It’s almost like they created the Klamath situation to make them look competent on Katrina.

-- William F. “Zeke” Grader, Jr.

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21:21/01. AS ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY Passes, A TRIBUTE TO ZEKE GRADER:
(Ed. note: this tribute was prepared by Pietro Parravano, commercial fisherman and IFR president, in memory of his colleague and friend.)

A year ago on Labor Day, 2015, Zeke Grader died in a hospice home in San Francisco. I would like to reminisce about his passing. This past year has given me time to reflect on what his passing has meant to me. I have realized that blessings and sorrow arrive on our laps at the same time. His voice, his stature, his principles, his dedication sum up the sorrow and blessings that he left us with to continue our work and success. He taught us how to develop the skills that are needed to not only use the oceans as a workplace, but also as a place to gather in solidarity.
I have been associated with Zeke all of my career in commercial fishing. He helped to found the largest commercial fishing organization on the West Coast—the Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman’s Associations (PCFFA) in 1976. These associations have represented the family fishermen in California ports and also members in Oregon, Washington and Alaska. In the early nineties, he established the Institute for Fisheries Resources (IFR)—the non-profit organization under PCFFA. He served as executive director for both organizations from their start to his end. I was President of PCFFA from 1992 to 2003. I have served as President of IFR since its start in 1995. During my tenure I have known Zeke professionally and personally.

He was the ultimate advocate for fishing families at all levels—community, state and federal. The following are my memories of working with Zeke through challenging times for commercial fishermen and their families:

- Zeke gave human values to fish, to fishery habitat, to ecosystems, to oceans;
- He taught us to use the centuries-old culture of the coastal communities as the cornerstone of fishery policies for sustaining commercial fishing;
- His vision was embedded in his lifelong quest for teaching others the ecological, social and economic importance of sustaining domestic fisheries. He did this by his commitment and dedication to fishing families. He spent endless hours with fishermen, policy makers and NGOs;
- As President of IFR, I was impressed with his strong desire to engage young people as interns for our fishery programs. Zeke gave the interns an opportunity to learn aspects of fisheries policy, fishery law, fish habitat, fish marketing and creating dialogue with adversaries. Not only was he our executive director, he was a true educator and legend.

Zeke assisted with many pieces of legislation that allowed commercial fishing to continue at a sustainable level in many coastal communities. He was the best spokesperson that we had to represent fishermen at various levels of government.

It is a coincidence that he died on Labor Day—a day that we honor workers, especially the independent fishermen, who epitomize their own labor of love.

Zeke—I know that you are in good hands. I know that fish is a welcomed item in Heaven. I know that you have some in your pocket!

21:21/02. STATE WATER BOARD TO UPDATE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER FLOWS: The State Water Resources Control Board (Board) this week announced a draft plan to update instream flow management on the San Joaquin River. The Board has not addressed flows into the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary since 1995. This update to the Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan will be designed to improve the Delta’s ability to sustain beneficial uses, including the salmon, sturgeon and smelt fisheries. Currently, 80-90% of the San Joaquin is diverted in some years, and more than 95% is diverted in certain months. In the draft plan, the Board proposed increasing flows on the Merced, Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers to an average of 40% of unimpaired flow, which is the level of flow the river would see in the absence of water diversions and dams.

Fisheries experts have called the plan the equivalent of leaving half a river in the San Joaquin Basin, and point to the best available science presented to the Board which says that 50-60% of unimpaired flow is necessary to restore salmon runs in the San Joaquin and its tributaries. The Board will be holding public meetings on the the draft plan in November, at which the fishing industry can voice its support for the 50-60% flow level.
For more information, see this 15 September Los Angeles Times article, or visit the State Water Board’s Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan webpage.

21:21/03. CONSERVATION GROUPS REQUEST SHUTDOWN OF CALIFORNIA DRIFT GILLNET, SABLEFISH TRAP FISHERIES: In a letter to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) dated 12 September, the Center for Biological Diversity and the Turtle Island Restoration Network have threatened to sue over mammal and turtle bycatch in the drift gillnet and sablefish trap fisheries. The letter cites both expiration on 4 September of Marine Mammal Protection Act incidental take statements (ITS), and a significant increase in reports of whale/gear interactions on the West Coast, as grounds for the lawsuit. Although the conservation groups propose 100% observer coverage or complete closure of both fisheries as interim measures, it appears that the endgame of the lawsuit is preparation of an updated ITS and a new Endangered Species Act consultation for affected species. NMFS has yet to respond to the 60-day notice, but fisheries groups including PCFFA are tightly tracking this issue.

For more information, see the 60-day notice of intent to sue letter, or this 12 September Center for Biological Diversity press release. Sablefish photo courtesy of National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, public domain.

21:21/04. WEST COAST TRAWL RATIONALIZATION FIVE-YEAR REVIEW UNDERWAY: The Pacific Fishery Management Council’s (PFMC) five-year review of the trawl rationalization program within the West Coast groundfish fishery has begun. The Review provides PFMC and the public to take a look at the effects of trawl rationalization, and specifically the effects of trawl catchshares and intersector allocation in the groundfish Fishery Management Plan (amendments 20 and 21, respectively). PFMC will finalize the agenda for the review at its upcoming meeting (September 12-20, Boise, ID), but some aspects of the review are already calendared. Fishermen have the opportunity to provide public comment at a series of port meetings running through September 29; PFMC at the September meeting will appoint members to a Community Advisory Board to analyze address impacts of trawl rationalization; once the Review process document is finalized at PFMC’s November 16-21 meeting in Garden Grove, CA, the actual review process will continue into 2018.

For more information or to get involved, visit PFMC’s Trawl Rationalization Five-Year Review webpage.

21:21/05. NORTHERN WILDFIRES JEOPARDIZE CRITICAL WATER SUPPLIES, SALMON HABITAT: California’s devastating wildfires kill people and wildlife, burn communities to the ground; burn vegetation protecting the soils; and contaminate precious water supplies and surface water critical for the spawning and rearing of juvenile salmon. “When rain follows catastrophic fire, water quickly saturates the exposed topsoil and hits the hydrophobic layer, (a fire and soil interaction which creates an oily barrier) about two inches underground. Since the water cannot seep into the ground any further, the topsoil, ash and debris gets washed away.
Mud fills nearby watercourses, devastating wildlife habitat and polluting drinking water,” reported Norman Pillsbury, Ph.D. of California Polytechnic State University.

When rain follows a forest fire, and the water cannot soak into the soil, heavy runoff causes; flooding; contaminates surface water, rivers, streams, and lakes, with increased water temperature; chemicals; fire retardants; and sediment. “Burning vegetation releases nutrients contained within plants including nitrate, ammonia and phosphate. At high concentrations ammonia can be toxic to fish and other aquatic life.” The reduced oxygen suffocates fish. Other aquatic life is threatened by sediment blanketing, depriving them of necessary food. “…[T]he more severe the fire, the greater the amount of fuel consumed, the more nutrients released, and the more susceptible the watershed is to erosion of soil and nutrients into the stream, which could negatively impact water quality.

"It's a new normal," Governor Jerry Brown said in August, 2015. "California is burning."

For more information, see the New Mexico Environment Department’s Wildfire Impacts on Surface Water Quality webpage.

21:21/06. FISHERIES STAND TO LOSE $10 BILLION WORLDWIDE DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE: The University of British Columbia (UBC) has released a study finding that global fisheries are going to be severely impacted by climate change unless fishery managers take steps to improve fisheries resilience. The study found that worldwide, fisheries revenues are expected to decline by $10 billion by 2050 if managers don’t take steps to address rising temperatures and changes in ocean salinity, acidity and oxygen levels. The study that aquaculture is not suitable replacement for the wild fishery, as fish farms may actually drive down overall seafood prices and contribute to revenue loss. Study authors suggested that improving stock resiliency to environmental changes would help cushion against revenue losses.

For more information, see this 7 September Science Daily article.

21:21/07: TWO WILD, SCENIC RIVERS IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA SAVED BY PCFFA AND NCRA LAWSUIT: A great victory for Chinook salmon and steelhead in the Black Butte River and its tributary, Cold Creek, was won when the U.S. Forest Service settled a 2015 lawsuit brought by the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations (PCFFA) and the North Coast Rivers Alliance (NCRA). In their lawsuit, PCFFA and NCRA claimed that a 2006 Congressional designation of 16 miles of Black Butte River as a “wild” river and 3.5 miles as “scenic” required the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to create boundaries and a management plan by 2009. By 2015, it was six years past due. Under the settlement, the USFS has a until 2018 to determine the boundaries and develop a management plan. A public process will begin this September. The Forest Service agreed to stop two previous plans to burn or remove trees and vegetation in areas near the watershed that could have impacted water quality and salmonid habitat.
PCFFA/NCRA attorney, Stephan Volker called the 26 August settlement a “major victory for environmentalists, fishermen and the threatened species that live in and around the watershed. These streams are extraordinarily important for the survival of Chinook salmon and river steelhead. Their designation by Congress confirmed the importance of protecting their watershed.”

For more information, see this 2 September Courthouse News article. Black Butte River photo by National Wild & Scenic Rivers System, public domain.

21:21/08: CDPH SHELLFISH AND ROCK CRAB WARNINGS AND CLOSURES CONTINUE: The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) continued its warning to consumers not to eat Rock crab and bivalve catches from south of Pigeon Point, San Mateo County, and north of Cypress Point, Monterey due to dangerous levels of domoic acid, a naturally occurring toxin.

The recreational collection of mussels is quarantined until 31 October for the entire coast of California. The annual closure is due to biotoxins such as paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) and domoic acid poisoning (DAP), also known as Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning. CDPH may extend the quarantine if monitoring results indicate dangerous levels of biotoxins beyond the normal quarantine period. The May through October quarantine period encompasses more than 99 percent of all PSP illnesses and deaths reported in California since 1927. Razor clam collection is also closed until further notice from Humboldt County to Del Norte County.

For more information, Contact the CDPH Biotoxin Information Line at 1-800-553-4133 or see this CDPH Press Release.

21:21/09. THE REDHEAD ON FARMED SALMON: A THREAT TO THE WEST COAST SALMON INDUSTRY: (Ed. Note: Sublegals is pleased to introduce The Redhead, a serialized column aimed at educating non-fishermen on fishing industry issues by IFR’s muckraking volunteer associate, Alston Laughlin. Please take the opportunity to share these columns with your friends and neighbors who might be interested in our efforts.)

Farmed salmon is becoming a ubiquitous product in every fish market throughout California, the U.S. and the world. Is it different from wild caught salmon? Is it safe to eat? How is it farmed and where? Are land-based fish farms or ocean pens better for the consumer? Should I buy farmed in the U.S.? Canada? Korea? Europe? South America? Australia? Asia? Does it matter? YES! Should we buy it? That depends on what you know and if you care. These questions and others will be answered in a SUBLEGALS series beginning this week.

The increasing population growth and the popularity of seafood in general, and salmon in particular throughout the world, is putting enormous pressure on the Pacific wild-caught salmon industry and the salmon themselves. Dave Harris of the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game (Juneau), explained the issues in a August 2016 interview: “Salmon fishing is cyclic in nature. It only lasts a few months of the year. Farmed fish is continuously grown and always available. Fresh frozen [wild salmon] is always best [for flavor and texture] but people want fresh salmon in stores. It could be days old or even pre-frozen.”

Since 2007, California’s historic droughts – especially the current five year dry period – endangers Pacific salmon due to fresh water scarcity. Warm waters in streams, rivers and tributaries, kill tens of millions of hatchery-released fingerlings on their way to the ocean. Wild
adult salmon cannot reach their spawning grounds. Consequently, the available catch is limited, commercial fishing days and limits are reduced—imperiling the livelihood of the commercial fishing men and women and related businesses. This creates a greater demand for farmed products, which now provide 60 percent of the salmon worldwide.

Since the abundance of farmed product makes it cheaper, wild-caught salmon prices have become depressed. “In 1980 Alaskan salmon was $2.50 a pound off the boat. In 2016, it is 70 cents a pound,” according to Tyson Fick, communications director at the Alaska Seafood & Marketing Institute, “Chinook was about $7 a pound in 1980 and now is $3.50 a pound.” How does the Alaskan salmon industry survive? “We export 65-70 percent overseas to be processed and then it returns to be sold. We’re now looking for niche markets which will bring premium prices. Hopefully.”

Seafood farming is the “Wild West” of the twenty-first century. Thousands of salmon and seafood farms were created since the 1970s, and they are multiplying annually. Quality of farming practices and regulations are irregular at best. Types and quality of fish food, whether pelagic fish or plant-based, often differ because of cost and availability. Excess food and waste, as well as chemicals and additives to combat disease and sea lice, notoriously pollute surrounding waters and affect wild fish in the area. Escapes are common, and farmed Atlantic salmon are capable of infiltrating wild salmonind genomes, compromising local stocks’ ability to fend off environmental changes.

It must be noted that Alaska and California do not allow salmon farming. New technology, public demands, governmental scrutiny and industry awareness, are all bringing significant changes to the salmon farming industry. But, there is much more to do.

Next time in The Redhead, Alston delves into how and where salmon are farmed. For more information, see the National Marine Fisheries Service’s Aquaculture in the U.S. webpage.

21:21/10. NOAA SEEKS MPA ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS: The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is seeking ten new members of its Marine Protected Area (MPA) Federal Advisory Committee. The Committee advises NOAA on improving MPA management and allows stakeholders to be involved in the MPA process. Current committee members come from the fishing industry, academia, tribes, and state and local goverments and other areas. Nominations for a Committee appointment are due 7 October, 2016.

For more information, see NOAA’s MPA FAC webpage. Nominations must contain (1) The nominee’s full name, title, institutional affiliation, and contact information; (2) the nominee’s area(s) of expertise;(3) a short description of his/her qualifications relative to the kinds of advice being solicited, and (4) a resume or CV not to exceed four pages in length, and can be sent to Nicole Capps at nicole.capps@noaa.gov.

21:21/11. BEAVERS MAY BE A NUISANCE BUT THEY MIGHT SAVE CALIFORNIA WETLANDS: California has lost more than 90 percent of its wetlands. The Central Valley wetlands have been reduced from more than 4 million acres to about 300,000 acres. But someday that may change by introducing beaver ponds to create and improve wetlands. Wetlands provide an abundance of food for small salmon, helping them adjust from freshwater to the ocean, and prevent flood waters from washing them away. “Beavers are an essential ecosystem engineer,” said Steve Zack in a study by Wildlife Conservation Society.
“[They] help repair degraded stream habitats and their dams and associated ponds recharge local water tables and create wetlands. Because climate change is likely to cause increasing droughts in the West, beavers may become especially helpful in allowing watersheds to act more like sponges.”

Fisheries managers are seriously studying the advantages of beaver dams and ponds. “The reality is that they are very cost effective and that they do a tremendous job of restoring wetlands and restoring habitat and streams,” said Michael Pollock of the National Marine Fisheries Service’s Northwest Science Center. “So it’s kind of a no-brainer.” Opponents of the program complain that beavers are a nuisance because they chew down trees, make dams, and flood private property.

California’s sturdy rodents were abundant in the 1800s but the numbers fell dramatically to around 1000 animals due to fur trading. In the 1920s and 1940s they lived in almost half the state’s counties, including in the Bay Area and Santa Cruz. By 1950, the population had grown to about 20,000. No one knows today’s population. “The problem though, is trying to figure out which regions have enough beavers to spare, so that some could be moved,” Pollack puzzled.

For more information, see this 18 April KCBS article and this 20 December 2014 Santa Cruz Sentinel article. Beaver photo by National Marine Fisheries Service, public domain.

YOUR NEWS, COMMENTS, CORRECTIONS: Submit your news items, comments or any corrections to Editor at: tsloane@ifrfish.org, or call the IFR/PCFFA office with the news and a source at either: (415) 561-FISH (Southwest Office) or (541) 689-2000 (Northwest Office). If you have any trouble subscribing or unsubscribing, contact IFR/PCFFA directly at: tsloane@ifrfish.org. Sublegals is a weekly fisheries news bulletin service of Fishlink. “Fishlink” and “Sublegals” are registered trademarks of the Institute for Fisheries Resources. All rights to the use of these trademarks are reserved to IFR. All photos are by IFR unless otherwise accredited. This publication, however, may be freely reproduced and circulated without copyright restriction. Articles taken from Fishlink Sublegals may be freely reposted or reprinted with attribution to “Fishlink Sublegals.” If you are receiving this as a subscriber, please feel free to pass it on to your colleagues.

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