

## IT'S ALL PART OF FISHING

While fishing on the Puntledge the other day I had an epiphany. I had accidentally foul hooked a spring salmon and somehow I managed to bring it to the beach. As I was doing so a young fella, recently new to the province looked on in admiration at the 20+ pound fish. As I was releasing it he remarked on my incredible honesty. Now instead of reacting as I usually do to such ignorance, I merely stated that the law was clear on this matter and that was that. After a few minutes talking with him I was able to share tactics and techniques that tend to work best for ethically catching salmon in our rivers. We then parted.

After contemplating the incident I realized that by being proactive instead of reactive I may have contributed to the development of another advocate for our sport and our fish. In my earlier days I believed it was every responsible angler's duty to confront unethical behaviour when one encounters it. I still believe that to be the case. However, opportunities to do so are rather rare. Poachers and the like are often rather furtive creatures. Besides who enjoys a confrontation? In fact, I believe most infractions are committed by normally honest folks who inadvertently find themselves making the choice to break the law. Like keeping the odd foul hooked fish when so many fish are about. Or, retaining that wild fish that is mortally hooked anyway. These folks can be brought around more effectively with a proactive approach.

## ORES Satellite Hatchery at Knight Inlet Lodge:

Another exciting season has passed at the lodge with good numbers of guests attending even in this difficult financial year. The bears started the season off slowly and late, finally showing up about the third week of May. There were three different male bears around the estuary to provide the females with lots of choices for mates. The regular Bruno and a tough old scrawny boar with no name provided most of the breeding entertainment. Then later in June a young fellow we called "Pretty Boy" showed up with a sweetheart. There was no doubt what they were doing on the beach. While all the large male bears hung around the estuary, the females with cubs stayed away. We were able to find Lenore with her cub of the year over in Siwash Bay, just a 10 minute boat ride away. There were no other bears with new cubs this year. We speculated often about why, but no definitive answers. Perhaps the poor salmon run of 2008 had something to do with this.

In June, we received our Coho fry raised by the ORES to our demonstration hatchery. We had no disasters this year and the fish grew rapidly. A few did manage to find a hole in the lid and jumped to their demise. We soon had that problem fixed and a no more escapes happened. Water temperature became a near problem as the hot dry summer progressed, but fresh rain seemed to come at the right times. In September, after a good rainfall, we began having our guests release the fry to the pools and side channels of the Glendale river system. A total of approximately 2750 fry were released to begin their dangerous life journey. Good luck to them.

As July waned and August marched along, we watched the river closely, looking for any sign of pink salmon returning. A few began moving into the river and we wondered if they would not return as

How can we do that? Well for one, be as helpful as you can with other anglers. Share tactics, techniques and other useful information. The days of hoarding our secret spots and methods are over. We need as many advocates for the sport as we can get. We all know that recruiting and retaining new anglers is the key to acquiring future support for fish and the pristine places that they inhabit. The old style of secrecy only succeeds in alienating neophytes and perhaps turning them into opponents.

We can also be unashamedly ethical in our behaviour. By this I mean don't hide your candle under a bush. When you have a chance to demonstrate upright and ethical behaviour do so publicly and proudly. You don't need to be superior or preachy, just honest. You will be doing more for the sport this way than through a dozen confrontations with hooligans. Besides you will have many more opportunities to be proactive in this manner than through confrontation.

As important as it is for us to challenge the lawbreaker when we witness one, it is even more important for us to show the majority of average fishers how to behave ethically. When we combine ethical examples with honest help and information we exert a powerful influence on the future of our sport.

**Rick Janzen**

predicted. Our fears were unfounded however as the salmon began their determined march upriver. The estuary soon began to boil with waiting fish because the river was so low due to the unseasonably dry summer. Many of the fish made the dash past the hungry mouths of bears, eagles, seals and even wolves this year. They filled every pool in the river, the spawning channel and the lake to overflowing with ripening salmon. What a spectacular sight to witness for our guests and ourselves. After all the doomsday reports coming over the internet and the newspapers, relief filled the air with optimism once again.

The bears showed their relief also. It was soon apparent that they were getting their fill of fish. As the fish were so widely spread out along the length of the river, so were the bears. They did not all have to concentrate at the spawning channel and risk conflicts with other bears. They fished in peaceful solitude wherever they wanted to, without the pesky tourists watching their every move.

The last part of the season brought us an unexpected bonus when a mother bear arrived, showing off her new triplets. Two of them are normal colors, dark brown, but the third is white with dark highlights. We wonder if this is a rare grizzly "Spirit Bear." What a pleasure to witness such a sight.

As the season closes, we all leave with sadness in our hearts and wonder what the next season will bring. Will the salmon return, will the bears survive the winter, will the grizzly hunt continue and will the guests keep showing us the wonder in their hearts and eyes, keeping our jobs so interesting with their support and enthusiasm.

**Bob Scriba**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The time for reflection on the past year is upon us. It has been an interesting year for the Society. First and foremost I have to thank once again the tremendous group of volunteers for making things happen. Additional thanks go out to all those members who donated extra money towards meeting our goals.

Some of the things we accomplished this year include, channel number one revitalization, purchase of a new and larger tractor, installation of a beaver box on the Connolly channel, and a long list of maintenance items. It has been gratifying to see the excellent numbers of salmon returning to the river this year. It is a sure sign that we are accomplishing our goals.

Our goals for this year included the hope to have a covenant signed and in place. That has not happened yet, but work continues, with valued input from the Evans family, Ducks Unlimited, Pacific Salmon Foundation, the Comox Valley Regional District, and our board. Bruce Bell has been a tower of strength in assisting me in working out the issues. The important issue here is that the hatchery and the work we do will continue to be protected.

As a volunteer organization, we struggle to raise the money required to operate the hatchery. The cost of doing business is always increasing. One idea that will help in a small



way is increased membership fees. There are a lot of members that indeed give more than the nominal yearly fee now. Nothing firm is going to happen yet, but a committee has been set up to look at this idea and recommend proposals.

Another idea is for increased communications and spreading of information on what we are and what we do as an enhancement Society. This would be in concert with the push for membership enrolment, and solicitation of funds. I would encourage anyone with ideas in regard to these issues, to please get them to me.

The new website is up and running and looks great. I challenge all members to look it over and critique it for improvement. In the near future, a strategic plan of action for the Society will be completed and presented to all members for discussion and approval. This is another area where input is needed and encouraged. Changing circumstances dictate that we adapt and think outside the box to ensure we have a healthy future.

As this year comes to an end, I feel confident that we are on the right path for the future. In closing I wish all volunteers and their families a very Merry Christmas holiday and a Happy New Year.

**Jim Loring**  
PRESIDENT O.R.E.S.

## CHRISTMAS POTLUCK PARTY

**Black Creek Hall - 2001 Black Creek Road on Friday, December 4th at 5:30 PM. Great door prizes for this truly Gala event! Please bring along your favorite dish and if you happen to have something to contribute to the silent auction, that would be great. Hope to see you there! FMI call Terry at 250-337-8343**

## WWW.OYSTERRIVERENHANCEMENT.ORG

Earlier this year, with the financial assistance of some of our members, we were able to professionally revamp ORES' web site. We invite all members to browse through it and give us your feedback and ideas at [info@oysterriverenhancement.org](mailto:info@oysterriverenhancement.org)

"All members, please email your current email address so we can continue to update our data base." Our volunteers are now kept currently informed of their "ORES Chores" in our dynamic events calendar feature, and Bruce Pirrie's photographs of on-going activities are posted to the web site on a more regular basis.

Kudos to Zac Whyte T.V. for his continuing assistance with ORES web site development!

**Bruce Bell**  
VICE-PRESIDENT O.R.E.S

## WWW.OYSTERRIVERENHANCEMENT.ORG

# Oyster River Nature Park

More and more people are finding their way to the park. Families, single moms and dads, joggers, dog walkers, hikers, bikers, swimmers, fisher (wo)men, bird-watchers, beachcombers, photographers, poets, botanists and therapists – all marvel at the rich variety nature has to offer within such short distance.

We have come to realize that the combination of the park and the 'pub to pub trail' has proven to be very popular indeed.

During the summer month we witnessed construction activities for improvements to the Black Creek/Oyster Bay water system. The intake for the water system resides within the park. This work has been completed. We have also seen the completion of an interpretative sign at the end of the Fisherman's Trail, close to the bridge. The sign is dedicated to the ORES for its ongoing work to 'enhance, restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat of the Oyster River watershed.' The sign also commemorates the life and dedication to the park by the previous ORES Director for park maintenance, Owen Landry.

The Strathcona Regional District (SRD) has produced an updated colour brochure about the park. These brochures are available in the brochure holders attached to signs in the park as well as at the cabin at the hatchery site. The SRD also provided a new doggy bag dispenser which is installed at the main trail head. It is stocked with ecologically friendly doggy bags provided for by the SRD.

The feedback we receive about the park is very positive. Some of the regular users pitch in with the maintenance of it. We thank them for helping us keep things clean and tidy.

A special thank you in recognition for their ongoing support goes to: Strathcona Regional District, Qualicum Farms Ltd., Discovery Foods. Thank You all.

**Bram Lucieer**

OYSTER RIVER PARK MAINTENANCE

## Bob's Reflections

The morning frosts are here, its almost December and Frank has been heard humming that old classic "Those Autumn leaves" as he sees them fall.

We've had a great year, returning lots of healthy fry and smolts to mother nature's care due to our TLC and Frank's secret mix of fry starter. We survived the big cold snap, burned up an enormous amount of wood keeping the cabin warm, picked lots of eggs and enjoyed good fellowship as we did.

Our membership swelled with lots of new faces, but we need the newbies to balance off the old timers who insist on having heart operations and falling off ladders. One now needs to arrive early to ensure getting a good parking spot, so our numbers must be in good shape. We survived the summer with make-do projects, replacing old egg trays with new, fending off the beavers, avoiding the bears and replenishing our wood supply; what a great year!

All in all, the hatchery is in good shape' the members are helpful and happy, we still get well fed and the future looks bright. Have a wonderful Christmas and I hope to see you at the potluck.

Cheers.

**Bob Hammersley**



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

*I wish to apply for/renew my Membership in the Oyster River Enhancement Society*

**ANNUAL FEE:**  Individual \$10)  Family \$10)  Corporate/Group \$100)

**TIME:**  1 Year  5 Years Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Postal Code:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send newsletter to Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

Available for volunteer work  Enclosed is my cheque

Please detach and return this portion to **Oyster River Enhancement Society P.O. Box 93, Black Creek, British Columbia V9J 1K8**

One year memberships are renewable on or before January 1st. All dues and donations are tax deductible. Receipts will be issued for donations of \$100.00 or more.

## A WENDY SPECIAL TO ORES Youth and ORES connected by passion for salmon

For five years I have been bringing youth out to spend time with ORES members on Tuesday mornings. One youth called the small hatchery 'a birth place that brings life to the world.'

That's amazing insight for a kid who doesn't fit into the mainstream school system or learn according to the standard curriculum.

When they first come and see all the old, retired gentlemen standing around talking, most of the youth wonder what they could possibly learn.

Their generation is still in the mindset of not trusting anyone over thirty and some of them don't have much interaction with older generations. One youth said that one of his grandfathers

is a drunk and the other is senile, so he treasured the time spent with elders.

Some youth jump right in to help with no hesitation, others keep their distance and need lots of encouragement, but there is a place for them all.

On leaving they take with them salmon knowledge and how people can work together to help them. They carry respect shown to them and hold value of being passionate about your beliefs.

Thanks to ORES members for accepting the youth and helping them feel confidence in themselves.

**Wendy Kotilla**

## Hatchery Report

### Fish Related Activities:

#### Pink Salmon

• 213,000 Pink Salmon fry were gradually released in April 2009 through the side channels. About half of them were transferred to capilano troughs and fed for a while prior to release.

• 700,000 Pink Salmon eggs were collected in September 2009. They are now incubating in Upwelling Boxes and were picked at eye stage at the end of October.

• The return of Pink salmon was spectacular this year. All side channels were full of spawning fish. An estimated return of Pink Salmon was 40,000+.

#### Chinook Salmon

• 77,000 Chinook Salmon fry were transferred from the incubators to the Round Tub and Capilano Trough in May 2009. They were ponded in June 2009 in Channel #2 Rearing Pond and then gradually released at the average weight of 3.5g through the Channel #2.

• 80,000 Chinook Salmon eggs were collected in October 2009. They are now incubating in the Wetland Heath Trays. An estimated return of Chinook Salmon was 200+.

#### Coho Salmon

• 45,000 Coho Salmon smolts (brood stock 2007) were released in the lower Oyster River on April 28, 2009 with the great help of students from G.P. Vanier and Sandwick High Schools. An average weight of smolts was 20g. 176,000 Coho salmon fry transferred from the incubators to capilano troughs in May 2009. 45,000 of fry were then ponded in Channel #1 Rearing pond in June 2009 and will be retained until the smolt stage and then released in April 2010. Remaining 131,000 Coho Salmon fry were outplanted in the Raven Channel, Connolly Channel, Arthur Mayse Channel, Rippingale Channel Complex and the lower Oyster River watershed in June 2009. An average weight of Coho Salmon fry was 2.5g.

• Coho Salmon run is in progress now and will continue until January 2010. 128,000 coho eggs were collected so far and are now incubating in the Mel's Mess heath trays. We are still holding 40 more females for further egg take and more adults are entering the Fish Trap on a daily bases. We will not have any problem to fill up the quota of 180,000 eggs. Many Coho Salmon are spawning in all side channels.

#### Chum Salmon

• 26,000 Chum Salmon fry were gradually released from the incubators through the side channels in April 2009. About half of them were transferred to capilano troughs and fed for a while prior to release.

• Chum Salmon are starting to show up at the estuary now. It is too early to report anything on Chum Salmon yet.

### Other Activities:

1. New tractor was purchased thanks to generous donations of Tom and Betsy Murray, Keith Flannagan and Regional Districts C and D.

2. Rehabilitation of Channel #1 project was done in early July 2009. It was very successful and there were hundreds of Pink Salmon spawning there in September, October 2009. Grass was seeded on all disturbed areas in September.

3. 'Installation of Beaver Box' project in Connolly Channel was completed in July 2009.

4. Lots of broom was cut in Connolly Channel by volunteers and Carihi Secondary High School students. Grass was seeded there in September 2009.

5. A new Heath Tray Stack was donated by Connolly family on behalf of Josephine Connolly's 95th birthday.

6. 4 VHF radios were donated by Dean Wyatt to improve the safety of volunteers.

7. Summer student Mitchell Kloppenburg worked very hard in July and August. We were very happy with him.

8. Lots of maintenance and repair projects were done during the summer.

October and November are the months of 'Leaves Patrol'. The river intakes and all screens are getting plugged with the fallen leaves, obstructing the water flow. They have to be cleaned 2-3 times a day. During the severe wind storms the cleaning has to be done even in the middle of the night. Many thanks to all volunteers participating in this very difficult and hard labour demanding task. A special thanks to Frank Kriche, our 'Iron Man', for organizing volunteers and participating on 'Leave Patrols'. You are an extraordinary volunteer, Frank.

I would like to thank to all volunteers for their dedication, enthusiasm and hard work.

**Frank Petruzella**

HATCHERY MANAGER, ORES