



Ooze News



Society of Wetland Scientists Pacific Northwest Chapter

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<https://members.sws.org/pacific-northwest-chapter>

President's Corner

By Shelby Petro, PNW Chapter President

Happy Spring and American Wetlands Month!

I am excited to step into the role of PNW Chapter President. First order of business is to say a huge THANK YOU to Josh Wozniak, who successfully led our chapter for the last four years and continues to provide value to the leadership team as past president. I have big muck boots to fill!

I look forward to working with the SWS leadership to champion initiatives that support our membership, including student scholarships for wetland courses, technical training, and conference attendance; chapter events to engage membership throughout AK, ID, OR, and WA; and the upcoming conference in Dayton, Oregon in October.

Adding to our continued support of SWaMMP, UW Wetland Science and Management certificate program, and the UW Restoration Symposium, we recently partnered with Clackamas Community College in Oregon to provide sponsorship to students taking wetland courses. We continue to look for opportunities to support students in AK and ID.

If you have ideas how our PNW Chapter can support membership and/or want to get involved, drop us a line at pnwchapter.sws@gmail.com.

May is American Wetlands Month, a time to celebrate the unique and diverse habitats that hold a special place in our lives. Take a moment to reflect on the wetlands you have encountered in your lifetime and the memories they hold. Let me share a foundational wetland memory with you:

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I think back to growing up on a lake in rural Indiana, my summers spent patrolling the lake's edge on a pink paddle boat with my best friend Kate, a quiver of nets between us for filling the back seats with turtles and the cooler with bullfrogs. We were so successful that we developed a turtle inventory, each turtle marked with nail polish (oops!) and diligently documented, noting its name, size, date it was caught, and date it was re-caught. We knew that the best spots to find critters was where vegetation grew over dirt banks or logs sticking out of the water and not along the concrete walls holding yards in place, areas with high boat traffic, at stormwater outfalls, or where landowners removed aquatic plants and downed logs away from boat docks and the shore. Unknowingly, I was assessing the functions of the wetland that brought me joy and purpose!

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Ooze News* and we look forward to seeing you at the conference in October.

SWS 2024 Chapter Meeting in Dayton, OR

By Brianna Hines, Program Vice President

Come join us for the SWS PNW Chapter Mini-Conference in Dayton, OR on October 10 and 11! There are exciting speakers and field trips planned, you won't want to miss out! Registration will open later this year, so keep an eye out for that announcement via email if you are a registered member of SWS.

If you're interested in attending, there are rooms set aside at the Red Lion Inn & Suites in McMinnville, OR. To reserve your room in the hotel block, call the hotel directly at (503) 472-1500 or follow [this link](#).

We still have slots open for speakers. If you have any interest in presenting at the conference please fill out [this speaker interest form](#).

If you have any questions about the upcoming conference, please email the SWS PNW Chapter Board at pnwchapter.sws@gmail.com. We hope to see you there!

May is American Wetlands Month

By Maki Dalzell/Doug Gresham, Co-Secretaries

May is a time to celebrate and recognize the importance of wetlands. Did you know EPA, along with its partners, created American wetlands Month in 1991 to educate people about the functions and values of wetlands and spread awareness? Here are some ideas and ways to celebrate American Wetlands Month:

- Go check out a nearby wetland you have never visited before.
- Look for volunteering activities to help restore wetlands.
- Share the importance of wetlands and this celebration in social media.

Do you have other good ideas? Please share your ideas with us by emailing at pnwchapter.sws@gmail.com!

SWS Funds Available for Wetlands Workshops

By Maki Dalzell/Doug Gresham, Co-Secretaries

The PNW Chapter Board is encouraging applications for SWS support to conduct workshops on relevant topics. The application can be found on the chapter website:

<http://www.sws.org/Pacific-Northwest-Chapter/pacific-northwest-chapter-events.html>

Social Media Update

By Maki Dalzell, Co-Secretary

Did you know we have official Facebook and Twitter accounts for our chapter? Find us on Facebook as [Pacific Northwest Chapter of Society of Wetland Scientists](#) and Twitter as [@SWS_PNW](#). We will post events, training, and articles on our social media, and you can also share with us by joining the Facebook group or following our Twitter account!

Consultant List Updates

By Maki Dalzell, Co-Secretary

The PNW Chapter hosts a quarterly updated consultant list on the website:

<http://www.sws.org/Pacific-Northwest-Chapter/pacific-northwest-resources.html>.

The only requirement to be on this list is current SWS PNW membership. ***Please note that updates to your SWS member profile through SWS business office do not automatically carryover to the consultant list.*** The PNW Chapter does not get member profile information from the SWS business office, and we need you to keep us informed for updates on the consultant list. If you would like to be added to the list or have your information updated, contact Maki Dalzell at mdalzell@hntb.com.

Calendar of Wetland Classes and Workshops

By Maki Dalzell, Co-Secretary

To better serve our members we have included a list of wetland related classes and workshops occurring in the Pacific Northwest. If you know of other organizations that offer classes, please forward the web link to mdalzell@hntb.com.

Coastal Training Program:

Note: all sessions listed below are currently full, but you can still join the waitlist.

- Using the Washington State Wetland Rating System (2014) in Western Washington – virtual with field site visit: May 15 – 17, 2024.
- Designing and Installing Wetland Mitigation and Restoration Projects: May 22-23, 2024
- Western Washington: How to Determine the Ordinary High Water Mark - virtual with field site visit: May 28-30, 2024.
- Eastern Washington: How to Determine the Ordinary High Water Mark – virtual with field site visit: May 28 – May 30, 2024.

Northwest Environmental Training Center:

- Wetlands: Science and Regulatory Management: May 29-31, 2024.
- NEPA: The Law, Logic, and Language of the National Environmental Policy Act: May 14 – 15, 2024. Virtual.

Portland State University Environmental Professional Program:

- River Restoration Design: October 17, 19, 24, 26, 2023. Virtual.
- Restoration Project Management: December 5-7, 2023. Portland, OR.

Clackamas Community College Environmental Learning Center:

- Oregon Rapid Wetland Assessment Protocol: May 7 – 15, 2024
- Wetland Plant ID: May 16-17, 2024

The Seminar Group:

- Shoreline Development & Permitting: June 6 – 7, 2024. Seattle, WA
- Floodplain Mapping & ESA Integration: September 11, 2024. Portland, OR.
- Oregon Water Law: October 24 – 25, 2024. Portland, OR.
- Washington Water Code: November 14 – 15, 2024. Seattle, WA.

University of Washington Botanic Gardens:

- None at this time

2024 King County Wetland Inventory Update

By Mason Bowles, PWS, King County Wetland and Riparian Monitoring and Adaptive Management Program

King County is updating its wetland inventory with new wetland maps and three wetland classification systems. These will include the USFWS National Wetland Inventory (NWI) Cowardin classifications, new Hydrogeomorphic (HGM) classification data, and the new UWFS Landscape Position, Landform, Water Flow Path, and Waterbody Types (LLWW) classification system.

The last King County wetland inventory dates from 1990 which identified 4,420 wetlands in (then) unincorporated King County, not including the Forest Production Districts and Federal lands. The 2024 wetland inventory takes advantage of 1.5m high resolution Lidar and uses the Wetland Indicator Potential Tool (WIP) developed by Meghan Halabisky and her team at the University of Washington. The WIP can identify forested wetlands through Lidar-derived machine learning.

The preliminary data suggests a significant increase in mapped wetlands. This increase in wetland numbers is the result of both better detection of small, isolated forested wetlands, and finer resolution classification of wetlands. Many large wetlands that were historically mapped using one Cowardin classification may now be mapped using multiple classifications. Overall, however, there has been a 7% loss of wetlands in the last 32 years, based on these data.

The three classification systems serve different purposes for understanding where wetlands are

located and what structure they have, and what functions they provide. The NWI system classifies wetlands using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Cowardin Classification System which is based on the dominant vegetation, ecological system, substrate, and inundation period. HGM classifies wetlands based on their landscape setting, source of water, and hydrodynamics and is required for rating wetlands according to the Washington State Wetland Rating System. Both the NWI and HGM classification are required for all professional wetland delineations. Ecology's Washington Tool for Online Rating (WATOR) can assist users with the wetland classification rating, but site visits are still required. The LLWW Classification system categorizes wetlands based on geographic characteristics. The LLWW Classification system appends hydrogeomorphic descriptors to wetland mapping data to predict wetland functional capacity at the landscape scale. Using LLWW, for example, a user may identify a Riverine wetland that also provides summer rearing habitat for Coho salmon.

The new NWI data are undergoing final QC review by the USFW and King County staff and will become publicly available later this summer. The HGM and LLWW data will become available by the end of 2024.

Washington Department of Ecology Regulatory Update

By Doug Gresham, Co-Secretary

The Supreme Court (WOTUS) decision in Sackett v Environmental Protection Agency has weakened federal protections for wetlands and streams. Waters losing federal protections include ephemeral streams; wetlands in areas such as coastal dunes, floodplains, behind dikes, and those not directly connected to a stream; and Interstate wetlands. An analysis by the Washington Department of Ecology indicates more than 50% of Washington's wetlands and 14% of state streams no longer receive federal oversight due to the Sackett decision. On Aug. 29, 2023, EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a final amended federal rule that conforms to the Supreme Court decision.

However, Washington state laws such as the 1945 Water Pollution Control Act, 1972 Shoreline Management Act, and 1990 Growth Management

Act, still protect wetlands. Ecology currently uses state administrative orders to review and authorize impacts to state waters without federal protection. Before Sackett, Ecology issued a handful of administrative orders annually. Due to the Sackett decision, Ecology now estimates 50 to 100 projects a year will need administrative orders. A new state review process is needed to protect state water quality.

The Washington legislature provided funding in fiscal years 2025-2027 to hire more staff for issuing administrative orders, providing education and outreach, and responding to violations. Ecology intends to start rulemaking to establish a new permit program designed to reduce delays and provide clarity and predictability to applicants. This would streamline the permit process, including developing general permits for common project types such as restoration projects, culvert replacement, and maintenance. The permit rule would also identify exemptions for certain activities such as existing and ongoing agriculture and forest practices. Under this approach, each project would be reviewed using agency guidance and best available science. Ecology would develop discrete, transparent criteria, and thresholds for decision-making. The agency would also define what are acceptable mitigation approaches for wetland impacts.

Boldt Decision 50th Anniversary

By Doug Gresham, Co-Secretary and Dash Paulson, Board Member at Large

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Federal Judge George Boldt's pivotal decision affirming the treaty rights of the northwest tribes to take fish at their usual and accustomed grounds and recognizing the tribes as equal co-managers of the salmon runs with Washington State. The Boldt decision had a monumental impact on conservation in the Pacific Northwest and continues to direct the study and management of all streams, tidelands, and wetlands wherever Pacific salmon swim.

The Boldt decision is now a cornerstone of modern tribal sovereignty in the United States and set a precedent for similar judicial decisions in Oregon, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. According to Charles Wilkinson, author of "Treaty Justice: the

Northwest Tribes, the Boldt Decision, and the Recognition of Fishing Rights,” the northwest tribes continue to view the decision as a critical affirmation of their sovereignty and continuing asset of paramount importance.

On February 12, 1974, Judge Boldt ruled that the treaties signed in the 1850s guaranteed the tribes a right to 50% of the annual salmon harvest in Washington and laid out a path for tribes to exercise sovereign self-management of their fisheries. Subsequent cases expanded the treaty right to include shellfish and found that northwest treaty rights include suitable habitat that can sustain harvestable fish populations.

In the decades before Judge Boldt filed his more than 200-page decision, tribal fishing rights were systematically denied by Washington state. Hundreds of tribal members were arrested and jailed for fishing in defiance of state law. Few fishers were as defiant or outspoken as Billy Frank Jr., who was first arrested for fishing when he was 14 years old in 1945. Frank became a leading figure in the Indian led fish-in protests during the 1960s and 1970s. Because of violent police crackdowns on these fish-ins, the period became known as the “fish wars.” The incidents led directly to the federal filing a lawsuit on behalf of the tribes against Washington for violating the treaties. for violating federal treaties.

In 1979, the US Supreme Court upheld Judge Boldt’s decision in *United States v. Washington*, but Washington state and many non-Indian fishing interests still fought against co-management. It wasn’t until 1984 that Frank and recently appointed Director of Fisheries Bill Wilkerson found common ground and organized meetings around the state to advocate for true co-management. Their efforts led to the Puget Sound Salmon Management Plan of 1985, a living document that is still revised and updated every 10 years.

Today there is no doubt about the leadership role of the tribes in the northwest. Washington state and the sovereign tribal governments work together to gather stream data, study threats to salmon, and co-manage harvestable fish populations. Fisheries decisions throughout the Pacific Northwest are based on collaboration and consensus among federal, state,

and tribal governments working towards conservation of the runs.

During the fish wars, Indigenous people were continuously scapegoated for declining salmon runs when rampant nontreaty commercial overfishing and habitat destruction were the reasons for the decline. State-tribal co-management, which emphasizes scientific monitoring and evidence-based decision making, has largely eliminated overfishing, while documenting and studying the impacts of continuing habitat loss, pollution, and climate change.

One of the most dramatic outcomes of the Boldt decision has been the removal of the two dams along the Elwha River, an effort led by the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. The dams, built in 1911 and 1926, destroyed the salmon runs along the Elwha by blocking nearly 90% of habitat along the river and tributaries. Despite fierce opposition to dam removal, the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe persevered and in 1992, they negotiated federal legislation that eventually authorized complete removal of the dams. By 2014, both dams were safely removed, and salmon species have returned to the river. In October 2023, once the Coho salmon runs were healthy enough, the tribe held a limited fishery. For the first time in more than a hundred years, tribal members harvested Coho salmon from the Elwha River.

For more info watch FISH WAR, a documentary film produced by Northwest Treaty Tribes Media and North Forty Productions, at the Seattle International Film Festival at 5 p.m. Saturday, May 11, at SIFF Cinema Uptown

Chapter Board Meetings

By Shelby Petro, Chapter President

The PNW Chapter Board conducts monthly board meetings via conference call. These meetings are open to the general membership, and you are encouraged to attend. If you have questions, concerns, want to get involved or are just curious please feel free to attend the meetings. Our last meeting was held on April 11 at 12:00 pm, and our next meeting date is May 9 at 12:00 pm. If you are interested, please contact us at pnwchapter.sws@gmail.com to receive conference call information.

Ooze News Deadlines for Articles

Articles and announcements are welcomed and appreciated for the next edition of the Chapter newsletter. Please send associated documentation to co-secretary Maki Dalzell at mdalzell@hntb.com by September 15, 2024. We will review your information for submission to the Ooze News.

SWS PNW Member List Serve

By Maki Dalzell, Co-Secretary

Of the many benefits of becoming a SWS-PNW member, members enjoy being on an exclusive list serv which provides up to date information regarding events, workshops, news, etc. If you're not a member already, please consider becoming one or encourage your colleagues, employees, or the like to join. Thank you!

We will be migrating the current list serv to the SWS website in the forum section. Any member can post job listings or even announcements to this forum. Notifications can be set for each post, a weekly email, or monthly email. Stay tuned for upcoming announcements on this transition.