



As usual, this is the second of two newsletters in 2016 - if you missed the first one, please click here for our January 2016 newsletter:

<http://steelheadsociety.org/news/january-2016-ssbc-newsletter>

2016 Annual General Meetings - Summary

The SSBC held this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on January 23, 2016, and once again it was great to see both familiar and new faces who came out to hear about the state of Steelhead in this province.

The first speaker, the SSBC's very own Dave Harper, provided some valuable insight into the Shovelnose Creek berm repair project. As many of you know, Shovelnose Creek is an incredibly important tributary of the Squamish River and studies show that the Shovelnose complex produces something in the order of 70-85% of the Upper Squamish steelhead. In September of 2015, a significant rain event led to a breach of the berm protecting Shovelnose. Dave outlined a plan that would include a Level 1 Fish Habitat Assessment, with the project team including the SSBC, DFO, and MFLNRO. Many thanks to Northwest Hydraulics Company and BGC Engineering for offering their engineering expertise at no cost for this project!

Second up was a team of four BCIT Masters students who led a discussion on the Seymour River Estuary Wetland. To date, virtually every estuary on the North Shore have been impacted by development, and as we know estuaries are a critical habitat for juvenile salmonids. Phase 1 of the Seymour Restoration Project has been completed in the estuary downstream from the CN Railway bridge, including habitat complexity (large woody debris, boulders, and plantings). Phase 2 will include removal of invasive plant species (such as knotweed), and creation of retention pools for salmon habitat.

Future projects may include the proposed "Crab Island" Restoration Plan – Crab Island" being the tidal section of the west side of Seymour estuary south to the Second Narrows. The project would involve habitat work creating shade, forage, and shelter for fish.

Annual SSBC Pub Night Fundraiser – update

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, the Annual SSBC Pub Night Fundraiser was once again a great success! This year we raised over \$30,000 with proceeds being directed towards the project on Shovelnose Creek. Even more important, due largely to the overwhelming generosity of those who donated prizes, services, and their time, overhead cost for this event was almost \$0. This means that nearly every dollar raised goes straight back into protecting Wild Steelhead! Thank you once again to everyone who came out and joined us for a terrific event. ****UPDATE** As this newsletter was going “to print”, the Shovelnose Project is now underway! Details to follow when available on our website and Facebook page.**

The following is a brief summary of some other things the SSBC has been involved in:

Opposition to non-selective fisheries on the Fraser River

The SSBC wrote a letter to the Southern BC 2016/2017 Salmon Integrated Fisheries Management Plan, opposing non-selective fisheries (ie. Gill nets) on the Fraser River at times and locations where interior Fraser River Steelhead may be present. We also suggested DFO move away from mixed-stock fisheries in favour of terminal salmon fisheries that can be managed for minimal or zero by-catch of steelhead.

Opposition to removal of Coquihalla Steelhead

Earlier this year, the SSBC (via President Brian Braidwood) formally protested the planned removal of Coquihalla Steelhead for use in the Chehalis fish hatchery. As many of you are aware, the Coquihalla River run of Summer Steelhead is a small number of fish who face many challenges returning home to spawn, including the recent canyon blockage near the Othello tunnels. Every fish matters and the potential removal of spawning fish is strongly opposed by the SSBC. Also of considerable concern is the recent approval of the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion through this already heavily impacted watershed.

Donation to the Seymour River rockslide removal

Speaking of river blockages, the SSBC donated \$5,000 to a fund for the removal of the Seymour River rockslide that occurred the previous winter. Plans are underway to build a floating fish fence to help salmon and steelhead to spawn, and the possibility of low-velocity explosives is also being explored. The most likely scenario for rock removal will include blasting over a period of several years. This is expensive and reliant on the river to actually disperse the broken-up rock downstream and will cost in the vicinity of \$1million over 4 years.

Letter in support of science-based environmental decisions on the Skeena

The SSBC signed off on a letter in support of science based environment decisions on the Skeena River estuary, primarily with regards to the Canadian Federal Government decision on the Pacific NorthWest

LNG export terminal that was proposed for the area at Lelu Island. The eel grass at Flora Bank alongside Lelu island supports massive numbers of juvenile salmonids, and it is critical this area is protected.

Support of strengthening environmental legislation

The SSBC also signed off on two letters in support of stronger environment legislation protecting BC's salmonids. The first was a letter by the Pacific Marine Conservation Caucus in support of the government's commitment to strengthen environmental legislation that had been weakened under the previous federal government, which also provided steps to undertake this process. The second was a letter from Watershed Watch that asked for the government to move ahead with implementation of the Cohen recommendations, implementation of all six strategies from *Canada's Policy for Conservation of Wild Pacific Salmon*, and replacing the habitat provisions in the Fisheries Act.

Endangered Rivers Nominations

The SSBC submitted a list of Endangered Rivers Nominations, which included the Skeena and Thompson Rivers, along with Shovelnose Creek.

Keeping the Thompson River wild

There has been some discussion of late with regards to putting a hatchery on the Thompson River. Science has proven again and again that this is a poor idea, and the Steelhead Society of British Columbia does not support place a hatchery on the Thompson. Our mandate is for Wild Fish in Wild Rivers, and we will continue to fight to keep the Thompson River, and others like it, wild. In fact the provincial fisheries manager's mandate does not support the use of hatcheries to support wild fish populations. There is no evidence of any kind showing that hatcheries are beneficial to wild salmonid stocks – in fact the opposite appears to be true: <http://www.steelheadsociety.org/news/roll-hatcheries-steelhead-management-pollard-2013>

Michael & Young SpeyClave

The Michael and Young Spey Clave held Saturday April 9th drew approximately 200 spey enthusiasts and was once again a successful event.

The SSBC booth at the Clave provided an opportunity to promote our mandate of the protection of wild steelhead stocks across the province as well reach out to potential new members. Raffle sales garnered over \$7000 which was split between the Steelhead Society of BC and the BC Federation of Fly Fishers. Funds raised by and donated to the SSBC will go towards various steelhead habitat restoration or protection projects throughout British Columbia and will go a long way to help conserve the health of our wild systems.

Once again the SSBC would like to thank Michael and Young Fly Shop for inviting the Steelhead Society to be a part of their Clave and for their generous donation as well as everyone who attended the event

and spent/donated their time and money! The SSBC looks forward to working with Michael and Young Fly Shop at future clones and events!

Deadman River thermal habitat assessment

The SSBC supported a thermal habitat assessment of the Deadman River with a donation of \$7,000 this spring. The assessment will provide a high resolution aerial survey of the Deadman River, which is an important Summer Run Steelhead stream, and will occur this summer in order to target maximum temperature contrasts between groundwater and surface water.

Sandy River Spey Clave

British Columbia has long been a popular destination for many American steelhead anglers. With that in mind the SSBC directors attended and hosted a booth at the Sandy River Spey Clave in Oregon for the sixth straight year. People came by to buy hats, T-shirts or to purchase or renew memberships. As usual many people were interested in the conservation and habitat work the SSBC has been involved in as well as future projects. Binders outlining our past projects were perused by those interested and a few lively discussions ensued.

SSBC supporters Saracione Reels, Farlex Reels and Meiser Rods are once again major contributors to the Pub Night fundraiser which takes place each November. These manufacturers have supported our cause and annual fundraising efforts with their donations as they truly care about wild steelhead and their survival. Because of their generosity, monies raised can go directly to wild steelhead conservation. We greatly value and appreciate their support.

Establishing contacts and connections with like-minded US conservation groups is also important as we share the coast-wide fight for anadromous steelhead and other salmonids. The Native Fish Society embodies many of the same ideals as the SSBC as they advocate for wild, native fish and seek to protect and restore the habitats that sustain them.

The Sandy River Spey Clave continues to be a successful venue for the SSBC as we seek to build relationships and spread our message of supporting wild fish and wild rivers to concerned anglers.

Northern Branch Update

The Northern Branch has been busy with projects that it started last year.

The old borrow pit at the Exstew boat launch which has been stranding fry and smolts for 40 years has had 3 piezometers installed so that ground water depth and water quality can be monitored over the winter. Permits are in place so fry and smolts can be trapped so that none will die this year when water recedes. Once data is collected this winter a fix for it can be engineered.

Our involvement with Dr. Andy Danlychuk continues with his C&R study on steelhead in the Bulkley River. This study is about best practices in C&R of steelhead. The Northern Branch has contributed both

in-kind donations and \$5,000 that was provided by the Parent Branch to fund a student. We continue to look for donations, both in-kind and monetary.

We continued this year with providing fish ID posters to tackle vendors in the north to print fishing licenses on the backs of. This year we had 20,000 copies printed up. We were able to get funding to do this through DFO's C&P. Money collected from fines and put into special purpose accounts paid for this.

The Northern Branch continued to be involved in DFO's SFAB/SFAC consultation process. We were able to have representatives at all local committee's from Prince George west to Haida Gwaii. We had a representative at the North Coast and at the Main board meeting as well.

We were also involved in provincial FLNRO SFAC process.

The Northern Branch had its AGM on April 30th. It was well attended from members across the northwest and some great discussion took place.

More education signs at popular fishing spots and boat launches are planned for this summer. Membership has been growing on a steady basis and we look forward working towards completing the many projects we have been involved in.

Thank you,
Troy Peters

Island Branch update

As some of you may or may not know. We have a small active chapter of the steelhead society here on Vancouver Island. While we are based out of the Comox Valley, we are involved in projects throughout the island. This year we have seen increased attendance at our meetings and have been working on a few notable projects which include:

- 1) *Working with Western Forest Products to address concerns regarding logging practices in the Salmon River water shed.* Some of our members were noticing increasingly concerning logging practices near the tributaries and the Salmon River itself. We documented these concerns and discussed them at our meetings. We were able to reach out to WFP who sent an engineer to one of our meetings to discuss and address our concerns. Going forward they have agreed to work with us regarding our concerns as well as we have an open invitation to visit their offices and review future cutting plans.
- 2) *BC hydro diversion dam on the Salmon River.* There is an ongoing BC Hydro project on the Salmon River to allow improved upstream fish passage as well as out migration of fish past the dam. This project was scheduled to start this year but has recently been put on hold due to high costs to BC Hydro. Hydro is now reviewing the project and there is talk that the dam itself may now become decommissioned. The SSBC has been working to advocate for this project and with the new hold which has been put on this we are consulting other stake holders and are working to have this project move forward in some manner.

- 3) *Fish counts, habitat survey and population monitoring.* Our members are actively collecting data on Steelhead populations on various watersheds throughout the island. This data is collected by swim counts, floats and walks of rivers as well as fishing reports and creel surveys. We are working to develop a dedicated and trained group of volunteers who are able to do proper swim counts and habitat surveys of our watersheds, in doing this we aim to gather a clearer picture of population numbers as well as identify crucial spawning and rearing habitat.
- 4) *We are doing on going work to educate fellow anglers of regulations, etiquette and proper fish handling.* We are currently developing signage based on the Northern Branch's salmonid identification flyer as well as seasonal signage addressing the droughts and low water conditions we experience each summer.
- 5) We have worked with BC hydro to distribute chum carcasses in the upper water shed of the Puntledge River to provide nutrients.
- 6) In the coming months we aim to reach out to folks who may be interested in our work in different parts of the island and aspire to build relationships with people who can work locally in the numerous watersheds of our island. This will mainly be focused to the south where there are a large number of anglers currently not represented by the SSBC.

I encourage anyone with questions to please contact me and if you would like to get involved with our projects, we would love to hear from you.

Duncan Lewis

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That wraps up the June 2016 Newsletter from the SSBC, direct to your inbox. You can always reach us through our website (www.steelheadsociety.org) and on Facebook (www.facebook.com/SSBCMmain). You can also purchase hats, shirts, crests, and other swag in our online store, which has recently added a "Northern Branch" section! (<http://steelheadsociety.org/catalog>)

Thank you once again for your support of our goal to preserve Wild Fish and Wild Rivers in beautiful British Columbia.

Kindest Regards,

The SSBC