

Hello fellow Steelhead advocates!



How quickly we are already approaching the summertime. Here at the Steelhead Society, we hope you have all had a great first half of the year. This is the second of two newsletters in 2015 - if you missed the first one, please click here for our January 2015 newsletter:

<http://www.steelheadsociety.org/news/january-2015-newsletter>

2015 Annual General Meetings - Summary

The SSBC held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on January 24, 2015 this year, 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, Region 2 Steelhead Biologist Kenji Miyazaki, covered a number of topics of interest for Steelhead advocates in BC. Topics included updates on two major hydraulic events on provincial steelhead waterways: the boulder on the Coquihalla River and the landslide on the Seymour River.

Second up was Region 1 Anadromous Fish Specialist, Mike McCulloch. Mr. McCulloch discussed points of interest for Steelhead in his region, which includes Vancouver Island, the Haida Gwaii, and a portion of BC's mainland coast. Despite various issues facing Steelhead stocks in this region, there are bright spots and SSBC funding and lobbying play a big role in ensuring we see more of these bright spots going forward!

Thompson River Habitat Restoration Project: Nicola 1.0 and 2.0

Besides lobbying, writing letters, and formulating strategies for Steelhead advocacy in British Columbia, we also fundraise for and spearhead habitat restoration on Steelhead tributaries around the province. The most recent fundraiser/social event we held (at Mickey's Pub in Coquitlam on December 3, 2014) was attended by more than 200 concerned friends of the Steelhead Society. When all was said and done, we raised over \$20,000 (!), which was earmarked for a portion of the Nicola River that was desperately needing to be rehabilitated.

A list of donors for the fundraiser and a "thank-you" letter was included in the January 2015 newsletter, but is worth posting again: <http://www.steelheadsociety.org/news/another-successful-fundraiser-2014-nicola-fundraiser-thankyou>

The Nicola River projects got underway over the past year. Project 1.0 was a bank stabilization issue that was ranked as the first priority, due to a large clay bank was causing significant siltation, which in turn had a large downstream impact of fish habitat. Project 2.0 was an off-river side channel improvement, along with fencing to prevent cattle from eroding the banks. Both of these project were completed this past Spring!

Special thanks to Kirk G of Tight Line Films for volunteering his time and skills to film the project.

Michael & Young SpeyClave

Once again the Steelhead Society of British Columbia was the recipient of monies raised from the Annual Michael & Young Spey Clave. A very big thank you from us at the SSBC to Michael & Young for the support, as well as to all the attended the event and spent/donated their time and money!

Cast & Blast

Our Squamish River Trust Fund continues to have positive cash flow thanks to the Annual Cast & Blast event hosted by Brian Niska. Once again thank you to Brian and all the attendees at this fantastic annual event - we appreciate your support!

Sandy River Spey Clave

British Columbia has long been a destination of choice for many American steelhead anglers. As such the SSBC has attended the Sandy River Spey Clave in Sandy, Oregon for the past 5 years.

This year three Directors attended and it was our best year to date! It seems that the SSBC's profile has continued to rise south of the border. People came to the booth specifically to renew their memberships, buy new hats or shirts and even make straight out donations! People were very interested in the work we have been doing and the binders outlining our various Thompson River projects were very popular.

As well, major contributors to our fundraising like Saracione Reels, Farlex Reels and Meiser Rods came to us asking if they could contribute again - watch for these great SSBC supporters products at upcoming events! A number of other companies agreed to donate to our cause. In all we raised \$925 USD in memberships, swag and cash donations plus what we will raise at auction.

From a financial perspective it was certainly a success, but as important is the increased profile that the SSBC gained over the weekend. In addition, contacts with US conservation groups are also significant in the coastwide fight for steelhead. The Native Fish Society wants to partner with us to broaden our scope in the PNW by offering to redistribute our info and link us to their website.

Overall, the Sandy River Spey Clave was a great success for the SSBC.

Northern Branch Update

The Northern Branch of the SSBC held their AGM on April 18th. Here is an update from the SSBC Northern Branch Chair, Troy Peters.

Hello Steelheaders,

Over the past few months, we have seen the continued revitalization of the Steelhead Society of BC's Northern Branch. Here is a quick summary of what we have been up to in the North:

- *Participated in an LNG round table discussion*
- *Attended the BC Hydro Open House on the Terrace-to-Kitimat Transmission Project, which has since included ongoing discussions surrounding routing changes that should facilitate the least amount of impact on the Lakelse watershed*
- *Attended a number of Advisory Committees (A.C.), including:*
 - *Provincial Skeena Fisheries A.C.*
 - *DFO Lower Skeena Sport Fisheries A.C.*
 - *DFO North Coast Sport Fisheries A.C.*
 - *Kitimat Public A.C.*
- *We met with DFO Biologist and Community Advisors, along with a Rod & Gun Club representative, regarding Hurley/Kofed Creek, where we decided to make an information pamphlet to be distributed by Elementary School Students to houses along the creek. We are partnering with the Rod & Gun Club on this.*
- *Held our 2015 AGM, with 16 people in attendance. Elections were held for this year's Board members*
- *Worked on the Lakelse River sign being replaced*
- *Held an informal meeting in Smithers, with 15 people in attendance. Interest was so great that it was decided a committee needed to be formed, and a formal meeting is planned for June to finalize.*
- *Membership has been worked on almost daily. Our main message is the importance of standing together, and putting aside differences to better serve Wild Steelhead in BC, no matter what method may be used to angle for these fish.*
- *We have also set the goal of limiting our impact on Steelhead through education of other anglers on things such as improved fish handling.*

Regards,

Troy Peters

Northern Branch Chair

Comox Branch Update

The Comox Valley Branch of the SSBC held their AGM on January 31st. Here is an update from the Chair of the Comox Valley branch, Larry Peterson.

- *Quinsam River – letter of support written for Quinsam River cascades has been sent*
- *Tsolum River – AGM Jan. 31*

- *Could be as many as 600 adult coho and 30 adult steelhead*
- *Needs more assessment, including goal setting*
- *Count redds in April (Steve, Ray, Nick, and Wayne White)*
- *Salmon River – physical work on the Salmon River diversion to begin in 2016*
- *Inventory Trips – Quinsam, Puntledge, Oyster to be done in February, March, and April*
- *Bottlenecks – biggest bottlenecks are ocean survival (currently about 4%) and juvenile rearing habitat. So, question about the Oyster River: if juvenile rearing is a bottleneck, with all that refuge water about the Little Oyster, what are we doing to address summer low flow?*
- *Puntledge River – Browns River falls and Puntledge enhancement projects for FWCP in November 2015*

Shovelnose Creek Habitat Improvement Project

Sticking with the stream rehab/enhancement side of things, earlier this year the SSBC began looking into funding and provide volunteers for a project to rehabilitate a dormant side-channel on a tributary of the Upper Squamish River - Shovelnose Creek. The ultimate goal of this project was to provide significant stable, protected, off-channel rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids, particularly Steelhead and Coho.

SSBC Directors Matt, Dave, and Ralf went to the location this spring to prepare some test wells and map out the remaining well locations for the upcoming Shovel day at Shovel nose Event (see the website and FB page). During our due diligence it was found that the water table was much lower than originally anticipated. This meant that either we look for a more suitable place for the project or we spend a tremendous amount of money to make this place work. SSBC chose the former.

So for now, the project has been postponed, although further discussions with project engineers and another site survey this summer may result in a smaller revised project. Although this was a bitter pill to swallow, it's always better to have found out early than after large amount of money had been spent.

More information and updates can be found on our SSBC Facebook page, along with pictures.

<https://www.facebook.com/SSBCmain>

Aevitas Pulls Plug on Hazardous Waste Facility on the Fraser River

In what can only be regarded as great news for Steelhead and many other aquatic species that live in and rely on the Fraser River, the corporate giant Aevitas has pulled the plug on a hazardous waste facility that had been planned to be situated on the lower Fraser River.

The Steelhead Society had opposed this project from the beginning, and had expressed that opposition both via writing letters opposing said project, as well as attending various forums regarding the proposed facility.

Salmon River Land Purchase Plan

Another project we have been involved with is the planned purchase of land in the greater estuary of the Salmon River on Vancouver Island. The SSBC has pledged \$4,000 to the Nature Trust of British Columbia for the purchase of 165 hectares on the Salmon River near Sayward on Vancouver Island.

The funding drive is being spearheaded by Nature Trust - who already have one parcel of land under wraps - and we are in the process of looking to purchase the remaining block to preserve it from industrial activity (including logging, salmon farming, etc).

A feature story on the project by CTV News can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41egGRv70Ek&feature=youtu.be>

For more information on how to help with this project, please click this link: <http://www.naturetrust.bc.ca/salmon-river/>

Opposition to Increased Commercial Fishery on the Skeena

In cooperation with the BC Federation of Fly Fishers, BC Federation of Drift Fishers, the Kingfishers Rod & Gun Club, and the North Coast Steelhead Alliance, the SSBC jointly submitted a letter to the government opposing increased commercial gill net fishery harvest rates on the Skeena River approaches and estuary.

Such a fishery would reduce Steelhead escapement (not to mention other salmonids), resulting in fewer fish making it home to spawn. We once again outlined our recommendation that sockeye are instead harvested in the terminal areas of Babine Lake, which is the only place where the desired harvest rates can be achieved without irreparable harm to other stocks such as the world-famous Skeena Steelhead run.

A Steelhead Society Original Offer - Fly tying scissors

Longtime SSBC supporter, Ben Gehrke, has stepped up over the past year and has organized a fantastic fundraising initiative through the sales of high-end fly tying scissors, with 100% of profits going towards supporting the SSBC.

To date, 100s of pairs have been sold! Buyers of these special scissors have come from across Canada and the US, as well as a number of pairs being sent out internationally.

Ben has a small inventory available, with more still to come. If you would like to purchase a pair of these scissors, please contact Ben directly at punkfisher@hotmail.com, and be sure to include "SSBC Scissors" in the subject line. The minimum suggested donation for these scissors is \$37/pair.

2015 Cal Woods Memorial Award - Dan Cahill

Finally, at this year's AGM, we presented the Cal Woods Memorial Award to long time SSBC member and vital part of the Board of Directors, Mr. Dan Cahill. The Call Woods award is presented periodically by the Steelhead Society to someone who has given unparalleled blood, sweat, and tears to the SSBC's goal of "Wild Fish, Wild Rivers" over the years.

This year's recipient, Mr. Cahill has been a member of the SSBC since ____.

Dan has served on countless committees, written letters speaking out for Wild Steelhead in BC, not just as a director with SSBC but in other fisheries related and steelhead cetral groups and organisations. and provided incredibly thoughtful and in-depth insight into various projects and discussions over his time with the organization.

Once again, the Steelhead Society of British Columbia would like to acknowledge the years of work and dedication provided by Mr. Cahill in support of our goals.

That wraps up the Summer 2015 Newsletter from the SSBC, direct to your inbox. Thank you once again for your support of our goal to preserve Wild Fish, Wild Rivers, in beautiful British Columbia.

Kindest Regards,

The SSBC