



# FISH FIRST NEWS

RESTORING WILD AND NATIVE FISH RUNS

## FRANK SHRIER TO SPEAK AT

### NOVEMBER 16 GENERAL MEETING

The next general meeting for Fish First members takes place on Thursday, November 16 at 7 p.m. at the Oak Tree Inn. Frank Shrier, a scientist working for PacifiCorp, will discuss the reintroduction of anadromous fish about the Lewis River dams, and Fish First board member Walt McGovern will provide attendees with a gillnet tutorial.

In 2004, PacifiCorp pledged to spend almost \$300 million to restore fish and wildlife populations and improve recreational facilities in the Lewis River watershed in exchange for 50-year federal licenses to operate Merwin, Yale and Swift dams. The centerpiece of the Lewis River Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement is the reintroduction of salmon and steelhead to 174 miles of habitat blocked since completion of Merwin Dam in 1931. Shrier heads up the project for PacifiCorp and will provide attendees with an update on the process and will answer questions. Please plan to join us and learn more about this important topic.

## FISH FIRST LAUNCHES

### NEW WEB SITE

Fish First recently launched a new, updated website that includes the organization's new logo, colors and a variety of helpful information about the group's mission and goals. Please visit the new site at [www.fishfirst.org](http://www.fishfirst.org) and take the time to review Fish First projects, view the Fish First video and comment on the blog written by Fish First president Gary Loomis (The blog is called "Gary's Rant."). We would also appreciate your feedback on how we can make the site even better, so please send comments to: [info@fishfirst.org](mailto:info@fishfirst.org) and write "Web site" in the subject line.

## GARY LOOMIS IN THE NEWS

The current issue of *Salmon and Steelhead Journal* features an article about Fish First and Gary Loomis titled "Can Gary Loomis Save West Coast Salmon?" The article details the steps that need to be taken to save our wild salmon runs, and the controversy surrounding those steps. Get your issue today and take the time to send a note of thanks to editor Pat Hoglund at: [editor@salmonandsteelheadjournal.com](mailto:editor@salmonandsteelheadjournal.com).

## GRANT RECEIVED TO CREATE TECHNICAL MANUAL

Fish First is often approached by groups and organizations throughout the region who are interested in developing their own restoration projects on creeks, streams and rivers. In response to these requests, the Fish First board approved the development of a technical manual and project guidelines focusing on nutrient enhancement and egg boxes. These materials can then be distributed to other organizations. To fund this project, Fish First received a grant of \$5,500 from HSBC Bank to hire a freelance technical writer who will produce the documents. A special thanks to Nathan Phillips of HSBC for his organization's continual support of Fish First.

## MEETING WITH VIRGIL MOORE

Fish First board members Gary Loomis, Walt McGovern and Chuck Yeager recently met with Virgil Moore, the new director of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Department. The four had a good conversation about the commercial over-harvest of wild salmon, and although Moore is an advocate of dam removal, he seemed to have an open mind regarding the issue of harvest.



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## CONSERVATION GROUPS TO SUE FEDS OVER PUGET SOUND SALMON HARVEST

The Salmon Spawning & Recovery Alliance recently joined forces with Washington Trout, Native Fish Society and Clark-Skamania Flyfishers to challenge Puget Sound salmon harvest practices. The groups notified the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of their intent to sue the agencies under provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) regarding illegal harvest practices in the Puget Sound.

According to the complaint, the current fishing-management plan for Puget Sound is jeopardizing the recovery of Chinook salmon, listed as Threatened under the ESA. In fact, some fishery standards appear to undermine the objectives of the Puget Sound Chinook Recovery Plan, nearly complete after years of effort.

In the Puget Sound, NOAA Fisheries have authorized the direct harvest of some listed Chinook, in addition to "incidental-take" levels of up to 76% on individual Chinook populations. Since the ESA does not allow the direct harvest of listed animals, the "incidental-take" levels on some key Chinook populations are unsustainably high. NOAA Fisheries also failed to consider or impose changes in fishing practices, locations, seasons, gear, and/or methods as reasonable and prudent alternatives.

Many scientists inside and outside of the Federal agencies believe that Chinook recovery will require consistently achieving spawning levels of wild salmon high enough to conserve as much of the genetic, geographic and life-history diversity within and between salmon populations as possible.

-Continued-

## Puget Sound Harvest...continued

To achieve recovery, it will require much lower total fishing impacts than current management allows.

As a result of NOAA's actions, harvest rates on Chinook from key Puget Sound rivers are too high for the salmon to recover. While NOAA Fisheries acknowledges this fact, it approved the harvest plan anyway. Harvest management must deliver enough spawning fish to the rivers to maintain viable wild, native populations. However, harvest-impact levels and spawning targets in the fishery plan appear directly contrary to the recovery goals and habitat-improvement objectives in the Puget Sound Chinook Recovery Plan.

The complaint requests that NOAA Fisheries and USFWS reinstate ESA-consultation on the *Puget Sound Comprehensive Chinook Management Plan: Harvest Management Component*; a Resource Management Plan, or RMP, co-developed by the state and tribes for fisheries affecting Puget Sound Chinook; and for NOAA Fisheries to reconsider its authorization of the RMP under the Puget Sound 4(d) Rule. The complaint states that the Agencies' Biological Opinion authorizing the RMP violated the ESA.

**Call to action:** If you would like to lend your voice to this effort, please write a letter to NOAA Fisheries and USFWS and let them know that the fishing-management plan for Puget Sound is jeopardizing the recovery of Chinook salmon and that harvest practices must change. Here's who to write:

Bob Lohn, Northwest Regional Administrator,  
NOAA, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA  
98115-0070.

Mamie Parker, Assistant Director, U.S. Fish and  
Wildlife, Washington Division, 1849 C Street  
N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240