

The Naked Fish

Policy & Science Rarely Mix Well

By Oscar J. Bandelin, Ph.D.

When the King County Executive Council recently passed the final version of the May Creek Basin Plan, Basin residents felt they could breathe easier.

Not so fast. King County has entered into the so-called Tri-County Agreement with Pierce and Snohomish Counties. This new arrangement, backed up by Federal enforcement under the Endangered Species Act, brings with it all of the measures of the May Creek Basin Plan as originally drafted, and then some. It is as if residents' concerns about environmental protection have been completely ignored. The bureaucratic mess that May Creek Basin residents have been fighting for several years now has been given a green light to make a comeback here and spread to two more counties. To top it off, county-level enforcers now have the excuse that their measures are Federally mandated and therefore not their ultimate responsibility.



(Continued on page 3)



We dare to print the naked truth!

EPA Lists New Species by Reggie Hopper

After years of watchful waiting, members of the local environmental community have sounded the alarm over yet another species falling victim to human evolution and expansion. This once thriving population has been reduced to dangerously low numbers as it has been systematically destroyed by the elimination of critical breeding grounds, indiscriminate use of pesticides and unlimited hunting.

Members have watched its demise with great concern and have prompted the EPA to take immediate steps to protect the rare *Northwest Roach* by listing it as an endangered species.

A large and expensive study was initiated and local experts were consulted.

(Continued on page 2)



Larry Fisher Tour	4
Critter Report	5
In My Field	5
Humans Without Resources	6
From The President	10

EPA Lists New Species

(Continued from page 1)

The results of which were presented during a meeting of local politicians. Solemn men pontificated and serious women expounded as members of the community watched. The overhead projector was flipped on showing topographic maps of where the species lived, charts of the rate of



decline and projections of stock extinction. The total roach population in the County was estimated at only 4.5 billion, less than 10 percent of the population estimate in 1929. The Northwest Roach has almost disappeared from areas such

as Medina, Kirkland, and Dash Point. All of which left the solemn and concerned men and women shaking their heads with concern.

"What to do? What to do?" they all cried.

After a long silence, a word formed and was spoken slowly. "HAB-I-TAT."

"What?" responded the concerned. "Habitat! We must protect their habitat!"

"What a wonderful idea" responded the solemn women. "Brilliant! Superb!" exclaimed the serious men. The group started talking excitedly and all beamed with smiles. All, that is, except a little girl in the audience who timidly asked, "What's habitat?" She was completely ignored.

The group considered the problems. "We need rules!" some said. "And regulations!" said others. By now there were smiles all around as they were certainly making progress. And because they were so sure they were right, they immediately began making rules and regulations for others to follow.



They reasoned that all roaches liked the dark, so they made a rule about lights. "No lights on after 7 PM or before 7 AM" said the concerned committee. "What if the people have to go potty?" asked the little girl. "Let them hold it till morning" came the reply. One of the older members of the committee

winned. Another member suggested, "No walking on the floors after 9 PM!" but added "If you have to go potty, go in a bucket." The rest agreed but only if the bucket was kept off the floor and not placed on the dresser where it might fall during an earthquake. "Hang it from the ceiling with a skyhook. That's the appropriate place."

"Buffers are the ticket" said one young man. "Yes, of course" chimed the others. "We must separate the people from the roaches." The concerned group talked at great length on the advantages of buffers, arguing back and forth as to how large they should be and how restrictive. Finally, they settled on 5-foot buffers; the first 2 feet from the wall being a total exclusion zone and the next 3 feet to exclude any furniture.



But the greatest idea of all was the revolutionary idea of an "LFC". These needed to be placed throughout the exclusion zone and inside the walls, if at all possible, so that the young roaches could find shelter. Yes, "Large Food Chunks" were a vital component of the plan to save the roaches.



An agency, the Department for Northwest Roaches was set up to administer the rules, educate the public and, of course, levy the fines. They immediately hired a

DNR

high-priced consultant to design a TV ad campaign. He recommended a series of ads promoting DNR (Do Nothing to Roaches). The consultant assured them that soon the masses in the streets will be chanting "DNR! DNR!" All that remained was to determine who should be subjugated to the new rules and regulations. The concerned group all looked at each other and agreed unanimously that it should be 'NOT I'. After all, the concerned all had fine homes in which roaches had been eradicated long ago; there were none left to save in their neighborhoods.

But there was one group who was still, albeit inadvertently, protecting the endangered species.

(Continued on page 3)

Policy & Science Rarely Mix Well

(Continued from page 1)

Of course, citizens whose property is affected by action taken under the Tri-County Agreement can appeal administrative decisions, but they must pay for a reassessment, which can be pretty expensive, depending on the circumstances.



And, if it turns out that the assessors find more grounds for labeling a certain piece of property a "sensitive area," then even more stringent restrictions will apply to it. Why bother?

The officials who endorse the Tri-County Agreement are sincere in their belief that their policies are grounded in the best available science. That is why they have worked out an arrangement that brings Federal power against anyone who would object to their beliefs about what is needed to protect the environment.

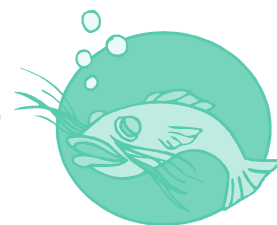
Nevertheless, however much the bureaucrats assure us that their policies are dynamic and will change as science changes, policies have a way of becoming set in stone. The revised May Creek Basin Plan reflects the common sense necessary to preserve the delicate environmental balance of the region, while the Tri-County Agreement seeks once again to impose regulations that have been thoroughly debunked.

Recent science, in fact, has opposed the notion that ecological balance can be politically mandated, precisely because ecosystems are so delicate and unique. Administrative measures, therefore, cannot be all-encompassing. They must be

specifically tailored to the needs of specific ecological systems, which may change significantly over very short distances.

This is particularly important when considering measures to protect salmonid populations. Professor Larry L. Larson, a specialist on range ecology from Oregon State University, has made these arguments in a number of recent articles.

This is precisely the approach taken by the May Valley Environmental Council (MVEC) with respect to the May Creek Basin. The needs of the valley and the canyon, for example, require different approaches. Professor Larson's data support the conclusions of MVEC about commonsense measures for reducing flooding, controlling erosion, and restoring the salmon runs.



A blanket set of regulations (or ideas) simply will not fit the Basin. The revised Basin Plan recognizes the value of commonsense initiative and cooperation on the part of Basin residents toward our common goals of environmental protection. But the supporters of the Tri-County Agreement do not seem to believe we can think effectively. Indeed, so much do they fear our meddling that they feel they must invoke Federal power to stop it.

So much for the vote of the King County Executive Council.

EPA Lists New Species

(Continued from page 2)

The poor, who could not afford exterminators, quite often had thriving populations of roaches in their houses and apartments. It was decided that this group of small homeowners and apartment-dwelling poor should mitigate the loss of roaches in the swanky suburbs by providing the prime habitat for the Northwest Roach. The group focused its restoration plans on this group and their homes.

A frown came over the little girl's face. "But if we're not allowed to protect our homes, we'll be overrun by the roaches. DDES might condemn the building and then we would lose our home!" she said.

"Your parents should have thought of that before they moved there" came the reply.

"But we have no where else to go" said they girl,

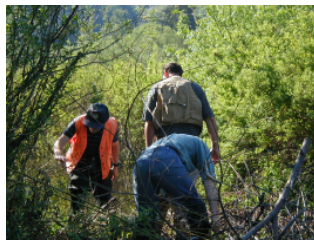
(Continued on page 9)

Larry Fisher Tour

by Rodney McFarland

On May 23, 2001 King County employees Brent Lackey, Paul Adler, and John Larson met with State Department of Fish and Wildlife employee Larry Fisher concerning the beaver dams on May Creek. Mick Zevart and I were MVEC observers. The purpose of the meeting was to gain feedback from Larry Fisher about the removal of the dams prior to permit submission.

Everyone donned hip boots and took a tour of the three dam sites above 164th. Refreshingly, the three county employees did a good job of explaining the problems residents are having due to the dams and why the basin plan calls for their removal. When they explained that the King County Council had made a commitment to the people of May Creek Basin, Mr. Fisher reminded them that they had an equal duty to habitat. Mr. Fisher explained that his department might look at dam removal because of flooded septic systems but that flooded "lawns" were certainly not reason enough to remove the dams. That led the group to Julianne Bruce's property to check out her flooded septic system after wading back through what used to be Mrs. Wilker's pasture.



In this unusually dry year, Julianne's system is completely covered with water backed up from the easternmost beaver dam. Mr. Fisher explained that any permit application would need to contain surveys including elevations of any affected septic systems. He stated that dam removal was not a decision he would make but that he would take it to his supervisors. That was encouraging since when his supervisor had been approached about dam removal she had stated that she couldn't do anything until Mr. Fisher has assessed the problem.

As we all stood in hip boots on top of Julianne's septic system, Mr. Fisher explained that we were in "**Prime Coho Habitat.**" When asked where the fish were he answered "They are here." Several long-time residents of May Valley have told me that there used to be so many coho that the stench of rotting fish was a problem, but that has not been the case since the coming of the beaver and the creation of the "prime habitat" during the 1980's. I requested escapement numbers for May Creek from Mr. Fisher's department thinking that they must have quantifiable data that refutes the resident's memories. All they could provide is sport fish catches from 1977 to present for the entire state - **no data specific to May Creek** ; no escapement data; and no data on commercial or tribal harvests.

MVEC has asked Brent Lackey to continue with the permit application for removal of the dams using data for the problem septic systems that were identified in the studies used to develop the May Creek Basin Action Plan. Let's hope that the State Department of Fish and Wildlife doesn't turn the action part of the plan into inaction by not finding a way to grant the permits.



**State and County Employees
Ponder Our Fate**

May Valley Critter Report



by Mick Zevart

Did you know there are five subspecies of Canadian geese that migrate through our area twice a year? These are the same geese whose numbers have grown to a point where they have become a nuisance in populated areas and are now non-migratory.

While working for the City of Renton, I helped a park superintendent make an application for a Federal permit that would allow the city to remove geese from Coulon Beach Park. The year was 1982. That same summer, while I was doing volunteer work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, these birds came up in one of our evening campfire discussions. Bruce Campbell, who at that time was our Party Chief, told us the birds were brought to the Seattle area in the early 1950's and were released on Lake Washington in exchange for some other type of game bird or animal, in an arrangement with the Oregon Department of Game. I remember

seeing a picture in the Renton paper in 1956 of a goose sitting on a nest on the seaplane ramp at Boeing's Renton plant.

Like the English Sparrow, the Starling, the East European Gray Squirrel, and the opossum, the geese are not native to our area. Unlike these other animals, however, the geese were brought here by a government agency. They are non-migrating birds, and this fact has been confirmed in newspaper and TV reports. I learned this from Campbell, who is now with the Oregon Department of Game. These geese have been propagated by Federal and State governments and private individuals, and they have created a problem throughout the U.S.

If you have any questions, please call me at 425-255-5690.

In My Field

by Douglas Bandelin



The red tail hawk rode the winds
Looking for bending grass

The field mouse left a cozy den
In search of tasty morsels

Together they met for breakfast

In my field



Humans Without Resources

by Rodney McFarland

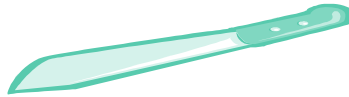
Prologue:

It all started innocently enough. After a meal of our local endangered species, our President (MVEC's president, not George W.) called and asked if I would put together a paper on the Endangered

ESA! Species Act (ESA) and how it is affecting our problems in this little valley. Moments later my editor called and asked if the little paper for Rick could be expanded to a newsletter article. I told her that I really needed to do some research so that I had my ducks, excuse me, salmon, in a row before tackling such a controversial topic. Hundreds of hours of reading later I called her back to see if she was up for editing and publishing an encyclopedia, since the books (see sidebar: Baked or Broiled?) had already been done by others! She declined. We compromised. If I would write using as few words as possible, not something I'm noted for, she would run a series of articles in upcoming newsletters.

The ESA is only one of at least three major forces working to drive humans from this valley. The blade started toward our neck in 1948 with the passage of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, which, after numerous amendments over the years, emerged in 1977 as the Clean Water Act. The third force is the attempt to limit or direct growth in the area. Since the ESA listings are the current hot topic and have the most controversial science, they will get the most coverage.

These articles are intended to provide a perspective of the issues not usually covered in the mainstream media. I will consider them successful if you come to understand that what is presented on the nightly news or in the major newspapers as gospel is seldom the only way to look at the problems. I hope you are encouraged to delve further into the issues on your own. I will recommend reading material that is understandable by anyone and provide endnotes for those that want to get to the heart of the science. On the advice of our Basin Steward, I read and recommend *Salmon Without Rivers* by Jim Lichatowich. It is well written and an easy read. Do not read it, however, without also reading something from a different perspective such as *The Great Salmon Hoax* by James L. Buchal.



Baked or Broiled?

I decided to start my research on the Salmon listing with a couple of books that would be easily available to readers. I marched down to Barnes and Noble in Tukwila to see what they had in their salmon section. After spending some time looking, I finally asked a gentleman working there where to find the books on salmon. He kindly led me to the section containing cookbooks. I explained that I already knew how to cook this endangered species but I wanted to know more about the life and habits and habitat of salmon. He didn't think he had any books like that. Fortunately, I remembered the name of the book that Brent Lackey had recommended. The kind gentleman looked it up on his computer and found that he had it somewhere. We finally found it in the section of books about the Northwest.

My faith in Barnes and Noble in tatters, I bought the book and proceeded to Borders to check out their salmon section. No section. Not even one book!

It turns out that there are lots of books out there but, obviously, the man on the street isn't trying to find them. The ESA listing is shredding our property rights and forcing draconian rules and regulations on us and no one is concerned enough to read up on the issue! Maybe we deserve what we get. To purchase relevant books try Amazon or the University of Washington Bookstore.

(Continued on page 7)

Humans Without Resources

(Continued from page 6)

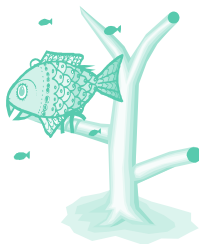
History:

Pacific salmon belong to the group of fishes known as the ray-finned fishes. Although they got a late start, evolving about 400 million years ago, they were well on their way to domination within 40 million years. There are three main groups of ray-finned fishes. Sturgeon and paddlefish are the oldest, followed by the gars.



Salmon belong to the newest and most prevalent group, the teleosts¹, which didn't dominate western North American fresh water until about 55 million years ago². The earliest Salmonidae fossil is from a fish that swam in British Columbia 40 to 50 million years ago³. Ancestors of modern salmon were lake dwellers whereas salmon are anadromous, living in salt water but spawning in fresh water. Warm ocean water is less productive than cool water. About 40 million years ago the ocean off the Pacific Northwest was 10°C (»18°F) warmer than today. It began to cool about 25 million years ago reaching its current temperatures about 8 million years ago. As the seas cooled, their productivity increased and salmon developed anadromy to take advantage of the increased food.⁴

While the earliest Salmonidae was settling into the sediment in a lake in British Columbia, the coastal mountains of California, Oregon and Washington lay under the Pacific Ocean. They began to take on their current form about 12 million years ago and had carved their current drainages by 2 million years ago⁵. The modern salmon evolved from three ancestral lines around this time. One line produced rainbow trout, coho, and chinook salmon. A second line produced sockeye and a third, about 1.25 million years ago, produced pink and chum salmon.⁶



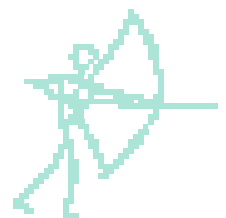
A period of intense glaciation followed that drastically altered the climate, rivers and salmon habitat. The most recent ice age, the Wisconsin, peaked about 18,000 years ago. The Cordilleran ice sheet covered the Pacific Northwest and was 4,000 feet

deep over Seattle. The salmon took refuge in watersheds to the south and north of the Cordilleran sheet.⁷

All things considered, it was a tough time for the salmon. Jim Lichatowich says it well in *Salmon Without Rivers*, "... the genus had to survive millions of years of cataclysmic habitat disruption. For example, one consequence of active mountain building and river downcutting would have been landslides large enough to block streams or create impassable waterfalls. Mountain building would have resulted in a continuous round of habitat destruction and creation. Individual populations of salmon would have become extinct when they were cut off from their spawning habitat or when their habitat was rendered unlivable. At the same time, stray salmon would have colonized new habitats, and the process of adaptation would begin again as new populations took hold. Local extinction balanced by re-colonization on an evolutionary scale has long been an important survival mechanism of the Pacific salmon." Local extinctions were common yet there were no humans, let alone European humans, to blame!



During the Wisconsin ice age, shrinking oceans left behind a land bridge between Siberia and Alaska that was used by the first humans to reach North America some 15,000 to 13,000 years ago⁸. The land bridge and large parts of Northwest Alaska were ice-free. By 12,000 years ago, people were radiating out into the ice-free areas of North America. The hunter/gatherer humans of that era expanded rapidly in their never-ending search for protein. Northwestern North America had an abundance of large mammals, including mammoths, mastodons, camels, horses, ground sloths, and giant beavers.⁹ These large mammals had no history of contact with humans and had no defensive behaviors to help them avoid these new predators. Because the animals



(Continued on page 8)

Humans Without Resources

(Continued from page 7)

had no fear, the hunting was easy even for stone-age men. The result was the widespread extinction of large mammals. North America lost 74 percent of its megafauna¹⁰. The real cost of that extinction to the first Americans is outlined very well in the book *Guns, Germs, and Steel* by Jared Diamond which is a bit off this subject but is highly recommended reading.

Because the Bering land bridge was open for several thousand years, multiple migrations occurred as humans from four distinct cultures, each identified by the design of its spear points and knives, crossed from Asia to North America. The Stemmed Point and Fluted Point people hunted and foraged in Oregon and California but moved eastward 10,000 years ago in pursuit of the dwindling mammoths.¹¹ The other two cultures were more closely associated with riverine (Pebble) and coastal (Micro Blade) ecosystems and eventually inhabited the Pacific Northwest. They lived in groups of 25 to 40 and moved continuously in search of food.

Salmon was a small part of their diet since it was not very abundant in the unstable postglacial period and was only available during spawning.¹² As the climate shifted from the hot, dry postglacial conditions to the cool, wet climate that prevails today, this second wave of Asian-Americans began to depend more on the increasingly abundant salmon. By the time the first European-Americans arrived en masse about 150 years ago salmon were very abundant and the descendants of the Pebble and Micro Blade cultures had developed their economy around the salmon's seasonal cycles.

Next time we will pick up with the arrival of the Europeans and their search for resources. With luck and

fewer words we will find out how we, with the help of the Clean Water Act, moved from burning rivers in the eastern US to starving salmon and flooding homes in the west!

Endnotes

¹ P.B. Moyle and J.J. Cech, Jr., *Fishes: An Introduction to Ichthyology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982).

² W. L. Minckley, D. A. Hendrickson, and C.E. Bond, "Geography of Western North American Freshwater Fishes: Description and Relationships to Intracontinental Tectonism," in *The Zoogeography of North American Freshwater Fishes*, edited by C. H. Hocutt and E. O. Wiley, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1986), pp. 519-613.

³ T. M. Cavender, "Review of the Fossil History of North American Freshwater Fishes," in *The Zoogeography of North American Freshwater Fishes*, edited by C. H. Hocutt and E. O. Wiley, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1986), pp. 699-725.

⁵ J. Lichatowich, *Salmon Without Rivers* (Washington: Island Press, 1999).

⁶ B. McKee, *Cascadia: The Geological Evolution of the Pacific Northwest* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972).

⁷ W. K. Thomas, R. E. Withler, and A. T. Beckenbach, "Mitochondrial DNA Analysis of Pacific Salmonid Evolution," in *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 64:1058-1064 (1986).

⁸ McKee, *Cascadia*; see also E. C. Pielou, *After the Ice Age: The Return of Life to Glaciated North America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

⁹ B. M. Fagan, *The Great Journey: The Peopling of Ancient America* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987).

¹⁰ P. S. Martin and H. E. Wright, Jr. (editors), *Pleistocene Extinctions: The Search for a Cause* (New Haven:



(Continued on page 9)

EPA Lists New Species

(Continued from page 3)

on the verge of tears. "The roaches are more important!" clamored the committee, whereupon the little girl burst in to tears.

Now the whole room grew silent. One member with a very furrowed brow said slyly, "We could buy the homes from the people." The sobs of the little girl immediately ebbed at the thought of help from the government. But the room grew more silent still. The idea of helping people was alien to the concerned. They were only used to helping the birds and the bees and the fishes and the trees. They did not know what to say. But the little girl had stopped crying and they were glad for that. "Of course," said one member to another, "we would have to appraise the homes to find out what they are worth."



One of the concerned started to say, "But roach infested buildings aren't worth anything if you can't

kill the roaches." However, he was stopped by the person next to him and then all the concerned got sly smiles on their faces and they said, "Wonderful, we have the solution!"



The little girl did not understand the sly smiles. She didn't even know that they were sly but was happy in the mistaken thought her family and friends would be helped, and the rare *Northwest Roach* would be saved.

Humans Without Resources

(Continued from page 8)

Yale University Press, 1967).

¹¹ A. J. Jelinek, "Man's Role in the Extinction of Pleistocene Fauna," in *Pleistocene Extinctions: The Search*

for a Cause (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

¹² R. L. Carlson, "The Far West," in *Early Man in the New World*, edited by R. Shutler, Jr. (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983).



A Message from the President

“Beavers Beware!”, says MVEC President Rick Spence. “Our consultant in Olympia has informed the Council that there exists a blanket permit for emergency removal of beaver dams. “Emergency” is defined as an imminent danger to homes, businesses or health. We certainly have that!” he explained. “This blanket permit does not require the SEPA process and can be

given by the Dept. of Fisheries with a verbal authorization.

The current status of beaver dam removal in May Valley is that our Basin Steward, Brent Lackey, is using the SEPA process in order to get a permit for dam removal. MVEC has informed him that this is not necessary and we are awaiting his reply. “Remember,” Rick said, “We only have a window from July 15 through Sept. 15 to work on projects that affect May

Creek. If we continue with this SEPA routing, we can’t start until, at the minimum, August 1st - losing more than 2 weeks from this already short work-window.” Rick then added emphatically, “We *will* begin work on July 15th of 2001 on the May Creek Ditch!”



The Naked Fish, a publication of the May Valley Environmental Council

Editor: KP Jones

15125 SE May Valley Road

Renton, WA 98059

(425) 656-9401

Email: mvec@mayvalley.com



**Don't let our
valley
disappear!**

