



Washington's Working Forests Newsletter

August 2021

What are "Working Forests?"

A Working Forest is professionally managed to provide a continuous supply of renewable, sustainable wood products for building materials -- with a focus on protecting fish, water and wildlife. Using scientific practices and adhering to comprehensive state forestry laws, Washington's working forests work to give back to our entire state. Growing working forests absorb carbon, wood products store carbon, and the forest sector taken as a whole currently operates with a negative carbon footprint that supports greenhouse gas reduction goals and rural economies across Washington, a fact that is recognized in state law.

The Good News From the Woods

Working forestry's successes at the headwaters have improved chances for regional salmon

Washington's working foresters have a good story to tell. Achieving real improvements in the protection of fish passage and water quality on the upland portions of salmon-bearing streams has been a worthwhile two-decade-long endeavor.

Still, salmon survival is hampered by persistent downstream concerns. A conversation among thought leaders and decision makers is growing about priorities and ways in which working forests can be looked at as a model of success.



The Washington Forest Protection Association partnered with [the Seattle Times](#) to bring readers up to speed on where, across the entire length of our streams, we stand on our shared goal of securing a future for native salmon. From the Seattle Times:

Seattle's wealth of waterways is one of the city's treasures, but in an urban environment, every storm washes pollution from rooftops, driveways, roads and other hard surfaces into local creeks, lakes and Puget Sound, putting that treasure at risk.

The health of one of the region’s key species, salmon, is an indicator of the health of these waterways. ... There are many obstacles between spawning grounds and open ocean, including water pollution, large spillways and culverts that are too small for the drainage area that feeds them.

Clearing some of these challenges in the upper watershed has been a priority for the past 20 years. The Forests & Fish Law signed by Gov. Gary Locke in 1999 protects 60,000 miles of streams running through nine million acres of state and private forestland, says Bill Monahan, current president of Washington Forest Protection Association. Nearly 53,000 miles of forest road have been inventoried and improved on state and private lands, opening nearly 6,200 miles of fish habitat.

... “At a statewide level, since 2001, forest landowners have removed more than 8,100 barriers to fish passage, reopening 6,200 miles of historic fish habitat.” ...

One specific way that the forested landscape protects clean water on forested streams has also inspired officials in urban, downstream areas to borrow some solutions from nature itself.

Another important aspect of the Forests & Fish Law is to keep water clean by preventing road runoff and sediment from entering into streams. ...

The way forests of the Northwest filter and slow runoff from heavy rain has helped urban planners design and build effective and environmentally friendly systems to manage stormwater. Research suggests that mimicking this natural process to capture, slow down and clean runoff from storms is an effective way to minimize overflows of our wastewater system and prevent toxins from getting into creeks, rivers, lakes and Puget Sound.

Putting this into practice, King County Wastewater Treatment Division and Seattle Public Utilities builds “planter strips” filled with deep-rooted plants that help hold and clean runoff from roads and sidewalks, keeping some pollutants out of urban waterways.

This is key, as roads in urban areas are a major source of pollutants. Recent research shows that “tire dust,” tiny particles shed by tires as they wear, releases a chemical that is toxic to salmon, killing them before they can spawn, says John Stark, director of Washington’s Stormwater Center. “Other chemicals in stormwater cause damage to a range of aquatic organisms,” he says.

We strongly encourage reading and sharing [the entire article](#), which also includes an easy-to-follow interactive guide for **building a rain garden** to let nature do its thing on your own property.

In Memoriam

Lorraine Loomis, tribal leader and advocate for salmon, dies at 81

Washington state last week lost one more guardian of Pacific Northwest salmon, Lorraine Loomis, leader of the Swinomish tribal community and longtime member of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. She was 81.

Loomis is remembered as a fierce, driven, and happy spirit by those who worked with her over nearly 40 years of collaboration to support a future for native



salmon in Washington's waters. From [the Centralia Chronicle](#):

"I can't put in words how much I'm going to miss her spirit in my world," W. Ron Allen, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Chairman and Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission commissioner, said of Loomis. "She made a difference for all of us just like [Billy Frank Jr.]. Now we have both their spirits to keep us moving forward to protect and restore our salmon."

From [the Seattle Times](#):

Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers — who used to work as a fisheries biologist for the Tulalip Tribes — praised Loomis for her lifelong dedication to the region's signature species.

"For anyone who cares for our salmon, orca, and incredible quality of life in the Pacific Northwest, we have Lorraine Loomis to thank for decades of moral clarity and persistent leadership," Somers wrote on Twitter.

"As a fisheries biologist I had the opportunity to work alongside Lorraine for many years and always felt her sense of profound urgency to save our natural heritage. Her legacy will live on."

Have You Signed?

Our drive toward the creation of a special Washington state vehicle license plate to support working forests is still moving forward. Your help is still needed. If you haven't already, [sign our petition](#) today and then please share with your friends. Thank you for helping to make sure our voices are heard.

[SIGN THE PETITION TODAY!](#)

