

Chambers-Clover Watershed Council Meeting Notes
Wednesday, January 09, 2008
Lakewood City Hall, Executive Conference Room

Attending: Ed Brooks, Lorin Reinelt, Sam Wright, Al Schmauder, Tom Kantz, Bob Burkle, Rich Eltrich, Jim Jenkins, Russ Ladley, Blake Smith, Thomas E. Shan (sp?), Nancy Olive (sp?), Jeff Boers, Keith Underwood, Mike Rhubright, Melissa Paulson, Don Russell, Hal Michael, Paul D. Russell, Phil Schneider, Mike Scharpf, Cindy Beckett, Daniel Hull, Cindy James, Karen Zirkle, Chris Phinney, Bruce Cromoga, and lone Clagett (taking notes).

Presentations & Education:

Brief Overview of Salmon Recovery in WRIAs 10 & 12 (Lorin Reinelt)

There are fifteen lead entities in Puget Sound (twenty-seven statewide) and the combined Puyallup/White and Chambers/Clover watersheds make up one of them. We are updating strategies for steelhead: Getting limiting factors identified and placing a heavy focus on removing barriers, e.g., the upcoming Shera Falls project. There are millions of dollars being spent to help the fish come back. How can this be accomplished?

A Proposal: Steelhead Restoration in Chambers Creek (Sam Wright)

The life history strategies of steelhead were introduced, as well as the shifts in capacity of Chambers Creek and domination by various salmonid species that depend on stream rearing for at least part of their life cycle. Coho dominate everywhere, are able to spawn at high flow, and have strong territorial tendencies. Steelhead spring spawn in the main stem and when they come out of the gravel they have missed half of the growing season and the coho are already feeding.

Chambers may be able to maintain as many steelhead as two other streams comparable in size: Big Beef Creek on the Kitsap Peninsula and Bingham Creek, a Satsop River tributary. An adequate number of spawners is necessary. Recommendation: Use the hatchery pass-through count and if twenty or more head upstream, then let them alone. If, however, there are less than twenty, intervention becomes necessary.

Researchers naturally head for protected waters but what we need is the knowledge to handle urban streams. This project would generate an immense amount of public awareness. There will be a need to close the watershed to fishing. Otherwise, we will never determine whether habitat limitations or over-fishing is causing reductions. It's agreed to start counting spawners through digital imaging plus riverwatchers keeping track at holding ponds.

Historical Steelhead Conditions (Rich Eltrich)

Winter steelhead propagation began in the 1920s and ran through 1997. Because the Chambers stock was manipulated over time to return early, hatchery stock could be separated from wild fish.

Currently coho numbers are depressed and summer chum are extinct. The return on coho was 75 this last year; there was no tribal harvest so that is a fairly accurate account. The chum return was 423 but as many as one thousand may have passed after the trap was removed from the ladder; chum don't like to cross the barrier. Between 1954-1974 coho were released into Chambers Creek; in 1975, 98% of coho releases went into Sequelichew Lake. With retrofits and upgrades, handling of broodstock will be even better in the future.

Further Discussion

The "**20 fish rule**" calls for an understanding of the availability of stock. The two closest wild stocks are in the Green and White rivers. There will have to be fish health testing and a certain number of eggs should be selected from an appropriate size sample to look at genetics. Steelhead have a complex, complicated maturation cycle: Generations are mixed. A four year history is needed. One fish may go resident and it's sister may smolt. Always, of course, the goal of each fish life cycle is to live to reproduce, whether success involves staying put as a resident or turning anadromus. A California run spent forty years waiting out a drought before returning anadromus.

SRFB grants are for capital projects not for monitoring--but may cover filling in an information gap. A moratorium on fishing, or limiting fishing to no bait and single barbless hook, won't work in a 300 thousand population watershed. *Rainbow trout fishing* has been *juvenile steelhead fishing*. Educate or don't close to fishing. Regulations of that kind (closure) need to go through the process and be printed in the state fishing regulations. Then enforcement is required. We could set aside a lake or two reserved for juvenile fishing. Other counties do it.

These proposals should go into the next regulation cycle package for 2009 and be reviewed by the public. Signage will be critical because if this is done through the regular cycle and appears in the official pamphlet, nobody will have an excuse for noncompliance. Is emergency application for this year possible? Hal will run it up the flagpole and see what happens.

Information Sharing:

City of Tacoma (Mike Rhubright) - The city is partnering with TPCHD to investigate the Wapato Lake situation.

WDFW (Bob Burkle) - Biologist Katy Knight is working with the Puget Sound Partnership to come up with recommendations for best management practices.

City of Lakewood - Stormwater project started up this week. Chum have been spotted on Leach and Flet creeks.

Pierce County (Lorin Reinelt) - The Sprinkler Retrofit grant is on track. Pilot retrofit will be constructed during the summer of 2008, followed by a full project in 2009.

Wetlands (Cindy Beckett) - Situation is as bad as ever.

Announcements:

Nisqually (www.nisquallyestuary.org) - They have Russell Foundation funding to come up with a proposal for the creation of an aquatic reserve which will include the Chambers estuary. A letter of support from CCWC is requested.

Pierce County is updating its **Shoreline Regulations**. You can find a draft online. Input is requested to help determine land use along our shorelines and reaches.

CCWC Retreat Reminder - Saturday, January 26, at the Girl Scout headquarters in Dupont. Save the date. Midday meal is potluck. Email will go out with more details.

Tacoma Chapter of Trout Unlimited - Meets this evening on first floor of this same Lakewood City Hall. Talk with Bruce Cromoga after adjournment to learn more.

Adjourn.