



It is that time of year again, the Steelhead Society of BC (SSBC) wishes everyone a happy festive season and a positive and productive 2015. This is the first of two newsletters that will be issued by the SSBC this year (2015) to keep our membership up-to-date regarding our activities.

### **Annual General Meeting 2015**

The SSBC will be holding its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on January 24, 2015 at 10:00 am at the BC Government Employees Union building located at 8555-198A Street, Langley BC. As usual we will have several excellent guest speakers giving presentations. The guest speakers will be announced once we receive final confirmations. The agenda for the AGM is as follows:

#### **AGENDA**

- 10:00 a.m. - Opening & Welcome (President B. Braidwood)
  - Introductions
- 10:15 a.m. - 1st Speaker
- 11:00 a.m. - Break
- 11:15 a.m. - 2nd Speaker
- 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

### **Stream Restoration and Enhancement Project Update**

The recently released Independent Review of the Science and Management of Thompson River steelhead states:

“Juvenile assessments undertaken by the B.C. Fish and Wildlife Branch, coupled with annual escapement monitoring, provide a basis for steelhead productivity analysis. Parr populations in the Thompson River and its tributaries have shown only minor variations between years (between 217,000-307,000 parr) despite 4-fold differences in spawner density (approximately 500-2,000 spawners). It follows that a freshwater population bottleneck may be suppressing the ability of the steelhead population to increase.” [http://www.steelheadsociety.org/sites/default/files/thompson\\_study\\_march\\_2014.pdf](http://www.steelheadsociety.org/sites/default/files/thompson_study_march_2014.pdf)

In keeping with our commitment of building a series of habitat restoration projects on important steelhead spawning tributaries of the Thompson River, to date the SSBC has completed projects on Spius Creek and the Bonaparte River. Now the Coldwater Creek/ Eaton-Beaton spawning channel restoration can be added to this growing list of successful stream restoration and enhancement projects.

To read more about the recent project completed on the Coldwater River, the original project description with pictures can be found here:

<http://www.steelheadsociety.org/sites/default/files/EATON.pdf>

A brief as-built summary is here:

<http://www.steelheadsociety.org/news/coldwater-habitat-restoration-project>

A very successful fundraiser/social event was once again held at Mickey's Pub in Coquitlam on December 3, 2014 to raise funds for a fish habitat restoration project on the Nicola River. More than 200 people attended and over \$20,000 were raised. Of particular interest, is the limited overhead we incurred raising this money; all of our overhead costs such as advertising, printing tickets and posters, the gaming and licence fees etc were less than \$200. Keeping overhead costs low is something the SSBC executive is quite proud of. A list of donators and a "thank you" letter can be found here:

<http://www.steelheadsociety.org/news/another-successful-fundraiser-2014-nicola-fundraiser-thankyou>

All necessary permits, permissions and other paperwork are in place for the Nicola River (1.0) Bank Stabilization Project. The contractor has mobilized equipment and materials to the site and expects to complete construction of this large project in early March 2015. Construction at this time of the year allows the contractor to take advantage of frozen ground and low water conditions to minimise site soil disturbance and to limit potential for river sedimentation (simply because everything is now frozen, rather than creating mud when working in more comfortable above freezing temperatures). The success of the fundraiser and efficiencies realised in the early construction phase has allowed the Society to seek out a second stream restoration and enhancement project on the Nicola River. This next project is now referred to as Nicola 2.0. Another announcement regarding this exciting development will be forthcoming as information comes in from our funding partner (Fisheries and Ocean Canada). Maybe you can sense our excitement regarding these stream restoration and enhancement projects? Sometimes it's difficult to convey this sort of thing.

The project description for Nicola 1.0 is available here:

[http://www.steelheadsociety.org/sites/default/files/SSBC%20Nicola%20Project%20-%20Technical%20Report%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.steelheadsociety.org/sites/default/files/SSBC%20Nicola%20Project%20-%20Technical%20Report%20(1).pdf)

To simplify and help keep track of the habitat restoration projects the SSBC has undertaken/funded in the Thompson River watershed in recent years here is a list:

1. Spius Creek Bank Stabilization and Enhancement (2012);
2. Bonaparte River Riffle and Pool Creation (2013);
3. Coldwater/Eaton-Beaton Spawning Channel (2014);

4. Nicola River Bank Stabilization and Enhancement Project 1.0 (2015); and
5. Nicola River Bank Stabilization and Enhancement Project 2.0 (2015)

While we are currently taking advantage of a favourable relationship with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and a highly skilled contractor in Kamloops to identify and construct projects in the Thompson River watershed, it should be noted this isn't the only watershed the SSBC has been involved in. We currently are in the early stages of investigating the possibility of a stream restoration and enhancement project in the Squamish River watershed, specifically on Shovelnose Creek. The SSBC has supported an ongoing stream fertilization project on the Salmon River on Vancouver Island over a period of years. A project description is here: [http://www.steelheadsociety.org/sites/default/files/SALMON%20RIVER%20FERT%20REPORT%20-%20CRSF%20-%202010%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.steelheadsociety.org/sites/default/files/SALMON%20RIVER%20FERT%20REPORT%20-%20CRSF%20-%202010%20(1).pdf)

The requisite follow up studies were supported as well and are discussed here:

[http://www.steelheadsociety.org/sites/default/files/Salmon%20River%20Stream%20Productivity%20Monitoring%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.steelheadsociety.org/sites/default/files/Salmon%20River%20Stream%20Productivity%20Monitoring%20(1).pdf)

### **Community Advocacy**

-The SSBC continues to monitor the proposed Chilliwack hazardous waste transfer station. We signed onto the coalition opposed to the project.

-We continue to be involved with the Provincial Angling Advisory Team (PAAT) process. The PAAT is consulting with provincial fisheries managers on angling regulations and other fisheries related issues; specifically, the management of steelhead sport fisheries on a province-wide basis, including Vancouver Island.

-The SSBC endorsed the recent habitat project on the Seymour estuary that was lead by one of our Directors through his course at the Rivers Institute at BCIT. This project is part of a multi-year program that has seen work completed on estuaries of other North Shore rivers, such as Mackay Creek. A project on Lynn Creek is planned for next year. More detailed information can be found here: <http://commons.bcit.ca/riversinstitute/2013/06/12/multi-year-ecological-restoration-of-the-burrard-inlet/>

-The SSBC was the recipient of four limited edition "Wild Steelhead" books authored by Sean Gallagher. Tom Pero, publisher for Wild River Press, gave us the opportunity to raise funds via the sale of these rare books. We are currently holding a raffle draw for one of the books. Tickets are available at Sea-Run Fly and Tackle, Pacific Angler and both Michael and Young locations. If unable to make it to the locations for ticket purchase, please contact Sea-Run Fly and Tackle at 604-931-5044 and credit card payment can be taken over the phone. Only 200 tickets will be sold at \$20/each and the draw is January 15, 2015.

- The change of the obstruction on the Coquihalla River impeding summer steelhead migration is of a great concern to the SSBC. The SSBC President visited the site with Lower Mainland fisheries staff. We continue to keep in contact with the Province and monitor the situation. We are hopeful the blockage may have changed with the high water events that occurred late-fall and early-winter in 2014. While it would be relatively simple to have a qualified rock scaler lowered down on ropes and place a charge or

simply split the rock with hydraulics, the issue is more complicated. This obstruction is the barrier that has, for as long as memory serves, prevented all other anadromous species (except summer run steelhead) from accessing the section of the river upstream of the falls. Any drastic changes due to poorly conceived rock clearing could potentially have a tremendous negative effect on the summer run steelhead population in the Coquihalla River. So for now, monitoring is all that is occurring. We will continue to monitor the situation and offering any support we can.

- A recent major rockslide on the Seymour River in North Vancouver has blocked all upstream salmonid migration. For now, until the full scope of the situation and an action plan is developed, all anyone can do is monitor the situation. A Picture of the barrier can be seen here: [https://scontent-a-sea.xx.fbcdn.net/hphotos-xaf1/t31.0-8/s2048x2048/10864016\\_10100324676818076\\_7187957249206556564\\_o.jpg](https://scontent-a-sea.xx.fbcdn.net/hphotos-xaf1/t31.0-8/s2048x2048/10864016_10100324676818076_7187957249206556564_o.jpg)

-The SSBC continues to participate in the Sport Fishing Advisor Board meetings. We attend both the main board as well as the Squamish/Lillooet region meetings. For more information on the Sport Fish Advisory Board see this link:  
<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/consultation/smon/sfab-ccps/index-eng.html>

-In an ongoing attempt to help educate the angling public in salmon and steelhead identification, the SSBC continues to fund (or to find sponsors to pay for) printing of the fish identification papers. This has now been going on for three years now. We provide the paper that the licences get printed on and distribute it to various shops that still sell fishing licences. The fish identification is on the back of both fresh and saltwater angling licenses that get printed at the participating shop. Picture here:  
[https://scontent-b-sea.xx.fbcdn.net/hphotos-xpa1/t31.0-8/s960x960/10623567\\_690784727673422\\_7828245242300459850\\_o.jpg](https://scontent-b-sea.xx.fbcdn.net/hphotos-xpa1/t31.0-8/s960x960/10623567_690784727673422_7828245242300459850_o.jpg)

-The SSBC financially supported the Osprey new later publication. This news letter is the voice of the Federation of Fly Fishers and deals with steelhead issues from both the US and Canada and the SSBC values the education of steelhead news that it provides to the public.

The following is an excerpt from the small yet very active and productive Comox Valley branch of the Steelhead Society of BC. This small group of dedicated volunteers has monthly meetings and within that group are a variety of committees and sub committees that monitor, report and take action on a variety of issues. They are well organised and effective. They raise money that allows them to deal with ongoing issues in their area.

1. Chair: Larry Peterson  
Treasurer: Nick Strussi  
Third signer: Otto Winnig

## 2. Financial

\$7410.39 as of Dec.1

Includes \$2000 from BC Hydro for chum carcass distribution into upper Puntledge watershed

3. Puntledge:

Status of Puntledge steelhead still extremely low; status of sea-run cutthroat is fair

Browns River falls obstruction: plans to produce an unobtrusive, inexpensive, effective fish passage with a narrow set of steps or stairs during summer of 2015.

4. Quinsam:

Sub-committee investigating Water Use Plan timetable and possible steelhead program.

5. Tsitika summer run program for fish into the Campbell system: about a 5 year program in the early 90's, with good Tsitika population and good ocean survival, followed by lower Tsitika numbers and poor ocean survival which led eventually to very poor results, efforts to re-vitalize included low numbers and poor ocean survival and was unsuccessful.

6. Oyster River:

Stay wild (it has refuge areas and good gravel, so what is the bottleneck, low summer flow? )

7. Predation: estuary seals, merganzers, etc. When and where and what kind of controls are warranted?

8. Commercial interception: our chapter remains skeptical that that too many steelhead are encountered and unreported and/or returned to ocean or river as dead or dying fish.

9. Salmon River diversion: needs continuous monitoring, followed by a new, revised and effective by-pass by 2016.

10. Englishman River program: is it expensive and time-consuming and are we getting valuable information, and if so, what is it and how is it being used?

11. Are we putting out excess numbers of pinks and chums so that they are endangering or is there continuing ecological gain by numbers that seem to over-saturate some systems and perhaps even have a negative influence on ocean survival?

12. Tsolum River: drift in April and look for steelhead redds.

Next meeting -- changed from Jan.15 to Tues.Jan.13, 2015 7pm

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A report from the Northern Branch of The Steelhead Society

SOME OF THE ISSUES THE BRANCH TACKLED IN 2014:

Continued participation on the Provincial "Skeena Fisheries Advisory Committee" that meets once a year with other organizations and independent anglers to discuss and provide advice to the Provincial Fisheries Branch on the regulation of the freshwater sport fishery in the Skeena Region. The NB has been instrumental and a leader in bringing about some of the latest progressive changes to river sport fishing regulations for the conservation of bull trout, dolly varden char, whitefish, cutthroat and rainbow trout, and steelhead. The next meeting will be in mid-March 2015. The Branch is working on two regulation proposals, one to urge the Province to establish a regulation (similar to Washington State) to make it illegal to hold the head of a freshwater fish out of the water.

The second proposal which is at the exploratory stage, is to establish a fly fishing only regulation for the Copper (Zymoetz) and its tributaries from about mid October until the angling season closes on January 1. The reason for this proposal is that during mid-October summer steelhead are starting to school up in holding water and they become much more vulnerable to excessive catch and release numbers. It may even be necessary to have a hook size/fly size restriction to reduce the catching effectiveness of a larger fly and hook penetrating a vital artery.

The Branch decided to focus on one LNG project/pipeline in 2014. It was decided to concentrate our efforts on trying to stop the construction of the Pacific Northern Gas looping pipeline through the Class 1 section of the upper Copper River. It is unknown what the status of the project is at this time. The company has not as yet applied for an Environmental Assessment Certificate, which is the formal application to proceed with the pipeline.

Two other projects that are causing much anxiety for the Branch are the establishment of run of river hydro projects on the Clore River (Copper River tributary) and the other on Williams Creek (largest Lakelse River tributary). Enbridge, the same company that wants to construct the oil pipeline to Kitimat, is the proponent for these two proposed projects. The NB sent a letter (with copies to everyone possible who may have an interest or a concern with the projects) off to the Minister of Energy and Mines Bill Bennett. No decision has been made public on the status of these two projects.

Two other run of river hydro projects, one proposed for the Nelson River (Kalum River tributary) which is planned to be located above a large impassible waterfall for anadromous fish received comments from our Branch stating we can live with the project so long as it does not impact anadromous fish habitat below the falls. A similar letter was sent to the proponents for the second project to be located on Erlandsen Creek ( a tributary of the Zymacord River) above an impassible waterfall for anadromous fish.

The Enbridge Oil pipeline proposal continued to take up NB time. Even though the Branch is a minor player (we were on one of the first organizations to sound the alarm way back in the mid-2000s) we continued to stay in the loop and express various points of view over the year. The NB communicated with the Kitselas First Nation over the establishment of a protected area on the lower Copper River and talked with Ministry of Transportation and Highways which is an ongoing process. The Branch is planning to meet with MOTHS staff in early 2015 and take a field trip to the area. A more formal plan and meetings with the Regional District are anticipated.

Along a similar vein the Branch touched base with various people including the Ministry of Forests and BC Timber staff over the use and destruction by ATV'S of walking trails and riparian areas along the Lakelse River. This will also be an ongoing project for the Branch.

Director Brian Kean will represent the NB on a Rio Tinto Monitoring/Advisory committee for their Aluminum Smelter expansion and the expected increase in SO2 emissions (acid rain) from the new smelter into the Kitimat -Terrace air shed and the Lakelse and Kitimat Watersheds.

Two NB Directors assisted the Provincial Fishery Guardians who were carrying out daily interviews and license checks on the Copper, Lakelse, and Skeena 4 (upstream of Terrace) Rivers in 2014. We helped them key in to popular fishing locations, familiarize them with traditional and more current pool and run names and where trails are located, along with tips on illegal guiding and who to keep an eye on. The NB is very supportive of this program which provides a regulatory presence on the three rivers where conservation officers are rarely seen.

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Here is a chance to get in on owning an engraved pair of SSBC scissors while also supporting the SSBC.

Need a new pair of scissors?

A friend of mine makes the most beautiful and best cutting scissors I have ever used, period! (see attached photo)

I have talked with him and he has agreed to sell them at a discount to raise funds for the SSBC. They are Japanese steel with a serrated edge and many other "trade" secrets to make them stupid sharp. If you are not careful with them you will bleed, it's that simple...

He has been using them for some time and cuts everything with them and they show no signs of wear. Yes, he even cuts tinsel (back of the jaws) and they are holding up incredibly well.

All scissors will be engraved with SSBC on them and sell for \$37 each and are 4" long. With the engraving and shipping, the easiest way to do this is to have a deadline of midnight January 31. I will need to get your name address and payment by the deadline for you to get your hands on a pair of these. After the deadline I will submit the order (with payment) and it will take about two weeks before they show up on my door step before I can ship them off.

So there will be a little lag time before you get them, but you won't be disappointed!!!

The best way for me to get your info is by email, so please email me here [punkfisher@hotmail.com](mailto:punkfisher@hotmail.com) make sure you put "scissors" in the email title so it doesn't get tossed out. I would like your full name address and how many pairs you would like. The easiest is to just send me a cheque, so I will respond with my info for you.

I want to thank all of you for your support in this endeavour! I think this is a great way to support the SSBC.

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Thanks again everyone  
Brood dude (Ben Gehrke)

Disclaimer...

If for any reason you have an issue with the scissors you have to go through me and not the SSBC. They are benefiting from a fixed portion of the profits; they do not make or distribute these scissors. SO PLEASE DO NOT BOTHER THEM WITH ANY PROBLEMS that may pop up.

I give you my word that I will make it right no matter what.

Thanks for understanding

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This wraps up the first SSBC newsletter of 2015. The SSBC would like to thank SSBC members for continuing to support our work in steelhead advocacy.

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