

The mission of the Olympic Forest Coalition is promoting the protection, conservation and restoration of natural forest ecosystems and their processes on the Olympic Peninsula, including fish and wildlife habitat, and surrounding ecosystems.



Olympic Forest Coalition

Fall 2012

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John Woolley

## President's Column

OFCO continues to represent your interests regarding public land management on the Olympic Peninsula. The following topics are at the top of our activities list this year:

**Marbled Murrelet:** OFCO files lawsuit against Department of Natural Resources (DNR). See article on page 3.

**Twin Mole (Pier) Removal:** Facilitating deconstruction to enable acquisition by DNR for:

- Public recreation
- Restore more natural coastal current flows

**Wild Olympics Campaign:** The "Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers Act" bill was introduced to Congress during June 2012. Although the bill has not gone through all the proper committees yet, we are hopeful that the bill will become a reality in the coming year. A [recent study](#), commissioned by the Wild Olympics Coalition, clearly shows there are no job losses caused by this proposal.

### Dungeness Watershed Action Plan

- [Now available](#) on Olympic National Forest's (ONF) website
- Initiated in 2011, ONF has completed a water quality and wildlife enhancement plan for public lands in the Dungeness River watershed and its tributaries.
- Many former logging roads and spurs are contributing to erosion. See Gold Creek Trail Access [website article](#).
- Funding in the future will be limited to Legacy Roads and particular access spurs that have recreation value.

### Engineered Log Jams (ELJs): Dosewallips River

- ELJs are manmade river obstructions intended to emulate habitat enhancement formerly provided by old growth trees.
- Virtually all Large Woody Debris was removed from Peninsula rivers in the last century.
- Numerous public comments expressed concerns regarding planned river intrusion to establish three manmade islands.

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President's Column.....Continued from page 1

- In addition, federal agencies have provided unclear recommendations.
- As a result, a revision of the Environmental Analysis is intended to be released in January.



*Dose Engineered Log Jam, photo by Connie Gallant*

- To have built in the Dosewallips River without proper SEPA review of an overall flooding plan is a serious offense. Brinnon residents were told at a public meeting that the large ELJ was going to be a habitat structure. It is not. It certainly appears that the State Parks has hidden this plan from the public eye, yet it has built aspects of it already without SEPA review and allowing any time for public comments. Something smells fishy here.

**Dosewallips State Park:** Estuary changes

- Big differences lie ahead for state park users.
- The asphalt Day Use area east of Highway 101 will be restored to a more natural look.
- Sixty-five trees, with root wads attached, will be bulldozed and stored at a site to be used in the three Engineered Log Jams planned for the Dosewallips River.
- Long-term intentions by the state are not clear, due to budget constraints in providing the plan.
- There has been mention of a budget concern as the excuse for Parks not notifying the public about long-term plans for flooding the lower Dose State Park and removing river access, amenities and recreation space currently there.
- State Parks has not revealed this long-term flooding plan yet because of concerns about public opposition. Instead, they have already built the large current diverter and have chosen not to tell park users and residents in the area.

**Dungeness River Engineered Log Jams**

- The Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe in Blyn is planning to install similar log jams in Dungeness and Gray Wolf Rivers.
- Two meetings have been held to discuss appropriate locations and least-intrusive installation techniques.
- Helicopter and ground-access alternatives were discussed, resulting in a conundrum: how to minimize harsh river intrusion in an area that has a "dearth of habitat."
- Five ELJ locations have been chosen for analysis by the parties involved.

**Pysht: Old Growth Lingers in DNR Logging Proposals**

- Craig Olson, retired Forestry Biometrics professor from Berkeley, has offered his skills for analysis of these proposals.
- Forest watchdogs from the Pysht area have scrutinized out-of-sight logging practices.
- Access to enable public analysis is often thwarted by DNR.



*DNR has been cutting MM trees despite the habitat concern. DNR goal: to eliminate MM from the forests of the western Strait. photo by Don Hammerquest*

- Photos of two 8-foot DBH (diameter at breast height) Doug-fir show murrelet nesting potential. Many trees have likely been logged inappropriately in the area due to outdated and inaccurate DNR maps.

The concern is that DNR mapping does not show the old-growth. DNR maps used in the office are not even close to being accurate. photo by Don Hammerquest



### Calawah Watershed – Bonidu OHV (Off-Highway Vehicle) Proposal

- Dean Millett, Pacific District Ranger, ONF, in Forks, has been considering an ATV (all-terrain vehicle) loop trail due to public interest.
- Currently only street-legal vehicles are allowed on ONF roads.
- Unfortunately many forest users are not in compliance, and feel that an OHV offering by ONF is long overdue.
- Many illegal ATV routes already exist in the area.
- The objective is to approve a motorized recreation area that does not damage salmon habitat and water quality.
- Funding for the project will necessitate a 501(c)(3) status in order to apply for grants from the state gas tax.
- An initial design for 22 miles of routes north of North Fork Calawah River is currently available.
- A user group must step forward to advance the project.

### Spruce RR Trail

- Olympic National Park caves in to county economic pressure and now plans to allow paving to extend completely around Lake Crescent.
- Three feet of gravel also will be available next to the eight feet of asphalt to better enable horse and hiker use.

### Logging Shoreline of Lake Crescent

- Olympic National Park Acting Superintendent Todd Suess informed us that communication with property owners on Lakes Crescent and Ozette will be renewed after a 20-year lapse.
- Open communication hopefully will encourage property owners to check with the park before making changes.
- This policy is a continuation of the "gentlemen's agreement" process.
- Meanwhile, a more formal process is being developed.
- Discussions are not public.
- New Superintendent Sarah Creachbaum is now on board.

### Yakima Basin Water Plan

- The current proposal will flood 1,000 acres of old-growth forest and raise the level of Bumping Lake, among many other intrusive aspects.
- OFCO is supporting revisions of the plan.
- Karl Forsgaard is the contact person.

### Spat Factory to Expand in Quilcene Bay

- The concern is expanded pollution into Hood Canal.
- Due to changing ocean acidification, oysters must be started in greenhouses with lowered pH.
- Baby oyster starts are sent overseas and Quilcene adds to its pollution source.

Please [contact us](#) for more information and how to get more involved. We greatly appreciate your financial support, including annual dues renewal.

### Marbled Murrelet Flies to Court

by John Woolley, Peggy Bruton and Paul Kampmeier

The Olympic Forest Coalition is part of a growing regional effort to save the Marbled Murrelet, a small seabird that nests in old-growth forests near the sea. These unique birds have long faced threats from habitat loss caused by timber harvest. Now these threats are increasing as state and federal agencies, pressured by the timber industry and counties, are looking to allow logging of even more Marbled Murrelet habitat.

Activists throughout the Pacific Northwest are fighting to stop those efforts. In Oregon, conservation activists have sued the Oregon State Forester in federal court to

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**Marbled Murrelet.....Continued from page 3**

stop logging that would harm or kill Marbled Murrelets nesting in Oregon state forests. In Washington, D.C., numerous environmental groups have objected to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) proposal to settle a lawsuit with the timber industry, eliminating designated critical habitat for the bird. Both lawsuits arise under the federal Endangered Species Act.

OFCO has brought the same fight to Washington's state forests. Represented by the Washington Forest Law Center, OFCO has filed two lawsuits to stop the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from logging 12,000 acres of previously protected Marbled Murrelet habitat in southwest Washington.



In 1997 DNR obtained federal approval for a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for state-managed forested trust lands in western Washington. The HCP specified that DNR must study Marbled Murrelets and their habitat before developing a long-term conservation strategy for that species. Although the HCP required DNR to adopt the long-term strategies a decade ago, and although Marbled Murrelets are declining at about 7 percent per year in Washington, DNR has not done so. Instead DNR has decided to log an additional 12,000 acres of murrelet habitat—habitat previously protected from logging—before adopting the long-term conservation strategies.

OFCO and its allies are working hard to stop that logging so that DNR maintains enough forest habitat to support *real* Marbled Murrelet recovery in Washington state. First, OFCO and the Seattle Audubon Society have sued DNR for opening that 12,000 acres for logging. DNR's decision to log that habitat rested in part on the dubious assumption that logging those acres—nearly 60 percent of the Marbled Murrelet habitat in southwest Washington—would not have a significant environmental impact. OFCO and Seattle Audubon are asking the court to order DNR to revisit that assumption and evaluate environmental impacts under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

Second, in federal court, OFCO and the Washington State Chapter of the Sierra Club have sued the USFWS for approving DNR's proposal and for allowing DNR to

mismanage its HCP without ever evaluating the environmental effects of that mismanagement. OFCO and Sierra Club are also asking the federal court to reverse the USFWS approval of DNR's plan to log the 12,000 acres and to require USFWS to evaluate the impacts resulting from DNR's 10-year delay in adopting the long-term Marbled Murrelet conservation strategies.

A key background issue in all this work is how to provide promised revenue endowments from timber sales in Pacific and Wahkiakum counties, where some of the state's murrelet nesting habitat is located. This year state Land Commissioner Peter Goldmark has allocated reserve funds to the counties in order to compensate for unrealized logging revenues from lands managed by DNR. more permanent revenue source for these counties must be identified. One possibility

is to establish a proactive \$10 million funding category in the next budget that enables the state to buy replacement land so it can meet federal requirements for the Marbled Murrelet in southwest Washington counties. These issues will likely come to a head as DNR and stakeholders work to develop the long-term Marbled Murrelet conservation strategies, which DNR hopes to complete by the end of 2014.

Members of Seattle Audubon, OFCO and others in support of the plaintiffs are encouraged to attend the King County court proceedings to demonstrate public support for the litigation and for vital—and long overdue—protection for Marbled Murrelets and their habitat. Stay tuned for date and time. We also strongly encourage you to help us work with DNR to build a strong conservation plan for marbled murrelets. Contact OFCO, Seattle Audubon, the Sierra Club, or your local birding or conservation organization to get involved. There is plenty to do and we need all the help we can get.

**Elwha After the Dam:  
Finding a Path to Recovery**

*by Josey Paul*

At the farthest reaches of its 269-square-mile drainage basin, deep in the snowy peaks of the Olympic Mountains, the Elwha River begins as a trickle. It doesn't stay a trickle for long. Grey skies dump more than 16

feet of precipitation into these mountains each year and the Elwha River quickly swells. By the time it spills out onto the lowlands, west of Port Angeles, it can roar with peak flows exceeding 40,000 cubic feet of water per second. That's enough flow, in just one minute, to bury a football field under 60 feet of water.

Lots of power in that water. Which is why it didn't take long for developers to plug the river with a couple concrete dams at the start of the 1900s.

The power was good, but unfortunately the dams pretty much wiped out the massive runs of salmon: hundreds of thousands of pinks, Chinook, coho, steelhead, sockeye and chum. The dams didn't block only water, they also blocked the lifeblood of the ecosystem. As those salmon worked their way upstream to spawn and die, they fed the forest with a steady stream of marine nutrients. Their bodies nourished the entire ecosystem, everything from bears to butterflies, from spring flowers to towering, old-growth cedar. Few of those nutrients still flow into the forest. Since the dams were built, salmon have diminished to 1 percent of their former glory. Today, Elwha salmon are down to 4,000 fish a year. Some runs are extirpated.

So it was good news when Congress voted in 1992 to dismantle the dams and allow salmon to once again fill the Elwha.

Sadly, as it turns out, it's not an unblemished good, even for salmon. The restoration leans heavily on hatchery fish. Both the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) plan to continue or increase hatchery operations, even with both dams gone. Hatcheries are anathema to wild fish.

There are two hatcheries on the lower Elwha, both built in the late '70s. The state operates a Chinook hatchery; it releases 2.7 million Chinook juveniles into the river each year. Those releases are the primary source of the 1,000 to 2,000 adult Chinook that return to the river each year.

The tribe operates their own hatchery for coho, chum and steelhead of varying numbers. In a typical year, it will release 120,000 juvenile winter steelhead, of which 150 or so will eventually return. In May the tribe was given a new, \$16 million hatchery, from which it hopes to release baby salmon by the millions.

The original point of the hatcheries was to provide a harvest for commercial, tribal and recreational fishermen. Hatcheries pumped out fish in numbers that

the river alone could no longer support because the dams held back the wood, spawning gravel and nutrients that wild salmon need, and blocked wild salmon's access to all but the degraded lower 5 miles of the river. The hatcheries were a holding strategy, but were not able to restore runs, just slow their decline. But it was a Faustian bargain: To preserve remnant runs of Chinook, steelhead and coho, the industrial practices of the hatcheries weakened the genetic vigor of Elwha salmon. No longer do powerful 100-pound spring Chinook race up rapids in the icy reaches of mountain canyons. Mostly, their small, enfeebled descendants return from the sea and mill about the hatchery gates.

But now, with the removal of the dams at hand, environmentalists and many fishing groups want the river to recover with wild Elwha fish, not hatchery fish, hoping to let nature gradually restore their genetic vigor. Wild fish are far more genetically fit than hatchery fish, and many studies have shown that hatchery fish reduce wild salmon numbers by introducing disease or genetic weakness that wild fish can't tolerate.

Hatcheries tend to domesticate or inbreed salmon. Rather than slugging it out with the entire run in the ever-changing river, competing for choice mates and spawning gravel, hatchery salmon are spawned in a bucket. Because salmon are so fecund and because hatcheries shield salmon eggs and fry from the pressures of natural selection, only a few salmon are needed to produce the next generation. The fish become inbred and enfeebled.

The hatchery fish can also compete with wild fish for food—and even make wild salmon part of their diet. Because hatchery fish get belly-busting amounts of chow thrown at them in the crowded concrete tanks of the hatchery, they grow faster than wild fish. When mixed, they can out-muscle wild fish for resources.

The State has, until recently, dumped tens of thousands of steelhead smolts into the nearby Lyre River each spring, just as tiny native chum salmon were emerging from the gravel. The foot-long steelhead smolts raced up and down the river in hungry packs, downing baby chum like popcorn. It's still not clear whether or not the winter chum run on the Lyre—the only winter run on the Strait—survived.

Because of the mostly wilderness Elwha River's potential to provide pristine habitat for salmon and the damage hatchery operations inflict on wild fish, a

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*Elwha Recovery.....Continued from page 5*

coalition of conservation groups sued the National Park and tribe in February to block the hatchery operations. "This is the world's largest river-restoration program and it should reflect the world's best science. We think the hatchery is threatening the recovery of wild fish, and we really don't think it went through the proper review process," said Kurt Beardslee, executive director of the Wild Fish Conservancy, the lead plaintiff for the suit.

That suit remains active, but in February the tribe agreed to temporarily stop one aspect of its hatchery operations. They didn't release Chambers Creek steelhead into the river this year. This concession allows other hatchery operations to continue, but stops the Chambers Creek program for 2012. Chambers Creek steelhead are an industrialized fish originally from a small stream near Tacoma. Hatcheries have released millions of Chambers Creek steelhead into western Washington streams, and many believe these fish have decimated the early winter runs of native steelhead.

The Chambers Creek program has long drawn criticism from scientists. In April 2010, the National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration's Northwest Fisheries Science Center sent a letter to the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, documenting the damage hatchery fish do to wild fish. The agency said continued release of Chambers Creek steelhead threatened the recovery of native steelhead in the Elwha River.

The tribe persisted, largely because it believes that it will take too long for native fish to recover, maybe 15 years or more, and it wants fish available for its commercial fishermen. But genetic diversity is what powers and protects salmon and steelhead evolution. The agency gave the tribe numerous studies to show that continuing the hatchery operation would reduce genetic diversity in wild fish and risk their recovery.

Finally, under pressure from the lawsuit, the tribe agreed to stop its Chambers Creek program, but only for 2012. Its other hatchery operations continue.

The state is also continuing its Chinook hatchery, at least until sediment flows have been reduced to safer levels. According to Ron Warren, Region 6 Fish Program Manager for WDFW, the idea is to protect Chinook from the sediment releases of dam removal. When asked why not just release the Chinook above the dams in their native, pristine habitat, rather than truck them to a hatchery, he told a public meeting in Port Angeles that releasing the Chinook into their native habitat was too risky.

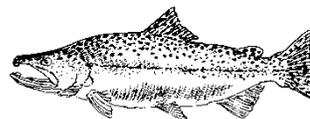
Asked if any hatchery has recovered a Chinook run in Washington, Warren said the closest example is the White River in Puyallup. Hatcheries have long tried to recover the spring Chinook run on the White River, but the efforts have not been successful. According to WDFW's website, "There is no evidence that the population has re-established itself naturally or achieved self-sustainability."

Elwha salmon deserve better than hatcheries. We have a chance to let wild salmon recover in a pristine, wilderness setting. It may not be easy because the fish have been so weakened, both in numbers and in genetic vigor. We'll have to stop fishing them, probably longer than the current five-year moratorium—and that will be a heavy price for the tribe—but it's our best and maybe only chance to see the Elwha River truly recover.

## **Volunteer Opportunities for Elwha Restoration**

Olympic National Park reports that in January, February and March there will be opportunities for small groups of 4–5 volunteers to help revegetate the (former) Lake Mills and Lake Aldwell with 47,000 native plants. Additionally, there are also opportunities to help at their native plant nursery.

For more info, see this [Park website](#), [email Jill Zarieczny](#) or call her at 360-565-3047.



*Chinook salmon  
– Larry Eifert*

## **Salmon Stories from the Olympic Peninsula**

*by Coleman Byrnes*

The species of aquatic insects that occur in a stream are indicators of stream health. Species found in healthy streams differ from those in impaired waters. For this reason, Streamkeepers of Clallam County collect aquatic insects from local streams every fall and 2012 was no exception. But this year the Streamkeepers volunteers, in addition to collecting insects, got to see salmon and stream restoration in action.

Morse Creek, a stream about four miles east of Port Angeles, was at one time a major salmon producer. In the sixties, a property owner straightened the lower

reaches of this stream and thus greatly reduced Morse Creek's ability to host salmon. This property is now owned by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife. Several years ago, the North Olympic Salmon Coalition returned the stream to its original channel. Engineered log jams were added to the new channel. Riffles started forming and spawning habitat was created. Aquatic insects colonized the restored channel. And this year, while collecting aquatic insects in Morse Creek, Streamkeepers encountered something besides bugs: Chinook salmon, spawning in the new riffles. The creek was full of juvenile fish.

The lower dam on the Elwha River is gone and salmon are now moving upstream into waters that have not been used by salmon for almost 100 years. Indian Creek runs into the Elwha between the two dams. When Streamkeepers went there to sample insects, they had a surprise waiting for them. Indian Creek was full of Chinook. Since salmon spawn in riffles and Streamkeepers collect their insects from riffles, the Streamkeepers had a hard time finding collection sites that didn't interfere with spawning activity. These fish found their way up the Elwha on their own. Nobody transported them upstream.

Stream restoration, if done carefully, can work—and the salmon will find their way back.

## SWAT News from the Skok

In late September, the Olympic National Forest led a field trip for the Skokomish Watershed Action Team (SWAT) to visit past, ongoing and future restoration activities in the South Fork watershed. The itinerary for the tour included stops to view and discuss the Upper South Fork Vegetation Management Project (currently in the planning phase), the 2353-140 Road-to-Trail Conversion Project (currently being implemented), and South Fork Large Wood Enhancement Project (partially completed in prior years).

The field trip also provided an opportunity to meet the Olympic National Forest's new Forest Supervisor, Reta Laford.

In 2010 OFCO selected the South Fork Skokomish watershed as the pilot watershed for its road survey and monitoring project. The SF Skokomish had one of the highest road densities on the forest. We are now in our third year of citizen surveys in the watershed and two of the stops on the field trip were at sites where we have conducted surveys.

In the past, surveys have documented current conditions of non-system roads or roads being proposed for conversion to trails. This year our efforts have focused on baseline surveys of roads that will be converted to temporary roads for logging during the Upper SF Vegetation Management Project. These temporary log haul roads will be decommissioned by the contractor following the logging.

Shelley Spalding, OFCO Board member and Project Manager for OFCO's citizen road survey and monitoring project, participated in the field trip and talked with the group about OFCO's survey project.

The Skokomish watershed is unique in that there is an active partnership of federal, state, county, local and tribal governments, land managers, conservation and non-profit groups, and watershed residents. The group has worked hard to prioritize projects and obtain funding targeting watershed restoration primarily through the decommissioning and stabilization of roads and trails.

## Roadless Rule Stands

As many readers probably know, the U.S. Supreme Court announced on Oct. 1, 2012, that it would not review the Clinton Roadless Area Conservation Rule, thus letting it stand as the law of the land.

Although the Rule affects only a relatively small land area on the Olympic Peninsula, OFCO applauds the decision and shares the happiness and relief of fellow environmental activists throughout the country.

A statement from The Wilderness Society noted, "The Roadless Rule is now indisputably the law of the land. [The] announcement by the Supreme Court denying Wyoming's petition to review the Roadless Area Conservation Rule case is good news for the millions of Americans who have called for safeguarding our nation's 58 million acres of pristine roadless forest areas for current and future generations ...

Adopted by the Clinton Administration in January 2001 after extensive public involvement, the Roadless Rule protected 58.5 million acres of roadless national forest land in 38 states from most road building and logging. Currently, approximately 45 million acres in 36 states remain protected by the 2001 Roadless Rule, while roadless areas in Idaho and Colorado are covered by similar state-specific rules that were adopted in October 2008 and July 2012, respectively."

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