

January 2014



NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Steelhead Society will be holding its annual AGM at 8555-198 A Street (BCEGU office) in Langley at 10:00 a.m. on January 18th, 2014. As usual we will have guest speakers giving presentations. They will be announced soon.

AGENDA

- 10:00 a.m. - Opening & Welcome (President B. Braidwood)
 - Introductions
 - 10:15 a.m. - 1st Speaker (TBD)
 - 11:00 a.m. - Break
 - 11:15 a.m. - 2nd Speaker (TBD)
 - 12:00 - Break
 - 12:30 p.m. - Business of Society:
 - President's Report
 - Treasurer's Report
 - Membership Report
 - Nomination Committee-elections
 - 1:00 p.m. - Adjournment
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Dear Steelhead Society Member,

Season's greetings and all the best of the new year to you!

It has already been a half a year since our last update of June 2013 and it has been a busy six months for the Steelhead Society of B.C. (SSBC). We thank you for your continued support throughout 2013. We look forward to working hard this upcoming year for steelhead in B.C. We would like to remind you that updates and notices can be viewed at our website in the "News" section located here: <http://www.steelheadsociety.org/news>

The following are some of the projects and business SSBC has been involved in over the past six months.

- Donated \$2,000 towards the BC Conservation Foundation Chilliwack River stream fertilization project. The project sadly failed to go forward as not enough funding was raised from other user groups in time. However, the fertilization project is now expected to take place in 2014 and the SSBC has left the funds in care of the BCCF specifically for this purpose.

- On July 18th the SSBC hosted Dr. Brendan Connors in Coquitlam to answer the question "Are There Too Many Salmon in the Sea?" The presentation was an in-depth look at pacific basin salmon production. Here is a link to the presentation on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=dydOQeUVQrU

- A perfect storm scenario developed on the Dean River this past summer. With the commercial sockeye fishery shut down on the Skeena, the north coast commercial salmon fleet moved down the coast to take advantage of the Area 8 hatchery enhanced chum salmon fishery. Predicted poor steelhead returns from the one in 300 hundred year flood of 2010 were absolutely hammered. The steelhead that did make it through the gauntlet of nets (DFO allowed 750 boat days) showed signs of physical damage from their struggles in those nets (*e.g.*, were heavily net marked). The 2013 Dean River steelhead season marked the first time that sport angler days were fully allocated. The Society has submitted numerous letters to date, the latest demanding closure of the commercial salmon fisheries in four select sub areas within Dean Channel. The requirement of weed lines in certain sections only, is at best a limited stop-gap measure. The area closure was an endorsed recommendation from the Dean River Advisory meeting held in Williams Lake in the late-fall. The SSBC has a representative on the Dean River Advisory Committee.

- Concern was voiced again by letter over the lack of third party oversight regarding the commercial pink salmon fishery and wasteful practices concerning discards and poor fish treatment. See the story here: <http://www.steelheadsociety.org/news/categories/press-releases>

- SSBC participated in the Squamish/Lillooet Sport Fishing Advisory meeting held in Whistler and asked DFO to show what in-depth stock analysis had been done on the record return of pink salmon to the Squamish system this year prior to announcing the first commercial pink salmon fishery in this area since 1962. It was surprisingly revealed that there had been no scientific stock analysis done by DFO. The reality now is there will be significantly increased pressure to allow a much heavier commercial take in 2015 than the estimated 285,000 pink salmon the directed commercial fishery harvested from the stock this year. Where were the commercial fishermen during the last 30 years of active work in the Squamish watershed rebuilding this stock?

-Attended and participated in the South Coast Sport fish advisory meeting. SSBC has a seat on the SFAB.

-Wrote a letter voicing concern and supported other groups against the Hazardous Waste Management facility that will be placed right on the flood plain of the Fraser River near Chilliwack.

- Continued to participate in the Provincial Angling Advisory Team process. SSBC has representation on the board and has significant influence in proposed provincial angling regulations, especially those involving Thompson River steelhead. It was through that process that the SSBC submitted proposed angling regulations changes regarding the provincial management of Thompson River steelhead stocks.

Amongst steelhead anglers, the Thompson River is perhaps the most iconic of all BC's steelhead rivers; some would argue those steelhead are the largest and strongest steelhead on the planet. Anglers, both local and from around the world, have journeyed to the Thompson River to try their skill in connecting with one of the fabled steelhead. Yet, this river, with its beleaguered steelhead stock, receives little support from our provincial and federal governments. In 2010, the Thompson River did not open for the recreational catch and release steelhead angling season. In response to that, the Steelhead Society of BC committed itself to organising and funding habitat restoration projects in the Thompson River watershed that would provide positive and measurable benefit to steelhead.

The winter of 2011-12, saw the Spius Creek Bank Stabilization Project completed. The following winter of 2012-13, the Bonaparte Creek Riffle Construction Project was undertaken and completed. After careful consideration and significant consultation with DFO and their provincial counterparts, the SSBC has embarked on another habitat restoration project. The winter of 2013-14 will see side-channel restoration work undertaken on the Coldwater River; another important Thompson River steelhead spawning tributary. Another successful fundraiser was organised and held in November to help pay for this \$85,000 project. Though

still awaiting response from the last funding partner, the project has been green-lighted. See the project description here: <http://www.steelheadsociety.org/news/coldwater-river-habitat-restoration-project>

This fundraiser, now in its third year, is becoming a much anticipated annual social event for concerned Thompson steelheaders. This was our most financially successful one to date with the 160 attendees raising over \$18,000.

There are many complex issues facing Thompson River steelhead and habitat is only one piece of the puzzle. However, it has only been through the initiative of the SSBC with much financial support of other like minded organizations, such as the Totem Fly Fishers of BC, the Kingfishers Rod and Gun Club, Pacific Salmon Foundation, Spence's Bridge Steelhead Advocacy Group, BC Federation of Fly Fishers, the Ospreys Fly Fishers and other BC fly fishing clubs, fishing tackle suppliers, tackle shops, and the general angling public, that these important habitat restoration projects have been funded and undertaken. Many thanks to those who donate, volunteer, participate and dig deeply into their wallets to support these projects.

-On December 5, 2013, Mr. Jason Marques took the initiative to organise and host the Fly Fishing Film Tour in Vancouver and donated half of the proceeds to the SSBC. The donation was made in the name of Kelvin Miranda a friend of Jason's who recently passed away.

-The SSBC has applied for federal funding for another project benefiting the Thompson River steelhead. The Nicola River Bank Stabilization project would be undertaken in 2015 and will be our largest to date. We won't know until sometime in March 2014 whether or not the proposal will be funded. We will have more to update on this in the future but we're too excited about the chance to mitigate a substantial slide on the Nicola River main stem (biggest Thompson tributary) to keep it quiet.

The SSBC is a grass roots organisation that relies entirely on volunteers to advocate for wild steelhead and salmon and the rivers they inhabit. With the current energy resource development rush happening in northern BC, the federal government has responded by weakening fish and habitat protection laws and regulations and; furthermore, taking habitat and fisheries oversight of these projects from DFO and handing it over to the National Energy Board.

Organisations like the SSBC find themselves in the position of having to continuously lobby government and industry to protect and advocate for what used to be, up until recently, protected by federal law. The SSBC needs your support to be able to continue undertaking this work and other worthwhile projects. We look forward to providing our next newsletter in June. Any question or comments please contact us at: info@steelheadsociety.org

Yours truly,

Brian Braidwood, President

Ralf Kroning, Vice President