

Washington Council Winter Membership Meeting - A Tremendous Success!
by Jim Wilcox

The 2010 Washington Council of Trout Unlimited (WCTU) Winter Meeting was held January 8 and 9 at the Comfort inn in Tumwater.

WCTU president Bill Abrahamse and the WCTU Winter Meeting organizational committee worked to provide WCTU members and our guests with a professional, meaningful, important and memorable meeting.

In addition to traditional Council business and networking opportunities, the 2010 WCTU Winter Meeting focused on two WCTU-sponsored projects: 1. NW Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Academy and 2. Chehalis Basin flood control.



Jim Brosio and Mike Clancy provided the details of the very popular and worthwhile 2010 Academy to WCTU Chapter presidents and others attending the WCTU Winter Meeting. They also provided information packets for each Chapter president to share with their local Chapter leaders and members. Any WCTU member is welcome to volunteer with the Academy or to stop by and observe the quality of this very unique opportunity.



Agency representatives on the WCTU Chehalis Basin panel: Mark White (Chehalis Tribe), Ron Warren (WDFW), Gordon White (DOE), John Donohue (WSDOT), Bill Goss (US Army Corps of Engineers)

The above Agency representative then participated with County Commissioners Ron Averill (Lewis), Terri Willis (Grays Harbor) and Karen Valenzuela (Thurston) on the two hour Chehalis Basin fact finding panel discussion.

This fascinating and thought provoking panel discussion was moderated by Ric Abbett. Each of the panel members introduced themselves and shared their roles associated with improved management of Chehalis Basin floods. Following their introductory comments, panel members were provided the opportunity to answer a half dozen or so prepared questions regarding issues involving effective management of Chehalis Basin floods.

During the panel discussion, meeting attendees and other panel members heard a wide range of proposed projects to mitigate the risks of increasing Chehalis Basin flood events. Some are advocating additional studies, some want to build levees to protect existing infrastructure, some want to construct water retention facilities, some propose the use of natural wetlands to retain storm water while others are considering re-location of homes and businesses outside of the historic floodplain. All realize that there is no single solution to the Chehalis Basin floods as they are natural processes that have happened forever and will continue to occur until the end of time.

After the Chehalis Basin panel discussion, meeting attendees were introduced to US Congressman Norm Dicks. Bill Abrahams presented Representative Dick's with the WCTU Conservationist of the Year Award for his many years of dedication to the protection and recovery of Washington's natural spawning salmon and trout.



Mr. Dicks then delivered his keynote address while Thurston County Commissioner Karen Valenzuela, Terry Turner, Paul and Morgan Sparks and other attendees listened intently as he encouraged Trout Unlimited to continue our relentless efforts to restore and recover natural spawning salmon and trout.

Representative Dicks touched on many efforts that he's personally working on to provide resources for the recovery of Puget Sound and Hood Canal, preparation for removing the Elwha River dams, ongoing work to recover Nisqually River Chinook salmon and his work to recover Columbia and Snake River salmon and trout. Mr. Dicks graciously allowed attendees to ask questions of him before he left for yet another commitment.



An added bonus to the WCTU Winter Meeting was hearing from our longtime friend, Lisa Pelly who served eleven years on the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission. Ms. Pelly is now the Director of the Wenatchee-based **Washington Water Project of Trout Unlimited**. Lisa and her staff work tirelessly on many water conservation projects across Washington State. Lisa looks forward to sharing her important work with each WCTU Chapter. She has a standing request to be one of the Olympia TU featured speakers during one of our 2010 membership meetings.

Traditionally, one of the most fun aspects of the WCTU Winter Meeting is presenting Chapters, dedicated TU members and others working to restore and recover Washington's natural spawning salmon and trout. This year was no exception.



In addition to the WCTU's traditional awards, a special service recognition award was presented to Washington State Senator Linda Evans Parlette (12th Legislative District) for her relentless efforts to protect and recover natural spawning Columbia River salmon and trout through her leadership in the Washington State Legislature.

Other dignitaries who attended all or parts of the 2010 WCTU Winter Meeting include WDFW Director Phil Anderson, Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Rollie Schmitt, Olympia Port Commissioner George Barner, 22nd Legislative District candidate Steve Robinson and Trout Unlimited staff members Alan Moore and Kate Miller.

In total, there were approximately eighty attendees at this eventful meeting. The next 2010 WCTU Membership Meeting will be held in or near Leavenworth in early June to take advantage of a Icicle Valley Chapter hospitality and to take advantage of a near record run of spring Chinook. The program for this meeting promises to be just as impactful and timely as the winter meeting was. You'll want to attend this very fun and informative gathering of Washington's Trout Unlimited leaders and our guests.