



Puyallup River Tales

A newsletter of the Puyallup River Watershed Council

Volume 1, Issue 2

November 2005

Puyallup Tribe Tracks Bulltrout Over the Radio

The Puyallup Tribe of Indians is radio tagging a handful of bull trout to learn more about the small population of fish that inhabit the entire Puyallup River watershed. “We don’t know a lot about how these fish live,” said Russ Ladley, resource protection manager for the Puyallup Tribe.

Over the summer, tribal staff attached small radio tags to about a dozen bull trout caught at the Buckley Diversion Dam fish trap on the White River, a tributary to the Puyallup. Tribal staff followed the fish with a radio telemetry device, tracking their movements. “We can follow them for about a year after they are tagged,” said Ladley. “Bull trout have a varied life cycle that is not as straightforward as other salmon species. By tracking them in their habitat, we can pick up on the details that might end up being vital in restoring them.”

Bull trout are members of the Pacific salmon family and like salmon they can migrate to saltwater. Bull trout need extremely cold water in which to spawn and grow, meaning most are found high in the mountains. Bull trout live much longer than any other species, with average life spans up to 12 years.

“Bull trout in the Puyallup show the wide ranging life histories that we see in bull trout across the region,” he said. “But, the population is so small here that if you weren’t paying attention, you might not notice it.” Fewer than a hundred bull trout are seen yearly at the White River fish trap, compared to tens of thousands of coho salmon.



Puyallup Tribal fisheries biologist Terry Sebastian checks a bull trout at the Buckley Fish trap on the White River Diversion Dam on the White River.

Knowing more about bull trout helps the tribe and the state co-managers protect all species of fish in the Puyallup River watershed. “Bull trout, chinook, coho and all of the other fish in the river don’t live in isolation of each other,” said Ladley. “The more we understand about how one fish species lives, the better we understand all species.”

The Puyallup River Watershed Council is a forum which promotes and implements programs that restore, maintain, and enhance the watershed in order to protect its environmental, economic, and cultural health.

As the Commencement Baykeeper at Citizens for a Healthy Bay, one of my responsibilities is to manage the Environmental Pollution Hotline for the City of Tacoma. This 24-hour hotline provides an effective method by which individuals or businesses can report suspected incidents of water-pollution, while maintaining their anonymity. I receive a lot of positive feedback regarding the hotline, as Tacoma residents appreciate the opportunity to become involved in the environmental health of their community and Commencement Bay in general.



Amy Bates
**Personal
Perspective**

The types of calls that I typically receive fall into a few specific categories: intentional dumping into storm drains or surface water, incidental spills, and construction runoff. Many callers are concerned about substances that they witness being directly dumped into storm drains. In these situations, the contaminants are most often oil, paint, cleaning fluids, or construction debris. In any case, the callers are appropriately concerned as the purpose of storm drain systems is to manage stormwater by redirecting it from streets (where it could cause tremendous traffic hazards) into surface water (streams, creeks, rivers, and in Tacoma, Commencement Bay). Typically, stormwater systems are not designed to filter contaminants.

The most appropriate action to take when witnessing suspected cases of water pollution is to contact someone who can respond to the situation before the impacts escalate. As most citizens are not familiar with the various response agencies, the Environmental Pollution Hotline provides a single number that individuals can call when they see a potential water quality violation. Further, Tacoma callers appreciate being able to contact the hotline knowing their identity will not be released, which increases the likelihood they will use the hotline again in the future.

For more information about the Environmental Pollution Hotline, please contact Commencement Baykeeper, Amy Bates at (253) 383-2429 ext. 102.

Protecting Culture, Nature and Building the Economy

You probably have a good idea of your own personal health – you don't have any aches or pains and you consider your overall health is good. But what can you say about the overall health of the Puyallup River Watershed (PRWC) - its economic, cultural, or environmental health - major elements of the Puyallup River Watershed Council's (PRWC) Mission Statement?

The PRWC, looking at work completed in 2001 and contained in the *Carbon River Corridor Charette*, entered into an agreement with the National Park Service (NPS), the Cities and Towns of Buckley, Orting, Enumclaw, South Prairie and Wilkeson in March 2004. Its purpose is to help organize a partnership, to efficiently and effectively collaborate on mutually beneficial projects related to:

- Conservation of natural and cultural resources
- Provision of visitor information and support facilities
- Development and management of local recreation facilities
- Economic development.

The Five Communities organization now formally called the *White/Carbon Rivers Communities Forum* and made up of the representatives from the cities and towns, NPS, and the PRWC, worked with local residents to put together a regional focus of its cultural history. A brochure with a regional map of the five communities on one side and all the local historical places of a city on the other side is the present project. These brochures will bring greater interest in the region's history and subsequently more tourist visiting days. Copies are planned to be available at points along the popular Foothills Trail and at public buildings.

For more information and volunteer opportunities, visit our Web site:
www.piercecountywa.org/PRWC
Or, send an email to:
PC-PRWC@co.pierce.wa.us

The Puyallup River Watershed Council meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month, 5-7 p.m., at Sumner City Hall, 1104 Maple St.

Swan Creek, an urban refuge being restored

Friends of the Swan Creek Watershed (FSCW) is a diverse group of adults and youth who cultivate environmental stewardship through educational and volunteer opportunities in the Swan Creek Watershed. *FSCW* works primarily in Swan Creek Park, an urban refuge of 250 acres nestled on the boundary of Tacoma and unincorporated Pierce County that provides important habitat for many species, including salmon that spawn in Swan Creek and a rare plant. Swan Creek begins near Hwy. 512, flows through a deep wooded gulch in Swan Creek Park, and into the Puyallup River near I-5.



This first year, *FSCW* has focused on gathering information from the different municipalities, agencies, organizations, and others who have responsibility for, or do work or educational activities in, the watershed. In addition to offering community programs, including *Songs of the Canoe People* by Chief Leschi School's cultural coordinator, *FSCW* has also hosted work parties in both the upland and canyon areas of Swan Creek Park. These projects have included tree planting with adult ESL students, the completion of a major trail reroute necessitated by a washout, and Park Appreciation Day.

Currently, *FSCW* activities include compiling a seasonal guide to the environmental needs and educational opportunities in the watershed, implementing a City of Tacoma Splash Grant, developing a park watch network, and facilitating additional educational and volunteer activities.

Friends of the Swan Creek Watershed welcomes the participation of individuals, families, groups, and schools, as we learn and work together to preserve this valuable resource in our urban landscape. For more information contact Sue Bernstein, *FSCW* Coordinator, 253-472-7264 or sue.b@prodigy.net.

Get Involved!

Volunteer groups involved in watershed health

Citizens for a Healthy Bay

<http://www.healthybay.org>
chb@healthybay.org
917 Pacific Avenue, Suite 100
Tacoma, WA 98402
253-383-2429

Friends of the Hylebos Wetlands

<http://www.hylebos.org/>
chinook@hylebos.org
(253) 929-1519

Friends of Clarks Creek

(253) 864-6042

Pierce Stream Team

<http://www.piercecountycd.org/streamtm.htm>
streamteam@piercecountycd.org
1011 E. Main, Suite 106
Puyallup, WA 98372
(253) 845-2973

South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group

<http://spsseg.org>
spsseg@spsseg.org
6700 Martin Way E., Suite 112
Olympia, WA 98516
(360) 412-0808



The Puyallup River Watershed Council toured the Fennel Creek watershed to better understand the impacts of growth and the importance of land use decisions and watershed management on habitat and community. The council saw Fennel Creek from its source, as it flows through wetlands, forests, along open spaces to Victor Falls where it drops into the Orting Valley and joins the Puyallup River. Marsha Huebner, with Pierce County Water Programs, discussed the creek's portion of the "Mid Puyallup Surface Water Management Basin Plan" and steps to address flooding, water quality and habitat problems.



Puyallup River Watershed Council
1104 Maple Street
Suite 205
Sumner, WA 98390

PRESORTED STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
TACOMA, WA
PERMIT NO. 820