



## Notes from the 2007 Pacific Salmonid Recovery Conference

Salmon and steelhead are vitally important to many people in the Pacific Northwest as sources of food, reminders of cultural heritage, and indicators of ecosystem health. At the recent salmonid recovery conference held in Seattle and organized by the Northwest Environmental Training Center, over 40 presenters covered topics central to salmon recovery, including policy, science, habitat restoration, and monitoring. Highlights from early sessions included a lively debate on the appropriate planning horizon for Puget Sound restoration.

Robert Lackey, a senior fisheries biologist from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, spoke about the historical range of salmon and showed how population growth, mining, logging practices, dams, over-fishing, and hatchery practices have decimated Pacific salmon runs. Dr. Lackey stated that several core policies are pressuring salmon: the tendency toward international trade, competition for natural resources, human population growth, a bias that favors individual choices over the collective good, and an economic system that ignores “externalities,” such as environmental impacts, when establishing costs. Dr. Lackey suspects that without significant changes, wild salmon populations will be at remnant levels by 2100. He referenced a recent book, *Salmon 2100: The Future of Wild Pacific Salmon*, that highlights a number of approaches for salmon recovery. More information about the book can be found at American Fisheries Society, [www.fisheries.org/afs/](http://www.fisheries.org/afs/).

David Dicks, the new executive director of the Puget Sound Partnership, provided a counterpoint by suggesting that significant progress can be made on three fronts by 2020. The first task is to complete an action plan by September 2008; the plan will outline the path forward for achieving Governor Christine Gregoire’s vision of restoring a “fishable, diggable, swimmable” Puget Sound. This is a tough problem given areas like the dead zone in Hood Canal (see the following link for a graphic example: Hood Canal Low-Oxygen Event at [www.wdfw.wa.gov/hab/hood\\_canal\\_oxygen.htm](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hab/hood_canal_oxygen.htm)). The second task is to find a clear way to involve the local community in restoration efforts. The third and final task is to make sure the Puget Sound Partnership is both financially and technically accountable to the public.

Ridolfi staff gave presentations on two restoration projects that Ridolfi designed over the last several years, one on the Duwamish River in Seattle and the other on the shore of Commencement Bay in Tacoma. On the final day of the conference, we led a field trip to six restoration sites on or near Commencement Bay. Ridolfi has been involved in design work or monitoring at most of the sites the participants toured, and it was gratifying to be able to show them off to our peers.