254,000 Steelhead Planted in Barnaby Slough

If everything goes according to plan, the Skagit river will become the best steelhead stream in the world. The plan belongs to the State Game Department, who are now starting the process of raising steelhead in their 27-acre rearing pond across the river at Rockport in what is known as “Barnaby’s Slough.” The slough is stream fed with good water and has been cleared, disked and equipped with a releasing trap for permitting the mature fish to migrate naturally into the Skagit river.

July 22nd the department, with State Game Protector Don Gibson as overseer, completed planting of 254,000 steelhead fry in the ponds at Barnaby. This amount of fish took four truck loads from the South Tacoma hatchery over a two day period. All fish seemed to survive the trip well under a tranquilizing drug and were lively and sound when released into the open waters.

A caretaker watches the rearing ponds on a 24-hour basis, keeping the predatory birds at a minimum and periodically feeding the small fish. They will be fed up until time for their release into the river. On their return from their cycle of migration, they will return to the ponds, where they will be trapped and the eggs taken for other hatcheries to be planted in the future.

In addition to the Barnaby fish plant, a summer run will be started from Lake Shannon. The first plant of summer-run steelhead was of 60,000 fry. Another 100,000 will be planted in hopes of assuring a continuing steelhead run from this spawning area.

Fish trap will be used to release steelhead to river and take eggs on return from migration.