

Merrill, Hannah

From: earnest spees [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 02, 2011 3:43 PM
To: Karl Spees
Cc: Michele d'Hemecourt; zSMP
Subject: Public Comment - Support Document

To: WRIA 19 Public Hearing Process attn: Michele d'Hemecourt
To: Shoreline Advisory Committee Public Comment.

Hearings Coordinators

In my recent Comment 'What's it all about Alfie'. I gave my opinion about 'locking up' shorelines property based on salmon and endangered species as a pretext. I made a reference to the PDN- Pat Neal Article -"Hatchery fish better than none at all"

Please include this article as a pertinent supportive document to my comment. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

PDN 8/31/11 Pat Neal Hatchery fish better **than none at all**

IN AMERICA, PEOPLE are free to believe what they want, such as salmon always return to the stream where they were spawned. Not true.

Salmon and steelhead often return to the wrong stream.

That's how they colonized new watersheds after the last Ice Age.

Others believe hatchery fish should not be used to restore an ecosystem.

The experts doing the complaining about hatchery fish are usually part of the salmon restoration industry.

Salmon restoration is a complicated process, where a river is studied, managed and fished until the fish are endangered.

This opens a floodgate of federal endangered-species funding, which falls from the sky like manna.

The money is used to hire consultants, publicists and earthmoving machinery that looks good in the newspaper.

The restoration folks don't raise fish.

This would sort of defeat the purpose, since if the fish weren't endangered, no one would pay to restore them.

Instead of raising fish, they build logjams in hopes an imaginary fish can make it through the nylon. and spawn there someday.

Until then, the river is studied, managed and fished some more.

When all else fails, blame the loggers.

For an example of the salmon restoration industry's cynical

, manipulation of our natural resources, we need look no further than the Elwha River.

It is the largest salmon restoration effort in the country.

They are taking out two dams to open 70 miles of pristine habitat that will allow an estimated 400,000 salmon to return to the river.

Never mind that our other North Olympic Peninsula rivers, the ones without dams, don't support their historic numbers anymore.

The salmon restoration "experts" claim the fish could come back to the Elwha without fish hatcheries.

They call fish raised in hatcheries "zoo fish" that could hurt salmon, recovery by "weakening the genetic pool" of the fish native to the Elwha.

The experts claim the trout that were trapped above the dams remain truly wild.

They don't remember the good old days when the state pumped thousands of rainbow trout into Lake Mills, or when biologists flew thousands of hatchery smolts by helicopter to the upper

Elwha to see if they could make it through the dams. (They did.) Washington started raising fish in hatcheries back in 1890.

Billions of hatchery salmon, trout and steelhead have been released into almost every river, lake and creek in the state.

The fish hatchery was first built on the Elwha after the Elwha dam was built in 1913.

This hatchery washed out soon afterward.

In the 1970s, a chinook rearing channel was built on the Elwha.

By then the hatchery workers could only find 12 female chinook to spawn in the whole river.

Within a relatively short time, they were spawning a thousand chinook a year.

The Elwha facility could have restored the tens of thousands of fish that once supported a salmon fishing culture, but fish hatcheries generally fail after you fire the workers and stop feeding the fish.

Meanwhile, nobody knows what the sediment will do to the salmon once they take out the Elwha dams, or if the fish can make it upstream without a helicopter.

Given the way salmon and steelhead stray from one watershed to the other, it isn't a matter of if there will be hatchery fish in the Elwha but a question of when.

Is this a bad thing?

Isn't it better to have some hatchery fish than no fish at all?

I am just a humble guide, but I never saw anyone complain about a hatchery fish when it was on the end of his or her line.

Pat Neal is a fishing guide and "wilderness gossip columnist."

Neal can be reached at 360-683-9867 or email at patnealwildlife@yahoo.com. His

column appears here everyotl .,

Wednesday.