



## **In This May 2007 Issue**

- Gary's Letter: Get on Board with CCA to save the fish  
Another successful year for Net Pens  
Could Shad feed the Salmon?  
Successful Banquet  
FF active in Clark Co. Habitat Rule Development  
Speaker for May Meeting  
More Opportunities to get involved
- Want to be a Miner for FF?
  - Teach a kid to fish

### **Gary's Letter**

Dear FF members,

We in FF are taking a lead role in ending the over-harvesting of salmon by commercial fishing interests that is the single biggest threat to the salmon and steelhead.

(See the April issue of National Geographic for an in-depth article on over-harvesting)

After years of restoring streams and fish numbers only to see them decimated by commercial harvest, FF realized the necessity of political action as well as habitat restoration.

FF has taken a lead role in bringing the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) to the NW to lead that political action. The CCA is without question the most effective and biggest organization in the United States dedicated to combating commercial fishing excesses and conserving the resource.

Your FF Board continued its leadership on May 9<sup>th</sup> by voting \$30,000 as seed money to help support the CCA organizational effort in the Northwest including bringing in CCA staff members who will help us form CCA Chapters and begin the lobbying effort needed to change the balance of power in favor of sportsman and fish.

In just a few months of organizing, we now have nearly 1,500 members of CCA from Northern California to Washington and including Idaho and more joining every day. We had 60 join at

the FF banquet in May and with this many members we are now able to form chapters in various areas of these States.

We are looking to raise about \$200,000 that will be needed to put chapters and staff in place. CCA will operate at three levels here in the NW as it does everywhere, local, state and national. One of the things that sets CCA apart is that every member in every chapter has a job to do. There is no such thing as sitting back and letting others do the job.

CCA Staff will be in this area later in May to help and there will be organizational meetings to help set up chapters. On May 18<sup>th</sup> Bob Hays CCA Lobbyist from Houston will be here for an educational meeting on getting chapters organized and active. On May 19<sup>th</sup> there will be a similar meeting in Olympia at the Salmon Club and on May 20<sup>th</sup> there will be a meeting in Wilsonville, OR.

There is tremendous enthusiasm here and throughout the NW about CCA and what it can help us do. FF members who haven't joined can do so by picking up applications at G. Loomis in Woodland or getting on their computers and going to [www.joincca.org](http://www.joincca.org). There are various levels of membership available. Please join CCA.

CCA through the NW Chapters being set up now will be effective and together we are going to change the balance of power in favor of the sportsmen and the fish. It isn't going to be overnight and it will happen in a series of planned steps through methods that CCA has used successfully in all other coastal areas in the United States.

Gary

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#### **NET PEN KUDOS TO DAN BALCH AND HELPERS**

Dan is definitely the net pen go-to guy for Fish First and it's a big effort. Consider these summary statistics:

- Echo Net Pens as of 4/17 there had been 150 trips for a total of 1780 mi. and 562 hours worked there.
- Speelyai Net Pens as of 4/17 there were 140 trips to the pens for 3,866 miles and 615 hours worked.

Activity on the Net Pens ended for this season May 9<sup>th</sup> with volunteers turning loose another 57,000 Summer Steelhead at 4-5 fish per lb in size. Then they pulled and cleaned the nets. When they are dried they will be put in storage for the next season. Those working on the 9<sup>th</sup> were Glen Johnston, Dave Bowden, Gary Loomis, Greg Glass, Dan Balch. John Webster worked with the group at Gary's house where the nets were soaked in iodine and water and put out to dry.

**Echo Net Pens:**

Dan reports 55,700 summer Steelhead turned loose as of April 15<sup>th</sup> at the Echo pens with four boatloads of volunteers including Kevin Cox, Dennis Herford, Gordon Ayres, Todd Haagenson, Auggie Saucedo, Narvin Hend, Steve Danny and Dan Balch all lending a hand.

April 16 they put 57,223 more summer steelhead in the Echo net pens. They will have been turned loose on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Workers there included Glen Johnston, Alan Fulcer, Dennis Frantz, Dave Bowden and Jack Kaeding. Dan reports it was a long ten-hour day. He adds there will be nine feedings before turning the Steelhead loose. Bob Schneider and Dan Balch are feeding them.

As of April 17 workers with 20 or more hours of volunteer work include Dan Balch with 133, Chance Balch with 50.5, Glen Johnston with 41, Alan Fulcer with 36, Dennis Frantz also with 36, Bob Schneider with 35, Ron Andreason with 23, Tom Golik also with 23, Dave Bowden with 22.5, Stan Juve with 21 and Jack Kaeding with 20.

Dan reports a total of 33 people helping and adds they also raised and turned loose 150,000 Spring Chinook in the 2006-2007 season

**Speelyai:**

Dan reports "We had turned 53,350 Kokanee loose in March. We had still been feeding Summer Steelhead and on April 16<sup>th</sup> we hauled 57,223 down to Echo Net Pens."

Workers at Speelyai include Bob Schneider, Paul Larson, Don Lewis, Greg Glass and Dan Balch and he says they had some help from DFW employees including truck drivers. Everybody pulled a 10.5 hr. shift on the 16<sup>th</sup>. With that work done Dan says the group pulled the anchors and nets and took them to the hatchery and pushed the pen back to the pen anchors as the water was too low to push it to the storage area for the summer.

He reports 16 workers with 8 or more hours for the season and a total of 24 different workers at Speelyai. Those workers and their hours are Dan Balch, 191; chance Balch, 71; Bob Schneider, 58.5; Glen Johnston, 37; Stan Juve, 30.5; Chris McGlothlin, 28.5; Richard Potenski, 24; Paul Larson, 20.5; Toni Harms, 18.5; Don Lewis, 10.5, Greg Glass, 10.5; Dennis Frantz, 9; Gary Hurn, 9; Ron and Alrene Andreason 8 hrs. each.

Finally Dan leaves a fishing tip that Kokanee catch is starting to pick up in late April as waters warmed some. He says there was a late start due mostly to cold water.

All of the workers at Echo and Speelyai are recognized and thanked for their volunteer work.



## Could Shad Feed the Salmon?

It's an intriguing possibility that the millions of Shad that migrate on the Columbia and its feeder rivers could provide nutrients for growing salmon. Even more intriguing is the idea, though unproven, that by reducing the numbers of Shad through commercial taking, a "hole" in the ecosystem might be created so that Salmon could expand their numbers.

According to information received from Tony Meyer of Lower Columbia RFEG, Wild Shad have replaced Wild Salmon in the Columbia Basin as the keystone species, which many other species rely on for food. His proposal calls for harvesting Shad and using their carcasses for nutrients. The idea is that so many Shad are available that much more nutrient enhancement could be created than by using available dead salmon. But wait, there is a bit of a problem on the way to doing this and that is that while Shad are generally "clean" and can be used for nutrient enhancement, there has been a recent fish kill in the Great Lakes from a common virus that apparently mutated and may be in Shad. The Lower Columbia Fish Health Center wants to test for this virus before giving the go-ahead to use the Shad as a nutrient enhancer.

A program has been proposed to take 60 Shad per week through the Shad run which is currently crossing the Bonneville Dam complex and submit them to the Fish Health Center for testing. Shad would be collected from various points so that sub species can be included in the virus testing. Volunteers or a local commercial fisherman are needed to collect the Shad for testing.

### Some Background on Shad in the Columbia:

Meyer included the following bits of information:

- Shad are a non-native invasive species with a significant dietary overlap with Salmon.
- There is a potential for Shad to directly consumer juvenile salmonids in the marine environment.
- Shad contain an enzyme that has been shown to reduce the fecundity of predatory fishes.
- Shad are supremely productive. Each 4 lb. Female lays over 300,000 eggs.
  - Five to seven million females spawn upstream of Bonneville each year
  - As many as twenty million spawn system-wide
- Trillions of juvenile shad are in the Columbia main stem and estuary and are the primary food source for non-native Bass, Walleye and other fishes and birds.
- Billions of feeder shad of multiple age groups are utilizing salmon and other native fish food resources in marine areas.
- Shad are an anadromous fish like salmon except they do not feed in the open ocean. They feed near shore in Willapa and Tillamook Bay; Puget Sound and up into British Columbia.
- Because Shad are anadromous and put on 99% of their body weight in the ocean they are an excellent source of marine derived nutrients and can potentially be placed in spawning streams to replace the nutrients formerly brought back by Salmon.

The Shad boom began when Celilo Falls was inundated in the 1950s Prior to that the Shad population hovered at less than 150,000 adults. Because they can't jump they could not ascend upstream far enough to lay their eggs that free float for at least a week before hatching. The

ladders at Bonneville were intentionally lowered to allow Shad to travel upstream to spawn. The reservoirs are an ideal spawning area since the water flows slowly and shad eggs have time to hatch before reaching the marine environment, which had been killing their eggs.

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**Want to be a Miner for Fish First?**

Have you ever yearned to have a mining claim, a gold pan and strike it rich? Well this is not quite that scenario but John DiVittorio, Executive Director of Fish First is looking for a volunteer: Fish First needs a volunteer to work on securing mining claims in the East Fork Lewis River for Fish First to keep miners from digging up the stream. Adam Haspiel of the USFS is willing to help us figure out the process for identifying the areas and filing the claims. Please call John DiVittorio 360-713-7460 if you're interested in making this happen.  
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**FF Active in Clark Co. Habitat Protection Rules**

Jim Malinowski, FF Board member reports development of an amended Clark County Habitat Protection Ordinance. On May 9<sup>th</sup> Jim represented FF at a hearing on that proposed ordinance. Earlier Jim had participated in the advisory committee that developed the original ordinance.

According to Jim the ordinance attempted to strike a reasonable balance between rural landowner's property rights and the community's interest in protecting wildlife habitat, particularly along streams. The amended ordinance will have two options for existing agriculture near area streams. The default ordinance will require ceasing to practice agricultural activities in the habitat zones. The other option involves developing a Habitat Protection Plan. A workbook has been developed which will guide landowners through the process of developing the plans, including listings of Best Management Practices that allow continued farming in riparian habitat zones while protecting and enhancing the habitat.

According to Jim the experience of FF is that most rural landowners both need to use the land and want to be good stewards of that land, for the few however who have done real damage to the habitat values on their land, this ordinance amendment will help the county protect our streams and the salmon and steelhead.  
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**May General Membership Meeting Speaker**

*Meeting format is changing to be more entertaining and informative*

Chris Wagemann, WDFW biologist on the Kalama, will be speaking this month on the "Wild Brood Stock" program for winter steelhead he's been running on the Kalama.

Glen Johnston says the manager of the very supportive Sportsman's Warehouse in Vancouver has also been invited to speak to the group. In addition our own resident Kokanee expert, Dan Balch and Glen Johnston will provide some tips on rigging and fishing for Kokanee.

Those who missed the April meeting missed hearing Captain Mike Cenci of the WDFW and some of his officers talk about fish enforcement issues and the wide variety of actions

against foreign fishermen, commercial fishermen, packing houses and even retail seafood sellers, and, yes, sadly the occasional bust of a "sports" fisherman. They also missed hearing fishing guide Brandon McGavran (360-607-1327) talk about salmon and steelhead fishing on the N. Fork of the Lewis. Brandon had several valuable tips for fishing but of course thought you would be most productive if you fished with him. Imagine that! Look for more guides to provide fishing tips and other interesting guest speakers at future membership meetings.



### **FF Annual Banquet Report**

#### **A sell-out with record fund raising**

Auction Chairman Glen Johnston reports a successful sold out annual banquet and a great time by all who attended the May 5<sup>th</sup> Banquet at the Oak Tree in Woodland. 340 people attended. Johnston asked that members give special thanks to corporate sponsors Sportsman's Warehouse and Bank of Clark County. Sportsman's Warehouse also sponsored a drawing for four \$250 gift certificates. All the Fish First members are urged to patronize those businesses that help FF.

Johnston said all the FF members owe a big thanks to the auction committee people who put in many, many hours preparing for the banquet and that the banquet would not be possible without their help. He said the Oak Tree Restaurant, site of the banquet, also cooperated and made more space available for displaying prizes and auction items.

Over 60 people signed up for membership in the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) at the banquet as well. A special table was set up for CCA applications. According to Johnston, FF also had a number of people join at the sponsor and life member level on auction night.

Banquet Committee members include Glen Johnston who chaired this year's banquet and Les Greear, Jodi Brentin, Gary Loomis, Vern Dollar, Barry Estes, Mike and Cindy Moss as well as Camee Moss, Jerry Thorp, Ron Andreason, Kent Berry and Jim Maxwell.



### **Other Opportunities To Get Involved**

#### **(A reminder)**

There are two fishing opportunities for kids this summer and volunteers are needed for both. These are fun and very rewarding. Those who have volunteered in the past say one of the most rewarding volunteer things you can do is to pass on your skills, enthusiasm and sportsmanship to kids.

- **Saturday June 9<sup>th</sup>** USFS Fishing Derby at lake Merwin. Contact John DiVittorio 360-713-7460
- **Saturday July 14<sup>th</sup>** Doernbecher Hospital Special Kids Fishing at Merwin Hatchery. Contact Jerry Sauer 360-607-1646.