



THE REDD

Dedicated to Restoring Salmon for Future Generations



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SKAGIT FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUP

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Salmon and Me

One board member's mid-term reflection

By Kimberly Cauvel, North Sound Information Officer at Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Skagit Fisheries Board Member

Replacing culverts with bridges to restore fish passage where roads cross streams. Reconnecting streams with wetlands to expand fish habitat. Planting trees and shrubs along waterways to support fish with shade to keep them cool, insects to eat, and wood to create places of refuge.

All this work is critical to

sustaining Skagit River salmon.

For years, I covered these types of Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group projects as a reporter at the local newspaper. With a background in environmental studies, I understood that the fish at the center of these efforts were integral to the ecosystems they pass through during their

career centered on the region's treaty tribes and joined the Skagit Fisheries Board of Directors.

It has been rewarding to zoom in on the work of tribal leaders, scientists, and problem-solvers at the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) and Skagit Fisheries as they strive to protect and restore the salmon of the Skagit River and beyond. Even life-changing.

The truth is, I hadn't tasted wild-caught Pacific salmon until the spring of 2022. Being from the Inland Northwest, I grew up fishing on lakes outside of Spokane with my dad. Perch and rainbow trout were our most common catches. When my family ate store-bought fish, it was mild-flavored frozen cod or canned tuna. Then as a teenager, I opted for a vegetarian diet. Despite writing for years about what a coveted food source Northwest salmon was, I hadn't considered putting it on my own plate. That changed when a tribal fisherman unexpectedly offered me a freshly harvested Chinook, and I couldn't resist.

Maintaining these salmon runs is important for keeping the ecosystems of the Skagit River, Salish Sea, and beyond running smoothly

lifetimes. I also knew their importance to the community, as a cornerstone of tribal culture, a delicious meal, and a driver of local fishing economies, tourism, and commercial fishing enterprises.

Those values have become more personal for me in the past two years, as I moved into a communications

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Kimberly on assignment at the Fir Island Farm Reserve.

REDD: A female salmon uses her tail to dig a nest in the gravel. After she deposits her eggs the male fertilizes them. The female then covers the fertilized eggs and the resulting nest is called a redd.

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WILD & SCENIC[®] FILM FESTIVAL

where activism gets inspired



6pm Reception

7pm Program begins

10 environmental advocacy
& adventure films • beer and wine
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Tickets \$20 & *\$40

*Includes Admission and
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hhmi



PURCHASE



TICKETS

lincolnthetre.org/film-event-wild-scenic-film-festival-2024

Salmon and Me – cont'd from page 1

After recruiting regular fish eaters to cook and share the meal, I was surprised by how much I enjoyed each bite. Now, I regularly crave it. It's exciting to find wild-caught salmon on local menus and satisfying to grill deli portions at home.

The Skagit River boasts five types of salmon – Chinook, coho, pink, sockeye and chum – as well as steelhead. Two of those species are listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act, and all are at risk due to the combination of human development in the watershed, the effects of climate change, sources of marine pollution, and other impacts

faced along their magnificent journeys from tributary streams to river to estuary to ocean and back again.

Few of the salmon spawned in each generation survive all the obstacles on their migratory route. Some are crushed during floods or baked during droughts before they even get the chance to hatch. Others find their lives cut short by predators, winding up in the bellies of bigger fish or birds or otters or seals or orcas or bald eagles or us.

Maintaining these salmon runs is important for keeping the ecosystems of the Skagit River, Salish Sea, and beyond running smoothly, as well as for providing a healthy and sustainable food source for the people who live here, now including me!

Coast Salish tribes, known as the people of the salmon, have seen this value for thousands of years. They are invested more than anyone in ensuring the fish of the Skagit and other Northwest rivers persist and are available to all who savor a smoked, grilled, baked or otherwise ready-to-eat catch. Against today's environmental challenges, though, it will take the tribes, nonprofits like Skagit Fisheries and government support – along with a little effort from all of us – to succeed in that mission.

I'm grateful to fulfill supporting roles through my work with the tribes and Skagit Fisheries – and for every opportunity to put salmon on my plate.

Intern Spotlight – Vegetation Monitoring

By Bruce Cudkowicz and Kate Rounds, Summer 2024 Vegetation Monitoring Interns

Our names are Bruce and Kate and we are the Summer 2024 Riparian Restoration interns at Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. We are Environmental Science majors at Western Washington University, and this internship has complemented our academic work by providing us with insights into the world of ecological restoration throughout our time out in the field. This last spring we had the privilege of participating in Environmental Science 'field camp', a program at Western Washington University run by Dr. John McLaughlin that focuses on riparian conservation. During this course, we took two different trips to conduct student-led research. The first was a backpacking trip in the Elwha River Valley in Olympic National Park, and the second was a rafting trip down the Grande

Ronde river. Throughout these trips we were taught and experienced the vast importance of healthy rivers. In their ecosystems, rivers are the lifeblood; they clean the air, filter the water, transport marine-derived nutrients to riparian forests, and support a disproportionately large fraction of Earth's biodiversity. Many of these systems are heavily degraded, and require active restoration to sustain the life that relies on them.

The Elwha River was dammed for close to a century before 2014 when the dams were finally removed. After the removal of the dams, a lakebed was left consisting of a substrate with harsh, inhospitable conditions for plants to become established. This was a primary concern in terms of ecological restoration as revegetation is a crucial step in repairing the damaged system. We were introduced to the ins and outs of restoration work through research projects we created on this system. Kate studied the impacts of beavers on the formerly dammed lake bed and Bruce studied how riverbank lupine, a nitrogen fixer, impacts its surrounding plant communities. Being able to see and experience the immense changes that have taken place along the Elwha ten years post-dam removal helped us understand the importance of

protected rivers and restoration work.

Our time as Skagit Fisheries interns working all along the Skagit River, which is designated as a "Wild and Scenic" river, has helped us cement what we learned and experienced during field camp with real life work experience. We have been able to help with many restoration projects, new and old through many means: assessing the survival of past plantings, land stewardship, invasive species removal, and site maintenance. This internship has shown us the inner workings of what restoration work is really like, as well as the real life impacts of such. We are proud to be able to work with such an impactful organization and to be able to participate in the protection and restoration of the Wild and Scenic Skagit River.



Bruce ready for a day in the field.



Taking a break from monitoring vegetation to survey for knotweed.

New Board Member Introductions

Bill Hebner

Bill is a lifelong resident of Washington, growing up in Redmond and receiving a B.A. degree in Biology from Central Washington State College. Shortly after graduating from college in 1975, Bill went to work for the Washington Department of Game which eventually morphed into the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Bill spent 38 years with the agency working in the Enforcement Program the entire time in both eastern and western Washington, eventually retiring at the end of 2012 as the North Puget Sound Enforcement Captain. However, Bill wasn't done working and immediately after retiring from the state he went to work with the Stillaguamish Tribe as the Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Captain supervising the Tribe's natural resource law enforcement program for the next 8 years finally retiring full time in 2020.

Conserving and preserving Washington's natural resources has been a lifelong passion of Bill's and even in retirement he had a desire to continue contributing. Although Bill resides in Snohomish County, his career responsibilities included Skagit County, and he is familiar with local conservation issues here as well as preservation organizations to include The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG). Bill has a history of working with the SFEG and states that, "the SFEG is one of, if not the, premier and most productive Fisheries Enhancement Group in the state and when the opportunity to serve as a board member presented itself, I was excited to apply and elated to be

selected to serve on its Board, to be associated with its professional staff, and to contribute to their success into the future". Bill enjoys and has a history of working with local property owners and feels a huge sense of accomplishment in bringing win-win solutions to the table to ultimately resolve complex natural resource issues to the satisfaction and benefit of landowners and protecting valuable resources at the same time.

Bill is married and has one adult son who lives and works in Skagit County. Their family enjoyed horseback riding over the years and now Bill and his wife Lora enjoy traveling internationally to explore and experience natural history in other countries. In his spare time, Bill enjoys playing golf, vegetable gardening, and maintaining their small hobby farm in Arlington. Over the past ten years, Bill has pursued a lifelong interest in wildlife photography, capturing nature worldwide and sharing the results with others. He still considers himself an amateur/hobby photographer and has shared a couple of his favorite photos with us recently.

Ken Raedeke

Ken's first experience in the Skagit area was as a field biologist in 1971 in the University of Washington's (UW) Biotic Survey of Ross Lake, funded by Seattle City Light as part of the proposed High Ross Dam project. To assess the probable impact of the dam he and his colleagues completed bird surveys, trapped small mammals, censused deer and mapped deer winter range, while the UW School of

Fisheries had a contract to do the fish-specific work. After four years as a Peace Corp Volunteer in Chile, Ken again worked on the Biotic Survey project, mainly working on mitigation options for impacts to deer and other wildlife.

As a UW professor, he was active in the Timber-Fish-Wildlife negotiations, and was a co-founder of the UW's Center for Streamside Studies. In the Center his role was to organize educational opportunities on the interaction of forest management, fisheries and wildlife. He designed and taught UW classes on the topic, also taking the opportunity to lead workshops and symposia.

As a consultant he supervised numerous wetland and stream mitigation projects, including wetland creation, stream relocation and enhancement, and long term monitoring of mitigation and various wetland and stream habitats.

For many years, Ken has enjoyed recreating in the Skagit Valley, fishing, rafting, bird watching, and hunting. When the opportunity came to join Skagit Fisheries' board, Ken gladly accepted with the hope that he could contribute to the maintenance and/or restoration of the Skagit River watershed. While his professional training is mainly in wildlife biology, he has had extensive experience in wetland habitat restoration and management, and hopes that this experience can be useful for the restoration team. He looks forward to contributing to Skagit Fisheries' work in any way that he can.

A Tribute to Chris Brown

1948-2024

I first "met" Chris Brown in very early 2008. I had just started a part time job as the employee for non-profit SCEA (Skagit Conservation Education Alliance.) It was the time of great energy on the "Clean Samish Initiative" to get pollution out of the Samish River which was causing disease in commercial shellfish in Samish Bay. Many organizations had activities with that. One of our activities was to get porta-potties placed and serviced out along the dikes of the lower Samish River where hundreds of fisher folks assembled during mid-August to early Nov. SCEA looked for "sponsors" of the devices to help with the cost, including a witty "time-share" program for individuals. The owner could get a name put up on the porta-potty. Chris was the only person to buy one - for his brother! I did not know many in the

field yet, but here was a guy for sure I needed to share more time with!

And I did. From many hours wading streams for spawner surveys to field work parties for almost any environmental need, and mostly, and lately, surveying numerous beaches for evidence and reporting of Surf Smelt (Forage Fish) spawning. So much I learned from Chris and so many just plain fun moments we had. There is quite a large band of folks who have been involved in the Forage Fish work, and Chris was a beloved member of that group. And, we always shared visiting and story-telling time at the summer picnics and annual meetings of many environmental groups.

A fellow so missed.

- Pete Haase, long-time Skagit Fisheries friend and volunteer

I first met Chris on October 3, 2009 when he attended SFEG's spawner survey volunteer workshop. We had an immediate connection on account of his talkative nature, his wry sense of humor, and penchant for puns. He was assigned surveys at Parsons Creek in partnership with fellow volunteer Sheila Tomas, and the two of them were awarded joint status as 2009 Volunteer of the year.

Chris went on to volunteer in Marblemount hatchery tours, juvenile fish seining, and then educational endeavors such as dissecting salmon for middle school classes. Chris seemed right at home in front of a classroom, deftly dismantling salmon and playing show-and-tell with the fish parts. He was keen to help with this project because it meant he went home with lots of crab bait!

My favorite thing about Chris was his wacky sense of humor. I could always count on him for humor and puns to brighten any visit. Seeing him at community events always brought a smile to my face. In summer 2020 when I ventured out of my COVID cocoon to Hansen Creek for some project or other, Chris unexpectedly showed up, and my first response was "Chris, Can I have a hug?". I was just so glad to see people, and particularly Chris.

I will remember Chris not for his hundreds of volunteer hours, but for his love of the natural world and his way of seeing and appreciating the beauty of life. I miss him very much.

- Lucy DeGrace, Skagit Fisheries Outreach Manager



To read Chris' obituary scan QR or visit:

www.sigsfuneralservices.com/obituaries/christopher-brown

Myrriah in front of a newly constructed bridge at Lower Day Slough.



A new bridge being set post-culvert removal at Lower Day Slough.



Engineer Paul Tappel and Myrriah talk culverts.

Stream Work Makes *the Dream Work*

By Myrriah Crowley, Habitat Restoration Coordinator

Culverts and other human made water crossing structures that direct water flow under roads have provided people access to most any place we want to go – unfortunately, the same cannot be said for salmon. Culverts can cause a whole host of problems for both adult and juvenile salmon. Many culverts are considered undersized for the stream they are conveying. This may cause velocity barriers, meaning water comes rushing through the narrow pipe at a rate too fast for salmon, large and small, to swim through. Undersized culverts can also cause erosion, scour pools, and significant drops in stream elevation that fragment habitat. A healthy, connected habitat is one of the most important factors for salmon survival. Fish passage projects benefit all stages of the salmon life cycle, and it is so important to be reminded of the immediate benefit that is awarded when we remove undersized culverts and restore habitat connectivity. Young fry need to be able to access a variety of pools and slow-moving water to find cool refuge and food, and adult salmon need to be able to find the right spawning habitat that ensures their ability to produce the next generation of salmon. For this reason, it is critical that we understand the impact that culverts

have on fish access to Skagit River tributaries and know where to focus our efforts on increasing fish passability and what projects might have the greatest impact.

For the last several years, Skagit Fisheries has been working with Skagit County, Skagit River System Cooperative (SRSC) and Upper Skagit Indian Tribe to understand the state of culverts in the Skagit River Basin. We call this collaborative effort the Skagit Culvert Working Group (SCWG) and through our collaboration have been able to achieve quite a number of accomplishments. Skagit Fisheries and SRSC have surveyed and updated culvert passability data for numerous sites that were previously inaccurate or unknown. Conditions can change a lot over time, and it is important to know current statuses so we can understand how to best improve fish passability and where to prioritize our efforts. SRSC built a robust GIS tool that increases our understanding of where salmon should be able to swim to if no culverts stood in their way. Their highly accurate LiDAR layer and expert GIS mapping skills have been able to provide critical information about how much upstream habitat there is above all known culverts in the Skagit River Basin. This step

is important for restoration groups like us because grant funding is largely based on the potential benefit of the project. By showing hard numbers like linear habitat gain and area of habitat gain, we can be more effective at explaining why certain projects need funding and focus on areas where multiple partners can work together.

Since 2018, the Skagit Culvert Working Group has collectively completed more than a dozen fish passage projects and restored access to over 9-miles of high-quality salmon habitat. These are huge feats, and it has been a wonder to see what is capable when restoration partners come together with a collective mission. By working together, the SCWG has been able to talk about the individual priorities of each organization/entity and strategize on how we can best achieve increased habitat connectivity for salmon in the Skagit River Basin. We are in it for the long game, and while we may have a long way to go, working together has made all the difference for salmon and the health of this beautiful place where we all live.

Keep an eye out for our upcoming report: Skagit Basin Fish Passage Barrier Analysis: Culvert Inventory and GIS Habitat Estimate Tool.

Interns and AmeriCorps are vital to Skagit Fisheries



Giving Tuesday was created in 2012 as a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do good. Over the past 10 years, this idea has grown into a year-round global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity. This November, Skagit Fisheries is asking for your support of our AmeriCorps and intern programs. The young adults engaged in these programs are passionate about serving their communities and making a difference for the future of salmon. Funds are needed to increase the number of opportunities and the diversity of individuals who participate. Unpaid internships can only attract those who can afford unpaid positions. With your help, we can create more opportunities for ALL those interested. Donate now to support future conservation leaders.

Donate on December 3rd to support future conservation leaders.

GIVING TUESDAY

DECEMBER 3, 2024



www.SkagitFisheries.org/ways-to-give

Explore all the ways you can give



BECOME A MEMBER

Members make salmon recovery possible. Help ensure successful salmon restoration efforts continue by becoming a member today.



DONATE

Show your commitment to the future stewardship of our local watersheds by making a donation today. Consider a recurring donation!



VOLUNTEER

We recruit and train volunteers to achieve increased public awareness for salmon habitat restoration. All projects are based on learning through hands-on activities.



STOCK / IRA GIFTS

Make your gift an investment in the future of Salmon.



LEGACY GIVING

Make a lasting impact on the future of Salmon.



PLAN A FACEBOOK FUNDRAISER

Organize a Facebook Birthday Fundraiser in support of Skagit Fisheries.



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Vehicle pickup and transportation are free. Fill out the form and we do the rest.



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**SKAGIT FISHERIES
ENHANCEMENT
GROUP**

PO Box 2497
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Events and Volunteer Opportunities



Scan the QR code or visit www.skagitfisheries.org/events/ for more info and registration. Registration is helpful so we can let folks know about event changes and provide more information as it is needed. Parking at some of these sites is ex-stream-ly limited, so please carpool!

Salmon Sightings

Saturdays Noon-3pm

October 12 • November 2

November 23

Join us at various locations around the Skagit and Samish Watersheds in hopes of seeing spawning salmon!

Fall Planting Parties

Saturdays 9am-Noon

October 19

October 26

November 9

November 16

Help restore riparian areas by planting native plants with us!

