



Volunteers Gear up for Springtime Rainbows

It's that time of year again when participants of the Satsop Springs Project combine their efforts to transport catch-able Rainbow's to local lakes of the Lower Chehalis Basin. This project, which is sponsored by the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force (CBFTF), raises 4,000 Rainbow Trout each year that average 6 lbs. a piece, with the largest weighing upwards of 20 lbs.!

Neighbors of the Satsop Springs Facility and local volunteer groups such as the Elma Game Club, Friends of the Chehalis, Grays Harbor Poggie Club, and Grays Harbor Chapter Trout Unlimited will once again gear up for the transport of this year's fish and prepare the Satsop Springs Ponds for the arrival of the new fish. "The involvement of the local community is what drives this portion of the Satsop Springs Project," said Dave Hamilton, Satsop Springs Project Manager, "...we plant the Rainbow's in the lakes where our volunteer base is from."

Raising these Rainbow Trout is no short order. The fish are cared for every day, and the ponds they are reared in are maintained on an annual basis. This year volunteers will prepare for the new fish by cleaning the ponds, pouring concrete, fixing screens and impoundment weirs, as well as helping with many other maintenance duties at the facility.



A very pleased young fisher holds his catch, which was planted for a derby at Fallor Lake last year by volunteers who raise and transport these "trophy" Rainbow Trout.

Nutrient Enhancement in the Lower Chehalis

If we look back through history, we can see that our native fish stocks are in decline. In the Satsop sub-basin alone, there are five stocks of salmon known to inhabit these waters, and two of these stocks (summer Chinook, and winter steelhead) are listed as "depressed" in the 1992 SASSI report. With that said, there is a lot of science available that proves returning ocean derived nutrient sources to our streams sequentially provides a food source for smolt and the insects they consume, thus increasing the survival rate of naturally spawning salmon.

Citizens in the Lower Chehalis Basin are doing just that. In a collaborative effort, volunteer groups from the CBFTF, Green Diamond Resource Co., Weyerhaeuser Co., WDFW, NFWF, and the SRFB are enhancing reaches of the Elk River, Johns River, Middle Fork Satsop River, and the West Fork Satsop River.

Between the months of October and December of 2005, in reaches of the Middle and West Fork Satsop River, over 6,000 carcasses were distributed by the Satsop Springs Nutrient Enhancement Project affiliates for nutrient enhancement. Additionally, on the Elk and Johns Rivers, 300 fish were hand flung by one, single, dedicated volunteer, Allan Hollingsworth, of the Grays Harbor Gillnetters.

Unexposed fish and those exposed only to one carcass increase mass 25 fold. Carcass density may be higher in localized streams that collect carcasses, and these streams can prove as attractive to rearing salmon. For example, Bilby, et al 1998, after seeding short sections of wild streams with Coho carcasses... (continued →)

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Membership is vital to the ongoing work of the Task Force. Invite a friend to join you with our efforts for producing salmon for sport and commercial fisheries; enhancing Steelhead and Cutthroat trout resources; and restoring, enhancing and protecting stream habitat critical to these anadromous species. Please pass this monthly newsletter on to someone who may be interested...



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Nutrient Enhancement in the Lower Chehalis (continued)

recorded significant increases in densities of rearing salmon in those sections.

Moreover, one of our sister RFEGs, the Lower Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group (LCFEG), is partaking in nutrient enhancement projects in conjunction with a USGS Carcass Analog Study. "Recent results of this study found no degradation of water quality, a four fold increase in growth and condition factor of all sub-yearling and zero-plus steelhead in the treatment section and no change in the control reaches. They also found periphyton (algae) growth increased four-fold during the growing season and then faded back to pre-treatment

levels once the carcass analogs were gone. In time, the increase in periphyton (algae) will result in a four-fold increase in the insect population providing more

food for the fish. The fact that the periphyton faded back to baseline levels once the nutrient load was used up clearly illustrates the need for annual distribution of nutrients

or the stream becomes oligotrophic (low nutrient level) almost overnight, especially in streams with no organic retention capacity," said Tony Meyer, LCFEG Executive Director.

In essence, nutrient enhancement projects help attain a healthy and diverse population of wild salmonids, in areas they once populated in plentiful numbers, which will (with anticipation of better fisheries management) one day maintain higher numbers in the wild.



Carcasses are moved to the back of a dump truck by forklift and tote. The Rotator on the forklift shown in this picture was paid for by a donation to the Satsop Nutrient Enhancement Project from Green Diamond Resource Co. The forklift was purchased via grant through the SRFB and NFWF, which was matched by WDFW State RFEG funds.