



**Salmon Creek
Watershed Council**
Clark County, Washington

**Summer
2010**



Afternoon at Salmon Creek Bridge
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in this issue >>>

- 2010 Water Typing Results
- Wild Fish Rescue in Salmon Creek
- Students Attend Watershed Congress
- Opine: Reform Hatcheries for Success

Salmon Creek Watershed Quarterly

A seasonal look at the state of Salmon Creek, its stakeholders and its watershed council.



SCWC Project Types Out Successes

Water typing project exceeds expectations in its first year

In the Spring issue, we reported on a water typing project lead by board-member Randall Pearl. The project aimed to identify unmapped streams and wetlands, and locate fish-bearing creeks. By identifying and classifying these waters, the Salmon Creek Watershed Council (SCWC) hoped to secure long-term conservation for ecologically important areas of the watershed.

After concluding surveys that involved GPS mapping, photo documentation and data collection on physical attributes, habitat features and fish presence, Ted Labbe from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife compiled a list of results. He then presented these results to the council at our monthly board meeting.

The cumulative results from SCWC's volunteer-led outings included the identification of 15 new fish passage barriers blocking salmon and trout from access to headwater streams, as well as 4.8 miles of newly mapped streams. Within these stretches, the Wild Fish Conservancy (WFC) conducted a follow-up survey that upgraded, or classified 3.4 miles as "fish-bearing" waters.

These noteworthy results came after hitting just 15 percent of Labbe's designated waypoints. Labbe remarked on



Above: Jamie Glasgow, a WFC employee, and Tim Dean, a volunteer, record habitat features, obstructions and fish presence in Salmon Creek tributaries.

the effectiveness of the project, pointing to the use of a volunteer reconnaissance as a major factor to their success. He said it helped to prioritize focal areas for official water typing.

Water typing data from our own volunteer reconnaissance and that of the Wild Fish Conservancy will be applied to state and county maps. In effect, it will allow for better protection of the watershed and more accurate resource management in the future.

The specific areas within Salmon Creek that benefitted from these particular assessments include portions of Mill, Woodin, and Rock creeks. These areas of the watershed stretch across the county.

Having covered all this ground in a short period of time, the board has elected to further pursue this project in the coming year.

For more information about this project, or to get involved in future water typing efforts, please contact board member and project lead Randall Pearl via board@salmoncreekwatershed.org.

Rearing to the Rescue

Council partner provides foster care for stranded fish

It's a hot day in early July. This means most people are diving into their favorite swimming holes on Salmon Creek, but a few residents are opting to get sweaty in warm, knee-deep water. They're splashing around to save salmon fry.

Filled with fish, these stagnant ponds were actually flowing streams during the wet season. Now it's summer, and while most residents cool off in the creek, the water is busy heating up and evaporating.

This leaves some tributaries—affected by urbanization and altered land use—in the Salmon Creek watershed high and dry. The same can be

said for the resident fry that typically die as creeks turn into dry bedrock.

This is where [Northwest Wild Fish Rescue](#) (NWFR) jumps in. Founder, Dave Brown, and a team of volunteers begin their work in the Spring as creeks dry up. They collect the trapped fry under permits granted by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, with oversight from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

In 2009, the program hit a record for their Salmon Creek recovery efforts, but this season they've surpassed that record handily. This summer, the team has netted 11,000 fry from Salmon Creek—mainly from a mile-and-a-half stretch of Mill Creek near Dollar's Corner in Battle Ground.

Once netted, the fry are transported in oxygenated tanks to rearing raceways, most of which are located on Brown's property. And while the group would like to rescue all the trapped fish they find, there's currently a limited amount of space. This year alone, Brown had to leave 5,000 fish stranded due to the lack of viable rearing space. It was a grim reminder of the need for more spring-fed holding pens.

Once housed, the meager fry are reared until they smolt—becoming more mature and ready for release—the following February. By mid-April most of the smolt are reintroduced into hand-picked locations within the same

watershed they were rescued from.

For the 11,000 fish captured this year Brown said he's considering releases in High Valley, Morgan and Baker creeks; but also appraising locations in Little Salmon Creek. Overall, Brown said he sees Salmon Creek as a viable watershed for these recovery efforts. He emphasized that—while the creek has its problem areas—most of the adverse conditions can be reduced or avoided by precisely timing releases.

“ I'm not a biologist. I'm just an ordinary guy with a passion for fish. ”
- Dave Brown

His first release of 8,000 fry is a testament. Introduced in the spring of 2010, some of the fish have been reported in sport fishery catches from the Pacific Ocean; even as far south as Depoe Bay.

While pleased by this data, Brown's real test is in watching his returns. His first Salmon Creek release is due back in 2011—from November through February. That's when the true tale of his Salmon Creek rescue effort will begin.

Volunteers are needed to help rear fish in various capacities. Also, if you have fish in your stretch of creek and are concerned about their viability, or if you would just like more info about the Wild Fish Rescue Program, please contact Dave Brown via e-mail at dwildfish@gmail.com.



Above: Dave Brown feeds a holding pond housing the 11,000 fry the NWFR rescued from Salmon Creek.

Far Left: Close monitoring of rearing pens signals when overcrowding occurs and fry are then transferred accordingly.

Left: Volunteers from NWFR work to net stranded fry in Salmon Creek.

Kids Take Congress by Stream

Annual Watershed Congress promotes stewardship

The City of Vancouver's Water Resources Education Center (WREC) and Clark County Environmental Services' Clean Water Program are known for educating the public on area water issues, but their reach goes deeper.

Together, the organizations have sponsored the Watershed Monitoring Network (WMN)—a water quality and habitat training program for schools.

The WMN is aligned with Washington's Grade Level Expectations and helps prepare students for the annual assessment, known as the Washington Academic Learning Requirements. The network is supported by both the City of Vancouver and Clark County Water Resources-Clean Water Commission.

This past school year, the network taught 3,200 students how to survey Clark County streams, lakes, rivers and wetlands in terms of temperature, pH, dissolve oxygen, nitrates, phosphates, fecal coliform and turbidity. In addition, students also monitor macroinvertebrates, habitat health and land use.

Data is then submitted to the Nature-Mapping water quality database managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and University of Washington. The WMN then urges students to answer meaningful questions with their data, which often leads to projects that protect the watershed.

As the culmination of the monitoring process, the Watershed Congress acts as a symposium for these projects.

The 12th annual congress convened in May at WSU Vancouver, and was attended by 275 students and 56 teachers representing 23 schools. Students reported their monitoring data to community members and profession-

Above: Columbia River High School students at the Snapshot of Clark County water quality debrief.

Below: York 5th grade students hold up signs showing their solutions to stream problems generated at the afternoon session.



Board member Steve Fountain participated as a facilitator this year—working face-to-face with some of the 50 presentations on display.

One group he met with from Columbia River High School had collected data on Cougar Creek, a tributary of Salmon Creek. They discussed its suitability for salmon and outlined poor water conditions found in their data.

The two critical problems included a few days of high temperature and occasional high nutrient loads, both of which could be addressed through minimal habitat restoration efforts. Surprisingly, over 90% of the time, they believe that this stretch of creek is viable habitat for anadromous fish.

The WMN strives to emphasize connections to “the bigger picture” of Clark County water issues. And by encouraging student efforts at the congress, participants strive to take real action in solving water quality and stream health issues in their own backyards. The WREC hopes to positively impact our waters by sparking such stewardship.



2010 WMN: Salmon Creek Watershed

Chief Umtuch Middle School

—Woodin Creek

Columbia River High School

--Cougar Creek

Gaiser Middle School

--Bioswales

Gardner School

--Wetlands

York Elementary

--Mill, Rock and Salmon Creeks

Sacajawea Elementary

--Salmon Creek

For general information or registration instructions regarding the Watershed Monitoring Network contact Cory Samia, Project Manager and Water Center Educator, at (360) 487-7112 or via cory.samia@civancouver.wa.us

Opine: The Case for Hatcheries

Hatchery reform presents a new paradigm for conservation



Hatcheries have been criticized for leading to the demise of wild salmon. In some instances this is true, while in other cases, without hatcheries, there would be no salmon. So the question of hatchery or wild isn't just one answer or the other.

This is because hatcheries are beneficial in a variety of ways. Salmon and steelhead hatcheries contribute to sport, commercial and tribal fisheries. And in the Pacific region, hatcheries help mitigate damaged or lost habitat in areas affected by mining, logging, agriculture, urbanization and damming. Moreover, they're used for the conservation of endangered species.

To determine whether hatcheries are following the latest scientific principles, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently conducted a review of their 24 Pacific Region hatchery programs. In this review, officials recognized that hatcheries should be utilized as a type of habitat and integrated into a holistic strategy that acknowledges wild fish. This is the crux of hatchery reform.

With reform, hatcheries will have a strong scientific foundation, conserve

genetic resources, assist with recovery of natural populations, provide sustainable harvest, identify future scientific research, and improve quality and cost effectiveness. In this model, the intended benefits of the hatchery program (harvest, conservation, research, education) must outweigh risks (genetic, ecological, demographic)—especially to wild, Endangered Species Act listed fish.

As a result, strong monitoring and evaluation programs are critical to determine if goals are achieved, and to quantify benefits and associated risks. For a hatchery program to evolve based on scientific information, monitoring and evaluation must feed back into management decisions. This creates an adaptive management framework.

For example, the spring Chinook hatchery program at Entiat National Fish Hatchery in eastern Washington was posing a risk to the ESA listed, naturally reproducing, spring Chinook salmon in the Entiat River. It also provided minimal harvest benefits for the fisheries, and thus managers decided to terminate the spring Chinook hatchery

Now they're working to find another program where the benefits exceed the risks. This could mean adopting a Coho or summer Chinook salmon hatchery program. Recognizing these relationships and adjusting management decisions accordingly will spawn beneficial hatchery programs, and more importantly a thriving, holistic fishery.

Written by our June speaker, Doug Olson, Hatchery Assessment Team Leader for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Contact him via Doug_Olson@fws.gov, or for more information on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Fish Hatchery program and review see <http://www.fws.gov/Pacific/fisheries/Hatcheryreview/>.

Get *Your Hands Wet!*

Become a fan or volunteer of the Salmon Creek Watershed. You can find us on [Facebook](#) or visit our [homepage](#) to find enriching opportunities in habitat restoration, stream monitoring, stream survey, cleanup, community outreach and fund raising.

Salmon Creek Watershed Council is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your tax deductible donation helps to fund restoration and educational efforts. If you're interested, we'd be grateful for the support. You can [donate online](#), or by contacting chair [Bianca Streif](#) via board@scwsc.org.

Come watch a guest speaker and join the conversation at our monthly board meeting. The hour-long meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 5:30 pm in the Clark Public Utility District's education center located at 8600 NE 117th Avenue, Vancouver, WA 98662.



**Salmon Creek
Watershed Council**
Clark County, Washington

#RMB 312

800 NE Tenney Road, Suite 110

Upcoming Events >>>

September 9th >>> Monthly board meeting featuring guest speaker and StreamTeam coordinator, Lisa Beranek, who will be presenting volunteer and outreach activities with Clark Public Utilities' StreamTeam.

September 25th >>> SCWC Creek Cleanup at Kline Pond. A three-hour invasive and debris removal project supported by SOLV. For more info, or to register contact Maury Harris at maury.harris@salmoncreekwatershed.org

October 7th >>> Monthly board meeting with a guest speaker to be determined. Check our homepage for more info.

November 11th >>> Monthly board meeting with a guest speaker to be determined. Check our homepage for more info.

Visit us online @

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