



As usual, this is the second of two newsletters this year - if you missed the first one, please click here for our Winter 2016/17 newsletter:

<http://steelheadsociety.org/news/ssbc-winter-201617-newsletter>

### **2017 Annual General Meeting - Summary**

The SSBC held this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on January 28, 2017, and as always the combination of old and new faces in our community showed the true passion for protecting wild fish in our province.

After hearing reports from our three branches (Northern, Vancouver Island, and Main branches; more on this below), we also heard from guest speakers John McMillan, Greg Wilson, Shawn Bennet, and Mike Wallace.

John McMillan gave a fantastic presentation on what is currently known regarding Steelhead biology. Greg Wilson provided an update on the COSEWIC (Committee On the Status of Endangered Wildlife In Canada) process. Sean Bennet & Mike Wallace also went over updates on how our habitat restoration projects from previous years are doing, as well as the outlook for future projects.

Speaking of which, the SSBC has funded a project on Guichon Creek that is underway – lots of work ahead of us after another year of poor estimated returns on the Thompson River, but we remain dedicated to helping provide an opportunity for this important run of fish to recover.

*The following is a brief summary of some other things the SSBC has been involved in:*

### **Recommendations regarding Chum fisheries on the Fraser River**

Poul Bech of the SSBC wrote a letter on behalf of our group providing comments on the Draft of the Southern BC 2017/18 Species Specific Salmon Fishing Plan, opposing non-selective fisheries (ie. Gill nets) on the Fraser River at times and locations where interior Fraser River Steelhead may be present. We also suggested DFO investigate the possibility of returning the peak of the Fraser Chum Salmon migration to November via management & enhancement techniques, and work with commercial salmon fishery stakeholders in order to minimize their impact.

## **Opposition to fish culture enhancements on the Thompson River**

Earlier this year, the SSBC once again noted the controversial push for fish culture augmentation on the Thompson River in order to recover the steelhead population. Our stance is to reiterate that although this idea sounds good, there is in fact no scientific evidence that any wild steelhead population has recovered through use of fish culturing programs – in fact, studies have shown the opposite to be true (negative effects from the programs). Instead, we continue to favour habitat restoration and conservation.

## **Thinking “Steelhead” (or fisheries) for the recent election**

The recent BC Provincial election was an opportunity for anglers, environmentalists, and stewards of our wild fish populations to make their voice heard. We urged SSBC members to consider some key questions, including:

- Why is there no Provincial Ministry dedicated to fisheries?
- When will our BC Conservation Service be properly funded to protect fish?
- How is the Provincial Gov't going to support recovery of interior Steelhead populations?
- How is the Provincial Gov't supporting sustainable fisheries in BC with limited Steelhead impact?

As always, we believe a strong provincial voice and presence is required to make DFO and our Provincial Gov't take notice. Although the election is passed, we urge you to continue to voice your opinion and reach out to your local representative on issues like these!

## **Michael & Young Speyclave**

The annual Michael and Young Spey Clave this spring drew a large number of spey enthusiasts and interested anglers, and was once again a very successful event. A large number of SSBC memberships were signed up over the weekend.

The SSBC booth at the Clave provided an opportunity to promote our mandate of the protection of wild steelhead stocks across the province as well reach out to potential new members. Raffle sales garnered over \$6,000 which was split between the Steelhead Society of BC and the BC Federation of Fly Fishers. Funds raised by and donated to the SSBC will go towards various steelhead habitat restoration or protection projects throughout British Columbia and will go a long way to help conserve the health of our wild systems.

Once again the SSBC would like to thank Michael and Young Fly Shop for inviting the Steelhead Society to be a part of their Clave and for their generous donation as well as everyone who attended the event and spent/donated their time and money! The SSBC looks forward to working with Michael and Young Fly Shop at future claves and events!

### **Squamish Sea-to-Sky Habitat Project**

We were approached by a member of the SL-SFAC for information to forward to MLA Jordan Sturdy, as he had indicated there was money available for habitat projects in the area. Based on the strength of the case the SSBC helped make for improvements in the Squamish watershed, a substantial cheque was written to the Squamish Watershed Society for use on this project, on top of which the SSBC also contributed an additional \$10,000 towards the restoration. This project was wrapped up previous to the beginning of the summer and was a significant improvement of the salmonid-supporting watershed.

The Steelhead Society will also be going ahead with a subsequent project in this region of our own, and we will likely work in conjunction with the consultant on the Squamish Watershed Society's project. This is a great example of the SSBC working with other groups under time constraints to get critical projects completed – thank you to all who helped make this happen!

### **Contribution to the SSBC in Daniel Schaffert's memory**

The Electrical Joint Training Committee made a donation in memory of Daniel Schaffert, who tragically passed away on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017. At only 24 years of age, Daniel was a young man who was passionate about fishing and the great outdoors. He was a supporter of the SSBC and he will be missed.

### **Northern Branch Update**

The Northern Branch continued water level and quality monitoring throughout the winter and this spring on the Exstew Slough project. The Skeena has flooded the slough this spring and when the water recedes we anticipate trapping all the fry and smolts in preparation to have it filled in. A rough estimate is that around 10,000 fry and smolts get stranded there every year for the past 35 years.

There was more tracking done this spring with the steelhead that were radio tagged in the Bulkley Catch & Release study with full results of the study to be published in July.

Fish identification posters for tackle vendors to print fishing licenses on the back of were distributed this spring again. As well, other posters were worked on this spring to promote ethics.

Planning continues on the spawning pools on Simpson creek which is a tributary to the Copper River. There were spawning pools for Chinook built a few years back. High water has scoured those and we are looking at rebuilding and maintaining them to ensure Chinook can continue to spawn there. Chinook populations have been in big downward decline on the Copper so they need all the help they can get. The pools will provide spawning habitat for other species as well including steelhead.

This spring we were involved with DFO's SFAC/SFAB process and attended meeting throughout the northwest as well as the province's SFAC process.

The DFO school program was eliminated with the latest round of cuts and we are exploring options to allow this education program to continue.

We are always looking for people to get involved. If you would like to help please send an email to: [steelheadtroy1@gmail.com](mailto:steelheadtroy1@gmail.com).

Thank you,  
Troy Peters

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That wraps up the Summer 2017 newsletter from the SSBC, direct to your inbox. You can always reach us through our website ([www.steelheadsociety.org](http://www.steelheadsociety.org)) and on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/SSBCMmain](http://www.facebook.com/SSBCMmain)). You can also purchase hats, shirts, crests, and other swag in our online store. Please visit our store at <http://steelheadsociety.org/catalog>

Thank you once again for your support of our goal to preserve Wild Fish and Wild Rivers in beautiful British Columbia.

Kindest Regards,

The SSBC