

Tenmile Treasures

A Newsletter for the Tenmile Creek Watershed Community

TENMILE CREEK
WATERSHED



Tenmile Treasures - Summer 2004

Summer comes with family picnics, open windows, fresh garden vegetables, flowers to dress up your home, and perhaps a vacation or two! However, in the Tenmile Creek Watershed summer also comes with a concern for enough water. For many water associations, water use is being restricted because of low groundwater levels in their wells. Low water levels in home wells for drinking and irrigation are also a concern. And while we usually see the creeks at low levels this time of year, many fear that with the low rain fall this year, we may be drying up in more areas than normal. This month's science is all about instream flow. Thanks for taking the time to read it and for filling out the survey below.

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Summer 2004

Tenmile Advisory Committee

- Jason Vander Veen, Landowner
- Kevin Sterk, Landowner
- Dan Thompson, Landowner
- Mike Murphy, Landowner/PUD
- Susie Nelson, Volunteer
- Craig MacConnell, WSU
- George Boggs, WCD
- Henry Bierlink, APC
- John Gillies, NRCS
- Steve Seymour, WDFW
- Darrell Gray, NSEA

In partnership with WCD, NSEA,
WA Dept. of Ecology, & NFWF

Project Manager: Dorie Belisle

A Little Science: Tenmile Creek Low Flow Study

Tenmile Creek is known to experience very low flows in the summer time and in some places and times it will dry up altogether. IS IT NORMAL FOR THE TENMILE CREEK TO HAVE SUCH LOW FLOWS OR ARE THE FLOWS GETTING LOWER? Some of the locals have contributed valuable information that the creek did not used to get as low. Some Tenmile Creek landowners have decided to undertake a study to determine what is contributing to the low flows in the creek and to document areas where the creek dries up. This very dry year provides an excellent opportunity to document the sections of the creek that are supported by spring flow.



Karen Welch of
Hydrologic Services Co.

Whatcom County PUD #1 has provided some funding to start this project. Joanne Greenberg and Karen Welch of HydroLogic Services Co. were hired by the PUD to help with this study. Joined by Ken Carrasco of WSU-Cooperative Extension, we stopped at over 30 sites. Where possible, we took measurements of streamflow, temperature, dissolved oxygen. Many of the sites were dry or contained stagnant water.

By measuring the streamflow at several points along the course of the creek, we can get an idea of where the groundwater discharge to the surface flow is of greatest importance. Temperature and dissolved oxygen measurements are useful because groundwater is cooler than surface water and contains less dissolved oxygen. Information collected this summer can help to further understand how groundwater supports the streamflow in Tenmile Creek.

Low flows affect us all - from our "drinking" water, to our "growing" water, to "healthy" streams. You know your creek and your land better than anyone! Help us get a picture of where we are today. Remember that the Tenmile Creek Project is about neighbors solving our own problems. The information we obtain will be shared with YOU. Thanks for your help!

Please complete this form and mail it to: Tenmile Project, 231 Tenmile Road, Lynden, WA 98264
Name; _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____

What creek (or tributary of) do you live near? Circle one: Tenmile, Deer, Fourmile, Silver (Crystal) Springs How long have you lived there? ___ years

Do you collect rainfall data? ___Yes ___ No Do you have a well on your property ___ Yes ___ No

Does your well go seasonally dry? ___ Yes ___ No Do you monitor your well level? ___Yes ___No

Does your section of the creek go dry? ___Yes ___No Is this normal? ___Yes ___No

Do you know of any springs on your land? ___Yes ___No (A spring is defined as an issuance of water from the earth. It needs to see to daylight to be called a spring.)

Do you know of any fish barriers on any of the creeks ___ Yes ___No

If yes, please share the location. _____

Please share any additional information. Water is an important resource - the more we understand the system the better we can protect it and ensure quality water for your home and mine.

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*"Berries, Ice Cream and Stories
 Down by the Stream!" -
 August 27th*

**Tenmile Creek Watershed:
 The Story of Its People and their Land**



Buford Waschke using old time bailer.
 Can you guess the year?

A community is built around the history that people share. Historically, stories were passed on from generation to generation as

a way to keep history alive. We have an opportunity to share and to listen to our own history in the Tenmile Creek watershed (Laurel area). An event is planned for Friday, Aug. 27th to bring us together and perhaps learn a little about the "days of old". We need you and we need you to bring a "Senior".

Brian Flowers, a local professional storyteller, will lead this story telling event for the whole family. Linda Ross, whose classes over the years have improved this area into great habitat for fish, will share her classes' portion of the Tenmile Creek. The Fourth Corner Fly Fishers are maintaining this perfect picnic site. Come to listen, to share your bit of history, and to have it documented for future generations. Meet Tenmile Creek Watershed neighbors - old and new. Enjoy an old-fashioned ice cream social down by the Creek.

When: Friday Aug. 27th Time: 6:30-8:30 pm
Where: Ten Mile Elementary School - 960 E. Hemmi Road at the creek.

Who is Invited: You, your family, and your neighbors - anyone who lives or has ever lived in the Tenmile Creek watershed or Laurel area.

This newsletter only goes to you who live or own property on Tenmile, Deer, Fourmile, Silver (Crystal) Springs or a tributary. We want anyone who is interested to come, so we need you to pass the word. Maybe you could even invite a neighbor to drive over with you.

What to Bring: Your family, a friend, chairs, an appetite for berries and ice cream, and those stories that grandpa use to share.

Information & Rides: If you need more information and/or a ride call 398-9187.

Fall, Fish, and Family

Fall is the perfect time to be looking for fish in our streams. Since this is the last newsletter before winter, I thought you would like a few tips for spotting them.



Coho

Coho, which is the most often seen in the lowland streams will be coming

back to spawn between Sept. and January. These salmon can be identified because they only have spots on the top of their tail. Their bodies appear more red in fresh water. Most of the small fry that you will see will be Coho because they rear in our streams.



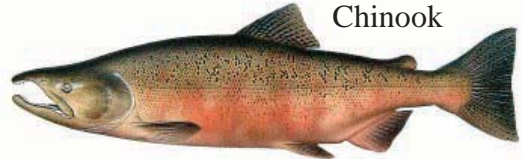
Chum

Chum will be spawning between July and Dec, with the peak in Nov.

Once the fry hatch they will move directly to the estuary, which is the habitat where the fresh river water meets the salt water. Chum males have a hooked nose and teeth and appear to be a more calico color (printed pattern) in fresh water.

The largest of all the salmon, of course, is the fall Chinook or King salmon. They spawn in Oct. and Nov. While we hear a lot about them in the

Nooksack River, they do come up our streams to spawn in



Chinook

the gravel bottoms. We have seen Chinook in the Tenmile above the Guide Meridian. The Chinook, besides being the largest are heavily spotted on both sides of the tail. Let me know when and where you spot any of them. We can begin our own fish survey. Call 398-9187 or email doriebelisle@yahoo.com

Schedule a stream walk individually or with your neighbors! Call Dorie at BelleWood Acres 398-9187. Or email doriebelisle@yahoo.com.