the ocean environment to support them.

As a result of intensive negotiation among salmon interests, the recovery planning effort was divided into 4 parts, Harvest, Hatcheries, Hydropower and Habitat. Each are being addressed separately. The relative importance of each of the four has not been identified. The effect is that the recovery effort can be influenced to concentrate on one of the elements and to give little attention to the others. That is exactly what has happened. Almost all of the money and attention for salmon recovery is focused on habitat, and little or nothing is done about harvest. This is a very serious oversight, as it is very likely that harvest is by far the most important current limitation on the abundance of Chinook Salmon.

In my opinion, there are other shortcomings in our recovery effort, including:

♦The lack of basic research needed to understand intra-species competition.

♦The lack of basic research needed to understand the capacity of the ocean to support salmon populations. This is needed to provide a basis for goals for production of juveniles and for harvest.

♦The lack of quantitative monitoring of juvenile salmon abundance in our rivers. This is needed to identify problems or effective solutions.

♦Altering habitat when there is no proven benefit.

♦Ignoring proven methods of increasing juvenile salmon abundance including the creation of over-wintering habitat, storm flow refuge, rearing ponds, spawning channels and food supplementation.

EXAMPLES OF BLUNDERS IN OUR RECOVERY EFFORT

Altering proven good habitat. In the just completed round of requests for funding for Snohomish River Basin salmon recovery projects, plans were made and funding requested to alter all three of the river areas identified as the basin's prime habitats for Chinook Salmon spawning and rearing. Officially our policy is to protect our best habitat. Instead we are changing our best habitat.

The salmon have shown us the habitat they prefer. Common sense and good management requires that we learn from the salmon and duplicate, not alter, their preferred habitat.

Destroying proven to be effective supplemental feeding and rearing habitat. On the West Fork of Woods Creek, near Monroe Washington, a landowner modified the existing stream. This was done prior to 1996. The ponds are similar to beaver ponds. Wild Coho salmon hatching naturally in the Creek discovered the ponds and began rearing there. The owner provided supplemental feed beginning about 1996. Biologists confirmed that the ponds are utilized by up to 10,000 juvenile Coho salmon per year, and that following the construction of the ponds and beginning of supplemental feeding, there was a wonderful resurgence of wild Coho Salmon spawning naturally in the Creek. This was acknowledged by Snohomish County and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists.

Unfortunately, the landowner had not obtained permits required for construction of the ponds. A Federal Court order was obtained requiring that the ponds be destroyed and the original stream conditions recreated. Snohomish County continues to insist that the Court order be enforced despite clear evidence that construction required to carry out the Court order would degrade habitat, and would cause the same damage inferred to have occurred when the ponds were constructed.

Reducing flood protection. The Forum approved a Near Term Action Agenda that includes several provisions calculated to disrupt the flood protection measures upon which the basin relies. These include removal of rock riprap, removal of flood control dikes and the introduction of Large Woody Debris, which reduces a river's flood conveyance capacity. These provisions appear to be a response the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife policy of reconnecting rivers to their flood plains.

Here is a gross disregard for society's need for safety and protection of property. These provisions may recreate "natural" conditions. However, the benefits to salmon are dubious or contrary to scientific knowledge.

A MORE SENSIBLE APPROACH

Farmers, landowners, industry and the public all want salmon abundance, both because salmon represent a cultural value important to all of us, and because we would like to avoid costly and damaging regulations or restrictions.

It is important to recognize that there are political and selfish agendas involved. A start at achieving the goal of salmon recovery requires recognition of the desire of special interest groups to usurp the process to satisfy their own goals.

There is a structural flaw in our approach. Salmon recovery is a scientific and engineering problem, not a political one. The will to do what is necessary for salmon recovery is a political problem. These are separate issues. Instead the two have been muddled together. Further compounding the problem, the snohomish County staff supporting the salmon recovery effort, are primarily planners. Planners are suited to resolving issues related to opinions rather than science. There is reliance upon processes, rather than upon scientific or engineering standards for certainty as a basis for action.

Some specifics that should help resolve the current problem include:

1) An independent review is needed of the scientific basis for Forum decisions.
2) Identification of scientific uncertainties and information gaps.
3) Salmon abundance or scarcity should be considered a part of a system, which we only partly control. All of the elements of the system, including harvest, hatcheries, hydropower and habitat, should be addressed together.
4) Economic and cultural impacts of salmon scarcity, and of the effects of recovery efforts upon all people should be determined and considered in the decision making process.
5) There should be an effort to minimize adverse cultural and economic impacts on all people.
6) Our rivers and habitat are extremely altered. Restoring some elements of past conditions is probably not appropriate. Alternative salmon recovery options, particularly those with a history of success, should be considered.
7) Specific goals for freshwater productivity and production of salmon should be set.
8) Salmon recovery efforts should have the benefit of strong highly experienced project management. Because it is a scientific and engineering problem, the manager should be trained in those disciplines. The project management should report directly to the Snohomish and King County Councils.
9) Conditions that can not be controlled at the County level, harvest as an example, should be identified, the agencies that can control them identified, and there should be negotiation or lobbying to resolve the issue.
10) There should be effective enforcement of harvest restrictions so that escapements of salmon needed in our rivers are achieved. The information should be made available to the public.

Salmon are important to all of the people of the State. Salmon abundance, harvest management and salmon recovery efforts should not be manipulated to serve the needs of a few. Salmon recovery is important, as tens of millions are being spent each year on recovery efforts. The economic effects of the projects, regulations, and land use restrictions based on salmon scarcity, amount to hundreds of millions or billions of dollars. They effect our culture as well.

Success is not doing what a few people allege is good for salmon. Success is doing what salmon show us is good for them.

From the President

Jim Osborne

Just as I figured would happen, the fish window has closed and King County accomplished nothing in May Valley this year. No project, no planning, nothing! You would think that with $250,000 burning a hole in their pocket they could come up with something that would help the residents or the salmon.

I guess I should give them a little credit. They did try to do a couple of things:

1) They tried to get permission from upper valley residents to study their section of creek without addressing lower section problems first. The lower half of the valley has already been studied to death.

2) They tried desperately to do a pilot project on Dick Colasurdo's property but couldn't come up with anything they could get a permit for short of another expensive Public Agency Utility Exemption (PAUE) project.

3) They tried to convince basin residents there was nothing they could do under current law.

I would like to explain what's wrong with the above items.

1) It only makes sense to clean a creek from the bottom up. If you clean up above and leave the middle section clogged you accomplish nothing except creating more wetland. They have studied the lower part, identified the problems, and gotten money from the council to do the project. All that's left is to DO IT!

2) As you read in last month's issue they tried to plan a project that would do some good but all parties agreed that nothing would help unless silt was removed, which would trigger a PAUE. Middle management at DNRP has decided that further PAUE projects are not permitted as per the basin plan.

3) We keep getting told there is nothing they can do under current county, state and federal laws. Well if cleaning ditches is against the law, then what is a trackhoe doing in Tibbitts Creek? Is Issaquah breaking the law? How is it that it's good for the goose but not the gander?

As I see it, DNRP has no interest in anything that does not support their bureaucracy. Doing a project means they have to pay out money, but studying means the money stays in-house. Issaquah can dig, no problem. It doesn't cost DNRP anything. In fact, maybe DNRP can make a little in consulting fees for their famous "technical expertise." What do you expect from an agency that spends 88% of its budget on itself?