

Yestuary!



Imagine the Estuary A newsletter of the Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team Fall 2014

Dine Out for the Deschutes!

On **Saturday, December 6th** at Traditions Café (300 5th Ave SW, downtown Olympia), 20% of the sales will benefit Deschutes Estuary restoration. Come dine on wholesome soups, salads, paninis, enchiladas, quiches, lasagna and more in view of the past and future estuary.

They will have Yestuary! t-shirts and bumper stickers for sale in their store.



Paulette Frisina welcomes the crowd at our annual meeting.

Annual Meeting Success!

By Sue Patnude,

Thank you to all who attended the DERT Annual Meeting at Traditions Fair Trade on October 24. The room was packed with good energy and excitement for the hard work DERT has accomplished during 2014.

About 80 estuary supporters listened to Jim Peters of the Squaxin Island Tribe Council and Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. He spoke of the importance to restore the Deschutes estuary, part of the tribe's ancestral home. He addressed the need to return the habitat for fish, wildlife and all of us. His message rang loud and clear: when there is balance in nature, we will have a healthy community.

Dr. Helen Wheatley, DERT Board member and historian, delivered a thoughtful slide show on the history of the Deschutes Basin from 1920 to 1950, featuring the emer-

gence of the automobile as a main driver for damming the river. Helen's work is thorough, interesting and brings another important perspective to restoration efforts.

Also joining us for the evening were Senator Karen Fraser, Olympia Mayor Steve Buxbaum, and Tumwater City Council Member Nicole Hill. Mayor Buxbaum spoke of the need to create a new governance structure to manage the mouth of the Deschutes River for the health of the community. It is an idea worth exploring.

To DERT supporters and volunteers who attended the event: a hearty THANKS! To our speakers and event coordinators: what would we do without you? As we move ahead with this issue, we move along like a free flowing river, building energy and community as we go!

"The issue with Capitol Lake is that it is an impoundment in a very wrong spot that creates more environmental problems than the primary benefit... of a reflective pool for the Capitol. If I were biased, it would be towards preservation of lakes, but in my opinion, **Capitol Lake is not really a lake. It's an impoundment in an area that functionally should be an estuary.**"

-Jonathon Frodge, Ph. D.
Washington State Lake Protection Association

(see "Technical Discussion" inside)

Clean water. Clean economy. Clean fun!

When you say yes to the Deschutes estuary, you say yes to clean water, recreational access, and a local economy that benefits the natural world.

Olympia City Council Updates Comp Plan for Capitol Lake

By Dani Madrone

The Olympia City Council has been approving revisions to the city's Comprehensive Plan, a document that provides a vision for the future. On September 16, 2014, the council discussed section PN4.4, which refers to the future of Capitol Lake. DERT's outreach arm sent in comments to remind them of the City's 2009 priorities on this issue:

Improved sediment management

Without the dam in place, 30% of sediment will bypass the Port and feed beaches and habitat in Budd Inlet. That is 30% less sediment to manage.

Improved water quality

The dam is the main cause of Clean Water Act violations in Budd Inlet.

Improved social and economic conditions

In a survey conducted by the city, 71% of people wanted to do what's best for fish, wildlife and water quality. 15% wanted to keep the cost as low as possible for the taxpayer. That means 86% want to restore the estuary. Only 11% wanted to maintain the look of the lake.



Capitol Campus, ca. 1945. State Library Photograph Collection, 1851-1990, Washington State Archives.

DERT's Involved with State Policy

By Dave Peeler

DERT has remained an advocate for the estuary at all State-level policy groups, including the State Capitol Committee (SCC), Department of Ecology, and Department of Enterprise Services (DES).

Recently, lake supporters presented to the SCC, who will ultimately decide the fate of the Capitol. They stated that Capitol Lake is the healthiest lake in the county, with excellent dissolved oxygen levels and low levels of coliform bacteria. DERT has requested equal time with the committee.

Meanwhile, due to the Clean Water Act, Department of Ecology is developing restoration plans for the Deschutes River, Capitol Lake and Budd Inlet – known as a “total maximum daily loads” (TMDL) because they provide limits to

We also encouraged the council to rely on qualified science, and to be more assertive in the need for implementation. We reminded them of the restoration economy: restoration funds putting local people to work, as well as bringing people to downtown Olympia for recreation.

In the special study session, Councilmember Jim Cooper stated, “This policy should identify that Capitol Lake does not exist in a vacuum. It is influenced by the Deschutes River upstream, and influences Budd Inlet downstream significantly... We can think about it as one system that needs to work together.”

The Olympia City Council approved the following language for the Comprehensive Plan, with the changes made by the council written in bold:

“As a party of significant interest, support the process for determining a balanced, **scientifically grounded**, and sustainable approach to the management of **State-owned** Capitol Lake, **Deschutes River and Budd Inlet**.”

They removed the passive language that stated that they will “participate when the opportunity is available.”

pollution that can be discharged to the watershed and still meet water quality standards to support healthy fish and other wildlife.

Water quality in these waters fails to meet water quality standards during some parts of the year in many areas. Standards for pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature, fine sediment, and bacteria are frequently violated.

Ecology recently shared with the technical committee, on which DERT serves, a preliminary draft Water Quality Improvement Report and Implementation Plan (TMDL) for the fresh waters of the Deschutes River, Percival Creek and Budd Inlet Tributaries. Later this year Ecology expects to issue a public review draft for a 45 day comment period. They are expect to submit the freshwater TMDL to EPA for its approval in 2015.

Meanwhile they are continuing to do advanced modeling on the marine waters of South Puget Sound and Budd Inlet and on Capitol Lake. DERT will continue to follow and comment on Ecology's work on these efforts, and on the restoration strategy for the river, lake and inlet.

DERT has also remained active with the Capitol Campus Design Advisory Committee with DES, and participated in the interviews conducted by the Ruckleshaus Center. Their report should be ready by the end of this year, and will be discussed at a joint meet between this committee the SCC on December 11.

Ecology Hosts Technical Discussion on Water Quality in Capitol Lake

Scientists defend water quality studies, Tribe tells of low salmon survival

By Dani Madrone

On November 3, 2014, Ecology hosted a discussion for scientists, modelers, and reviewers of the technical studies related to Capitol Lake and Budd Inlet to identify specific areas of agreement and disagreement on the conclusions. Attending this meeting were three scientists from Ecology, Dr. David Milne and two others from the Capitol Lake Improvement and Protection Association (CLIPA), a representative from Squaxin Island and their technical reviewer, Dr. Jonathon Frodge, and a representative from DERT.

Ecology presented their modeling that demonstrated that the Deschutes Watershed will not meet EPA requirements for dissolved oxygen under the Clean Water Act, explaining the nationally accredited modeling protocol and the results. Milne countered that the modeling did not provide accurate results and was not appropriate for the research.

Dr. Mindy Roberts of Ecology stated, "The model has gone through several stages of very well documented calibration and review by outside experts. We are confident in the model."

Scott Steltzner of Squaxin Natural Resources reminded everyone the Tribe is a government agency co-managing natural resources. They are pro-science, not necessarily pro-estuary. He also described several regional, state and federal processes with technical committees that had also reached the conclusion of estuary restoration.

Overall, south Budd Inlet is affected by invasive species, altered circulation patterns due to the dam, a shallow and warm basin with excessive algae, water quality issues, and poor salmonid survival.

Milne's paper was never formally peer-reviewed, and submitted as proof of the benefits of Capitol Lake before being

reviewed by the many technical teams involved in this process. The Tribe had Milne's analysis independently reviewed by Dr. Jonathon Frodge, past president of the Washington State Lake Protection Association, who found he ignored changes in circulation patterns and effects on plant decomposition on water quality. Frodge also stated that both Ecology and Milne ignored the significant issue of the impacts of invasive species.

Steltzner alerted everyone of the concerns around salmon mortality. "We have an introduced hatchery Chinook run that has one of the lowest survival rates in all of Puget Sound. We also have an introduced but naturally producing coho run that is declining, and the one year class is functionally extinct. This is in contrast to other runs in South Sound that are staying steady or actually going up."

Frodge backed his claim. "I think it's related to the dense growth macrophytes. In Lake Washington, we got significant mortality... survival of smolts below dense beds of macrophytes was zero, equated to low dissolved oxygen. When you look at Capitol Lake, the actual amount of habitat for out-migrating smolts is significantly less than the actual surface area."

Frodge also stated, "The issue with Capitol Lake is that it is an impoundment in a very wrong spot that creates more environmental problems than the primary benefit... of a reflective pool for the Capitol. If I were biased, it would be towards preservation of lakes, but in my opinion, Capitol Lake is not really a lake. It's an impoundment in an area that functionally should be an estuary."

During the discussion that followed these presentations, CLIPA did not address these issues. Instead, they continued to debate the validity of the model and the merit of the process. Roberts defended Ecology's work, stating they have established confidence in the model and have followed a good protocol. Ecology sought feedback from the TMDL technical advisory group, identifying potential scenarios and priorities to model. CLIPA participated in this process, and the study was peer-reviewed twice.

Roberts responded to CLIPA's uncompromising challenges by stating, "I'm sorry that it does not support the position that you have, but when you look at it from a scientific perspective, this model is a way to dispassionately understand the impacts... We need to move on."

An audio file of this meeting can be found at Ecology's website:
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/deschutes/index.html>



“As a resident of East Bay Drive, with a home fronting on a finger of the Puget Sound with an extreme tidal range of over 20 feet, we often have water lapping a few yards from our deck. A few hours later, we'll likely be looking out on expanses of intertidal mud. It is always a delight to be in such close proximity to this constant change and the great variety of life that inhabits this area -- even one as stressed and abused, over the last century, as Budd Inlet.

My dream is that its tributaries and estuaries can be daylighted, and its waters and shores restored to a healthy condition. And there's always the delightful ambience of a tidal environment. **Anyone who associates tidal mudflats with unpleasant odors has not been privileged to live on these shores.”**

Peggy Bruton,
Long-time Olympia resident

Restoring the Deschutes Estuary to its Natural Flow, with DERT Board members Dave Peeler and Helen Wheatley, will be featured on TCTV (Channel 22).

Catch it during the month of December on Mondays at 1:30pm, Wednesdays at 5pm, and Thursdays at 9pm to learn more about the estuary!

What's Your Story? Giving a Voice to the Estuary

On September 27, National Estuaries Day, we launched a campaign to alert local and state officials of the public's desire to restore the estuary. In just a couple of weeks, over 120 people responded, sending a resounding voice of the estuary to decision-makers. Here are some of those stories:

“Capitol Lake is no replacement for a healthy river and estuary. Olympia needs the river and estuary to return to provide clean water, recreation, and a vibrant economy to downtown. With the river flowing again we can work to bring back the water dependent uses that are now banned due to the unhealthy lake. Since the estuary will support stocks of wild juvenile salmon from all over the Sound, restoration of the estuary will be a vital component to salmon recovery.”

“Capitol Lake was built with good intentions, but it's now a disaster. Olympia will have a more vibrant downtown and a more beautiful Capitol Campus with a restored estuary. I can just picture it! Wildlife, fish, boaters, walkers - a real living estuary in the living heart of the City. It's time to bring estuary restoration home to Olympia!”

To share your story, go to <http://www.deschutesestuary.org/take-action>

“By prioritizing the restoration of the Deschutes estuary, the city of Olympia could set an important precedent for other communities on the endangered Puget Sound. We need to clean up our act and honor the abundance of natural resources that initially drew settlement to this region, and that we continue to cherish.”

“I live up by the State Capitol, and I walk in Heritage Park quite a lot. What I enjoy the most is the wildlife that I see. I'd rather have the estuary back than have the lake sitting there full of green scum.”

Become a member!

I say **yes** to the Deschutes estuary!

Enclosed is a check payable to DERT for \$_____

Membership \$_____

Additional donation \$_____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

The estuary can't speak for itself.

You will receive quarterly newsletters and a Yestuary bumper sticker!

Join online, or mail this form to:

DERT Membership
PO Box 11093
Olympia, WA 98508

www.deschutesestuary.org

Annual Membership Dues

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| | \$100 |



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