Interview #4. November 28, 2017: Bob Jacobson & Fishing the Elliott

Tapes 8-C (47:21 min.) and 8-D (11:50 min.). Interview with Bob Jacobson at Coos History Museum in Coos Bay by Bob Zybach on November 28, 2017.

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Interview with Bob Jacobson
Interview by Bob Zybach
Location: Coos Bay Historical Museum, Coos Bay
Date: November 28, 2017 (1/2)
Transcription Draft/Audit: Rev.com/McKenzie Peters (December 5, 2018)

Bob Zybach: It's a new cheap recorder. A Black Friday special, so I'm hoping it works.

Bob Zybach: I'm with Bob Jacobson, November 28, 2017 at the Coos Bay Historical Museum, and we're talking about fishing on the Elliott. And Bob, one thing, I got to get your agreement. This'll be, hopefully the machine will work, we'll get it transcribed. You'll have a chance to look at the transcription and change anything, but it's apt to end up on the internet.

Bob Jacobson: That's fine.

Bob Zybach: And it's specifically for education and --

Bob Jacobson: That's great.

Bob Zybach: Okay, so you agree to that?

Bob Jacobson: Absolutely.

Tape 8-C. 0:44 West Fork Sea-run Cutthroat & Ocean Dead Zones. Photos (6): 0951; 0952; 0953; 0954; 0955; 0956

Bob Zybach: I'll put this here. Well, we were talking about Joe's Creek, the mouth of Joe's Creek [this reference is in error: the location being discussed and photographs are of a location on the West Fork Millicoma between the mouth of Trout Creek and Elkhorn Ranch]. That's where these pictures were taken. There's three creeks that come in there. And when I asked David Gould who was the expert on fishing in the Elliott, he said you and nobody else.

Bob Jacobson: Well, let me just, if I could, Bob, give you a little background. I was born and raised in Glasgow, on the north side of Coos Bay. Attended North Bend High School. And sometime during my early years, I remember my dad talking about there being a cabin on the West Fork of the Millicoma River that was very inaccessible, no roads, that was a cabin used by trappers in the early days who would hike over from Tenmile Lake, stay in that cabin, trap the West Fork, and go back.

Bob Jacobson: I'm not sure my dad ever made that journey, but he talked about friends of his who did. So, that was always kind of intriguing to me. It was probably my sophomore or junior year in high school, my friend Gary Gebhardt and

I decided that we were going to go up to the West Fork in the Millicoma, never been there before, and so we drove to the end of the road, which was at that time a big logging yard either owned by Weyerhaeuser or somebody [likely George Vaughan's Cooston Lumber Co. sawmill at Stull Falls]. Parked the car, put our packs on our back, and took off for West Fork. No maps, no compass, no nothing. Armed only with our fishing rods and three or four days' supply of food.

Bob Jacobson: So we walked for probably half a day. I remember some huge log jams in the creek that we had traversed around. And the farther up we got, the more fish. When I talk about fish, this was in August, maybe early September, was before school started, so probably late August, talking primarily sea-run cutthroat. And so we caught a few fish, fished some of the good holes. As we were walking up, we thought we were in there probably three or four miles. I think now it's probably more like a mile and a half or two miles that we walked before we camped. But I think, by looking to some of these old pictures, I can probably pick out the spot where we camped. It might have been right at the mouth of Joe's Creek, I'm not sure.

Bob Jacobson: But two or three things were very exciting to me. I was born into a fishing family, I fished Tenmile Lakes a lot. I loved fishing, and so did Gary Gebhardt. And we got up and saw these sea-run cutthroat stacked into these holes, head to tail, head to tail, schools probably . . . I don't remember, it's been 60 years, but probably four or five feet wide, running for 20 or 30 yards. It was absolutely something unlike I'd ever seen before. It was virtually a fish every cast. So we were very, very excited and ended up camping there that night.

Bob Jacobson: And the second thing that happened to us on that trip was that I had never . . . oh, I'd shot some deer at that point in my life, and I'd never been elk hunting, and I don't think I'd ever seen an elk.

Bob Zybach: Wow.

Bob Jacobson: And just before dark that first night, we heard this sound that neither of us had ever heard before. We had no idea what it was. It turned out that it was a bull elk bugling. Scared the daylights out of us, so that was another first on that trip. Anyway, it was just a great three or four days and saw some wonderful country. I don't remember any logging, I don't remember any roads, although some of the earlier pictures confirm that there were trails through that country where the Gould's came in to their homestead by horseback or on mule. But I don't remember ever seeing any of those trails or any roads.

Bob Zybach: Did you go through the Tenmile side or from the Allegany side?

Bob Jacobson: We went up from the Allegany side. Drove right to the end of the road, when that road goes much farther now than it did back then, of course, but it was the end of the road then, and there was nothing above it as far as we knew. I think we ended up probably fishing up three or four miles above where we parked the car.

Bob Zybach: And those hundreds of fish, and they're sea-run cutthroat?

Bob Jacobson: They're all sea-run cutthroat.

Bob Zybach: And so that's late August, early September?

Bob Jacobson: That's correct. Not then. The other thing that . . .

Bob Jacobson: Let me back up just a little bit. Dave Gould, a couple years ago, took me on an auto tour of that area and drove right down to where we had camped, and I think it was right there at the mouth of Joe's Creek, there was still an old cabin there when we were camped there. That cabin's gone now, but 60 years, time tends to dull the memory a little bit, but as I recall, it was just a lot more water in the West Fork 60 years ago than there was that I saw a couple years ago when I was in there with David Gould.

Bob Zybach: The logjam, before I forget that, was that snags from the fires that had just "landslid" in, or was that logging?

Bob Jacobson: I don't think it was logging. I think it was just from the snags in the banks that gave in and toppled trees and . . . they were pretty massive.

Bob Zybach: On Jerry's book, he talks about a surveyor that went in there . . . It says, "After the first fall rains in 1953, and the West Fork was jammed with coho." So could there have been massive cutthroat runs and coho runs?

Bob Jacobson: Absolutely, absolutely.

Bob Zybach: I was told he was making a mistake, that he wasn't seeing cutthroats and thinking they were coho.

Bob Jacobson: No, sea-run cutthroats are 12 to 15 or 16 inches long. They are all kind of right out of the same mold. And the difference between a native cutthroat and a sea-run, a sea-run goes to sea in late spring and comes back late summer, and while they're at sea they turn silver. They lose their freshwater markings, and they turn silver. So you don't get that real distinct cutthroat color on those sea-run cutthroats, they're all very silver. But no way are you gonna confuse them with coho.

Bob Zybach: But there's like thousands of them in the river?

Bob Jacobson: There was a . . . I mean, I couldn't even estimate how many sea-run cutthroats we saw and how many we caught during the period of time we were there. It was something like I'd never seen before and I've never seen since.

Bob Zybach: Now, Jerry says that those flushes are done every few years, that it's not an annual thing. But from your knowledge, are the runs anywhere similar in size today? You think there's less water in the river? Do you think there's less fish?

Bob Jacobson: You know, there's less water, there's probably less fish. But I haven't been back there during that late August, early September period in 60 years. I was in there once, and that's the only basis on which I have to make my assumptions that there was a pretty healthy sea-run cutthroat population in that stream at one time. When I was in there with Dave a couple years ago, there's hardly any flow at all. A few pools, but there's just . . . the flow was . . . summertime lows.

Bob Jacobson: To answer your question, Bob, run size and streams vary from year to year, no matter what stream it is. So my guess is that the Millicoma's no different. Some years you're gonna get, primarily because of good ocean conditions, you're gonna get better survival of the outgoing smolts or the outgoing cutthroats in the ocean and therefore a bigger return when they come back. So I think a lot depends on the ocean conditions, but certainly conditions in the freshwater stream have an impact also.

Bob Zybach: It’s lightly off-topic, but it's one that I'd like to ask, is these dead zones. There's been a discussion that dead zones are a new thing, but I've got records of them from 1849 on the Lincoln County area, they found tons of dead fish at that time, and that they're related somehow to ocean acidity or climate change. Have you seen any evidence of that at all?

Bob Jacobson: Well I spent a lot of time on the central coast estuaries and out at sea; Yaquina, somewhat in Siletz. Yeah we've seen that and as far as that being a new phenomenon I don't agree with that. I think maybe it's more pronounced or public today than it was in the past. Just this year, for example, we had a tremendous recreational Dungeness crab fishery, in our coastal bays. And my guess is that the ocean was undergoing one of these dead zone periods where a lot of those crabs got pushed to the near shore waters where the waves are breaking continually re-oxygenating the water, push them into the bays, and as a result, we saw a tremendous recreational crabbing in the bays. But you know, we definitely see changes in the ocean. Northwest wind during summer months creates an upwelling effect

which brings the oxygen rich waters off the bottom to the surface and shore. In recent years we just haven't had much of that Northwest wind.

Bob Zybach: So it could be a climate change condition, but it could just be . . . things change.

Bob Jacobson: Things do change, we know that.

Bob Zybach: Yup.

Bob Jacobson: But, whether it's long or short term we have no idea at this point in time.

<u>Tape 8-C.</u> 11:50 Tenmile Lakes Coho and Lamprey Eels

Bob Zybach: No you said you were also interested in the Tenmile Lakes area. There's Eel Creek in there. I did studies with the Siletz [Tribe] on eel runs on the Siletz [River], and talking with Patty Whereat, she said that her dad used to take her to fishing camps along Tenmile where all the coho would have to go, and then Eel Creek there were still runs. Are there still runs in those areas, or have they been displaced by exotic fish?

Bob Jacobson: Are we talking about the coho?

Bob Zybach: Coho and lamprey.

Bob Jacobson: Lamprey, yeah.

Bob Zybach: Yeah, both.

Bob Jacobson: We don't see many lampreys anymore. We don't see many lampreys in any of the coastal streams that I'm familiar with. Now, there may be. I see a few of them periodically.

Bob Zybach: Yeah.

Bob Jacobson: I was razor clamming a couple of years ago south of Newport near Beaver Creek and there was lamprey swimming around in a tide pool. But you know, there used to be a tremendous run of lampreys – particularly in the Siletz, and unless things have changed the last couple of years. I haven't spent a lot of time up there, but the lamprey runs were way, way, way better. And as far as the coho are concerned, you know, the Tenmile Lake system at one time, was the biggest producing coho system on the coast, outside of the Columbia River.

Bob Zybach: I've heard that.

Bob Jacobson: And, tremendous, tremendous coho runs at that time. My Dad, Bill Jacobsen, and his brothers logged a lot of the Tenmile Lake systems back when I was a pretty little guy. They would high-lead logs off the landing on top down to the lake with a donkey that was floating in the lake and was anchored there. So I'd go with my dad when I was five or six or seven or eight years old. While he worked on the donkey on the lake, I'd have my little rowboat and fish for coho.

Bob Zybach: Wow.

Bob Jacobson: I mean, it's just tremendous to see . . . sometimes you'd look out to see 40 or 50 or 100 fish jumping at one time. Absolutely. And some of the spawning ground counts back during the '50s, over on Johnston Creek, where it enters the lake. Over on Jensen Creek. Some of those spawning ground counts were just absolutely phenomenal. I forget the numbers but it was very, very, very, very high. But those days have pretty much passed.

Bob Jacobson: The lake has filled in. We've got a lot of exotic species in there now that weren't there in the numbers that were there. There were some yellow perch back when I was a kid growing up, but no bass.

Bob Zybach: Wow. So those are really recent?

Bob Jacobson: And no, there might've been a few catfish back then, brown bullheads, but not very many. So those are kind of taken over the totally different ecosystem now than what it was back then.

Bob Zybach: So they rotenoned that area to get rid of the exotics in the early '60s I think, and I think that was effective for a few years or something. What would you recommend if we were trying to restore those coho runs to the Tenmile area? Or is it just a hopeless case at this point?

Bob Jacobson: Trying to rotenone that whole system is virtually impossible. You've got Saunders Lake and whole bunch of little lakes to the south of Tenmile Creek that are all connected in there. Eel Lake is connected by Eel Creek, it's all tied into that Tenmile Lake system. You've got both North and South Lake, tremendous bodies of water.

Bob Jacobson: You know, to rotenone that, and to get an effective kill on those critters you're trying to get rid of is really tricky, can be really tricky. And true, it proved very difficult back then. You know, they think they were not particularly satisfied with the job they got then.

Bob Zybach: David has given me a study on Elk Creek. Let's see. Up to this area here, just above of where Gould Lake was, that was done in 1967 by a couple of fish biologists [Cummings and Schwarz 1967] and they were blasting

away a waterfall so that they could improve the run for coho, and they had an estimate . . . I sent that to you as an attachment. I notice I didn't bring it with me, but I don't know if you had a chance to look at that, but it looked to me like the type of analysis and they made some recommendations, I think the recommendations were followed, and then they made some predictions.

Bob Zybach: So, there's a very nice scientific progression, but it looked to me like something that could be replicated by high school students from North Bend or Reedsport to go over the same area 50 years later and see if those recommendations have been followed, see if those predictions were accurate and, who made major changes in the system.

Bob Zybach: And I know a lot of the creeks in the Elliott have had fairly good monitoring in the past as far as discharge and I think to a lesser degree, the fish populations.

Bob Zybach: With your experience and [OSU] Extension, is there a way to involve local high school kids or community college kids, maybe working in concert with Oregon State [University], who could use the Elliott for research and education regarding the fisheries?

<u>Tape 8-C</u>. 18:10 Tom Rumreich's Millicoma STEP Hatchery & Program

Bob Jacobson: There has probably . . . there has been in this area probably the best STEP [Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program] program in the state. As far as monitoring, I'm not sure where it's at right now because I think . . . I'm not sure about that.

Bob Jacobson: Tremendous job with the STEP program, and reintroducing salmon to some of those areas that had been totally devoid for a number of years.

Bob Jacobson: He had the school kids involved. I wish I could think of his name [Tom Rumreich].

Bob Jacobson: Tremendous job, getting the school kids involved; donating and bringing extra rain gear for all the kids. It's been a heck of a program down here, probably more so than any place else on the coast. Maybe more so than any place else in the state.

Bob Jacobson: Getting back to your question about the Elliott specifically, and whether or not that might be an outdoor laboratory where you get these kids involved, I'd say absolutely. You know, you've got a number of different stream systems that have water in the Elliott.

Bob Jacobson: I think that Hayne's Slough and Larson Slough, Millicoma -- I can't think of them all right now. I personally haven't spent that much time in the Elliott but, yeah, I think with the right supervision, the right person in charge, that might be an excellent way to get some of those students involved and provide some data that would help better manage the fish populations in those areas.

Bob Zybach: That's the focus: is one, this land is set aside specifically for schools and education and that's up to the teaching of Oregon State in the '50s, but it's only been used for income -- and now it's stopped being used for income and people are, I think, ignorant of forestry and fisheries issues for the most part of the urban populations. I worked with STEP kids in Portland inner-city area and in Siletz, and they weren't as developed.

Bob Zybach: But it just seems like there is an opportunity there because off the Elliott's past history of fish production to look at current conditions and develop information that would be useful at a lot of different levels, not only as far as education methods and that, but also state of current conditions and recommendations for the future for a lot of folks. It's not just Elliott. What would be the best way in your estimation to initiate something like that?

Bob Jacobson: Well, I haven't been as close to the issues down here as I probably should have been, but living 100 miles away sometimes, you know . . .

Bob Jacobson: Perhaps the starting point would be to put together . . . if I say taskforce that sounds rather ominous because you don't want to get too many people involved. Put together a handful of people with some interest and or knowledge of the Elliott, some degree of biological background, to sit down and talk about what opportunities might exist, what resources might be available to address those opportunities in terms of high school kids, community college kids, volunteers, working closely with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife [ODFW], probably the State Board of Forestry . . .

Bob Zybach: The State Board of Forestry doesn't manage the Elliott anymore, as of July.

Bob Jacobson: I didn't know that.

Bob Zybach: Yep. They didn't tell anybody.

Bob Jacobson: Oh, really. So, who has management responsibility now?

Bob Zybach: For the last . . . for the next two years, it's two guys from Lane County [Kelly Klempel and Mark Huff, Titan-Kelly, LLC]. They have a little tiny road building company that's getting about [$]800,000 a year to manage

the Elliott privately. So there's kind of a hidden motive on my part, a hidden agenda, which is people need to be better informed about what's happening to our tax lands, and our fisheries, and our forests. Rather than the stuff they're getting about marbled murrelets and spotted owls.

Bob Jacobson: And these two individuals were selected on what basis?

[**tape is shut off at 23:49**]

Bob Zybach: One thing I'm curious about -- so that's a state plan. I'm very interested in of any kind of education, any type of way to get what you're saying today, and we've taken a couple of tours with Jerry and David in the forest. How to get that information into the public and into the schools is a real question, because it seems that the documented mismanagement of our state lands for more than a decade is related to legal actions, and so how do we better educate the public -- and starting with our school kids so that we manage the lands better? Manage our fish better?

Bob Jacobson: I don't know whether you have talked to any of the local ODFW fish people here or not. Have you interviewed any of them?

Bob Zybach: Not yet.

Bob Jacobson: One of the guys you definitely should interview is Paul Reimers. Paul was a district fish biologist here for many, many years. Brilliant guy really. He's very, very smart. I don't know where he's living now, I think he's retired from the department. The second person, Bob, you need to talk to is a fellow who's in charge of the STEP program here, his name just escapes me [Tom Rumreich, retired]. He's well known in the area for working with schools. I can get you his name.

Bob Zybach: Okay, or I can probably find it on my own.

Bob Jacobson: Yeah, I'm sure you can. I think if you've got those two, plus whoever they recommended, just to sit down and talk about how you go at this school educational issue that you're talking about. I'd be more than willing to drive back down, sit down with them and just have a round table discussion or something.

Bob Zybach: That would be great!

Bob Jacobson: So bringing my [OSU] Extension background, they bring their fish background, and I think it might be a real, real, real good place to start.

Bob Zybach: Okay. That's one thing I was hoping to find out, is who you would recommend.

Bob Jacobson: And you need to get whoever the current district fish biologist is in on the discussion, too. Because they are the decision-maker now, and I don't know who that is.

Bob Zybach: But the STEP program and the Department of Fisheries and they've had good people here, so . . .

Bob Jacobson: Oh, man! Really, it was the best STEP program in the state.

Bob Zybach: Wow.

Bob Jacobson: By far.

Bob Zybach: Wow.

Bob Jacobson: You know that little . . . I think it's Daniels Creek on the South Fork [Coos River]?

Bob Jacobson: I don't know how many Chinook they've released, and they've got the facilities, but it's been amazing over the years what they've done.

Bob Jacobson: And then, their steelhead facility on the West Fork [Millicoma River].

Bob Zybach: So they've already been on the Millicoma, and the STEP program's already been there? Well that's wonderful. So they're, they've --

Bob Jacobson: They've got a big . . . I'm assuming it's still there. They've got a classroom there for kids to come up, they've got all the rain gear for kids who help to spawn the fish.

Bob Zybach: Wow.

Bob Jacobson: I mean, what you need to do is to get yourself an invitation and have one of them take you up, while you're in the area someday. I'd come back down and go on a trip with you.

Bob Zybach: Okay. I'm going to take you up on that by the way.

Bob Jacobson: Yeah, there's three of four guys in Newport might come up for that, too. It's really the envy of the coast what they've done here. And you're a pretty well-spoken guy, and you didn't realize what's going on.

Bob Zybach: Nope.

Bob Jacobson: It's . . .

Bob Zybach: I planted some trees up here in the late sixties and this was the first time I've been back, and then was when I worked with the Coquelle [Tribe] up to Allegany, but not north of Allegany.

Bob Jacobson: It's really been a remarkable program.

Bob Zybach: Okay. But that's really good to find out. I didn't bring the one with me . . . when you open your email, there will be an attachment with a six or seven page report, and I've got annotations on it.

Bob Jacobson: I tried to open that and couldn't.

Bob Zybach: Ooh! That's a pdf file, that shouldn't be a problem.

Bob Jacobson: Anyway, I'd be more than willing to come down and sit in and help with something substantive here. It makes it valuable, a tremendously valuable resource. It belongs to the people of this state, it should continue to belong to the people of this state, in my opinion.

Bob Zybach: Especially the school children.

Bob Jacobson: Especially the school children because they are the ones that directly benefit or will directly benefit. They haven't been benefiting much lately because of, you know, there hasn't been much logging, so. Anyway, that's what I have, unless you . . .

Bob Zybach: Well, so far as the West Fork's concerned, we've been talking about that and I just learned that there's a tremendous STEP program there, so that's a "step" ahead of . . .

Bob Jacobson: Yeah, right.

Bob Zybach: . . . but that's still an anadromous fish, and they're working on the river. It's not too big of a shift to go from that to coho or lamprey or Chinook.

Bob Jacobson: Yep.

Bob Zybach: We worked with Chinook with inner-city kids in the STEP program in Portland and we had an aquarium, and then they raised the fry in the classroom, and then went out in the river and we photographed them releasing them, and that was about it.

Bob Jacobson: Here's something else [Bob], that I'll just throw out here: fact is, I moved to Newport and went to work for OSU Extension in 1967. I've always been an outdoors man, love to fish, spent a lot of time in the Siletz and the

Alsea. And this was true, particularly on the Siletz, there were spots on that river back in the late '60s, early '70s that were absolutely – the bottom of the river was absolutely [covered] with freshwater clams.

Bob Zybach: Uh-huh. (affirmative)

Bob Jacobson: I don't know if you could find one today. I haven't seen one in years and years and years and years on either of the Alsea or the Siletz. And as I said, I spent a lot more time in the Alsea than I have on the Siletz, so . . . I mean it was just . . . the bottom was totally covered with these freshwater clams.

Bob Zybach: We did an oral history with the Siletz tribal elders. Probably about a dozen elders and three or four older neighbors. And we were talking specifically about eels, but they mentioned. they brought up over and over the freshwater clams are missing, they were saying what their theory was, the Department of Fish and Wildlife had been poisoning the river to get rid of the eels and there had been a backlash to the clams. That was 25 years ago.

Bob Jacobson: I don't think that's the case, but you know you don't rule out anyone's guess on something like that. But, I've often wondered what happened. I have no idea. Maybe it's herbicides, I don't know. But, they're gone. I don't know what kind of a staple they were in the diet of the Native Americans, but I think they were a fairly important item. But, I haven't seen a freshwater clam in a long, long, long time.

Bob Zybach: Wow.

<u>Tape 8-C</u>. 31:58 Elliott Forest Splash Dam History & Riparian Management

Bob Zybach: On Mill Creek . . .

Bob Jacobson: The clams on Mill Creek [Siletz River tributary]?

Bob Zybach: No on the Elliott, on the Umpqua. That's the drainage from Loon Lake.

Bob Jacobson: Okay, yeah.

Bob Zybach: Did you ever fish Loon lake?

Bob Jacobson: Oh not very often. I water skied on it more than I fished.

Bob Zybach: Well they had . . . on that area, that's where they found most of the spotted owls and they talked about the old-growth in the Mill creek subbasin there and that it's an area that needs to be not-logged.

Bob Zybach: Here's Camp Creek, which is the main tributary of Mill creek. That's a splash dam they have [looking at photo]. Before World War I,they you can see it's made out of -- there's a guy [for scale] – old-growth logs and they logged them right down into the creek and then channeled out the creek and then they built in a splash dams and then they put Cats down the river. Here's a log jam on Loon lake [photo] and they dynamited the mouth of the lake to get the logs going down to the Umpqua.

Bob Zybach: So that whole area has been heavily logged and channelized since before World War I and then right up through World War II. All that area that had been channeled out has been filled in with weeds, mostly blackberries -- evergreen blackberries and some exotic grasses probably. I don't know what type of grass.

Bob Jacobson: What kind of grass?

Bob Zybach: What can be done on a situation like that, in which: 1) the public thinks that it's a pristine environment (laughter), and 2) has been totally degraded through past practices which are entirely illegal now, but have left a permanent imprint as far as weeds and --

[**loud background bang and inaudible 34:00**].

Bob Jacobson: You know, let's back up and talk about splash dams a little bit here. I think . . . I vaguely have a recollection of my folks taking me up to watch when they released one of those splash dams. Maybe that's . . . I don't know if that's true or not. I was very, very young, but I remember my dad talking about it still, here on the Coos River system.

Bob Zybach: I think up until the early fifties, they were doing it.

Bob Jacobson: Yeah. According to Paul Reimers, who was the district fish biologist here, that pretty much wiped out the Chinook run on that entire system. In fact, I heard Paul say the Chinook run was gone. That's the reason that the STEP program has been so important for reinvigorating that system with Fall Chinook. So, I would guess if you interviewed 100 citizens in Coos Bay right now, maybe one would know about the splash dams way back when.

Bob Zybach: Maybe one.

Bob Jacobson: Yeah, maybe one, maybe not. But you know it's tremendously degrading to the ecosystem, but at that time that it was the faster, easiest, and the cheapest way of getting logs from the outlying areas to the mill. "Pull 'em down, put 'em in the middle, send 'em down." Pretty simple.

Bob Jacobson: I don't know, I mean it's all part of the public education process. I assume that the splash damming activity is pretty well documented for some of the historical uses of this information.

Bob Zybach: I think Lionel Youst might have information on that. His dad had a sawmill and stuff, back in the ‘30s when they were ending that. But it did, from what you're saying, have a permanent effect, or semi-permanent effect, on the fisheries.

Bob Jacobson: Yeah. No question, no question about it.

Bob Zybach: What can be done to reverse that process, other than . . . as far as structurally? It's taking out the structure of those streams on purpose -- all the impediments, all the rocks, all the pools, and then scoured it with a wall of logs, and then it all filled with weeds. So what, what would we do about that?

Bob Jacobson: The modus operandi for many, many years was to remove all the logs and all the structures and all the diversity from the streams. That's totally turned around now. You know, you see a lot of STEP programs up and down the coast putting logs into streams and creeks and structures, increasing the number of pools and the depths of pools; increased the gravel; structures catch the gravels and you can see them do it during high waters.

Bob Jacobson: So a lot of that's being done, but there's a lot more to do. But I am following that issue and we're really paying attention to where we are, coast-wise, at that. But, the stream structure is very important. We know that that's a given fact, but at one time we as the general public, and biologists, didn't consider that to be a tremendously dominant factor for the survival of the salmon.

Bob Zybach: So it seems that we're putting in logs now -- in the '96 flood all those logs floated away -- and now they're putting in rocks in areas. But they're also putting in streamside buffers, and most of those buffers through inactivity there are filled up with weeds now. It's not streamside vegetation that was ever there before.

Bob Zybach: What are your thoughts on the riparian areas? Should they be set aside like they're doing or should they be restructured as well?

Bob Jacobson: I'm not familiar enough with that, Bob, to really say anything on that.

Bob Zybach: That might be the STEP guy and the local biologist.

Bob Jacobson: Have to be the STEP guy and the local biologist. I can't, I shouldn't really comment on that. You know I live in the Lincoln County area and see a lot of these structures. I actually was in the eastern Oregon area with some friends of mine, deer hunting, and we discussed the STEP program there and how to improve it.

Bob Zybach: Okay. I'm familiar with the STEP program and I think they did some testing on that.

Bob Jacobson: Yeah, they did. But anyway, to fix it in the riparian area, it's really come back to these nice flows. Lots of trees in the creek, some of the water temperature down considerably, there's more flow, and probably more fish, I would guess.

Bob Jacobson: Some of those programs have proven to be very, very useful in as far as protecting and enhancing the fish habitat.

Bob Zybach: Well, the riparian area, and the studies they've done on them . . . Mike Newton's study on this -- are you familiar with Mike Newton?

Bob Jacobson: Yeah, I'm familiar with Mike.

Bob Zybach: I did a study on Mike's area --

Bob Jacobson: Is Mike still alive?

Bob Zybach: Yes.

Bob Jacobson: I haven't seen him in years.

Bob Zybach: He's more crotchety than ever.

Bob Jacobson: Really! (laughter)

Bob Zybach: Yeah he's still doing research in the field.

Bob Jacobson: You know, he and I were in school about the same time.

Bob Zybach: Let's see, you'd be after Marv Rowley then. Mike did, like, riparian areas where he logged right down the water's edge and the measured its flow, and measured the water temperature, and by good fortune they had a Department of Fish and Wildlife guy there, and where they had logged right down to the stream's edge: 1) the temperature didn't increase, but the number and size of the fish did. And they were speculating that by allowing sunlight . . .

Bob Jacobson: Sunlight?

Bob Zybach: . . . onto the water, that they were increasing food production and fish production.

Bob Jacobson: (laughs) There's always another side of the story, isn't there?

Bob Zybach: But what are your thoughts on that?

Bob Jacobson: I think you just needed a picture of it to make it clear. The thought is, you've got a buffer strip of trees along the stream to keep the sunlight off the water and it provides cooler temperatures so the fish survive in the hot summer months. But, the other side of the coin is by providing direct sunlight, and logging right down to the water there's probably gonna be more in-stream growth of invertebrates. And that's food for the fish and the fish become larger. So . . . flip a coin.

Bob Zybach: That's why what we're saying is we think the Elliott of all these redlines here [see Appendix map, p. 24] are probably Indian trails that developed into trails and you probably followed one of them in, and so these are all subbasins. The way we divvied them up is, there's the Millicoma West Fork; there's Tenmile; here's couple of sloughs coming right into Coos Bay; and here's Umpqua tidewaters.

Bob Zybach: So all those areas there -- there's four basic areas – there's anadromous fish populations. And so the basic idea [*Elliott State Educational Forest: The Giesy Plan Alternative*, Giesy & Zybach 2017] is if we can go into these subbasins, about 25 of them, do half of them and log right down to the water's edge and measure the results; as opposed to areas where there is no logging, no buffers, but just owl habitat, over a 20-year period – that we could get some pretty definitive and useful information.

Bob Jacobson: You've got to do it; you just got to do it, okay? In my opinion you can't shut the doors on any new idea. Like I said before, we thought for years that removing all the structures and the trees is going to be a benefit to the fish. And, over a period of about 10 years, or 15 years, the biologists said, "Oh, let's stop them from doing this, we don't think this is a very good idea, we need structure in the streams." So, it's a costly issue, where research shows that by cutting the trees causes more growth in the streams and larger fish, so I don't know.

Bob Zybach: The other side of the coin, which is kind of disturbing, is the north sides of the stream don't contribute and shade to the stream at all, and yet you've got buffers on the north side.

Bob Jacobson: That's a good point.

Bob Zybach: I think you answered my question: that it's an open question and it can be researched and this is a good place to do that.

Bob Jacobson: You know, just responding to the last line of that question. I'm sure there are, and you could probably quote the research better than I could, but I'm sure there's research that will show you, that would directly counteract what Mike Newton's research shows you. I'm sure there's research that shows better production, better survival, better growth with buffer trees. Somebody's done that research as the basis for making that buffer strip initially.

Bob Zybach: I hope that research exists somewhere.

Bob Jacobson: (laughter) You haven't seen it?

Bob Zybach: No, I have not. It's like the research that shows murrelet critical habitat. I've seen the research, but it doesn't seem to demonstrate the point.

Bob Jacobson: Yeah.

Tape 8-C. 44:45 Hatchery Fish vs. Wild Fish

Bob Zybach: One other question. I was hoping that David would be here so we could talk a little [OSU] sports a little bit. We might have to do that without him. On hatchery fish. What are your thoughts on those? Are those actually . . . are they inferior to so-called wild fish in your estimation?

Bob Jacobson: What is your definition of "inferior?'

Bob Zybach: I think the argument is that the hatchery fish – I've seen some incredible things that just aren't true. That they don't fight and things like that; but they take food away from the wild fish; they're unfair competition and they're not suited for reproduction; and yet they compete directly with the wild fish.

Bob Jacobson: You come from a tree planting background right?

Bob Zybach: Yep.

Bob Jacobson: And it's been a while since you've been in that business. And maybe back when you were planting trees you didn't really consider it, but I thought that a number of people involved in the timber industry over the last 30 years, that basically what they had told us, at least, is that you don't take Douglas fir seedlings from the Willamette Valley or the Cascades, and plant them on the coast.

Bob Zybach: Yep.

Bob Jacobson: Why don't you? Why don't you? Well, they're acclimated to the west slope of the Cascades and they're not going to be acclimated to the west slope of the Coast Range, and they won't survive. Survival would be way down from what the seedlings would be if we took them roughly from a nursery that produced them from seeds from their natural environment.

Bob Jacobson: Hatcheries are the same thing. If you take a fish from . . . if you go way back and look at the history of hatcheries in Oregon, a guy name of R. D. [Robert Deniston] Hume started hatcheries; he started his own hatchery on the Rogue River clear back in the late 1800s. And . . .

Tape 8-C End. 47:21

Interview with Bob Jacobson
Interview by Bob Zybach
Location: Coos Bay Historical Museum, Coos Bay
Date: November 28, 2017 (2/2)
Transcription Draft/Audit: Rev.com/McKenzie Peters (December 2, 2018)

Bob Zybach: I had a new recorder. It did not work but I used my old one. It broke so . . . Okay we should be ready to start. You were talking about the old fish hatcheries in the 1800s.

Bob Jacobson: Anyways, look at the old, the history of the Oregon Fish Commission back before they were merged into the Game Commission, they had a history of transferring fish from this hatchery to this hatchery to this hatchery, so it got a mish-mash of . . . but if you look at the fish on a particular system, the wild fish, they have acclimated themselves to that system over thousands of years . . .

Bob Zybach: Yeah.

Bob Jacobson: Thousands of years. Their genetic composition really is suited for that system -- not that they won't survive in systems 20 miles away, because they probably will, but probably to a lesser degree than they would in their own system. I mean that just makes sense to me intuitively. So we have very few systems left, on this west side anyway of the state, that are truly wild fish. We have very few systems continuing with wild fish. Now some of those fish with extensive hatchery interaction 20 or 30 or 40 or 50 years ago, and then since that probably come back to the point where after 10 generations where they, where those fish are pretty much acclimated to that system again, while by the biologist's definition may not be considered to be true wild fish, it pretty much reactivates that system.

Bob Jacobson: So I don't think that hatchery fish are inferior, I just think that I haven't seen any difference in the fight between the hatchery fish and a wild fish, if you catch them on a hook and line --

Bob Zybach: Yeah.

Bob Jacobson: You're probably going to get a reduced or a lesser percentage return of those fish at the hatchery than you would wild fish to that same system with . . . assuming that all other variables are equal, that ocean conditions are the same when they went to sea, etc.

Bob Zybach: There would have to be approximately the same number of fish, too, wouldn't there?

Bob Jacobson: That's correct. You know, if you take a look at the Elk River Hatchery, when they first put the Elk River into production in southern Oregon coast, Chinook fish hatchery primarily, tremendous returns. And gradually, year by year, there was never . . . that curve tended to trend downward, bit by bit, just like this.

Bob Zybach: I know it.

Bob Jacobson: Down and down. Take a look at that sometime for the Elk River -

Bob Zybach: Okay.

Bob Jacobson: I think now that they start reintroducing wild fish into the genetic mix, when the spawners are used with the hatchery fish . . .

Bob Zybach: Yep.

Bob Jacobson: . . . that you're probably seeing certainly a stabilization of the percentage return, and maybe even a slight increase. But for years and years if you just use the hatchery fish, and you get a pretty steep downward trend in percentage of return you get.

Bob Zybach: I know in the late 1800's that they had the hatchery fish in California that they released on the Kalama [River], up in Washington, and the Lewis River, so they were moving those fish 120 miles or something. But nowadays it seems that -- and especially the Indians on their hatcheries -- are taking the local fish and using those eggs and basically having hospital births instead of the back room. Are those fish, do you think they would have the same decline for any particular reason?

Bob Jacobson: No question if you use local fish, you're going to get better returns than if you use fish from outside your area.

Bob Zybach: Can you see a problem with hatcheries succeeding with this, using local eggs, local sources; can you see problems with them degenerating the line, or making it go down, or --?

Bob Jacobson: I think you have to have oversight over local fish managers. And I'm not a hatchery person, so I'm fairly certain issues that, you know, local fish biologists are seeing a mixture of that. Yes, and to answer your question, I can see, in fact they've done it on Daniels Creek and that West Fork Millicoma fish hatchery.

Bob Zybach: But did they use all local stock on that? And I think they did on the Alsea, on that test research they were supposed to be doing.

Bob Jacobson: For steelhead they allowed the guys to fish right there at the [West Fork Millicoma] hatchery, and they encouraged the individual, when they catch a fish, to put it directly into the holding ponds there at the hatchery for spawning purposes. And a lot of that goes on. Guy'll catch a fish right at the hatchery, where the fish are holding in the hatchery ponds. You can just run up and dump it in the holding pond. I mean yeah. This is a hell of a program now.

Bob Zybach: So in your estimation having hatcheries for fish, as long as it's done with local stock and some oversight, is not detrimental to the fisheries as a whole?

Bob Jacobson: That is my opinion.

Bob Zybach: More positive than . . .?

Bob Jacobson: More positive.

Bob Zybach: Okay.

Bob Jacobson: Now one of the things I think that has violated the fish management, the policies regarding the fish: we've left the human element out of the equation.

Bob Zybach: And especially the fishermen!

Bob Jacobson: And, yeah. We love our salmon. We love our fish. And so they keep cranking down the regulation, you drop your hatchery production, you can't keep any wild fish . . . I got to go fishing, but I can't keep the fish? I'm not! That's it. I'll go someplace else. But what happens when the people don't fish? No license revenue?

Bob Jacobson: No sentinels on the streams to watch the fish? I mean there's some pretty strong reasons for keeping people involved in the process of fisheries. I'm talking about our salmon and steelhead runs. Without those people we couldn't do it. They're a very important connection to the overall health of our salmon and steelhead runs.

Bob Jacobson: One of my good friends is Lindsay Ball. Lindsay was an Oregon State Game cop for years, and he moved up the ranks and became the top guy in the Game Division and then he moved from there to Director of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, where he served for six or seven or eight years, and then he went from there to Department of Administrative Services, but anyway, really good fish and wildlife background. He was very, very good while he was director over the ODFW in the legislature. Very good administrator. And he pretty much

single handedly, along with State Representative from Pendleton, Bob Jenson, got enough money to convert the old ODFW Fall Creek coho hatchery near Alsea.

Bob Zybach: Yeah.

Bob Jacobson: . . . into what is now known as the Oregon Hatchery Research Center.

Bob Zybach: That's where Wayne Giesy was involved in that.

Bob Jacobson: Yeah, that's right. And they're trying that . . . the people at that center are trying to answer the very same question you asked me: is there a difference between hatchery fish and wild fish? They've got some studies going on that I think would probably help answer some of those questions. Not a short term issue with fish. You know, it's going to take several generations of fish to prove or disprove to . . . but anyways, that's going on, and I think that's very positive, but there's a lot of people in the area in which I live that don't look very favorably on that because that hatchery was taken out of production where it provided fish for the anglers, and they're actually very angry, primarily because they don't understand the depth of the research that they're doing at the hatchery and how that's going down the road to really help us decide a lot of key issues with regard to hatcheries throughout the state. So I'm all for it. I think it's a great program. But there's a lot, a lot, a lot of my friends who would get rid of that sucker as a waste of taxpayer dollars. So intervening there caused problems.

Bob Zybach: We looked at hatcheries on the Siletz when the tribe was operating in control of the old ODFW [Rock Creek] hatchery, and there they were doing a lot of odd things – well, "odd" compared to other hatcheries -- putting branches in a stream, and trying to reshape more natural conditions. I think they had water flowing in from the creek there --

Bob Jacobson: Background.

Bob Zybach: Yeah, and that, to replicate more natural conditions. And then I know that the Alsea hatchery was set up for just exactly like you were saying, to study the differences, and there seems to be some local resistance of that as well, for different reasons -- and that is that they think that the research has become biased in the last few years against hatcheries with this program, and they don't think the data's supporting that bias, right? I don't know if people are reading too much into it, but it does seem like it's controversial on both sides.

Bob Jacobson: Yeah, it is. There's no question about it. Well, I'm going to have to get out of here pretty shortly.

Bob Zybach: Okay. I think that . . . can you think of anything we haven't covered? I got all my notes here, and they're covered.

Bob Jacobson: No, I'm willing to come back down.

Bob Zybach: Oh, good! And David, and we can talk about sports a little bit next time.

Bob Jacobson: Yeah, right. And actually I just talked to my brother who's out on the north of North Bend, and we're gonna get David to take us on another tour of the Elliott.

Bob Zybach: Oh, good.

Bob Jacobson: Yeah. He likes to do that.

Bob Zybach: Yes. I just took a tour with him and we recorded that, and one before with Jerry, and we've got one more to do with on the west slope.

Bob Jacobson: Ah, very nice, very nice!

Bob Zybach: Well thank you very much for your time and I look forward to --

Bob Jacobson: Well I'm not sure how much I provided –

Tape 8-D End. 11:50

Map and context discussed on p. 16. Submitted as a portion of the *Elliott State Educational Forest: The Giesy Plan Alternative* proposal to the State Land Board at the February 14, 2017 public meeting by Wayne Giesy and Bob Zybach.