

Northwest Fisheries Science Center

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Remembering Casey Rice

June 2016

NOAA and the Northwest Fisheries Science Center lost a valued colleague far too soon this month when Casey (Casimir) Rice passed away at his home June 2, 2016. Casey worked with NOAA for over 20 years, dedicating his scientific career to the unique dynamics of Puget Sound and its food web, the ecological and habitat aspects of Pacific salmon recovery, and leaving a lasting mark as a cherished colleague and mentor.

Casey grew up in Catonsville (MD) and Spokane (WA) and after attaining his bachelor's degree from Evergreen State University, fell in love with the region and never left. The early days of his career were spent on the water conducting fieldwork, sampling fish and invertebrate communities throughout the Sound to examine the impact of human activities on marine populations and trophic relationships. The work required a strong work ethic, perseverance, keen intellect, and a sense of humor, all of which he offered in abundance.

This work laid the foundation for a comprehensive biological survey conducted by Casey and partners in 2010-2012 to characterize the pelagic food web of Puget Sound, filling a prominent gap in our understanding of



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this ecosystem. This information is being used today to inform management by the state's Puget Sound Partnership, and revealed a shift from a forage-fish dominated system in the 1970s to one controlled by jellyfish in the 2010s.

Casey was a fixture, and many would say the life and blood, of our Mukilteo Research Station. He managed the day-to-day plumbing and engineering of the flow-through sea water system, trouble-shooting disruptions and breakdowns. He played a major role in the effort to replace the aging facility, representing the needs of scientists in facility planning, helping to shape our vision for the facility to meet future national and regional marine science needs, and coordinating with local neighbors and partners.

In recent years Casey was a key scientific contributor to restoration efforts in Puget Sound estuaries, particularly in the Snohomish River, planning and implementing research to measure the effectiveness of habitat recovery actions, and to ensure the highest quality science was used to inform restoration plans. These landscape-scale efforts involves many groups and interests, and Casey forged lasting partnerships, many of which evolved into cherished friendships.

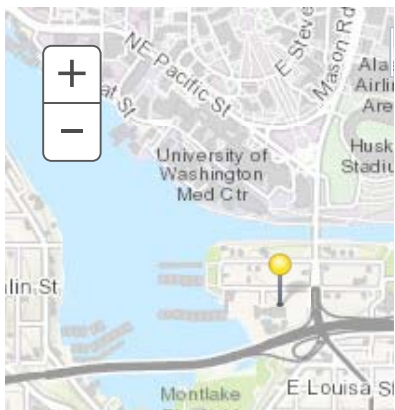
Casey was known for his strong and exacting opinions and his tenacity to achieve a goal. He also knew when to bring levity and to take a break, organizing social team gatherings like an annual flag football tournament. He was active in the community, serving often as a Big Brother with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound and was just starting a program to employ veterans to assist monitoring of the Snohomish estuary.

Casey will be remembered fondly for his steadfast dedication to restoring the Puget Sound using the highest caliber science, and for his loyalty and commitment to the scientists, communities, and individuals who call it home.

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The Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) supports the conservation and management of living marine resources and their habitats in the Northeast Pacific Ocean.

Our research assists resource managers in making sound decisions that build sustainable fisheries, recover endangered and threatened species, sustain healthy ecosystems, and reduce risks to human health.
