

## SAMMY AWARDS 2009

### Harry Barber

Sitting on the dock of the bay watching the tides roll away has not Harry Barber's theme since his retirement in 1999. It wasn't long after his retirement from 30 years in the paper manufacturing industry that he began to pursue his interest in salmon recovery. He is a life-long sport fisherman and his passion for the resource is directly related to his decades-long pursuit of salmon, steelhead and sturgeon across many watersheds in the United States. Harry Barber has been a member of the Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group (LCFEG) Board of Directors since 2001. He was aware of the downward trends of endangered salmon and thought the LCFEG, a non-profit organization devoted to restoring salmon populations in Southwest Washington, was a good place to get involved. He transitioned his leadership skills from the manufacturing business and has served as Director, Vice-President, and President. While President from 2003 to 2008, he was largely responsible for guiding the growth of the organization from one staff member to five full-time staff with a budget that ranges between \$1 to \$2 million dollars per year. The lower and upper Washougal River Restoration Projects are major endeavors under his guidance. The most recent undertaking is the Ostenson's Restoration Project also located on the Washougal River. In 2007, he was selected by Governor Chris Gregoire to represent Southwest Washington as a voting member of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Clark-Skamania Flyfishers named him "Conservationist of the Year." He is an active member of the Steelhead and Cutthroat Trout Policy Advisory Committee, the Columbia River Recreational Fisheries Advisory Group, and the Coastal Conservation Association Board of Directors. He has been instrumental in promoting nutrient enhancement as a successful and practical tool for salmon recovery. Harry Barber is a hard act to follow. He inspires everyone to be good stewards of our resources.



### Kirk Fitzer

Kirk Fitzer makes you want to be an elementary student again when you see how he has taken the "Salmon in the Classroom" project to an enriching, fun, and educational level. He is an avid fisherman and former Alaskan fishing guide, turned elementary school teacher at Hazel Dell Elementary School. When Principle Woody Howard asked if he wanted to spearhead the project for the entire school, he accepted without hesitation. Flashbacks of his love and protection of salmon during childhood kicked into high gear. The project is year long revolving around teaching students the life cycle of salmon and their



environmental influences. Wanting to provide students and staff with hands-on learning, he brought in an aquarium to be used as a visual learning tool to witness live salmon transform from egg to smolt. Educational material is posted close by for anyone to learn about Coho salmon at any time. He took advantage of the school's Enrichment Fair opening his classroom, giving students from all grade levels and staff the opportunity to learn more. Kirk Fitzer expands student learning outside the classroom. With the help of parents, he brought a group of students to Salmon Creek to release the smolt into their natural environment. Students and parents marveled at this real-life educational experience. Little did Kirk Fitzer know that he would be teaching at the same location where he cast his first fishing pole as a youth. Through use of advanced classroom technology, Kirk Fitzer's classroom lessons are transmitted onto his self-developed Web site within a matter of minutes. Students and parents can review lessons on the Web site from home. Homework now becomes home fun for the entire family.

### **Jac Arnal**

Jac Arnal is a great example of local action. As a Watershed Steward volunteer, Jac saw a need in his community for a restoration project along Tenny Creek. After recruiting other Watershed Steward volunteers Jac got to work right away clearing ½ acre of Himalayan blackberries from the project site which is mostly wetland. Clark Public Utilities donated native trees for the venture enabling Jac and other volunteers to replant the area with 75 native trees and shrubs. This helped to revive the riparian area and assist in water quality and habitat functions. Jac says the deer and rabbits who have recently visited the site have reinforced that what he is doing is the right thing. In addition to the Tenny Creek project, Jac joined the Friends of Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge and assists the refuge with the Gee Creek Restoration project. The Clark Public Utilities Stream Team and the Northeast Hazel Dell Neighborhood Association also benefit from Jac Arnal's passion for volunteerism. His dedication can be contagious. Since beginning the Tenny Creek restoration project, Jac has involved more than 40 volunteers from Watershed Stewards program, neighbors, and various students looking to fulfill community service hours. Jac Arnal provides a perfect picture of how grassroots actions can restore our local streams that are so important to salmon recovery.



### **Lower Washougal Restoration Project**

The Lower Washougal River was targeted for restoration by the Southwest Washington Salmon Recovery Plan in 2004. Since 2005, the project managed by the Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group (LCFEG), has transformed the site to provide functional fish habitat. The project addressed in-stream channel configuration and re-contoured the side slopes of a 10-acre gravel mining site for use by juvenile salmonids as off-channel



rearing habitat. Since 2005, LCFEG has placed 12 major structures in the mainstream river as well as habitat complexity consisting of boulder complexes and numerous wood pilings in the ponded back water areas. In addition, LCFEG has planted over 50,000 native trees, shrubs, and willow cuttings along the shorelines of the river and associated back water areas. The accomplishments are noteworthy; however, none of this could have been possible without the backing and support of four primary partners. The four landowners, City of Camas, Concrete Products, Georgia-Pacific, and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway have been on board since day one lending funding and resources as needed. The major benefits are the creation of suitable spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and steelhead runs. Other funding sources were the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The restoration project is 75 percent complete and will move forward only when funding becomes available. Kudos to everyone involved in making this worthwhile project a success!

### **George Nosko**

You can count George Nosko in with the list of landowners that are concerned about the endangered status of salmon. George Nosko raises beef cattle on his 20-acre farm located on Salmon Creek. In 2006, he initially contacted the Clark Conservation District for assistance with erosion on the creek banks. After a few site visits, it was clear George Nosko was interested in enhancing his property for the benefit of salmon and a larger scale planning effort was implemented. His restoration efforts began when he voluntarily enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

The District and Clark Public Utilities engineered and implemented the bank stabilization and fish habitat restoration. George Nosko went beyond the program minimum buffer requirement of 35 feet from the creek and committed to installing a 140-foot buffer, establishing more than 5 acres of riparian habitat along Salmon Creek. The cattle were permanently excluded from accessing the creek and a new off-channel watering facility for the cattle was constructed. This project protects and enhances salmon habitat through stream bank stabilization, in stream habitat enhancement, and riparian restoration practices. Not only has George Nosko gone beyond the call of duty in retiring a significant portion of his pastureland for fish recovery, he made his farm available as a training site for evaluating agricultural practices that may be used for habitat protection. George Nosko's generosity is a gift that keeps on giving.

