

THE CONCRETE HERALD

Formerly the Hamilton Herald Established Nov. 23, 1901. Oldest Paper in the Upper Skagit.

FEBRUARY 9, 1956

Upper Valley Sportsmen To Battle Closures of Skagit River

Sportsmen of the upper valley, long tired of being deprived of fishing rights in the Skagit river while the same rights are returned to pressure groups in the lower valley, are going to make a fight on the latest ruling of the game department to close the Skagit to steelhead fishing from May 20th to July 1st.

The law is supposed to protect young steelhead fry during their return to salt water. However, in a petition now being circulated by upriver sportsmen, a protest is voiced on the following grounds:

1. That the Skagit river, already closed above Marblemount bridge during the regular winter season, would then be open just 4½ months of the year, from July 1st to Nov. 15th. This would deprive fishermen the use of camp sites and picnic grounds built especially for their benefit during summer months. The Skagit river below the Marblemount bridge would only be open 8½ months out of the year above the mouth of Gilligan Creek, near Sedro-Woolley, except for a short period of 15 days from March 31 to April 15.

During the spring months the game department intends enforcing

the new steelhead law when fishing for the large trout is at its best.

2. That because of the shortened fishing season, business in the upper valley will suffer due to cutting down of tourist travel for the fishing usually enjoyed in the Skagit.

3. That to protect the young steelhead fry returning to the salt water a size limit should be placed on all trout caught out of the river that will protect young salmon as well as young steelhead. Since few true rainbow trout inhabit the Skagit in late years, most "trout" caught as game fish are either young salmon or steelhead.

A law limiting size of the small fish would make it possible for the fishermen to go after the big ones and let the small fry escape.

The petition closes with the closing of the major portion of the Skagit for so long a period is too large a penalty for the citizens of the upper valley to pay for what little they will gain in the long run.

Petitions are now out in Marblemount, Rockport and Concrete, and will soon be placed at Birdsvew, Van Horn and other spots where those interested in joining in the protest can sign up.