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The Elwha River Restoration: Landscape Change, Salmon, and Sense of Place

Kelseyanne Johnson
Central Washington University

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THE ELWHA RIVER RESTORATION: LANDSCAPE CHANGE, SALMON, AND SENSE OF PLACE

A Thesis

Presented to

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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

Resource Management

by

Kelseyanne Johnson

March 2013
We hereby approve the thesis of

Kelseyanne Johnson

Candidate for the degree of Master of Science

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

February 8, 2013
Dr. Kathleen Barlow, Committee Chair

February 8, 2013
Dr. Hope Amason

February 8, 2013
Dr. Jennifer Lipton

April 29, 2013
Dean of Graduate Studies
ABSTRACT

THE ELWHA RIVER RESTORATION: LANDSCAPE CHANGE, SALMON, AND SENSE OF PLACE

by

Kelseyanne Johnson

March 2013

Removal of the Elwha River dams to restore the ecosystem and salmon fisheries is the largest project of its kind in the history of the United States. Spanning decades and affecting generations, this project has changed and will continue to change the landscape. This research examined the influence of the anticipated return of salmon on 18 key stakeholders’ sense of place of the Elwha River. For almost all stakeholders, changes to the Elwha landscape are welcomed as they expect that salmon will restore the ecosystem to its natural state. Narrative data revealed dominant themes in participants’ sense of place expressed through memory, symbol, and nostalgia. The return of salmon, as a culturally significant species, marks change in participants’ perceptions of the Elwha.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For my parents, Jerry and Lisa Johnson. Thank you for the love, support, and fishing tales.

For the person who was surprised to be acknowledged. Thank you for the love, support, and faith.
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Located on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State, the Elwha River is famous for its abundant salmon runs. Prior to construction of the Elwha and Glines Canyon dams, the river supported all five species of salmon and steelhead, which resulted in year-round spawning cycles. The dams have blocked the Elwha River and its salmon runs for nearly one hundred years. In 1992, the United States Congress passed the Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act, which granted the Secretary of the Interior authority to fully restore the ecosystem and native fisheries ("Elwha River," 1992). In September 2011, dam removal began, creating dramatic changes to the landscape. Salmon are the driving force behind the transformation of the river valley. It is estimated that the mere ~3,000 salmon that spawn in the Elwha currently will balloon to more than 300,000 fish after dam removal (United States Department of the Interior [DOI], 1995). For many Elwha River Restoration (ERR) stakeholders, the restoration of the entire ecosystem and, thus, the success of the project hinge on the salmon returning. Despite the vital role of this species in the ERR decision-making process, there is a lack of information about how salmon have come to be so influential in people's perceptions of landscape and landscape change. These perceptions are also known as "sense of place."

This research examines people's perceptions of the physical landscape and the role of keystone species in people's sense of place. Specifically, this research examines
how perceptions are influenced by the anticipated return of salmon. Several studies are available regarding connections between people and place; however, little has been written about how the presence, abundance, and/or absence of specific species, such as salmon, can affect sense of place.

The National Park Service (NPS), as the lead agency of the ERR, has put considerable effort into promoting the return of salmon to the Elwha as not only the main reason behind this undertaking, but as an indicator of successful restoration. Informational materials, such as brochures produced by the NPS, feature the story of salmon in the Elwha. For example, the NPS-produced brochure *Freeing the Elwha: A Story of Dam Removal and Restoration*, included the following sentence about the benefits of the ERR: “Removing the dams will not only free the Elwha River to meander, redistributing fallen trees and gravels, but will also restore a missing part of the community--salmon.” Although a major focus of the ERR has been restoring the landscape, attention almost always circles back to salmon. Most of the literature about salmon and culture focuses on connections between Native Americans and this species. Very little literature is available about how other people connect with salmon; however, as the NPS ERR brochure highlights, salmon are important to communities of people. This research focuses on these broader perspectives of salmon, communities, and sense of place, by asking: What makes salmon important to communities? What are the connections between people and salmon, and how do they influence connections with the Elwha?
As the largest project of its kind in United States history, the ERR provides an unprecedented opportunity to examine how people relate to resources. Despite the historic nature of the project, there has been a lack of attention to cultural implications of the ERR. This lack is part of a larger problem within resource management in that projects often do not employ a holistic approach that includes the values, meanings, and goals that people bring to discussions of environmental issues and resource management. An interdisciplinary approach allows these discussions to be considered within different contexts, such as social and economic contexts. Knowing more about what connects people to resources will assist in garnering public support for long-term projects, such as dam removals and river restorations, that center around those resources. People are intimately connected to the natural world, and literature shows that including public perspectives in resource management projects benefits management agencies and the public. Resource management projects are often time-consuming, controversial, and expensive. Stakeholder support is often necessary for the initiation and support of projects. In order to garner support, agencies need to identify stakeholders’ underlying interests and values. The ERR provides an opportunity to investigate social aspects of a project already heavily designed by the scientific community. ERR is moving forward, and having this information can help address future management challenges as changes to the landscape continue.

The Elwha landscape will continue to change as the ERR progresses. This project will take decades to complete and a level of uncertainty exists about what the future holds. Will the salmon return? What will the landscape look like? Scientific studies have
attempted to answer questions such as these, but it is difficult to predict the future. This research began prior to dam removal, so many of the changes instigated by the ERR had yet to occur. From stakeholders’ perspectives at this time, the dams will be blasted out of canyons, sediment will cloud and clog the river, and two lakes will disappear. Although many people may feel greater connections with the Elwha because of the return of salmon, others may not. Overlooking varying perceptions could lead to complications for all those involved or affected by the process.

During these changes, the main focus, as it has been throughout the dam removal process, will be on whether or not the salmon return. Salmon are intricately woven into the history of Pacific Northwest tribal and non-tribal communities, and are often cited to be worth saving because of their contributions to ecosystem health (Garibaldi & Turner, 2004). In addition to being crucial to the environment, salmon are also crucial in defining people’s individual and cultural identities (Garibaldi & Turner). Scholarly research and oral histories are available about the role salmon play in Native American culture (Anderson, 2005; Campbell & Butler, 2010; Gunther, 1926; Taylor III & Cronon, 1999). This indigenous knowledge is sometimes integrated into resource management strategies. For example, the Fraser Lake Indigenous Solutions Project in Canada incorporated Stellat’en First Nation’s traditional knowledge about salmon habitat into the management of the lake (Sanderson, 2010). This management strategy included interviewing members of the Stellat’en First Nation about traditional salmon management and incorporating information into public outreach materials and elementary school curriculum. The literature available about other, non-native people and salmon is less dense. This topic
needs to be broadened to include other groups who perceive salmon as part of their identities.

The lack of acknowledgment of people's perceptions of salmon and landscape change is what drew me to this research project. Having grown up in Washington State, I have known both native and non-native people who felt connected to salmon. I have witnessed the decline of salmon populations and how this decline has affected individuals and communities. Some have lost their livelihood as commercial fishing regulations continue to limit the allowable catch each year. Others have lost a way to relate to family and friends as sport fishing opportunities lack the excitement of years past as the "big ones" are harder to catch. Many fishing communities have lost a source of income as recreational anglers cease to visit. Port Angeles, the city bordering the Elwha, is one such example. In the 1990s, the annual fishing derby that had been held for 50 years ended due to lack of salmon. As salmon populations dwindle, places, such as Port Angeles, are visited less by people who want to see, catch, and/or experience salmon.

Research supports that dams are major contributors to the decline in salmon populations. These structures often prove to be deadly obstacles to spawning salmon (Lovett, 1999; Pejchar & Warner, 2001). Studies show that as the problems created by dams, such as environmental degradation, become increasingly evident worldwide, people are less likely to support building and relicensing dams (McCully, 2001; Pejchar & Warner). Removal is coming to be viewed as the best course of action for addressing these aging structures. By 2020, approximately 80 percent of the dams in the nation will be 50 years old; an age that the Association of State Dam Safety Officials states is the
maximum life expectancy of most dams (Pejchar & Warner). Research about dam removal highlights the controversy and conflict generated among different stakeholders (Lovett; McCully; Donahue, 1998; Johnson & Graber, 2002). As more dams are slated for removal, research projects such as this will supply resource managers with valuable tools for conducting studies on people’s perceptions of landscapes and their interests in and receptivity to future projects.

Literature available about salmon and landscape tends to focus on what Higgs (2005) called “restoration ecology,” which is a purely scientific approach to management issues. Higgs distinguished this from “ecological restoration” which is an interdisciplinary approach to management issues. Incorporating multiple perspectives into a project, including economic, social, and political, is key to developing comprehensive, effective management techniques that include positive relationships with stakeholders, those who live around or are otherwise affected by large-scale management projects (Born & Genskov, 1998; Higgs; Johnson & Graber, 2002; Kil, Holland, & Stein, 2010; Phalen, 2009). Such collaboration improves managers’ chances of eliciting support for projects. Managers must approach projects by integrating different perspectives because public involvement and satisfaction are fundamental in sustaining projects (Johnson & Graber), such as the ERR.

Stakeholder buy-in is necessary in order to not only initiate resource management projects, but sustain projects from beginning to end. In order to obtain this buy-in, resource managers have to understand where people are coming from—what their underlying interests and values are. These underlying interests and values refer to not
only people’s perceptions of the landscape, but to how people value the landscape in their own lives and identities. One of the results that emerged from this research project is that connections between key stakeholders and the Elwha River contributed to stakeholders’ individual identities and to the identity of the community as a whole. The Elwha River and its salmon are intricately woven into its surrounding community’s identity. For members within this community, the Elwha binds people to each other. The bonds between people and the landscape reflect the strength of the bonds within their community as stakeholders come together to manage the Elwha landscape and its resources.

Much literature supports the essential role of evaluating people’s perceptions of the landscape in managing resources (Davenport & Anderson; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2006; Kil et al.; Stedman, 2003). Attachments to a landscape can also inspire a sense of stewardship and/or protectiveness in stakeholders and communities towards resources (Davenport & Anderson, 2005; Kil et al.). A person’s sense of a place influences how he or she desires to see that place managed (Kil et al.; Pure, Dewes, & Roos, 2007). Through landscapes, people maintain and nurture their identities; therefore, changing a place is similar to changing parts of themselves. As such, fully understanding sense of place allows for better management of landscapes, and better integrating communities into project goals and outcomes.

Researchers often attempt to define sense of place as one of the following: perceptions people project onto the landscape; perceptions that the landscape inspires within people; or a combination of these two definitions (Lang, 1999; Smaldone, Harris,
& Sanyal, 2008; Stedman, 2003). The construct is complex as it consists of emotional attachments to a place as well as perceptions and ideas. Sense of place is not achieved by using just one of the five senses we possess; it is a tapestry woven together through experience and knowledge of places. Memory, time, and physical landscape are elements in people’s connections with place. Pinpointing these internal elements, such as the emotional and aesthetic values people attach to physical locations, assists in fully understanding this concept (Lang).

Attachments to landscape are not static, but dynamic, and change within people and communities over time (Davenport & Anderson, 2005; Lang, 1999). Researchers use qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches to untangle the web of emotions, memories, and experiences that shape people’s sense of place. A consensus on which method to use to account for people’s perspectives and incorporate them into management of resources does not exist. Therefore, resource managers find it challenging to integrate these connections into management strategies (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2006). For this reason, sense of place is often broken into subcategories that classify connections to determine how people are linked to places. These sub-categories include, place identity, place attachment, place dependence, and place satisfaction. Within the field of resource management, researchers often use quantitative methods, such as surveys, to examine perceptions of resources, and frequently choose to focus on one facet of sense of place. For example, Smaldone et al. (2008), highlighted the temporal aspect of sense of place, while Stedman (2003) focused on how aesthetics of a landscape influence connections.
Although quantitative methodologies enable researchers to sample a large group of stakeholders, these methods essentially reduce complex attachments to numbers and statistics. This approach oversimplifies the deep connections between people and resources. A qualitative approach takes into account the complexity of these connections, considers them holistically, and allows for openness to the intricacy and subjectivity of sense of place (Davenport & Anderson, 2005; Eisenhauer, Krannich, Blahna, 2000; Gunderson & Watson, 2007; Hay, 1998; Ryden, 1993; Schroeder, 1996; Stedman, 2003).

Qualitative studies allow a level of flexibility to account for dynamic connections between people and resources. Researchers often use interviews to identify themes in perceptions of the landscape (Davenport & Anderson, 2005). For example, Davenport and Anderson used in-depth interviews to examine stakeholders’ perceptions of landscape change on the Niobrara River in Nebraska. They extracted themes from loosely structured interviews and analyzed how these themes were interconnected and, in some cases, dependent on each other. From this analysis, Davenport and Anderson developed a “Web of Meaning” that visually displayed the connectivity of the components within stakeholders’ sense of place. This study used a holistic approach toward a resource management issue. In doing so, the researchers extracted deep underlying connections between stakeholders and changes to a river resource.

Davenport and Anderson’s (2005) study provided the basis for my research. Knowledge about themes that resonate with community members can be used to tailor resource management policies that elicit public support, thus, increasing the sustainability of projects. The purpose of my research is to examine the connections people make
between meanings of salmon and meanings of place, and to do so in a manner that could be used by resource managers facing current management challenges. Changes to the Elwha landscape will continue to impact current and future generations for decades. The more information the agencies managing the ERR have about how people perceive and are affected by the ERR, the better equipped agencies will be to address future concerns.

The following questions were used to guide my research, but were not the questions used during stakeholder interviews. I asked participants about their experiences with salmon and the Elwha in order to understand the following broad questions:

- Prior to dam removal and river restoration, what were the connections between key stakeholders and the Elwha River?
- What connects people and salmon?
- How does anticipating the return of salmon, a culturally significant species, influence key stakeholders’ connections with the Elwha River?

The participants interviewed for this research were selected based on their involvement in the ERR. Because my goal was to reveal many different ways of thinking about salmon and the Elwha, interviews were conducted within a loosely structured format. Per Central Washington University Human Subject Review Committee guidelines, I obtained Exemption Status\(^1\) to conduct interviews with key ERR

\(^1\)"[This research] was screened for exemption status according to the policies of CWU and the provisions of the applicable federal regulations. [The] research was found to be subject to CWU oversight
stakeholders. I interviewed ERR key stakeholders, such as tribal members, NPS staff, and Port Angeles community members from June 2011 to February 2012. During this time, I interviewed 18 participants and conducted 30 interviews.

The following chapters focus on the conceptual framework used to extract meanings from participants' narratives. Within Chapter II, historical background of the Elwha River is discussed to contextualize participants' connections with the landscape. In Chapters III and IV, a review of relevant literature is provided, as well as critiques of previous sense of place methodologies and how these research projects frame the methodology used within this research project. Chapters V, VI, and VII discuss participants’ sense of place regarding the Elwha and how these connections change in response to landscape change. Throughout these chapters, the concepts of memory, symbols, and nostalgia are employed to understand meanings of salmon and the river embedded within participants’ narratives, thus, revealing the implications landscape change has on participants’ sense of place of the Elwha.

As more rivers are slated for restoration and salmon populations continue to decline, it is important to understand the cultural implications of loss and recovery of resources. The ERR project provides a prime opportunity to examine the relationships between community stakeholders and salmon, and how these connections influence people’s perceptions of the landscape. The themes identified in this study can be used by resource managers to build and nurture sense of place for other communities and understand the role of key resources in this process.

but exempt from federal regulation because it involves collecting interview data from volunteer adult participants and the responses could not harm participants if made public” (Stacy, 2011, p. 1).
CHAPTER II
HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE ELWHA RIVER

Introduction

In order to understand the connections among people, salmon, and the Elwha, I first address the historical context of people and the river. For more than 150 years, the Elwha has been at the center of a struggle among Native Americans, homesteaders, businesspersons, entrepreneurs, politicians, commercial and sport anglers, recreationalists, environmentalists, and many others for access to and use of the landscape and its resources. This struggle has been a competition over Elwha resources, such as water, timber, wildlife, and, in particular, salmon. To each person and group, the Elwha and its salmon represent something different. Many of the participants interviewed for this research have lived on or near the Elwha their entire lives. Tribal members, for example, can trace their connections to the Elwha through generations. Because participants’ individual and collective histories are steeped in the Elwha, it is important to recount how the history of the landscape, salmon, and surrounding communities are intertwined.

The Elwha

The Olympic Mountains spiral from the center of the Olympic Peninsula into numerous watersheds, including the Elwha (Figure 1). These rivers pass through temperate rainforests before draining into surrounding waterbodies, such as the Pacific...
Ocean and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. As the largest watershed on the Olympic Peninsula, the Elwha provided a wealth of resources to inhabitants of the region. Before the construction of the dams, the Elwha River was home to one of the most abundant runs of salmon in the Pacific Northwest (Duda, Freilich, & Schreiner, 2008). The fish, which included Chinook, Coho, chum, pink, and sockeye salmon, as well as steelhead, spawned up the Elwha and its numerous tributaries year round (Duda et al.).

Figure 1: The Elwha River and surrounding communities (National Park Service, n.d.).

It is estimated that fish have been spawning on the Olympic Peninsula for at least ten thousand years (Lichatowich, 1999). As an ecological keystone species, salmon have
defined the Elwha River ecosystem. Ecological keystone species are bases of ecosystems, providing support for other species within those systems (Garibaldi & Turner, 2004). The Elwha provides a diverse habitat for other species, such as black bears (*Ursus americanus*), Roosevelt elk (*Cervus canadensis roosevelti*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) that are nourished by the cycle of salmon returning to spawn (Duda et al., 2008).

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe has long depended on the Elwha watershed for its resources. They describe their people as having lived on the Northern Olympic Peninsula for millennia (“Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe,” n.d.). For many Native American tribes, such as the Klallam living along Pacific Northwest waterways, the cycle of salmon defined their way of life. The Klallam people are divided into three tribes: the Lower Elwha Klallam, the Port Gamble S’Klallam, and the Jamestown S’Klallam (Wray, 1997). Rituals and prohibitions surrounded the catch and use of salmon. For example, according to Gunther (1926), the Klallam had a taboo relating to salmon and the birth of twins. The Klallam tried to tell the father of twins not to fish in the Dungeness River. Despite the warning, the father fished the river and pink salmon did not spawn in the river for twenty years.

The traditional way of life for the Klallam began to change with the arrival of the first European settlers. Contact with natives living along the mouth of the Elwha River was recorded in the late 1700s by Manuel Quimper, a Spanish ensign who was dispatched to explore Vancouver Island and the surrounding area (Johnson, 1997). Regular contact was established by fur traders who came by land and water during the
following decades. It is estimated that 2,400 Klallam lived in these areas in 1780 (Johnson). The Klallam were not immune to the effects of disease brought by settlers, and their population had dwindled to 926 people by 1855 (Olympic Peninsula Intertribal Cultural Advisory Committee, 2003).

During this time, Washington Territory Governor Isaac Stevens spearheaded the signing of the majority of the treaties with territory tribes. The 1855 Treaty of Point No Point limited native ownership of land for the Klallam and other tribes, but established native fishing rights. As an integral part of native society, the right and access to fish were of paramount concern during this time period (Johnson, 1997). Ezra Meeker, who lived during this time and was familiar with the treaty processes, described the native perspective on fishing:

It is to be noted that but few of the fish Indians, the Indians who lived on the Sound, went on the warpath. They did not care for land. As one of the Clallam chiefs put it, he was willing to sell his land. All he wanted was the right of fishing. (Johnson, 1997, p. 20)

At this time, non-native settlers focused more on the Northern Olympic Peninsula’s timber than on its salmon. In this respect, the Lower Elwha Klallam maintained access to a healthy population of salmon that other native inhabitants across the Pacific Northwest did not experience. By the mid-1800s, governments in the Pacific Northwest were already calling for conservation of the species. Most of these efforts
focused on maintaining populations to support continued commercial harvest and economic benefit of non-native townships.

For the next 30 years, the Elwha salmon remained relatively unaffected as settlers focused on other resources. Eventually the lumber industry spurred large migrations of people to the area and solidified the conversion of forests into townships and homesteads. Agriculture was the primary source of land use for many years. The Elwha remained remote and fairly untouched, and many Port Angeles residents were not familiar with the river valley. For Port Angeles, significant growth did not occur until the completion of the Northern Pacific Railway's transcontinental Seattle terminus in 1883, which transported thousands of people to the region (Johnson, 1997). The increase in population led to greater demand for land and the Elwha landscape began to be divided among people for various uses. For example, in 1886, ten Klallam families gained trust patents to approximately 1,300 acres of land near the Elwha (Wray, 1997).

The 1890s marked the beginning of the rise of the Port Angeles timber industry. Pulp, paper, and lumber were primary sources of economic stimulus as mills began to sprout along the area's waterways, including the Elwha. During this time, the U.S. Fish Commission began to encourage salmon industry business leaders to expand their operations into Western Washington. The railroads provided access that had been previously denied to the booming Pacific Northwest commercial salmon industry. As early as the late 1880s, 43-million pounds of salmon were processed nearby in Columbia River canneries (Egan, 1991). By 1895 the salmon industry in the Pacific Northwest generated $9 million in capital each year (Johnson, 1997). In the early 1890s, Port
Angeles joined this industry as its first canneries were established. As more people became aware of the abundant salmon runs, the fame of Elwha salmon spread across the United States. For example, the following excerpt, entitled “Big Haul of Salmon,” first appeared in the *Portland Oregonian* and then in the *The New York Times* in 1893:

Salmon have been running up the rivers and streams in the vicinity of Port Angeles in enormous numbers during the last few weeks. In one haul of his net on the Elwha, S. Goodwin caught 3,000 large salmon. It took a team of horses and eight men to drag them out of the water, and it took nine trips of a large farm wagon to carry them away (“Big haul of salmon,” 1893).

In the early 1900s, the number of homesteads in the Elwha increased, and included Humes Ranch, which still stands as a historic structure in Olympic National Park. By 1909, Clallam County employed 327 people in its salmon fisheries. One hundred seventy six of these employees were native, which was more than any other county in Washington State (Johnson, 1997).

Although Port Angeles was experiencing significantly more growth than before the railroads were in place, industry was relatively small when compared to the rest of the state. Timber was still the major industry of the area with numerous sawmills operating in Port Angeles in 1909. Port Angeles had the resources, but not the means to process timber in quantities that could compete with the rest of the Pacific Northwest. This status changed with the prospect of building a dam on the lower Elwha River a few years later.
The hydroelectricity from this dam would power the largest sawmill to date in Port Angeles. Combined with the railroads that had now snaked their way onto the peninsula, this dam would open up the area to more people and commerce.

Thomas T. Aldwell was a local businessman who had lived in Port Angeles since 1890, and, in addition to his other holdings, owned land on the Elwha River. By 1910, Aldwell and his partner, George A. Glines, had purchased the land needed to build a dam and they began construction (Johnson, 1997). Accidents haunted the project, including the death of at least one person and a devastating blowout in 1912 that caused damage to farms and infrastructure downstream. Tribal members recalled salmon being swept up by flood waters and stranded on the banks of the Elwha as the river subsided. By February of 1913, the Elwha Dam was completed and Port Angeles was receiving power. In 1916, the Zellerbach Paper Company purchased the dam, power plant, and transmission lines with the intent of powering a pulp mill. These events led to years of growth for the pulp, paper, and timber industry in the area.

Although the local economy boomed because of the dam, Elwha salmon populations were devastated. Built approximately five miles from the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the lower Elwha Dam blocked anadromous fish populations from 35 miles of mainstream habitat and many miles of tributary habitat. The *Olympic Leader* reported the following in 1911:

> Hundreds of them have gathered just below the dam during the last few days until they are packed in together like a school of herring, or sardines in a box. Every
few moments a big fellow makes a jump clear of the water that shoots out of the flume as tho from a hydraulic nozzle and strikes square in the flume above, only to be thrown back to the pool below. (Johnson, 1997, p. 72)

In addition, Lake Aldwell, the reservoir created by the dam, flooded the place that the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe considered to be the site from which their people originated. A Klallam elder stated that there is a spot near the lower dam where there is a big flat rock with holes in it. If a person reaches into the hole and pulls something out, like a certain kind of shell, this indicates what he or she can expect in the future, such as wealth or good fortune (Wray, 1997). In addition to flooding this creation site, the dams flooded a village site along the river (Wray). Beaches were lost and the Elwha estuary dwindled as sediment that usually replenished these areas piled behind the dam and beneath the reservoir. This change eliminated important habitat for plants, shellfish, and animals, limiting the harvesting practices of the Klallam (Wray) and community members who relied on salmon (Anonymous, personal communication, June 29, 2011). The commercial fishing industry also suffered because of dwindling populations. In the early 1900s, the competition over declining salmon runs intensified and state legislators began to heavily regulate fishing practices, such as limiting harvesting grounds and times. Consequently, fishing outside tribal reservations was made illegal. These restrictions were devastating to the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe who did not have a reservation at the time. In response, tribal members fished illegally and were often arrested. Lack of access
to resources that had been the foundation of their society forced many tribal members into poverty (Johnson, 1997).

A decade after the completion of the lower dam, demands for power for the expanding timber industry in Port Angeles were far greater than the single dam could provide. Construction of the second dam began in May of 1926 and was completed in a year. For Zellerbach, as well as others who saw the potential for Port Angeles to become a pulp and paper manufacturing mecca, water was the key to accomplishing this goal as large amounts of water were needed for manufacturing processes. In 1929, companies secured 45 million gallons of Elwha water daily for these processes (Johnson, 1997). The acquisition of water resources enabled companies seeking to capitalize in the pulp, paper, and timber industry to expand their enterprises. New plants and warehouses were built. Timber was cut down in larger quantities and at faster rates. The bay in Port Angeles was dredged as a new wharf was built. Thus, the Elwha became the backbone of economic growth for the area as it provided the electricity and water that the surrounding community need.

Although the hydroelectric projects increased available power and recreational opportunities, it became apparent early on that the prolific Elwha salmon runs were declining. The response to this growing problem was to build hatcheries. Numerous groups, including private organizations and the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, first attempted to conserve populations with varying degrees of success. The hatchery constructed by Aldwell shortly after completion of the Elwha Dam was abandoned by 1922 (“History of the Elwha,” 2012). By the 1930s, populations had decreased to a point
that the Port Angeles canneries abandoned the Elwha for more prosperous rivers (Johnson, 1997).

Although the fisheries declined, Port Angeles began to reap economic benefit from recreationalists visiting the peninsula, including the Elwha River Valley as early as the 1900s, but the dams added more attractions for tourists in the 1920s and 30s. People came to hike, camp, and fish. The lakes created by the dams were advertised as good sources of recreational fishing and people used the water bodies for trout fishing. Olympic National Park (ONP) was established in 1938 and eventually designated an International Biosphere Reserve and a World Heritage Site (DOI, 1995). It now draws millions of visitors each year (National Park Service, 2009). The Elwha River originates in the heart of ONP in the Olympic Mountains with its watershed making up 20% of the park’s area (Duda et al., 2008). Visitors and residents alike frequent the river valley, including the Olympic Hot Springs.

The decline in the Elwha’s salmon runs inspired recreational anglers to voice their concerns over the dams’ impacts on salmon into the 1950s and 1960s. These voices added new pressure on management agencies to start hatchery operations once again. By 1975, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife was operating a state-run hatchery for Elwha Chinook (“Elwha Hatchery,” 2011). The Lower Elwha Klallam people were not included in this discussion. Although the tribe gained federal recognition in 1968, with a reservation near the mouth of the Elwha on land that originally had been put into a trust for a few Elwha families (Johnson, 1997), management agencies prevented tribal members from fishing the Elwha.
In 1974, a landmark court ruling in *United States vs. State of Washington*, known as the Boldt Decision, confirmed treaty rights of many tribes to 50 percent of the harvestable amount of fish in their “usual and accustomed” places (United States v. Washington, 1974). For the Lower Elwha Klallam, this meant management of and entitlement to a dwindling salmon fishery on the Elwha. Shortly after in 1978, the Klallam built their first fish hatchery on the Elwha (Wray, 1997).

In 1973, the Glines Canyon Dam, which had a 50-year license, became eligible for relicensing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The Elwha Dam had never been licensed and also was eligible for licensing. Crown Zellerbach Corporation submitted the Elwha Dam’s licensing application in 1968. In response, both the Department of the Interior and the Klallam filed “motions to intervene” (Johnson, 1997, p. 124). Loss of natural features, such as log jams, the estuary, fisheries, and spawning habitat, reduced water quality, and the presence of a hydroelectric dam within its boundaries, inspired ONP to seek restoration of the river. Glines Canyon Dam was part of ONP as those lands had been included within the park boundary in 1940. Despite growing opposition to the dams in the late 1970s and 1980s, the structures remained in operation. In 1988, Daishowa America, a subsidiary of the Japanese company Daishowa International, purchased the mill from James River Corporation, formerly Crown Zellerbach. As mentioned earlier, in 1995, the salmon fishing derby held in Port Angeles for more than 50 years was canceled as there were no longer enough salmon to make the event worth the effort (Johnson).
By 1990, groups supporting the restoration of Elwha fish populations included the NPS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, and National Marine Fisheries Service of the Department of Commerce. Research conducted by these organizations supported the removal of the dams as a viable option for river and fisheries restoration; however, residents of the Northern Olympic Peninsula remained divided. Many supporters of dam removal saw the project as an opportunity to bring back salmon, restore the river to how it once was, and restore a missing dimension to Klallam culture.

Dam removal opponents lamented the loss of a power source and loss of recreational opportunities if the lakes were drained. For example, in the early 1990s a group of local Port Angeles residents formed an organization called Rescue Elwha Area Lakes (REAL). The group members made and distributed videos, and were vocal in opposing any dam removal project (Anonymous, personal communication, August 23, 2011). The group described dam removal as disastrous for the economy and the environment. By the mid-1990s, the hydroelectric projects were no longer a significant source of power for the community, providing only 12 percent of local energy (Johnson, 1997). Nevertheless, concerns were raised over losing the dams as they did supply 40 percent of the power to Daishowa's mill in Port Angeles. Loss of power could equal loss of jobs.

In 1992, Congress passed the Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act which called for the full restoration of the ecosystem and native fisheries. This was also the year that the tribe became a self-governance tribe (Wray, 1997). The Elwha Act
itself did not require removal of the two dams; however, in 1996 the NPS, as the lead agency of the project, completed the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and maintained that removing the 136 foot Elwha Dam and the 210 foot Glines Canyon Dam was the best option for fulfilling the Elwha Act’s provisions. The Elwha Act stipulated that the dams could be purchased by the federal government for $29.5 million (Elwha River Ecosystem, 1992). Actual demolition of the dams would require additional funds. Land acquisition, natural resource projects, and the building of a new tribal hatchery were undertaken by the NPS, the tribe, and other agencies. The NPS was responsible for several other mitigation projects, including two water treatment plants, as the Elwha supplies Port Angeles with drinking water (Gottlieb, 2009). The power used by the Daishowa Mill that would be lost with the demolition of the dams would be supplied by the Bonneville Power Administration (Johnson, 1997).

The Elwha River Restoration, as the project came to be called, was unique in that the removal of the dams was expected to result in the restoration of an entire ecosystem. Salmon were the key to this restoration. The approximately 3,000 fish that remained in the Elwha were expected to swell to hundreds of thousands of fish within decades of dam removal. From the NPS to the Klallam, those in support of the ERR promoted the return of salmon as the return of a natural ecosystem.

Although the NPS was moving ahead with ERR, progress dragged as agencies struggled to acquire funding during the Clinton and Bush administrations. It was not until 2000 that the Bureau of Reclamation assumed operation and maintenance of both dams (“History of the Elwha,” 2012). Nearly twenty years after Congress passed the Elwha
Act, dam removal officially began in September 2011. Local groups, including the NPS, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, and city of Port Angeles, organized a festival to mark the removal. Four hundred people, including Lower Elwha Klallam Tribal representatives, community members, and agency representatives, such as Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, attended a dam removal ceremony at the lower dam in September 2011. As attendees walked across the dam, many looked over the side to see Chinook salmon pooling at the dam’s base.

Although the vehement opposition of the 1980s and 1990s had dwindled by the time of dam removal, controversy continued to surround the project. Concerns focused on loss of the dams as a power source and changes to the landscape. River flow and course were expected to change. Lake Mills, Lake Aldwell, the dams, and powerhouses would cease to exist. The public raised concerns about the cost of the project, the expected completion date, the loss of lakes, the loss of a source of green energy, and the use of government funds. First estimated to cost approximately $119 million in 1999, as of 2011, the ERR was expected to cost more than $320 million (Callis, 2011).

In February 2012, a few months after removal began, four fish conservancy groups filed suit against project agencies and the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe for releasing hatchery steelhead in the Elwha. Part of this effort was supplemented by the $16.4 million Klallam hatchery completed in 2011, which replaced the original tribal hatchery built in 1978 ("Timeline of the Elwha River," 2011). This facility was constructed to raise Coho, pink, chum, and steelhead. The groups maintained that the agencies were not using the best science available to restore the ecosystem and fisheries.
The conservancy groups cited that hatchery fish would infect healthy populations of native steelhead, which were listed under the Endangered Species Act, with disease and that these hatchery fish would not be as viable as native stock (Callis, 2012).

In addition, sediment release from the two reservoirs was of ongoing concern. Researchers expected the ERR to result in the largest sediment release into coastal waters in recorded history (Randall, 2012). It was estimated that approximately 20 million cubic yards of sediment was in Lake Mills and approximately 4 million cubic yards in Lake Aldwell (Randall). Although the ERR was well underway as of 2012, people continued to express concern about how the ERR will affect the landscape and the salmon’s chances of returning.¹

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¹ It is important to note that the use of the word “return” is deliberate in this project. As discussed in later chapters, most participants anticipated salmon and the Elwha to return to healthy populations and a natural state following dam removal. This implies that most participants considered resources to have existed previously, with the potential to be restored, and these resources only needed to be presented with the opportunity to do so.
CHAPTER III
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section reviews previous studies dedicated to sense of place in order to outline how researchers have examined the concept and to explain those elements that aided in framing my methodology. Sense of place is complex, as are the approaches used to investigate it. There is no universal way to describe and evaluate connections between people and the landscape. The connections one feels with a place have many different names, including sense of place, rootedness, and place attachment. Overall, the term sense of place is the most widely accepted definition of these kinds of connections. Sense of place represents the relationship between humans and their surrounding environment (Basso, 1996; Lang, 1999; Stedman, 2003).

In recent years, resource managers have become increasingly aware of the important role sense of place plays in landscape management, and the construct has been the focus of numerous studies (Davenport & Anderson, 2005; Stedman, 2003; Kil et al., 2010; Lang, 1999; Smaldone et al., 2008; Pejchar & Warner, 2001). As sense of place is an internal, complex construct that entwines itself into people’s identities, those elements that define ourselves, such as emotions, memories, and experiences, are important to discuss in relation to the phenomenon. In the following discussions, I examine previous sense of place research in order to provide a framework for investigating how people’s
perceptions of the Elwha are affected by anticipated changes to the landscape, and what implications changes in sense of place have for resource management projects.

Sense of Place and the Landscape

Much of the sense of place research defines place as more than location; it is imbued with meanings and values (Basso, 1996; Casey, 1996; Lang, 1996; Kahn, 1996; Stedman, 2003; Stewart, 1996; Tuan, 1977). These meanings and values are dynamic and subjective. According to Tuan, connecting with a place relies heavily on the human body’s needs and senses. As we use our senses to become aware of where we are, we become more knowledgeable about our environment. This knowing changes meaningless, undefined space into a defined, known place (Tuan). In order for locations to become places, people need to infuse them with meaning. Without definition, places can be lost. As Casey (1996) described, this loss of place results in a “void.” This point is important for my research. As the Elwha landscape changes, people will be forced to interact with it in different ways because they will no longer be able to experience the landscape as they once did, which can result in a loss of Elwha as place.

As humans, we are perpetually arranging our world and, thus, interacting with it (Relph, 1976; Ryden, 1993; Tuan, 1997). Relph makes the important point that our choices about how we interact with and arrange our world are influenced by both individual motivations and societal pressures (Relph). While our own bodies and senses inform us of how we perceive the world around us, these choices are heavily influenced
by culture. The management and manipulation of landscapes is an example of how we, as humans, build and define places around us based on individual and collective needs and desires. Greider and Garkovich (1994) described landscapes as the following:

“Landscapes” are the symbolic environments created by human acts of conferring meaning to nature and the environment, of giving the environment definition and form from a particular angle of vision and through a special filter of values and beliefs. Every landscape is a symbolic environment. These landscapes reflect our self-definitions that are grounded in culture. (p. 1)

Within the field of geography, specifically, human geography, “cultural landscape” often refers to human-produced and manipulated places and their features. These cultural landscapes could be cities with their culturally relevant buildings and streets, or parks with their trees and ponds. As Kucan (1998) described, “Landscapes are the results of reciprocal interaction between the space and the individuals and the society, who change the space and inscribe their history on it through their action” (p. 261). Landscapes and their features become symbols for various meanings and, as symbols, they are consistently used by people to express and maintain their identities. For example, for many residents of and visitors to Washington State, Mount Rainier is a symbol of the Pacific Northwest region. A place can define how a person not only thinks of his or herself, but how others think of that person (Basso, 1996; Davenport & Anderson, 2005; Kahn, 1996; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983).
However, even those landscapes that are considered pristine, which do not display the clear mark of human reformation, are cultural landscapes. We do not have to plant flowers or build a city in order for a landscape to be part of our culture. For example, focusing on language and places, Basso (1996) provided anecdotal accounts of how language, culture, and places of the Western Apache were intertwined. Place names (toponyms) served as descriptions of the places themselves, and also held layered meanings for the people connected to them. The stories connected to these places were embedded with moral codes. The phrase, “places help people to ‘live right,’” invoked this process of recalling not only the places, but the social guides attached to them (Basso). Certain places reminded the people of how they should behave in order to live within and as part of their culture. Place not only provides opportunities for groups to unite as a culture, but provides opportunities of self-reflection for individuals (Basso). Place is where individuals learn their significant roles in society (Basso; Kahn, 1996; Proshanksy et al., 1983). They are backdrops for shared meanings that can bind individuals and cultures to the place itself, and each other (Basso; Johnson, 1998; Kahn; Taylor, 1981). For example, the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island connect people to themselves through perhaps recalling their own personal history and also perhaps connecting people to each other through sharing knowledge and experience of the place.

A person’s sense of place is not fixed, but can change for various reasons and at various times in that person’s life. Elements such as time, aesthetics, and memory influence sense of place. While one researcher may focus on the temporal relationship to sense of place and another focuses on the aesthetics or physical appearance of place,
these studies add to the common vein that runs through all sense of place research within resource management: various elements, such as emotional, physical, and psychological components, comprise people's sense of place. In particular, the elements of time spent in a place, its appearance, or available physical features, and the memories connected to place were prevalent topics within sense of place literature. Based on this literature, I anticipated that certain elements would emerge in stakeholders' narratives. I discuss these elements in the following sections.

*Time Spent in a Place*

Research suggests that the more time one spends in a place, the stronger his or her relationship to that place may be (Davenport & Anderson, 2005; Lang, 1999; Smaldone et al., 2008; Tuan, 1977). For example, Smaldone et al. used a mixed method approach of questionnaires and interviews to evaluate the effect of time on subjects' connections to special places within Grand Teton National Park and Jackson Hole, WY. Quantitative methods were used to rank levels of association with the places on a scale of low, medium, and high, while qualitative methods examined why and how these connections were influenced by time spent in a place. Researchers found that people who spent more time within the park expressed a deeper attachment. As more time passed, people participated in more events, created more memories and participated in more socially significant situations that altered the meaning of the place.
While this study suggests that time was a primary influence on sense of place, it is important to acknowledge why and how these connections deepened. Participants within Smaldone et al.’s (2008) study cited that increased time led to an increase in social activities. It is less about the influence of time itself, and more about what happens during that time that influences connections. This is important to note within my research as many stakeholders have spent considerable amount of time, sometimes their entire lives, living on or near the Elwha. By just considering increased time in a place as the element that creates a strong sense of place, connections with residents of the Elwha could be considered strong; however, this assumption could potentially lead to missing deeper reasons for those connections.

On the other hand, people do not always have to spend time in a place to feel a connection with it. Tuan (1977) gives the example of an ancestral home, to which descendants may feel a strong connection with a motherland they have never visited. For example, you could hear about a place throughout your lifetime from an older family member and/or hear one story that sparks a connection between you and an unfamiliar place. Tuan’s research is important for my project in that participants who may not have lived on the Elwha their whole lives, could have strong connections with the landscape. Also, Tuan makes a crucial point about how sense of place is learned through our own personal preferences and those of others. Within my research project, participants’ knowledge about the Elwha before the dams was not acquired through personal, direct experience, but learned through others’ accounts. In this sense, collective memory of the
Elwha River played a crucial role in their perceptions of and connections to the landscape.

Memory

Memory is fundamental to the concept of sense of place (Basso, 1996; Johnson, 1998; Smaldone et al., 2008; Stewart, 1996). According to Johnson (1998), places, “provide the background upon which ideas, feelings, and memories are formed” (p. 5). An example of this is someone’s perception of his or her hometown. Although perhaps nondescript when viewed with the limited experience of a visitor, to a native it is rich with experience and memory. Thus, the town’s meaning to natives is vastly different than to visitors. Tuan (1977) states the following:

Hometown is an intimate place. It may be plain, lacking in architectural distinction and historical glamour, yet we resent an outsider’s criticism of it. Its ugliness does not matter; it did not matter when we were children, climbed its trees, peddled our bikes on its cracked pavements, and swam in its pond. (p. 144)

These memories linked to places are formed by individuals, but are also part of a collective memory. Much of the research about sense of place focuses on connections between people and places for individuals. While it is important to account for individual perspectives and reasons, collective memories associated with a place can also be
considered. These memories are shared, passed down from generation to generation, and, even when not directly experienced by individuals, can still have a profound impact on their identities. Collective memory extends beyond individuals to represent cultures themselves. These memories may not have resulted from our direct experiences, but as they are part of the groups in which we are members, these memories become our own. For example, in her research about the attachments between African Americans and recreation areas, Johnson (1998) discussed that although younger generations of African Americans may not have witnessed violent racial acts, such as lynchings, the memories of those events, passed down by older generations, influenced younger generations’ perceptions of places and, thus, influenced these people to avoid places that represented certain memories.

The influence of personal and collective memory is important in my research as it has a powerful influence on people’s sense of place. Memory and other people’s experiences of places can influence how we, ourselves, remember and choose to experience those places. Many studies about sense of place within the field of resource management do not acknowledge memory as an influence in sense of place, let alone incorporate it into studies. Often these studies focus on people’s direct experience with places. Although a person may not directly experience events of the past, Johnson’s (1998) research demonstrates that memories of indirect experiences, as passed from one person to another, do influence how people choose to experience the landscape. It is a gross oversight within sense of place research to exclude memory’s influence on sense of
place as memory plays a significant role in the connections we develop with places and, ultimately, how we choose to interact with places.

The Physical Landscape

Sense of place is a cultural construction that relies heavily on the physical features of the landscape (Smaldone et al., 2008; Stedman, 2003). This is a significant point with respect to the Elwha as the physical landscape is expected to change dramatically because of the ERR. Beckley et al. (2007) examined the influence of biophysical attributes on people’s sense of place. Although the researchers acknowledged the influence of sociocultural attributes on sense of place, the purpose of their research project was to specifically examine the role of biophysical features in influencing people’s attachments to the landscape. The researchers employed a mixed-method approach by using both data categorization and ethnographic methods to evaluate sense of place. Research focused on four communities in western Newfoundland and western Alberta. Subjects were given cameras and asked to take pictures of special places. Researchers combined this data with qualitative data to develop an analysis of residents’ sense of place. Data was divided into categories to represent subjects’ sense of place. Results indicated that biophysical attributes, such as forests, influenced attachments to the landscape. Approximately one third of participants’ responses about their attachments to particular places focused on the biophysical attributes of those places.
Although the physical attributes and/or condition of places influence sense of place, it is a fallacy to suggest that aesthetics is the sole element that influences the construct. People may feel better about a place if it looks a certain way, but, in most cases, the condition of the physical landscape influences sense of place by determining what kind of experiences, if any, can occur within a landscape. For example, a lake may disappear to be replaced by a barren, brown crater, thus affecting the aesthetics of that place. But to the people connected to that place, a loss of place is felt not only because of the change in the physical landscape, but because they can no longer partake in experiences the landscape provided.

Role of Sense of Place in Resource Management

Although researchers readily acknowledge the need for incorporating sense of place into resource management projects, there is no consensus on how best to examine and apply the construct. When examining sense of place, many researchers within the field of resource management categorize people’s sense of place into four sub-domains: place dependency, place identity, place attachment, and place satisfaction. Place dependency identifies the strong bonds between a person and a place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2006) and the capacity of a place to fulfill particular physical and/or psychological needs (Davenport & Anderson, 2005). For example, the following participant explained how the Elwha helped him figure out who he was as a person:
[The Elwha helps you] come up with some worthwhile sort of expectations of yourself, which I don’t know if I could’ve figured out those things if I didn’t have the opportunity to come out here on this river. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011)

Place identity, on the other hand, is more concerned with the symbolic relationship between people and places. It concerns the symbolic meanings of a place and is based on the idea that places influence both self and group identity (Davenport & Anderson, 2005). For example, the following participant described how the Elwha was an integral component to the activities that brought him and his friends together as a group: “We’d do everything from coming down to this very spot a lot of times after school going fishing, jumping in, or going down to the mouth of the river and go surfing” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011). Research suggests that the constructs of place identity and dependency are closely related, but not overlapping (Davenport & Anderson; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992). Place dependency can refer to a place fulfilling needs, such as physical and economic needs.

Place attachment is the most widely recognized and studied sub-category of sense of place (Davenport & Anderson, 2005). Whereas place dependence is a bond between people and places, and place identity is a symbolic bond, place attachment is an emotional component (Eisenhauer et al., 2000; Johnson, 1998; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Proshansky et al., 1983; Smaldone et al., 2008; Stedman, 2003). For example, one
participant and long-time Port Angeles resident described how the Elwha was unique to all other rivers and areas by comparing it to other places in Washington State by saying, “There’s not anything like this” (Anonymous, personal communication, June 29, 2011).

Many studies about sense of place categorize place identity and place dependence as sub-categories of place attachment, both of which influence the level of attachment one feels with a place (Smaldone et al.; Stedman, 2003).

Place satisfaction is another category of sense of place, although it is less widely discussed (Stedman, 2003). Place satisfaction is the degree to which a person is satisfied with the quality of the place (Mesch & Manor, 1998). Although related to place attachment, place satisfaction is distinctly different. A person could have a high level of attachment to a place, but be unsatisfied with it (Stedman). For example, one participant described the Elwha as a dead ecosystem, but then continued to highlight how he enjoyed hiking in the Elwha to experience the wildlife and vegetation. The reverse of this is true as well in that a person could be very satisfied with a place, but not strongly attached. As the construct of sense of place itself, these sub-domains evolve as places and people change.

For example, using Vilas County of Wisconsin, Stedman (2003) studied people’s sense of place of an area’s numerous lakes that experienced a boom in shoreline development. Stedman used place attachment and the less widely recognized variable, place satisfaction, to examine sense of place. Respondents were presented with questions such as, “how important is your lake to you,” and asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement using a seven-point scale. Stedman found place attachment to be directly
affected by the condition of the physical environment. A changing physical landscape, such as a less-clear lake, led to fewer experiences involving that resource, such as fishing or sight-seeing; experiences that can add both individual and social meaning to a place. With increased development, property owners felt less attached to the lake as a place to escape, but felt more attached as a place that provided more recreational opportunities. The meanings behind their attachment changed, but Stedman found that their level of attachment was relatively unchanged.

In many cases, research within resource management about the use of a landscape and its connection to sense of place focuses on the experiences people have in a landscape and the connections these experiences build between people and a place. This could include using the land as a source of recreation, livelihood, and/or escape. In the case of Stedman’s (2003) study, people’s satisfaction with the landscape depended on what experiences, such as recreational activities, they could partake in while using the lake and surrounding area. The mission of many public land agencies, including the NPS, is to make land available to people and encourage use of the managed landscape. As landscapes change, so do people’s connections with those places, which, ultimately, impacts the use and/or visitation of those places. This supports the purpose of my research in that accounting for participants’ connections with the Elwha gives insight into relationships with Elwha resources. As the majority of the Elwha is within the borders of Olympic National Park, many study participants’ relationships with the Elwha have developed through the use of public land. As the landscape changes, so too can
participants' relationships with the Elwha. These preferences can be powerful influences in management processes as the public and agencies negotiate land use.

For example, Payton, Fulton, and Anderson (2005) used a collaborative framework to assess how place attachment influenced civic action levels at Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge in Minnesota. Researchers examined emotional and recreational ties to the refuge, along with trust levels people displayed toward the management agency. Researchers found that increased place attachment to the resource corresponded with an increased level of involvement in the resource management process. This research recommended that agencies integrate sense of place analysis into management processes to promote a level of trust between those users and management entities. While Payton et al.'s study supports that attachments to the landscape are important to include in the resource management process, they do not provide implementation techniques or suggestions; a widespread problem in the field. Providing not only results about people's attachments with the Elwha, but recommendations for how my results can be used, will add to sense of place literature.

*Landscape Change and Sense of Place within Resource Management*

Humans are not passive observers of places. For as long as people have been in existence, they have been changing the landscapes around them. In recent times, a growing trend has emerged in resource management: restoring landscapes to their “natural” state. Throughout history, humans have molded the concept of nature into its
current definition; a place revered and supposedly devoid of human impact (Cronon, 1996). Dam removal and ecosystem restoration provide a pertinent example of this renaturalizing, or beautifying, of the environment. Our current attitudes toward the environment are, in essence, responses to previous alterations of landscapes. The Elwha dam issue epitomizes these historical shifts. From harnessing the wild, to exploiting it, to finally "rewilding" it, the Elwha River has been subject to all these differing wilderness attitudes.

Whether industrializing or rewilding landscape, changes to a landscape can have a profound impact on those connected to that place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Smaldone et al., 2008; Stedman, 2003). For example, in their research about the Niobrara River in Nebraska, Davenport and Anderson (2005) investigated the impacts of changes to the landscape on sense of place. As a source of recreational and cultural benefit to the community, people were heavily invested in developing the river and its resources. Researchers used a qualitative approach to discern the meanings and values attached to the river. They developed an interpretive research design with the goal of obtaining a detailed understanding of a small group's relationship with the river rather than sampling a large population's perspectives of the river. Their interview guide used open-ended questions to direct interviews. This method allowed cultural and historical contexts to be accounted for as well. Interviews focused on three primary themes: connections with the river; perceptions of the condition and management of the river; and expectations of the river in the future. As with some of the quantitative studies, this research utilized three main sub-domains of sense of place; place identity, dependency, and attachment.
However, instead of developing predefined statements to which respondents could express their level of agreement or disagreement, Davenport and Anderson performed this analysis after the data were collected. Themes within narratives were categorized, but not assigned numeric values or quantified. For example, one of the meanings described by participants was “river as tonic.” This phrase expressed the river as “good for the mind, body and soul” and was categorized as an expression of place dependence. Other meanings included: river as sustenance; river as nature; river as identity; and evolving river meanings. With the emergence of these themes, it became evident that as the landscape evolved, so too did meanings.

For my research, it is especially important to acknowledge that when landscapes are changed or threatened, the meanings and values attached to the landscape are threatened as well (Davenport & Anderson, 2005; Gunderson & Watson, 2007). As meanings and values ascribed to the Elwha are threatened by changes to the river valley, so too, are the participants themselves who ascribed meanings and values.

Dam removals and subsequent ecosystem restoration projects are examples of changes to a landscape that can impact perceptions of landscape and, ultimately, sense of place. Within the United States, tens of thousands of small dams are reaching a point at which management agencies have to make decisions about their future (Born & Genskov, 1998). Much of the research dedicated to the subject of dam removal focuses on the decision-making processes of the projects. Little research has been specifically dedicated to how changes to these landscapes affect perceptions of those involved and their ongoing commitment to the projects. The Elwha is a prime example of this trend. Little
research about the ERR has been dedicated to people’s perceptions of the project, even though most studies highlight that lack of public involvement stymies processes within resource management projects. This finding has implications for the ERR. Excluding public perceptions could negatively impact the restoration process as it continues, especially if changes to the landscape are different from what people have come to expect.

For example, focusing specifically on dam removal projects, Johnson and Graber (2002) critiqued previous decision-making techniques used to address dam removal. The researchers identified the lack of sustainability applied to ecological restoration as a significant and, in some cases, debilitating hindrance to the success of these projects. By “sustainability,” Johnson and Graber meant that a project is supported throughout the entire process and even after completion. Many sustainable restoration projects enjoyed a level of success due to public involvement and support. Researchers discussed previous dam removals in which the decision making was conducted by a small, powerful group of people who often overlooked public perceptions, even though many of these issues were incredibly important to and emotional for members of the public. By acknowledging and incorporating the relevant public into projects, decision makers might have avoided conflicts and developed a higher level of sustainability, or support for projects.

As the demand for demolishing dams increases, so does the literature that discusses methods by which to restore altered ecosystems. Research on ecosystem and river restoration often cites community involvement as a necessary component for sustaining restoration projects. Blending community aspects with the more traditional
decision-making based on scientific studies of dam removal and ecosystem restoration reduces conflict over these controversial issues (Johnson & Graber, 2002).

As stated earlier, “ecological restoration” is identified as an interdisciplinary approach to management issues, as distinguished from “restoration ecology,” which is a purely scientific approach to issues (Higgs, 2005). Concerned that restoration projects were focused too narrowly on restoration ecology and not ecological restoration, Higgs used the following example to illustrate the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to restoration issues. In July 2000, a group of ethnobotanists and Lekwugen indigenous people participated in the first Blue camas harvest (*Camassia quamash*) in more than 100 years in British Columbia. This species was culturally significant to the tribe, but population and distribution of the species had been reduced by habitat loss. Higgs argued that this ecological restoration signified a cultural restoration as well. As the Blue camas population increased, it allowed for traditional use and practices to take place once again. Local knowledge must be combined with science in order to successfully restore ecosystems, as people are part of systems (Higgs; Johnson & Graber, 2002).

This interdisciplinary approach is something that too often resource management projects lack, with significant implications for the sustainability of projects. No one knows how long the ERR will take to complete. During that time the agencies charged with managing changes to the landscape will find it beneficial to include public perceptions and participation in the process.
Salmon as a Culturally Significant Species and Its Influence on Sense of Place

Although ample literature is available about sense of place as a broad concept, little has been dedicated to how specific features of landscapes, such as plant and animal species, influence people's construct of place. In many instances, such singular species are cited as important for the role they play in physical processes of the landscape. For example, salmon are considered an ecological keystone species, meaning, the health of an entire ecosystem hinges on their presence (Garibaldi & Turner, 2004). Garibaldi and Turner build upon this concept, and suggest these ecological keystone species are often cultural keystone species as well. The researchers provided the following definition:

Cultural keystone species are culturally salient species that shape in a major way the cultural identity of a people. Their importance is reflected in the fundamental roles these species play in diet, materials, medicine, and/or spiritual practices. (p. 4)

Similar to ecological indicator species that act as a gauge for the health of an ecosystem, cultural keystone species can act as a cultural indicator species, whose presence, absence, or abundance has powerful impacts on the well-being of the people connected with them. Garibaldi and Turner's (2004) study is one of the few that addresses salmon as a cultural keystone species not only for native peoples, but non-native peoples as well. Garibaldi and Turner highlight that connections between people
and specific resources depend on how people use the resource. This implies that those who have the ability to know and use resources also become attached to those resources. As all people, both native and non-native, have the ability to experience salmon, so too do they have the ability to connect with the species.

Despite this possibility, much of the literature available about cultural connections between people and salmon focuses on Native American connections to salmon (Campbell & Butler, 2010; Gunther, 1926; Stewart, 1996; Taylor III & Cronon, 1999). As the main source of protein in Pacific Northwest native life, culture revolved around the salmon life cycle (Campbell & Butler; Taylor III & Cronon). Gunther (1926) highlighted the cultural relationships between Pacific Northwest Coast Tribes, such as the Klallam, and salmon. For example, for catching the first salmon of the season, the Kwakuitl-speaking peoples had specific clothes and tools that were used. Fishermen were expected to have their own, personal prayer that was recited while drying the fish. The following is an example of a Kwakuitl fisherman’s prayer:

Swimmer, I thank you because I am still alive at this season when you come back to our good place, for the reason why you come is that we may play together with my fishing tackle, Swimmer. Now, go home and tell your friends that you had good luck on account of your coming here, and that they shall come with the wealth bringer, that I may get some of your wealth, Swimmer; also take away my sickness, friend, supernatural one, Swimmer. (p. 606)
This literature benefits my research by providing a foundation for investigating the cultural connections between Klallam people and salmon. Because Klallam people have integrated salmon into their society as a cultural keystone species, it is important to acknowledge this legacy in my analysis. It should be noted that much of the research on Native American tribes, such as the Lower Elwha Klallam, focuses on salmon as a basis for subsistence practices which led to the integration of the species into the tribes’ cultural practices.

With respect to the cultural connections between salmon and non-native groups, the literature is less dense. Much of the research addresses salmon as a bi-product of the act of fishing. For example, Taylor’s (1981) study of the village of Teelin, Ireland provides a specific example of how salmon fishing and culture intertwine. The act of salmon fishing provided a conduit through which people connected to each other, but also defined themselves with respect to surrounding communities that did not have the same fishing traditions. Most community members’ main forms of income came from other sources, such as operating small farms or working a trade. However, when Taylor asked a Teelin man what he “did,” the man said “[I am] an iascaire,” or a fisherman. In Teelin, fishing defined individual and community identities by providing a social context for the players (fishermen) and the audience (larger community) to act out values, such as morals, physical prowess, honesty, and historical knowledge, which defined their community. The place (sea) and the act (fishing) provided the stage on which to act out cultural performances. Taylor’s piece is of particular importance to my research. Port Angeles and Klallam histories demonstrate the importance of fishing to community
members' livelihoods. Taylor's study provides insight about the possible connections between my participants, place, and salmon. Although literature is available on Native American and international people's relationships with salmon, literature focusing on cultural connections between salmon and Pacific Northwest communities is scarce.

Summary

Much of the literature produced in the field of resource management has maintained that people, places, and resources are intricately connected (Davenport & Anderson, 2005; Higgs, 2005; Lang, 1999; Smaldone et al., 2008; Stedman, 2003). Despite this, most research focuses on people and place or people and a particular resource. The topic of sense of place needs to be broadened to investigate the connectivity and integration of people, places, and resources.

Sense of place is a well-established concept within the field of resource management with quantitative, mixed-method, and qualitative methodologies dedicated to its evaluation. Due to the complexity of the construct, many studies use qualitative methods to account for the meanings people ascribe to the landscape. Previous research within the field of resource management provides me with a framework for evaluating these connections as they are complex and interwoven into people's identities. Reviewing the preceding literature provided the basis for my methodology.

Although I use a qualitative approach to examine sense of place, quantitative studies proved valuable as well. Most sense of place studies acknowledge that places are
intricately linked to people's identities. For example, even though Stedman (2003) employed quantitative methods to examine the influence of lakeshore development on property owners' sense of place, results indicated that these changes influenced experiences, such as fishing, that people engaged in to construct their identities. On the other hand, Davenport and Anderson (2005) used a qualitative methodology to examine how changes to the Niobrara River influenced sense of place. Similar to Stedman, Davenport and Anderson found that landscape change directly affected how participants used the river and, thus, affected experiences used to define their identities. The underlying theme is that landscapes and people are intricately connected in ways that go beyond the physical attributes of the landscape. The major difference is that quantitative studies are reductive and rarely provide context for the connections between people and landscapes. Sense of place is a complex cultural construction and, as such, the means by which to investigate this concept must allow for the rich, underlying meanings to emerge.
Ample research is available that provides a framework to assess sense of place (Basso, 1996; Davenport & Anderson, 2005; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2006; Kil et al., 2010; Smaldone et al., 2008; Stewart, 1996). Having a sense of place is more than simply identifying a location; it is the emotional meanings associated with a place (Lang, 1999). How to identify and evaluate these internal elements is a source of controversy within sense of place research.

Many sense of place studies, both qualitative and quantitative, within resource management, deconstruct sense of place into the sub-categories of place identity, place dependency, place attachment, and place satisfaction. Although a great deal of the literature has used these sub-categories to make distinctions about the elements of sense of place, there are not clear criteria on how to differentiate among them. For example, what some research labels as place dependency, others may label as place satisfaction.

While categorical analysis presents some benefits, it also limits the richness of the data. As sense of place is segmented into sub-categories important information may be lost. For example, a researcher may use a survey questionnaire to ask participants to rate how much they rely on a forest, which results in a value for the level of dependency people feel, but this analysis does not convey why people are dependent. The division of people’s thoughts, emotions, and feelings into these categories has the potential to lose
meaning behind people's sense of place as it does not explore the reasons for these connections. In most cases, data need to be contextualized in order to be fully understood.

These sub-categories, however, should not be discounted entirely. Much research demonstrates that people can be dependent, attached, and satisfied with places and that they integrate places into their identities. Therefore, these sub-categories can be used to find statements of significance within data. With complex subjects, such as sense of place, landscape change, and emotional attachment to landscapes, a qualitative approach is preferred (Davenport & Anderson, 2005; Quinn, 2005; Redfern-Vance, 2007; Ryden, 1993; Schroeder, 1996; Stedman, 2003). This is particularly true of subjects that have not been examined before. For example, in my research project, no previous studies are available about the influence of a specific resource on sense of place. In order to gain an understanding of these kinds of connections, I chose a qualitative approach in order to account for the underlying meanings in participants' interviews.

In the following section, I proceed to outline the methodology I used for this research project. Previous studies within resource management and cultural anthropology provided the basis for the methodological framework.

Research Methodology

Eighteen key stakeholders were interviewed over a nine-month period from June 2011 to January 2012. I identified a sample population that included individuals, such as Lower Elwha Klallam tribal members, NPS staff, and Port Angeles community members.
Reviewing the available literature on the ERR provided the names of key stakeholders that have been involved throughout the initiation and implementation of the ERR. The reviewed literature included available scientific studies and articles from area newspapers, such as *Peninsula Daily News* and *Seattle Times*. Available literature highlighted that organizations, such as the NPS and Elwha Lower Klallam Tribe, have been involved with the ERR for decades. I contacted these organizations and asked who they would recommend for interviews. In many instances, participants recommended the same people. Participants were contacted via phone and/or email. In some instances, participants were contacted through an acquaintance who agreed to make contact. Stakeholder selection was based on participants' involvement with the ERR and/or knowledge about the Elwha. Stakeholders were not selected based on age, race, cultural affiliation, or social/economic status. Ages of participants ranged from 19 to 93 years of age. Five of the participants were female and 13 were male.

Interviews were conducted in the town of Port Angeles and on the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe reservation. Fieldwork produced 30 interviews. I used a digital recording device to audio record the interviews and also took notes. Interviews were conducted in locations convenient for the informants, including NPS offices, homes, coffee shops, and places along the Elwha River itself. In two instances, interviews were conducted over the phone and recorded. Limited participant observation was used to collect data during this research project. One instance occurred while joining a rafting guide during a rafting tour on the Elwha. Another occurred during a four-hour tour of the Elwha with a community
member. Interview length ranged from 30 minutes to four hours. Most participants were interviewed twice.

Most researchers agree that collecting data is subjective in that the researcher’s own biases and perspectives can impact how subjects respond. I have previous knowledge of the Elwha River, having worked for ONP and lived in the Elwha. I was also familiar with salmon and salmon fishing having grown up in the Pacific Northwest. These elements provided insight into people’s narratives about salmon and the Elwha, but also presented the problem that participants might assume I had knowledge about the Elwha and, therefore, leave out crucial points within their interviews. As someone who considers salmon part of her identity and who feels attached to the Elwha from my previous experiences, both professionally and recreationally, I also had predisposed perceptions of these topics. As Soon Kim (1990) described, one of the major problems with examining one’s own culture is remaining distant enough to allow people to teach the researcher. Because I was intimate with the subjects of salmon and the Elwha, this presented the challenge of avoiding directing participants’ narratives. Being aware of my own knowledge and biases was the first step to maintaining balance within my research. Although I had previous knowledge, I attempted to listen carefully to informants’ perspectives of ERR-related issues. As I was unaware of what participants thought of the Elwha or salmon, I assumed the role of a student so they could educate me about their points of view. The purpose of these interviews was not to gather facts, but to listen to people’s perspectives.
I implemented this purpose by crafting a guideline questionnaire prior to the initiation of interviews. Similar to Davenport and Anderson’s (2005) method of developing an interview guide to conduct their interviews with Niobrara River stakeholders, these questions guided conversations, but did not control them. Certain topics, such as the Elwha and salmon, were relevant to this study, but participants embellished these topics with details from their own personal stories and experiences. Interviews were conducted in an interpretive setting, meaning interviews were semi-structured to allow participants the freedom to talk and tell their stories. Interviews often began with me asking, “Can you tell me about the Elwha?” From there, additional questions and prompts were used to guide interviews if talk strayed too far from the topics of the Elwha or salmon. Using this structure, interviews began with questions about participants’ current and past connections with the river. Interviews then usually shifted to talking about salmon. Interviews ended with connecting the Elwha and salmon. In some conversations, participants were asked directly about how they thought their perceptions of the Elwha would change, if at all. In other instances, initial and changing perceptions of the Elwha became evident during participants' narratives. Almost all participants linked salmon and the Elwha without additional questions from me. Questions used included:

- Can you tell me how you use the Elwha River?
- Can you tell me about salmon?
- Do you fish for salmon? What is it like?
Do you eat salmon? How often?

What is your favorite memory of the Elwha?

What is your least favorite memory of the Elwha?

What will it be like if/when salmon return to the Elwha?

I used three categories of questions within this interviewing framework: questions focusing on participants' sense of place of the Elwha River; questions focusing on salmon, and questions focusing on participants' sense of place of the Elwha River upon the return of salmon. The purpose of this organizational framework was to compare participants' initial sense of place before the return of salmon to participants' anticipated connections with the Elwha post salmon return. Questions about salmon were used to gauge not only connections between people and the species, but then, in turn, to assess how these connections influenced changes to participants' connections with the Elwha.

The interview questions pertained primarily to subjects' personal histories, use of the landscape, experience with salmon, interpretations of the ERR, and involvement in the ERR process. Transcription of the data took place over an eight month period from July 2011 to February 2012. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. The interviews resulted in more than five hundred pages of typed transcriptions.

When working with humans, researchers are confronted with the fact that people’s feelings and emotions strongly influence what they think and express about places. Qualitative research methods are appropriate to use with issues in which the desired information is embedded within peoples’ conversations (LeCompte & Schensul,
2010). With words and narratives, people are able to express the varied meanings that support their sense of a place (Ryden, 1993). Gaining insight into people's environmental experiences and values can be achieved in a variety of ways. Art, songs, and conversations are all representations of the cultural values people place on the environment (Schroeder, 1996).

In addition to incorporating previous resource management methods into my project, I also drew upon anthropological studies about sense of place to provide the theoretical framework for data collection and analysis. For example, Stewart (1996) produced one of the seminal works about sense of place using ethnographic techniques that included participant observation and interviews. She used an informal narrative approach to capture the meanings attached to places in rural Appalachia. Stewart encouraged informants to talk and tell their stories. Stewart’s informants attached themselves to places in such a way that one could not exist without the other: the places were needed to inspire the telling of the stories, and the stories were needed to define the places. These narratives infused places with layered, textured meanings. A river littered with trash is more than a polluted water body: it is where someone died; it is where a child came to collect water for his family; and it represented the depressed economy of this coal mining area. In this case, stories represented the connections between Stewart’s informants and the landscape.

Stories of individuals emerge from narratives held in common through culture. Narratives are interpretations (Kohler Riessman, 1993); they are constructions of reality
The analysis of narrative data should include not only what subjects literally said, but take into account the context in which the information was presented.

People construct narratives in different ways. Feelings, emotions, and thoughts are conceptualized using language and words that would not normally describe everyday life (Lakoff, 1979/1993). For example, we use metaphors to take an experience and translate its meaning. In this way, metaphors foreground certain meanings while pushing others out of direct view. For example, Lakoff described the metaphor, “Our relationship has hit a dead-end” as a means by which the relationship is now portrayed as a journey. This metaphor foregrounds the relationship in a negative context, conveying the sense that the relationship is not a happy one, has stopped moving forward, and has no place to go. This technique of identifying metaphors is useful in that it provides yet another way to understand qualitative data. As I used the subcategories of sense of place, such as place attachment and place dependency, to reveal statements of significance, so too did I use metaphors to analyze participants’ narratives for themes. D’Andrade (2005) described this process as winnowing. This tool is used over and over again with each narrative to whittle talk into identifiable themes. Winnowing was necessary within my own research to identify and present the dominant themes that emerge from participants’ interviews. A theme is a general sense of what subjects are attempting to convey through their narrative (Bruner, 1991). For example, the story about how a boy meets a girl, and how a boy woos a girl, could have an underlying theme of “gift giving” (Bruner). These themes are not always directly stated, but are the essences or meanings behind people’s narratives (Bruner). Identification and interpretation of themes is subjective to researchers. This is
important to acknowledge within my research as I am the one identifying themes within the data presented by participants. In order to retain the essence and emotions of what participants conveyed, it was crucial to take the context of their statements into consideration. Researchers must examine narratives as a whole by examining what subjects said, how they said it, how the narratives were constructed, and the context of the story. A theme is constructed from a selection of story snippets: individual parts fitted together into a representative whole.

I analyzed individual interviews first. Segments that highlighted participants’ connections with the Elwha River and salmon were discerned based on relevance to participants’ connections to salmon, to the Elwha prior to dam removal, and to the Elwha post dam removal. This technique narrowed the data to a more manageable set for analysis. Once I identified themes within individual interviews, themes from all 30 interviews were analyzed together to determine major themes present in most, if not all, of the interviews. Themes were not only identified and analyzed individually, but analyzed for their connectedness to and dependency on each other. The results of my analysis were dominant themes expressed by participants in their narratives about themselves, salmon, and the Elwha.

Summary

This research employed qualitative methodology that allowed individual and cultural intricacies and nuances to develop, thus, creating narratives that could be
analyzed. Studies within the field of resource management that use qualitative methodologies, often present the data within categories (Davenport & Anderson, 2005; Gunderson & Watson, 2007). While the organization of my data is important, it is equally important to preserve the context. Therefore, in addition to categories, or themes, in the following chapters, I discuss the context surrounding those themes.
CHAPTER V
THE ELWHA PRIOR TO DAM REMOVAL AND RETURN OF SALMON:
MEMORY AND CHANGE

Introduction

Memory provided the context for connections to the Elwha. Using stories, participants described their relationships with the Elwha and shared with me memories of past experiences. Within this chapter, I discuss the concept of memory and how it works. Participants used memories to showcase their relationships with the Elwha. This chapter also includes discussion of the dominant themes, or meanings, which emerged from participants sharing their stories and memories.

These memories were based on participants' direct and indirect experiences. In describing the Elwha prior to dam removal, participants showed how memory is used to construct a meaningful relationship with the landscape. Different frameworks on the construct of memory pull from various perspectives to explain the construct, including memory, as dependent on perception and memory as a product of experience. For example, D’Alisera (2004) wrote that, “Memory becomes the medium through which experience is measured and understood” (p.81). Memories filter information that our five senses siphon into our bodies, and converts this chaos into our perceptions of the world (Lowenthal, 1975). In this way, remembering is also forgetting (Sturken, 1997). It is a subjective process in which a person selects details to be remembered, but also selectively forgets others (Lowenthal). The memories a person recounts offer clues about
what that person values. Within participants' narratives, valued meanings were pushed into the foreground as they recounted their stories. For example, one Port Angeles resident, who had lived in the area since she was 12 years old and was now a rafting guide on the Elwha River, described memories of rafting the Elwha that focused on family experiences. She recounted her first experiences rafting the river with her father:

I remember one of the first times I went down [to the Elwha River] because my dad was trying to teach me how to roll and it was so cold. But I remember, but just being in the eddy and trying to learn to roll and he was helping me. I was wearing a dry suit so I didn't really get cold. You wear dry suits when you kayak on the Elwha or else you get cold. (Anonymous, personal communication, August 23, 2011)

Although this participant talked about how cold the Elwha was and the challenge of learning a new skill and specifically one focusing on safety, she foregrounded themes of family, protection, and feeling secure. I discerned that these were the *essences* of what she was trying to convey to me about her relationship with the Elwha. Another resident focused on hiking alone in the Elwha to seek out solitude and saw it as a place for personal reflection (Anonymous, personal communication, October 14, 2011). A Klallam tribal member recounted memories of playing with her siblings and cousins along the Elwha, which highlighted family and relationships as significant (Anonymous, personal communication, October 14, 2011).
According to Nora (1984/1999), how we define ourselves and how we conduct ourselves is guided by knowledge remembered and shared. These memories are not just recollections of past experiences; they express meanings the participants hold dear. Meanings embedded within memories show us who people are and/or wish to be. Memories participants shared with me provide insight into their current perceptions of the Elwha, and what they hope for in the future.

Memory: Contextualizing Connections to the Elwha River

When asked “about the Elwha,” many participants recalled past experiences, including recreational, professional, and spiritual experiences. Participants foregrounded direct experiences, such as hiking and camping, and indirect experiences, such as learning about the Elwha from others. Many participants highlighted positive experiences. For example, the following narrative was from a Port Angeles resident who grew up living in the area and visiting the Elwha. I had asked him to tell me “about the Elwha.” He described an arduous journey as a small child with his father to their secret fishing spot. It was fraught with danger, discomfort, and fear. These themes, however, were not the focus of his story. In recalling this memory, he foregrounded positive themes of family bonding, and feeling a level of comfort with and fondness for the Elwha:
We had this one secret, secret spot that we found one time and it was actually kind of hard to get to. It was a big adventure. You would hike out along Little River trail and you had to bail out, off the trail and there was this old decommissioned logging trail and you, like, on this old decommissioned logging road and you would have to cross the log bridge and I remember I was so afraid crossing this log bridge. Sometimes we would do all day long now on (…)

I was so little and I was always so relieved we got to the other side, thought I was [a] dead guy on this log bridge and then from there it was worse. You had to bushwhack up the river through devil’s club and you eventually, after we went up there a couple times we push[ed] the devil clubs down. There’s this waterfall where there happens to be a bunch of wood piled up and the fish would back up behind it and it was like a bench in the river. It will go out over this big log and into this pool and there was a bunch of fish in this pool and no one else knew about it and I was so proud that me [and] my dad knew about it and we would just go out there and you would get salmon eggs and put on the hook. You can’t have the barbed hooks, you would have to flatten the barbs with a little pair of pliers, put a salmon hook on it and a bobber and cast it out there and it would float and when the bobber went “blop” you would reel it in. “Dad can I reel now?” And you would.

We always released them. That was so much fun. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011)

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The use of ellipses within this research project represents names of people, places, and/or other identifiers that jeopardized anonymity.
This participant’s experience provided meanings of connecting with family, learning self-sufficiency, and overcoming challenges. In turn, the recounting of this memory exposed implicit meanings the participant attached to salmon and the Elwha. The memory showed not only how the participant connected with the Elwha, but how he connected with his father. He used this memory to foreground the specialness of the experience and place and provide insight into his relationship with his father. The fishing spot on the Elwha was a secret that only he and his father knew about. His narrative emphasizes the special relationship with his father in that they share a secret. In the recollection, elements are highlighted, while others fade into the background, foregrounding positive experiences he holds dear. The same was true for many participants. Although interviewees expressed some negative feelings in their narratives, such as a sense of loss attached to the Elwha, almost all narratives circled back to describe positive connections with the Elwha.

The process of selecting and culling memories is a negotiation we go through as individuals and as a society. Memories that societies choose to preserve or discard are indicative of “collective desires, needs, and self-definitions” (Sturken, 1997, p. 2). At times a certain memory may be prominent, but may be less popular at other times (Nora, 1984/1999). For example, a free-flowing Elwha was once an unpopular idea to many, thus, dams were constructed. However, as societal preferences changed, people began to gravitate toward the idea of an Elwha without dams. Those who remember salmon in the Elwha River in healthy numbers are few and far between. No living person today can remember the Elwha when the dams were not in place. Like the fish themselves, the
collective memory that once existed about mighty salmon runs in the Elwha is endangered. Much knowledge has already been lost as those individuals who directly experienced such salmon runs have passed. One participant spoke of how experience with salmon in the Elwha has skipped his generation (Anonymous, personal communication, August 24, 2011). This break in the chain of experience can be painful. It can be distressing for those who do not have those personal memories, but feel the pull to pass on what is known about salmon and the Elwha to future generations. The loss of these experiences can equate to a sense of loss and, because our memories define us, a loss of ourselves. Much of the participants’ knowledge about the Elwha before the dams was acquired through collective memory. For example, the following narrative was provided by a member of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe who was not born until decades after the completion of the second dam. Nevertheless, he described what the salmon populations in the Elwha were like before dam construction nearly 100 years ago:

They estimate that the river had, on pink salmon years, over 300,000 salmon and right now we have about 5,000 harvestable salmon coming back and out of those 300,000 salmon at least 50 percent would have been harvestable. That would have been in the 150,000 range in the pink years and even on the others it would have been in the tens of thousands. Yeah, fifty, sixty thousand range. So it was a good provider. (Anonymous, personal communication, August 24, 2011)
This participant did not have direct experience seeing hundreds of thousands of salmon spawn in the Elwha, nor did he experience the Elwha as the good provider it was before construction of the dams. However, the collective memory passed down through his tribe influenced his perceptions of the Elwha.

These collective memories are not always narrated directly from one person to another. For example, this participant could have acquired his knowledge through tangibles, such as books, pictures, and/or objects. Many participants used tangible objects to share their experiences of the Elwha with me. For example, an old fishing rod embodied significant memories for a participant who remembers fishing the Elwha as a child. A bridge spanning the Elwha became a reminder of times spent playing in the river with siblings. Photographs displayed of ancestors in a participant’s house offer points of reference as she recounts memories of her family.

The Elwha was intricately woven into many participants’ collective memories. Telling and sharing memories equates to telling and sharing our identities with others. The memories we recount define how we are different from some and connected to others. These experiences are necessary to sustain memory and, in turn, relationships (Halbwachs, 1925/1992). For example, a member of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe told of a vacation spot that tribal members used to visit. We were sitting at her kitchen table. As she remembered, she looked out the window to the south, toward the headwaters of the Elwha. She had never personally been to the vacation spot she described, but learned about it through stories told to her by her sister. Although she herself did not participate, it is part of her collective memory and, thus, part of her connection with the Elwha:
Well, (...) told me they had a different name for it and I keep forgetting what the name is. She told me a couple times, but I know my sister was telling me, she said it is really, really beautiful. She said you get up in the morning and peek out of the tent they have and birds would be singing, flowers would be growing up all over and the lake right down, canyon like, and they were camped out there. I would say this for about three or four different families would be camping up there. And that was our vacation. We called it “vacation.” That was time to go hunting and do different things: gather medicinal plants and stuff like that.

This participant’s narrative highlights how memories are shared and can be collective, but also the role experience plays in our relationships. Each memory and the meanings contained within it are like links in a chain that binds people to each other.

Relationships among people are an integral component of individual and group identities. In this way, shared memories help maintain relationships (Halbwachs, 1925/1950). In this research project, familial relationships were the most common relationship discussed by participants. As Halbwachs describes, family is one of the first groups that we join as we enter the world. Family members are our first teachers, and often they teach through using memories. “Family” is not necessarily comprised of relatives. According to Halbwachs, families can provide a realm of safety in which people find acceptance by adhering to the rules and traditions the family has taught its members through recollection of memory. On the other hand, families can also include
people who do not make you feel safe and accepted. From the mass of society, these people are given more and more precise definition over time as we assign meaning through the memories we attach to them (Halbwachs).

A member of the Klallam exemplifies this common occurrence of weaving family, relationships, and memories into her description of the Elwha. The following narrative section is the product of the question, “What is your favorite memory of the Elwha:”

My fondest memories are, like I say, you are of, as siblings or during the harvest time we did follow, all of us kids would follow, when they bring the hay in the barn and stuff like that and everybody would help each other.

Throughout this participant’s narrative and others, family and relationships were highlighted within their memories. In many cases, as with this participant, these memories are not only remembered by the individual, but shared among family members; however, as memory is a subjective process, the “same” memories recounted among members of a family group can be different with details being changed either intentionally or unintentionally. Families commemorate different memories based on what they determine to be representative of those fundamental elements that define their family. These shared characteristics could center on an object, such as a photograph, a physical place, such as a campground, or a particular experience, such as fishing. As Halbwachs (1925/1992) wrote these memories are, “the traditional armor of the family.”
He went on to write, “Each family has its proper mentality, its memories which it alone commemorates, and its secrets that are revealed only to its members” (p. 59). As with the participant who shared a special fishing spot on the Elwha, this is a secret that only the two of them know and it expresses implicitly the importance and value of their relationship and family tie.

While participants used memories to describe their connections with the Elwha, it is important to note that these connections were based on individual and shared experiences. The experiences participants described within their narratives, given in the context of recounting a memory, were often experiences that they not only value in the present, but continually try to reenact. In their daily lives, people constantly enact and reenact cultural meanings that position them within society. These performances are more than, “entertainment, more than didactic or persuasive formulations, and more than cathartic indulgences. They are occasion[s] in which as a culture or society we reflect upon and define ourselves, dramatize our collective myths and history, present ourselves with alternatives, and eventually change in some ways while remaining the same in others” (MacAlloon, 1984, p. 1). During these performances, such as fishing, meals, and/or camping trips, people’s identities shift in response and relation to their audience. By “audience” I mean other people within society, such as family members, co-workers, and/or strangers. Cultural performances teach others about us and about our traditions. For example, participants’ narratives as they explained their perceptions of the Elwha with words, photographs, and actions, such as taking me on tours of their favorite places, were cultural performances. The Elwha provided a crucial stage for participants to act out
cultural values in relation to the landscape. As one participant highlights, these places become special to us. He tells how the Elwha exemplifies his home, and how he takes new people in his life to the Elwha. He grew up visiting the Elwha, and as an adult has taken new acquaintances, such as friends and dates, to places his mother and father took him and his siblings as children:

If I was going to show somebody like a really neat place on the peninsula, like somewhere out of town, I’d take them up there [the Elwha] just because it’s a nice little hike. It’s only like two and a half miles or something like that and it’s a pretty area and kind of gives you some background history of, you know, of the peninsula, too. (Anonymous, personal communication, August 2, 2011)

Based on participants’ narratives, it was clear that they experienced strong connections with and attached various meanings to the Elwha. While no two participants told the same story or recounted the same memory, embedded within their narratives, were common meanings ascribed to the Elwha landscape. Themes that emerged were often about developing cultural and individual identities, and about building and sustaining relationships. Examples of self-discovery and maintaining a sense of well-being were also prevalent. Many narratives exemplified multiple themes. Prominent themes that emerged from participants’ narratives are explored in the following sections.
Connections with the Elwha

*The Elwha as a Home and Safe Haven*

For all participants, the Elwha was part of their home. Whether a member of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe or a community member from the city of Port Angeles, the Elwha was part of participants’ home place. Many participants grew up using the Elwha in some way, whether as a place to visit and/or a place that supplied part of their livelihood. It was part of participants’ personal and collective histories. The Elwha River Valley is the largest watershed on the Olympic Peninsula. It is also the closest to Port Angeles, and is only a short drive away from the city. The Lower Elwha Klallam reservation is adjacent to the river itself. Many participants described how easy it was to get to the Elwha River, whether a trip was planned or spontaneous. The following narrative was supplied by a Port Angeles resident who grew up on the Olympic Peninsula. He talked while sitting with me on a rock beside the river as the sun was setting:

So growing up in Port Angeles, there’s not a whole lot to do, I mean, at least for a kid you can go to the movie theater, but that doesn’t happen very often. There is no biggie, no urban area, there is no video arcade or whatever, like everyone else does when they’re young. So we were always finding stuff to do outside and a lot of that was done at the Elwha River. Especially when you’re older and one of your friends have a car or whatever. But we do everything from coming down to
this very spot a lot of times after school going fishing, jumping in or going down to the mouth of the river and go surfing. There’s really good surfing. Or almost every weekend we would either go up to the Hot Springs, which is up Boulder Creek, which is a tributary to the Elwha, or to Humes Ranch. When we were young, you know, your parents want you to be in at a certain time, so you’re not out at some party or whatever, but we could always go camping and we can stay up as late as we wanted to. We’re 16 and we could stick some of our parents’ beers up there and we wouldn’t get in trouble. So the Elwha was our safe haven where we could go and be all grown up and be whatever we felt like. So it’s definitely, like, a very important place for us growing up. And I’m so glad this is where we got to grow up, because if you look at this river and it’s so goddam beautiful, you know? Where else do you just get to drive five minutes from your house and get to be sitting right here and you’re at the bank of this river? Or hike only two miles and get to an old 1800s [homestead] and camp out in what used to be his old potato fields or whatever is? Just incredible that you get to grow up around stuff like this and I think it gives you more perspective. I don’t know, growing up in the city, the only time you spend outside is at the dog park throwing Frisbees or whatever. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011)

The Elwha represented an escape and also a place of lasting security. It represented an opportunity to act out those cultural performances of growing up. Whether
escaping from parental supervision or the crowds of other places, it represented freedom and independence. By comparing himself to other children living in more urban settings and who did not have access to the Elwha’s resources, he was highlighting how his home was unique and how he himself was unique.

The Elwha was a source of solitude and reflection. For example, for one longtime Port Angeles resident, the Elwha is a special and very familiar place. The Elwha is where he and his family first moved to the area in 1937. Since that time, he has spent his life fishing, camping, hiking, experiencing, and learning the Elwha. He described this as his “relationship” with the Elwha. He described some of the details he and his family have observed as they developed their relationship with the river. Although this segment showcases themes of recovery, relationships, and changing fortunes, it also demonstrates how the more time spent in the Elwha, the more details were known. This memory showcased themes the participant was trying to convey. Within this recollection, the participant demonstrated the selectivity of memory by highlighting specific features about the Elwha, such as beetles and trees. By highlighting these features, the participant was highlighting the essences of his connections with the Elwha. The river was a familiar place and its resources become more than tangible objects; the Elwha has become a place of meaning that is valued as part of him and his family:

Enough is visible if you’re a fair observer on just the large things and of course we were looking at something the other day about beetles. And we run across a lot of them and, you know, they’re the cleanup guys. They’re one of the major
cleanup guys in there. If something is dead, why, they’re one of the major fellows taking it off and utilizing. There’s just all sort of these things going on under there. I don’t spend a lot of time looking at all of that. It’s much nicer looking at all the trees. But it’s nice, to me it’s nice to stand up alongside of a tree that’s 10 foot in diameter and lean on it and kind of think about all the things it saw.

(Anonymous, personal communication, June 29, 2011)

Even though the majority of the Elwha was public land as part of Olympic National Park, many participants considered the Elwha their river. The following narrative was provided by a Port Angeles resident who was describing how he and three or four of his closest friends grew up experiencing the Elwha. As young boys, these friends formed an “Elwha Club” that unified its members toward the common goal of using and protecting the river:

Yeah, we really thought of this river as our domain. We were its keepers. We kind of had this mutual relationship with the river that if we treated the river really well, if ever we saw trash we would pick it up, and in turn the river would treat us well and it did. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011)

The river was a safe haven that, if the boys took care of it, would help in maintaining their well-being. Many participants described a fierce loyalty and
protectiveness toward the Elwha. They owned the Elwha. The Elwha was not only part of home; it was part of who they were.

*The Elwha as a School of Life*

The Elwha represented a platform on which people learned about themselves and others. The Elwha and many participants shared a symbiotic relationship in which the Elwha taught a person lessons and then he/she used the Elwha to learn about him/herself. As the quote above, the following, provided by a man who grew up in Port Angeles, exemplified this person/place relationship. Both of these quotes exemplify how themes within participants’ narratives were repeated:

The Elwha River has always been a part of my kind of growing up in life.

Understanding life. Understanding the way people work. Understanding the way that you yourself work. It’s just one of those special places to me and it has been for a lot of people in Port Angeles and I guess people from all over who come here in the summer and hike around and stuff.

This man went on to say:

It was like, a playground, to figure out people and figure out yourself when you’re out. You really get to know yourself and what you’re okay with and what you’re
not okay with. You’ve got a lot of time of testing. A lot of kids would just sit at home and play video games. You’re not really thinking about yourself or bettering yourself or thinking about plans for the future, you’re just kind of watching *The Simpsons* or whatever. So getting to be out here day after day and night after night you’ve got a lot of time to think and use your mind to imagine and plot and scheme. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011)

For many participants, the Elwha was part of their lives. Although it is a platform that participants used to act out significant cultural performances, such as fishing and rafting, the Elwha was not stagnant: it was a dynamic component in shaping participants and their relationships. The Elwha was a guide for many. It provided opportunities to overcome challenges, thus, promoting a feeling of self-reliance and satisfaction. These experiences were chances to solve problems and grow personally from those situations, in addition to growing closer to others through shared experiences. It represented reflection on one’s self and community.

*The Elwha as a Source of Loss*

For many participants, the Elwha River represented loss of fisheries, healthy ecosystem, wildlife, nutrients, and diverse vegetation. Loss of these specific resources represented a lost way of life, as the Elwha and the opportunities it provided were lost
with the construction of dams and the decline in salmon populations. These losses inspired a sense of pain, embarrassment, and frustration for many participants. The sense of loss focused on the loss of the Elwha as a salmon river. Participants knew that the Elwha used to contain more fish, based on personal experience or on second-hand accounts. For example, a member of the Klallam talked of the loss of wildlife, salmon, and medicinal plants on which she and her family used to rely. Another participant described loss in terms of the ecosystem, fisheries, and opportunities the river used to supply:

> You know we’ve just lost so much here. And Joe fisherman didn’t care about nothing but getting a fish. Didn’t care about looking at what’s there and what’s missing. I mull that over a lot. What was there, what the hell was there that I didn’t see? I’ve stood on the dam and when a new run of fish come up and watched them jump and jump and jump and beat themselves against that dam.

(Anonymous, personal communication, June 29, 2011)

This quote exemplifies an instance in which multiple, major themes are present within a narrative. While the essence of this participant’s narrative conveys a sense of loss, he also highlights the Elwha as a Changed Ecosystem. He also conveys a sense of concern over its preservation and changes to the river. The theme of the Elwha as a Home and Safe Haven emerges from this narrative in that the participant describes familiarity with the river and its features.
Based on the decline of resources throughout participants’ personal and collective histories, participants felt that the Elwha was not how it should be. The river valley was a special place to them, but it was not complete. While participants described a sense of pride and ownership towards the landscape, this added to the pain and frustration of losing resources within the river valley. In the following excerpt, a Klallam tribal member described how she used to pick berries along the Elwha:

I remember when we would have our last little supper during the day in the summertime and nipping down past that one-way bridge and my sister would get a water bucket and we would go and pick berries and actually fill it up and come home. There was that much berries. Wherever you looked there was plenty of berries. (Anonymous, personal communication, October 14, 2012)

While the participant portrayed the experience of berry picking as a positive experience, she foregrounded the meaning of loss during her narrative. This story was used to show me how the Elwha used to be better before the loss of certain resources. She was not only telling me about a loss of resources, but a loss in experiences that hinged on availability of those resources. This was a common theme in participants’ interviews as they recounted many past activities that had been lost due to changes in the landscape.
The Elwha as a Changed Ecosystem

The Elwha represented a landscape that has undergone changes in the past 100 years. As discussed previously, the Elwha represented loss of a healthy ecosystem to many participants. Some had first-hand experiences with how the Elwha used to be a healthier ecosystem. The following excerpt was provided by a participant who had lived on or near the Elwha since he was a child. He focused on how much better the Elwha ecosystem used to be compared to later years, while highlighting the theme of The Elwha as a Source of Loss. He talked of the insects that used to cloud the Elwha and how their populations decreased the longer the dams were in place and salmon passage was blocked:

You could not believe the incredible, the old saying was up there around Soldiers Bridge in there, ‘Don’t take a deep breath,’ in those times, because you’re going to inhale about five of them. These are all gone, these will come back. It all starts with the carcasses. I have a lot of people say, “Well that Elwha looks pretty good.” But it’s dead. That’s the problem. It’s dead. (Anonymous, personal communication, June 29, 2011)

Many other participants also described the Elwha as a dead ecosystem. These accounts came both from participants who had personally seen the changes in the ecosystem and from those who had acquired their knowledge through their community’s
collective memory. After the loss of salmon, as an indicator of ecosystem health, participants’ perceptions of the entire Elwha ecosystem changed. Many participants described the Elwha as a dead, artificial, or stunted ecosystem, but with their next breath they described the Elwha as unique, beautiful, and pristine. While participants described deep connections with the Elwha, such as perceiving it as *The Elwha as a Home and Safe Haven*, they were not entirely satisfied with it. They felt pride, ownership, and loyalty, but at the same time, loss, frustration, and pain. Although the Elwha was a special place, it was not a complete place as it was bereft of many of its defining features, such as wildlife. In the following narrative, a NPS employee used other, less “pristine” places to foreground the Elwha’s specialness as one of the last rivers in the area that has the potential to be restored:

You know, the word pristine would be untouched and there isn’t anything on the planet that’s pristine anymore. But there have never been roads above Glines canyon dam within the Elwha valley. It’s never been logged, with the exception of a few small homestead areas. There is no development along the shoreline. So the system is functioning pretty much as it functioned before the dams were built. And that’s unusual. I mean, you don’t, think about Dogfish Creek. Do you know where that is? It’s at the head of the bay by, you know where the Bremerton naval shipyards are there? And then up at the head of the bay there’s a little creek that runs up and off? You know that’s, that thing from the mouth to the headwaters is developed. And even in the Cascades, because there aren’t any, like Mount
Rainier National Park, protects headwater areas, but there aren’t any salmon that get up into Mount Rainer National Park so you can’t say there’s pristine fish habitat in that area of the Cascades even though the park is there. It doesn’t support salmon and all of the land around the park is at least commercial forest land. (Anonymous, personal communication, July 13, 2011)

This participant’s narrative summarizes many of the sentiments expressed in narratives about the Elwha. Participants expressed how special the Elwha is, but that it is not complete; however, to most participants, the Elwha had the potential to be complete.

The Elwha as a Place for Wildlife

For most of the participants, prior to the return of salmon, the Elwha was perceived as devoid of wildlife. For example, a Port Angeles resident used memories of what wildlife populations used to be like when salmon spawned in the Elwha to demonstrate how the Elwha ecosystem lacked those species:

There were so many fish, but also there were lots and lots of black bears. And they came. They had calendars of course and they knew when the fish run because they always turned up so they must’ve had a calendar or maybe their mother taught them. And they would show up when the salmon runs did and they
would be there. And they were never a problem. They also were big.

(Anonymous, personal communication, June 29, 2001)

For others, the Elwha had plenty of wildlife without salmon, and the slated removal of the dams signaled the loss of species that relied on the lakes and river. These species included birds, beavers, and fish, including salmon. The following is from a Port Angeles resident who described some of the wildlife in the Elwha:

It was a beautiful ecosystem to my way of thinking. Those lakes were home to about 20 different varieties of waterfowl and most remarkable was the trumpeter swan. I don’t know if you’ve ever seen one, but they’re huge—they’re sometimes six feet tall. They would come down primarily into Lake Aldwell and they migrated up in Canada but when the weather gets really violent up there they come down here. And going up there it was a beautiful thing to go up there and watch them and listen to them in that valley there where the lake was. Their sounds echoed and it was, I don’t know, mystical I thought. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2011)

Although dam removal had yet to occur at the time this interview was conducted, this participant was already talking as if the wildlife were lost. Whether for or against dam removal, all participants highlighted that wildlife was an important element of the landscape.
The Elwha as a Provider

The Elwha was a provider to participants. It was a savior to some, providing food when there were limited resources. In the past, salmon were a main food source for many who lived near or on the river. The following participant, who grew up along the Elwha River during the Great Depression, described how he and his family depended on salmon to survive:

Bosco Crick is a groundwater stream like there used to be a lot of in Elwha. The water table was high, ok? And there was a deposition of old gravel so it was porous and this just came right out of the ground beautiful clear and they would go down there. There would be, I got to go, kids could fish. Well I got to go along. The high tide, when the high tide come in, why, they would just, it would just turn gray. It was just solid salmon, so they would gaff there. And then we would, you know, we learned, looked at their gaff hooks, and so we made up some and then we could gaff. Folks started to gaff upstream in some little overflow channels and so we got other salmon. We got some Chinook and Coho.

(Anonymous, personal communication, June 29, 2011)

Some participants talked of how they were dependent on the Elwha, particularly in the first few decades following dam construction. Dependence on the Elwha by different participants varied in nature and frequency. Older participants (80 years of age
or older) used to be dependent on the Elwha to achieve their subsistence goals. Tribal participants experienced this same dependency before and after the construction of the dams, although as the availability of salmon decreased, so too did the tribe’s reliance on the fish. Younger Port Angeles community members (younger than 80 years) did not have these experiences. The limited supply of salmon directly impacted the dependence people assigned to the Elwha.

*The Elwha as a Source of Environmental Injustice*

To nearly all participants, both native and non-native, the Elwha represented environmental injustice to native peoples, especially for the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. For nearly a century, the Elwha has represented conflict as parties struggled over the distribution of resources. As discussed in previous chapters, much of this injustice stemmed from conflict over the salmon harvest. The following narrative was from a Klallam tribal member who remembered that she and her tribe experienced restricted access to the Elwha and its fish:

Well, like I said, I was born and raised by the river. Up until my mother passed away in 1937. But all my growing up days were by the river. We were not allowed to fish at the time. The Indians were not allowed to fish. At all. So whatever we had to take we had to take behind their back you might say, but like I said, it was during the Depression Era and the will to survive and the river and
then very much to the local people that lived by the river. And that meant our race. (Anonymous, personal communication, October 14, 2011)

The same participant went on to talk about the hardships the Klallam suffered during those days:

That’s why I say I don’t like to talk about it because there’s a lot of ill feelings. If you were to talk to somebody else older than I am how we were treated we weren’t treated civil at all. During the time the sports fishermen would come in they would fish where they fish but if they didn’t like fish they wouldn’t eat it. So like I say, they would just leave it on the ground or beach or whatever. Seems like they would give it away to somebody that would make use of it. *Unclear* There was plenty hatred. I caught a lot of that when I went to public school. We weren’t on the reservation territory like some of the Indians like *Unclear.* The government didn’t recognize us as a reservation so we were just out. And in that era we weren’t allowed to fish. In fact, the game warden wanted to arrest my mother. [A white peninsula resident] was catching fish just for the fish eggs and he was kind enough to tell my mother that she could take that and so she was drying it. She got accused of fishing. That’s what I mean by there’s a lot of memories—unhappiness on the way we were treated.
Tribal members were not the only participants that talked of associations with injustice that the Elwha represented. In addition to loss of subsistence opportunities, many participants mentioned the injustice the Klallam suffered as the dams and resulting reservoirs flooded the tribe’s creation site and a village site. When talking of the cultural importance of salmon, almost all participants, both native and non-native, mentioned this site as one of the injustices the tribe suffered because of dam construction.

The Elwha as a Laboratory

Many interviewees placed value on the scientific knowledge the Elwha River provided. As the largest dam removal and river restoration project of its kind in the history of the United States, the Elwha’s contributions to science cannot be denied. The river provides opportunities for scientific discoveries. Admittedly, this theme was prevalent in interviews because many of the participants were researchers, scientists, and/or professionals who were studying and managing the river. The following is from one such scientist who worked for Olympic National Park:

In terms of being able to learn from the process, being able to be a part of the process. You know, there’s, the Elwha is going to be a really interesting living laboratory, but you had to, you know, in order to learn what was going on you had to have information on what was going on already or what the existing conditions
are. So no one can ever study the reservoirs full again, they'll never be full again, so that opportunity is gone. (Anonymous, personal communication, July 13, 2011)

Even those participants who did not have this background in the scientific community still talked about the river as a source of discovery. The opportunity of scientific discovery added to the overall quality of the Elwha. Nowhere else in the United States or within the history of the United States, was information available that was similar to the information the Elwha supplied and will continue to provide as the process of restoration unfolds.

Discussion

As a place that was considered part of their home, identity, and livelihood, the connections between participants and the Elwha were strong. People know the place and, in turn, feel safe. These connections between people and place provide people with a sense of belonging and well-being (Proshansky et al., 1983). As Basso (1996) explained in his research about the Western Apache, places play roles in constructing and maintaining personhood. Places are teachers. They shape people's identities and also maintain them (Davenport & Anderson, 2005; Proshansky et al.). People use places as tools to demonstrate who they are and who they are trying to be (Davenport & Anderson). As Basso (1996) described, "In large ways and in small, they are forever..."
performing acts that will reproduce and express their own sense of place—and also, inextricably, their own understandings of who and what they are” (p. 110).

These relationships between people and place add to the on-going existence of places. Otherwise, as Halbwachs (1950/1980) wrote, houses, cities, and other places would all be constantly torn down. As a place is threatened, so too are those who are bound to that place. The people who infuse places with their collective memory are also advocates for the continuity of that place because losing that place would be losing a part of themselves. In order to be keepers of memory, people must be protectors of place. Although landscapes can easily be changed with the building or demolition of dams, relationships between people and landscapes are not as easily changed.

Based on this research and other research in the sense of place field, one would anticipate that participants would be opposed to the ERR, as the project will result in dramatic changes to a landscape to which they are strongly connected. In fact, the opposite was true. In spite of the anticipated changes to the Elwha, all but two of the 18 participants interviewed for this research were not only supportive of the ERR, but expressed excitement about changes to the landscape. Participants were fully aware that anticipated changes included draining Lake Aldwell and Lake Mills, restricting access to area hikes and camping, and introducing changes in river quality and flow. Despite these changes, most participants emphasized positive feelings about the project. For example, the following is an excerpt from an interview with a 19-year-old Port Angeles resident who talked of her support of the ERR. She justified the changes to the river based on the health, welfare, and availability of wildlife:
But overall I’m 100 percent for taking out the dams because it’s going to restore the salmon and bring back a ton of wildlife. You don’t see very much wildlife because there’s no bears that come down to the river to catch salmon, there’s no bears that come down, it’s just some ducks or some deer. (Anonymous, personal communication, August 23, 2011)

Why is it that the majority of the participants found changes to the Elwha supportable to the point that they supported the ERR? While many participants talked of positive experiences and connections with the Elwha, in many cases, their recounting foregrounded meanings of loss, pain, and frustration. Although participants felt deep connections with the landscape, their home was not right; it was not how it should be. These themes of loss, pain, and frustration were also strongly linked to salmon. To many participants, the key to righting the Elwha depended on the presence of this single species. As salmon was the symbol used to represent the ERR, thus, providing reason for changing the landscape, this species acted as a rallying point for participants to support changes to the landscape. I would suggest that salmon acted as a symbol that enabled participants to suffuse salmon with meanings, uniting them toward a common goal: the restoration of the Elwha ecosystem.
A symbol is an object, person, or event used by individuals and societies to represent a wealth of meanings and values. Symbols are powerful in that they can represent various meanings, but still unite people toward a common goal. In the context of this research, although salmon embody multiple meanings to participants, the species also represents a single goal to most: restoration of the Elwha River.

This chapter discusses the concept of symbols. I explain how individuals and cultures use symbols in defining and nurturing identities. I discuss how the symbol of salmon united participants towards a common goal, while at the same time evoking various meanings to participants. These additional meanings are discussed within this chapter as well.

As Bodnar (1992) described in his account of symbols’ influence on collective memory, cultural and individual preferences influence how we create and maintain our symbols. Throughout time, symbols and their meanings change. Public memory is subject to political and societal pressures that may be imposed by those in authority. Bodnar called this the “cultural offensive of authorities” (p. 253). Those who are in public leadership positions, are part of what Bodnar called the “official” cultural expression of a society, while people outside the political realm are “ordinary” people and are part of the vernacular cultural expression. Officials try to convey what society should be or what it
should focus on, and use symbols to push these agendas. The realm of public memory is a constant tug of war of ideals between official and vernacular domains. The result is a negotiated set of ordinary and official expressions that ultimately formulate public opinion. Bodnar used the example of the Vietnam War Memorial to illustrate how these two groups assign different meanings to the same symbol. The officials cast the memorial in a patriotic light while ordinary people viewed the memorial as a representation of sorrow and grief.

As an icon of the Pacific Northwest, salmon is a symbol that is readily recognized and interpreted, and holds significance for many in the region. For decades people have viewed salmon as a key political signifier in managing resources in the Pacific Northwest (Lackey, 2009). As conflict has ensued over salmon harvest and conservation, groups, including tribes, government agencies, and non-profit organizations, have utilized the symbol of salmon for their agendas, such as the restoration of ecosystems like the Elwha. An example of this was provided by a long-time Port Angeles resident and supporter of the ERR. He talked of Chinook salmon as the symbol of the restoration of the Elwha ecosystem:

Let’s talk about king salmon in the river. This is what this is all about, this is what sold Elwha restoration, is the big Kings. It is. It wouldn’t matter if we had said, “Did you know there was probably a million humpies on the odd year there?” They would have said, “Oh yeah? Well, [so] what?” But you said, “Did you know

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1 Chinook salmon, also known as king salmon, are the largest of the salmon species.
there had been hundred pound kings in the Elwha?" Well, that gets their attention.
(Anonymous, personal communication, June 29, 2011).

Meanings attached to symbols have to be learned because the relationship of a symbol to what it represents is arbitrary. For example, an image or a word may be used to represent the same object. Without being taught what symbols such as a red cross or a skull and crossbones mean, how would we know what reactions to have when confronted with those symbols? This learning can occur through direct experience or can be acquired from others. Salmon was a shared symbol among participants because of both shared and/or individual experiences, such as sport fishing and utilizing the species for food. Through these experiences, participants learned and practiced the symbolic meanings salmon evoke. With respect to cultural acts we engage in every day, symbols are often our guides to how to negotiate our way through those experiences. As Turner (1967) described, “From this standpoint the ritual symbol becomes a factor in social action, a positive force in an activity field. The symbol becomes associated with human interests, purposes, ends, and means, whether these are explicitly formulated or have to be inferred from observed behaviors” (1967, p. 20). In other words, symbols spur people to act. These symbols not only support rituals or acts centered around them, but motivate people to take particular actions. For example, a symbol of a red cross to many people represents medical assistance and can draw people toward places where the meanings the cross represents, such as care, safety, and health, are fulfilled. On the other hand, the symbol of
skull and crossbones can represent danger, harm, and/or death and is meant to repel people away from where the object is displayed.

Although society influences meanings applied to symbols, individuals take these messages and interpret them based on their own preferences and experiences. In discussing the "openness" of symbols, Turner (1967) highlighted that this flexibility allows individuals to ascribe meanings to symbols that may not be the same as the meanings publically ascribed to the same symbol.

Clearly, the ERR is moving forward, with salmon as the figurehead of the project. The anticipated return of salmon is spearheading changes to the entire ecosystem, and the "officials" managing the ERR, such as the NPS, promote this idea. This is not to say that participants were unaware or disagreed with what was officially said about salmon. Many participants perceived salmon as an important, if not the most important, justifying reason behind the restoration. But there was more to the issue. According to Bodnar (1992), if a closer look is taken, and the "ordinary" people who make up the whole are allowed to express their opinions, issues are less clear cut.

This dichotomy was present in participants' perspectives about salmon. While agencies managing the ERR promote salmon as a symbol of restoration of the ecosystem-the "official" view of the species significance—upon closer investigation, it became evident that the "ordinary" view of participants went beyond this official perspective. Salmon evoked a variety of meanings for participants. For most participants, salmon and/or the decline of salmon, was controversial and represented, in some cases, lifetimes of conflict, manipulation, and a lack of faith in management of the species. In addition, to
all participants, salmon represented opportunities to connect with themselves and others, thus, symbolizing parts of their individual and cultural identities. It was at this level that people talked of not only the “official” view of salmon, but their “ordinary” interpretations as well.

As Turner (1975) described, “A symbol often has a single signans and often multiple signata. In other words, the ‘vehicle’ carries a load of ‘meanings’” (p. 152). Salmon is one of these “vehicles” imbued with compound meanings. For example, one participant recounted memories of fishing by himself, which foregrounded fishing as a source of relaxation (Anonymous, personal communication, August 2, 2011). Yet another participant spoke of the economics of fishing and, therefore, highlighted the monetary value he placed on salmon (Anonymous, personal communication, October 14, 2011). When asked about the role of salmon in the Elwha landscape, a NPS employee and Port Angeles resident summarized people’s multiple connections with salmon as follows:

Whole food webs are based on salmon in the Pacific Northwest, so there’s that value. There are many people who come to the park to look at salmon moving upstream during the fall, so there’s an education or whatever you want to call it. The value of people being able to see salmon [in the] environment. There’s the cultural value to the tribe which is huge for them. That’s a major issue. There’s a cultural, for the non-Indian community as well, in the form of fishing, you know, even if you’re not keeping fish you catch, being able to fish for them is important. (Anonymous, personal communication, June 22, 2011)
Turner (1975) described symbols as dynamic. They are "semantically 'open,'" meaning that the meanings ascribed to symbols can change. People are free to add, remove, adjust, and/or replace meanings linked to symbols. Symbols do not constrain meanings; they allow a fluidity of meaning to occur as people control what symbols represent through ongoing experience.

The following is an examination of participants' "ordinary" interpretations of the symbol of salmon. The themes discussed in the following sections address the predominant meanings participants ascribed to salmon within their narratives at this time.

Representations of Salmon

Salmon as a Representation of Fishing

The theme of fishing was, by far, the most often described and meaning-rich topic discussed with respect to salmon during interviews. In most cases, participants who had direct experience with salmon through fishing displayed not only a greater depth of knowledge of the fish, but a greater sense of respect. The act of fishing provided a platform on which to act out cultural performances that situated participants in society and developed their individual identities. Within the experience of fishing, those meanings that cultures and individuals used to define themselves, such as sharing and passing along traditions and rules, was accomplished. The following narrative is from a Port Angeles resident and former commercial fisherwoman who grew up in Western Washington fishing both recreationally and commercially:
If you stop and think about it, if you go back to Biblical times there was fishermen. There were always fishermen. They have always been fishing for fish. You’ve got the butcher, the baker, the firemen, whatever. You’ve got the fishermen. It’s part of our culture. That’s what I think. And as far as what draws people to fishing, it’s probably the same thing that draws people to race car driving or skydiving or anything else, it’s something that brings you pleasure and some kind of feeling I get [that I] did a good thing (Anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2011).

This participant linked fishing, salmon, and culture. By “our culture,” she was referring to American culture. To her, fishing was a way to be accomplished both as an individual and a member of American culture. What people valued in the experience of fishing determined what they hoped to accomplish while fishing. This was often, but not always, determined by the reasons people chose to fish; recreationally or professionally. Interviewees described bank fishing, deep sea fishing, and commercial fishing. For example, most of the participants who commercially fished for salmon focused mainly on the economic benefits of fishing and described fishing as their “livelihood.” Fishing was also a job. One participant began describing his fishing experience in terms of money spent and earned. The cost of the fishing boat was described along with an overview of the monetary value of different species of salmon. For example, Chinook salmon were worth more money than pink salmon, therefore, kings were his favorite fish to catch.
Fishing represented a way of life for many of the participants. People lived by the cycle of the salmon fishing season. This way of life was more prevalent in the past, but for those who still fished commercially, fishing was perceived as a component of their survival. This perception contrasted with recreational salmon anglers who did not depend so heavily on salmon, but still considered it a part of their identity. Whether fishing commercially or recreationally, fishing was less about catching fish, and more about opportunities to connect with others and oneself.

Within the broad theme of “fishing,” subthemes emerged during participants’ narratives. These subthemes were classified as: connecting with others; connecting with self; and overcoming adversity and honing skills. Additional categories were identified within these subthemes. The following sections discuss these categories and subthemes.

**Connecting With Others**

Whether commercial or recreational, participants’ memories about fishing focused on relationships. Fishing provided opportunities to connect with others. One participant, who grew up fishing with her family as a child and fishing with her husband as an adult, highlighted the connections she felt: “It just seemed to me, with my dad and my brother, we went fishing and, gosh, when we were dating we went fishing out in Puget Sound, rented a boat at Point Defiance and went fishing” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2011).
In many cases, fishing was an activity that was experienced by current and past generations. In all instances, participants learned how to fish by learning from others. “Exchange of knowledge” was one of the subthemes discussed within this category. The act of fishing and exchange of knowledge that occurred between participants of this event was a powerful component of some groups’ collective memories. The following narrative is from a Port Angeles resident’s response when I asked if he would, “Tell me about fishing.” He settled himself against the rock he was leaning on before answering:

Salmon fishing used to be a big part of my family’s life. I wasn’t alive for part of that, but my mom worked for Fish and Wildlife on the Columbia River and she would do a bunch of salmon surveys and my dad was a habitat biologist up here in Forks, but also my dad was a big fisherman. And all his friends would go out steelheading on the river in the winter. All of my dad’s friends had boats and they will go out to Sekiu all the time and go fishing. When I was growing up, every fall at least, I would get to go fishing at least once or twice from my dad’s friends’ boats, especially with my uncle (...) on his boat. Kind of like, kind of figured out, not how to be a man, but what real men were like because you would go out there on the fishing boats and, you know, it would be my dad and his old friends and these are all fisheries guys with their beer guts and big beards and tall tales and you go out there, “Oh reel that Goddamn line and what are you doing?! Get that fucking thing!” You know, my dad never talked to me like that. They’re out there five in the morning at Sekiu, in their boat and taking swigs of Crown Royal and
everything. These were definitely manly men. And I thought one of the best feelings in the world was you go out there and you have fish on your line. And reeling in a salmon is kind of like an art. You have to do this and that and if you got that salmon close to the boat and you snagged it with the net and it was a nice fish and you felt like you earned some respect that day. You might only be 14 years old, but by golly these big men are slapping you on the back, “Whoa boy! That’s a good fish! That’s going to taste great on the barbecue. Did you see how that thing jumped in the net?” And it seems like whenever they told the story about how that fish got caught, it was more exciting every time. The fish jumped more and someone almost died.

So those were my experiences growing up salmon fishing. I’ve been to Sekiu a few times [and also] at the mouth of the Columbia as well with my mom’s friends from her days in fisheries. We would go around and motor down there. Always good times. Very good bonding times. You always wanted to do a good job out there because you knew you could gain some respect from these big manly guys you wanted to impress. These were my experiences salmon fishing, going out to Sekiu with the boys. It was fun though. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011).

This participant’s narrative exemplifies the development of his own, personal identity, of learning to be a fisherman, and becoming accepted into a group through “honing skills” and “overcoming challenges”--other themes connected to the broader
theme of “fishing.” Another participant recounted his experiences with an older, long-time resident of Port Angeles and well-known expert on the Elwha. He described the experience as, “awesome,” having learned a lot about salmon and the areas the older man fished in the 60s and 70s (Anonymous, personal communication, August 9, 2011).

Fishing provided opportunities for “practicing and passing on traditions.” This subtheme was closely related to the symbolic work of developing/enacting “cultural identity” and “individual identity.” The individual was molded and formed by practicing the traditions and rules displayed and acted out while fishing. Individuals were rewarded for following these rules by acceptance from other participants. Depending on the group, acceptance was born through catching fish, learning specific skills, or displaying prowess at certain tasks.

Connecting With Self

In addition to providing opportunities to connect with others, fishing also provided opportunities for reflection. In many instances, the act of fishing was less about interacting with other people, and more about escaping from them. Fishing as a form of “solitude” was a subtheme within this category. A NPS employee and Port Angeles resident described his fishing experience as the following:

[Fishing] gives you an excuse for being outside and standing someplace and sitting someplace where it’s quiet and nice. I definitely wouldn’t be one of those
people who goes to a crowded area to fish. I’d be more happy not catching something someplace quiet than catching lots of fish with elbow to elbow fishermen. (Anonymous, personal communication, June 22, 2011).

Fishing was a “time for reflection.” In these instances, fishing and salmon were excuses to escape onto a boat or into the woods. Participants sought out places that offered quiet and distance from others. Fishing was “relaxing.” The following Port Angeles resident focused on how fishing was not only an escape, but a process as well. He described how fishing can be relaxing; especially on a day when the sun is shining on the Strait of Juan de Fuca and his boat is running:

It’s incredibly relaxing. Get a lot of enjoyment out of, and it’s, I don’t know, like growing your own garden. You just wait and wait and wait until the tomato turns red and you can pick it and the carrots pop up or something. It’s always more enjoyable to eat something that you actually participated in harvesting yourself. It probably goes back to when we were living in caves. (Anonymous, personal communication, August 2, 2011)

Many of these participants were recreational anglers who perceived fishing as more of a sport or pastime, rather than commercial anglers who perceived fishing as more of a job. Some participants who did fish commercially, however, described fishing as a
source of relaxation. A commercial angler, who focused on the economic and relationship value of fishing, also valued the peacefulness she experienced while fishing:

I loved it. I really did. Get out there early in the morning. It was peaceful. We had some of the hydraulics of fishing or whatever, but I just loved watching the fish come because you could see them below the water so free and beautiful.

(Anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2011)

Overcoming Adversity and Honing Skills

Fishing was “practicing rules and protocols.” By practicing rules, anglers are more likely to catch a fish, thus, meeting the goal of most fishing trips and gaining a sense of accomplishment. Fishing was “practicing skills.” For example, a recreational fisherman and Port Angeles resident talked of the various fishing equipment used by people on the Olympic Peninsula. This equipment included spinner spoons, bait, such as sardines and anchovies, and other gear. He described the different methods anglers preferred while explaining that his preferred method was to fly fish with spinner spoons (Anonymous, personal communication, August 2, 2011).

Fishing was a way to develop and practice skills that resulted in catching fish and having a safe experience. “Practicing skills” also addressed the uncertainty presented by ocean and river environments. The Elwha and Strait of Juan de Fuca are cold and can be dangerous. The following story was told by a Port Angeles resident and former
commercial fisherwoman who described the unpredictability and dangers of fishing in Western Washington waters:

My brother had a boat and he came up here to Sekui, gosh, that was scary. My gosh, my sister-in-law was pregnant and so he had a little cabin boat and we were out in the Straits and we were fishing and all of the sudden we’ve got these huge swells and I mean you’re looking out and all you see is this wall of water and then the boat goes up and then over it, but then you get over into the other troughs and all you see is a wall of water and it was like (gasp) it was very scary.

(Anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2011)

A Lower Elwha Klallam tribal member recalled some of his first experiences as a commercial fisherman, in which the ocean environment was unpredictable. He described his first year of fishing as, “pretty adventurous.” In one story, he was with an older, more experienced fisherman when he noticed something initially thought to be another boat on the radar, but quickly realized it was an island shrouded in fog. They quickly changed their course (Anonymous, personal communication, October 14, 2011).

The sense of uncertainty and risk in fishing heightens the sense of achievement when catching a fish or returning from a fishing trip. Fish live beneath the dark Pacific Northwest waters, and are not usually visible to the angler’s eye, unlike a hunter who can locate a deer in his or her sights. Anglers must locate the fish, hook or net the fish, reel or drag in the fish, get the fish in the boat or onto shore, all the while battling weather and
water conditions. For some interviewees, fishing was “overcoming challenges.” This not only applied to catching the fish itself, but the experience in its entirety. Fishing was “self-reliance.” Overcoming obstacles promoted a sense of self-reliance among some participants and pride in themselves or the people they were with.

Fishing was uncertain, in that fishing conditions were unpredictable, and also in that catching a fish was not guaranteed. Many participants’ stories about fishing focused on the effort and knowledge they had to use in order to land a particularly large, wily fish. It was a “contest.” Fishing was human against fish; human against the elements and human against human.

In addition to being a “contest,” participants also described fishing as an “art form.” The intricacies of fishing may be known to many, but there are secrets to catching fish. Using the right bait, trolling the right spot and fishing at the right time and season are kinds of knowledge that may only be shared among certain people. People are reluctant to share their secret fishing holes. For example, when asked where specifically a 38-pound Chinook was caught, one Port Angeles resident answered shrewdly, “Oh, I can’t tell you that” (Anonymous, personal communication, August 9, 2011).

“Gambling” was another subtheme of fishing. Many participants described fishing as exciting. A Port Angeles resident and commercial angler recalled how she enjoyed watching the fish come in from the flying bridge of her fishing boat. She described how the fish would, “Dance and splash around and flip and jump.” She would hope that salmon would not shake the hooks from their mouths, but sometimes that did happen and it appeared that, although this was not the ultimate goal of fishing, it did not
upset her (Anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2011). Even if no fish were caught that day, there was the sense that the next day of fishing could be better.

The uncertainty of fishing, combined with the possibility of a reward at the end, is similar to other gambling activities. Fishing was “addictive.” The following narrative is from a NPS employee and Port Angeles resident who described his thoughts about fishing:

"Sometimes I think of it like gambling. It’s almost an addiction because you don’t know what’s going to happen each time you throw, you might get something. So there’s a sense of anticipation every time you cast a line in the water that something exciting is going to happen. But it’s also kind of quiet. It’s nice, even if you don’t catch something." (Anonymous, personal communication, June 22, 2011)

This participant not only highlighted the sub-themes of “gambling” and “addictive,” but also that fishing was a time for “reflection” and “solitude.” In addition, the sub-theme of fishing as “surprising” emerged. The process of catching a fish represents an opportunity for participants to continue to learn whether they have been fishing for a few years or their lifetimes. Many participants recounted memories of fishing in which the weather, fish, or people they were with did something unexpected. One participant recounted what he described as, “my favorite fishing story,” in which his wife outfished him. Although he joked that clearly she was successful because he baited
her hook so well, he considered this an exemplary fishing tale. He remembered how he was not even able to get his line in the water before his wife, who had never been fishing before in her life, reached the boat’s limit for fish (Anonymous, personal communication, June 22, 2011).

For many, fishing represented a sense of “pride.” Accomplishing tasks and overcoming challenges promoted a sense of satisfaction among participants. Whether navigating a vessel through rough seas or catching a large Chinook on the Hoh River, many of the participants’ stories of fishing were tinged with a sense of pride.

“Freedom” was yet another subtheme of fishing that participants expressed. This freedom refers to the opportunity fishing provided for participants to act out their own rules and protocols. Of course there are fishing regulations that should be adhered to and various agencies police the catching of fish, but on a fishing boat or riverbank, people are able to decide how their fishing experience will be acted out. This act provided emotional and bodily satisfaction as participants connected with themselves and each other while, in some cases, skillfully overcoming obstacles.

**Salmon as a Symbol of Tribal Culture**

Many participants, both native and non-native, cited salmon as an important component of tribal culture. Non-native participants were often reluctant to expand on this topic and suggested that I talk to tribal members. Klallam tribal members particularly talked of salmon’s role in the culture of their ancestors. The first salmon ceremony has
been held for generations and continues today. While the dams were in place, this ceremony was held in three places; the mouth of the Elwha, between the dams, and upriver from the upper dam. A tribal member described how the first salmon ceremony to be held in 2012 would be the first one since the construction of the dams to be held in one location on the Elwha (Anonymous, personal communication, February 20, 2011).

A significant theme in interviews with members of the Klallam was reliance on salmon as a source of economic benefit. When presented with the request to tell me “about salmon,” all tribal participants’ narratives circled to the theme of “economic benefit” of salmon for the tribe. This emphasis was different than many non-native participants’ perceptions of the role salmon played in Klallam culture. According to native participants, salmon do play an important role in their traditions and collective memories, but salmon were a significant representation of economic benefit. The tribe has relied on salmon in the past and will continue to do so in the future. When non-native participants were asked to tell the researcher “about salmon,” the narrative mainly included fishing experiences that highlighted memories, traditions, and relationships that were sustained through these practices. For native participants, the experiences recounted in their narratives focused on fishing as well, but instead of highlighting memories, traditions, or relationships, economic benefit was a more prominent theme. This focus was due, in part, to the underlying reasons how participants encountered salmon. Many, but not all, non-native participants were recreational anglers, while native participants fished commercially. The reasons participants bought bait, stepped on a boat, and trolled the sea or river were different. Tribal members subsisted on salmon which provided an
economic basis for the tribe, while for most non-native participants, salmon were not their means of economic support.

This is not to say that tribal members interviewed for this research did not share cultural connections with salmon. Salmon as part of their culture and economic well-being spans generations, but the species is also part of a current, modernized industry that provides economic support for the tribe and its members.

**Salmon as a Provider**

Many participants described consuming salmon as their main food source, occasionally during special occasions, or as part of their regular diet. Whether catching salmon personally or obtaining it from another source, salmon satisfied certain biological and cultural needs of participants through consumption. Both native and non-native participants mentioned salmon as a way to provide for their families. A Port Angeles resident described salmon fishing by contrasting it with trout fishing. Whereas trout fishing was a sport and anglers typically did not keep trout to eat, salmon fishing was a way to obtain food: “Salmon is your subsistence. You don’t hook salmon and then put it back so that somebody else can catch it. You hook a salmon, you keep it” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2011).

A Klallam tribal member recounted how she “could eat fish three times a day” and never tire of it. She had grown up eating salmon and she continued to eat salmon decades later as an older woman. She recounted the following when asked if she still ate
salmon: “I don’t forget my main food. So I guess you were raised in it” (Anonymous, personal communication, October 14, 2011).

Non-native participants also subsisted on salmon. Another participant who grew up during the Great Depression described how his family’s, “protein source for really quite a long time, was salmon” (Anonymous, personal communication, June 29, 2011).

The decline in salmon and increase of commerce on the Olympic Peninsula marked a movement away from this subsistence base, in which people began to rely on other sources of sustenance. For some participants, salmon was not a main food source, but was a source of special food and mostly consumed during special occasions. A Port Angeles resident described eating salmon as a way to connect with his family each week:

I would say that we eat salmon three times a week. Both my parents are salmon habitat biologists. That’s how they met. So it was a big part of their life, but through that they would always go salmon fishing and catch a bunch of salmon and eat a bunch of salmon and they’re so good at cooking salmon and barbecuing it. So growing up that was a big staple for us. Every Sunday we would sit down to a big salmon dinner. And usually at least one day of the week Dad would just come home and throw salmon on the barbecue. It would be informal. Like, we were sitting down--whenever you came home--you could grab a piece and put it on your plate. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011)
Many participants knew precisely how many days a week they ate salmon and under what circumstances, which included who they were with, how the fish was cooked, the species, and how it was acquired. For one Port Angeles resident, when asked how often she eats salmon, she replied, “We have salmon in the freezer right now that was given to us” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2011). A tribal member described various ways to cook salmon, including making a hash, boiling, frying, smoking, half smoking, and baking. These occasions often involved a gathering of family and/or friends. From catching, to cooking, to eating salmon, rituals such as these provided opportunities to connect with others. Among many participants, eating salmon was a tradition. The practice of eating salmon had been passed down from generation to generation. This custom holds for tribal members who did not remember a family history that did not include consuming salmon, to younger generations of Port Angeles residents whose parents raised them on eating salmon during special occasions.

Eating salmon goes beyond consuming a food merely because it tastes good. Undercurrents of meanings are expressed during the ritual of selecting, preparing, and eating salmon. Many participants feel healthy when they eat salmon because it is a “pure” food source in that they considered good for their bodies (Anonymous, personal communication, June 22, 2011).

Along with being a source of food, salmon also provided for participants as an economic benefit. For native participants, salmon represented the economic health and benefit of the tribe. It was the tribe’s source of life. Salmon once directly supported tribal members as their main food source. Salmon has continued to be used in this way, but
now the species also represents economic profit, thus, directly and indirectly sustaining the tribe by providing funds to purchase other materials that sustain tribal members. Many participants extended the economic benefit of salmon to the surrounding community of Port Angeles as well. Many coastal towns, such as Port Angeles, grew out of the availability and harvest of resources. Salmon have provided a way of life and source of economic benefit for community members for generations.

_Salmon as a Resource_

Since the 1860s, Pacific Northwest salmon populations have, in some way, been managed by the government. Salmon recovery is an emotional and controversial multi-billion dollar industry (Lackey, 2009). Salmon represented controversy, struggle, and injustice to all participants. This controversy ranges from the removal of the dams to fishing rights. The heavy involvement of government agencies in the management, and in some participants' opinions, mismanagement of the species, represented a resource. The following is from a Port Angeles resident who has been involved with the pulp and paper industry for more than 40 years. The additional theme of _Salmon as a Source of Loss_ is also present within this narrative as he discussed the decline of the species. The participant described the following about salmon recovery as an industry while sitting in a restaurant in downtown Port Angeles that overlooked the Strait of Juan de Fuca:
It’s a new industry that has developed in the Northwest since the 1960s. Organizations grew out of recognizing the decline of salmon runs. So this industry is composed of environmental groups, maybe fisheries groups like Trout Unlimited and various fishery coalitions and then of course the tribes, although the state and federal agencies. Anyone that has any use of the river has got to be involved in this salmon recovery industry. And the hydropower industry is a big player because they are paying, billed. The Bonneville Power Administration is probably paying about, $1 billion a year, which comes out of our electric rates in the Northwest. There’s probably another billion that’s spent from other sources so it is a huge industry, and there’s probably thousands and thousands of people. I hesitate to hazard a guess but there’s probably 50,000 people employed in this industry. And one of the interesting things about salmon recovery is no one has to define it and no one is working on a definition of salmon recovery and no one appears to be interested in working on a definition of salmon recovery. So our chances of defining what salmon recovered would look like, what would it be like if there weren’t a shortage of salmon? And because we don’t know what it looks like, we won’t know when we get there and we probably don’t want to get there. Because there’s too much money invested or being invested every year in this industry. So, I think it’s a very interesting situation, where we have a tremendously huge industry all in place and instead to be there to recover salmon we don’t know what salmon recovery is, we’re not trying to find out. (Anonymous, personal communication, August 24, 2011).
Similar to other watersheds in the Pacific Northwest, the Elwha salmon fishery is a complicated and controversial industry with numerous vested stakeholders. Many participants mentioned tension among stakeholders, such as tribes, the NPS, and other government agencies, as they have managed populations throughout the years. For many participants, the majority of these tensions stemmed from the outcome of 1974 United States v. Washington, known as the Boldt Decision, which upheld many tribal fishing rights that were outlined in treaties in the mid-1850s (United States v. Washington, 1974). Many of the participants who were more than 30 years old, mentioned the Boldt Decision and conflict surrounding the issue when asked about salmon during interviews. The court proceedings were marked with protests, pain and, in many cases, violence. One Port Angeles resident recalled attitudes during the time of the ruling. She described how painful it was to witness the anger directed at the tribes and the resulting riots after the ruling. She described the atmosphere at the time of the Boldt Decision:

The struggle the tribe had to go through, you know, they had to send people as expert witnesses, like ( . . ) and ( . . ) ( . . ). They had to fight to show that the treaty guaranteed them half of the resource and I remember when the decision was made, I mean, there was literally, I don’t think anyone was killed, but there was a lot of fighting, a lot of beatings of tribal fisherman. (Anonymous, personal communication, June 29, 2011)
For many participants, the Boldt Decision and new harvesting laws marked the beginning of the significant decline of salmon. For example, one participant described how after the Boldt Decision, fewer fish were available to catch. He ended his narrative by pounding his hand on the table:

So when they say that the dams kill the salmon, that’s a lie because there’s lots of salmon until about the time that the salmon disappeared in all Northwest rivers was following the Boldt Decision. The Boldt Decision said that the Indians could go and net the rivers. There are millions of salmon that go out, young salmon and only a very, very small percentage come back, but one female Chinook salmon will lay four thousand eggs and so if they let the ones that do come back survive and go and spawn and we have quite a bit of salmon. Most of them are not getting back. They are tremendously productive but the Indians net them and sell the eggs to the Japanese and then they say, ‘Why don’t the government do something about our salmon!’ (Anonymous, personal communication, August 24, 2011)

Another participant described the same decline in the salmon fishery, but talked of environmental and other commercial fishing operations as contributing factors to the decline. He went on to say, “There were lots of fish certainly until the 1960s” (Anonymous, personal communication, August 24, 2011).

While many participants cited salmon as a resource that people themselves competed over, many of the same participants included the ecosystem as a player in this
competition as well. Many participants not only perceived salmon as a commodity that satisfied their own immediate, physical needs, but also as a resource that the Elwha landscape needed in order to be complete.

Salmon as an Indicator of Ecosystem Health

To participants, the salmon was the most basic component of having a fully-functioning system. Many participants began their conversations about salmon as an indicator species, describing the lifecycle of salmon and how through their lifecycle, they transfer sea-derived nutrients into watersheds. More than one participant assigned value to salmon as a source of insects. As the carcasses decayed along river backs, ecosystems experienced a “boom” in insect populations. This was the basis for the food webs participants described; beginning with insects and contributing to both vegetation and wildlife species. In the following, a Port Angeles resident and employee of Olympic National Park explained how salmon contributed to the ecosystem:

Salmon are a huge source of nutrients, essentially fertilizing the system year after year. And those nutrients are taken up both in wildlife as well as riparian vegetation. (Anonymous, personal communication, June 22, 2011)

Most participants acquired their ecological knowledge about salmon from others, as most participants had not witnessed this process directly. Participants know this to be
true through an exchange of knowledge that occurred in formal learning environments and/or from others. Scientific studies are available that describe salmon as an ecological keystone species. Local and indigenous knowledge also support this designation.

*Salmon as a Symbol of Wildlife*

Participants were unable to witness the flow of sea-derived nutrients through the ecosystem they described, but some had witnessed the results. Most of the narratives about salmon and healthy ecosystems circled around one theme in particular: wildlife. Most participants referred to "wildlife" as larger animals, such as bears. Even those participants who had never seen wildlife in the Elwha, such as bears and eagles, as a result of the presence of salmon, still highlighted this theme in their narratives. Although salmon were cited as a symbol of ecosystem health, wildlife symbolized whether or not the ecosystem was healthy *enough*. If wildlife were present, the ecosystem was at its peak. The system not only looked healthier, it *felt* healthier. The loss of salmon represented the loss of wildlife. One Port Angeles resident described salmon as a "canary of the river," meaning salmon indicate the health of the entire river ecosystem (Anonymous, personal communication, August 10, 2011). This participant had limited personal experience with salmon, but the fish represented the nutrient base other river species needed to thrive. Many participants provided similar examples. Although they appreciated the fish in various ways, one of the main meanings attached to the species was its ability to sustain other species.
Salmon as a Source of Respect

To most participants, the life history of a salmon was unique and fascinating when compared to other species. The amount, size, and repopulation abilities of salmon were impressive. For many participants, these characteristics inspired a sense of admiration for the species. Its ability to survive and navigate through the natural world commanded respect. Participants gauged the level of respect they felt toward salmon by comparing their own abilities to those of the fish. For example, one participant, a river guide and recreational rafter/kayaker, cited salmon as impressive based on the species’ capability to navigate through a canyon river, such as the Elwha, and imagined their journey based on her own experiences navigating through the river. This participant began by describing what it was like to raft the Elwha. She used words such as “flow” and “rapids.” When she began to talk about salmon, she applied the same language she used in describing her journey through the Elwha to describe salmon’s journey. She described the fish as “crazy:” “The salmon will just throw themselves up river and they can get through, like, the biggest rapids. They just push through until they reach the end and, but then they’re exhausted because of how far they’ve gone and they die” (Anonymous, personal communication, August 23, 2011). Another Port Angeles resident, who had spent time hiking the Elwha with family and friends, had this to say about the salmon’s capabilities:

To think that they get all the way up to where they get and will again, I mean, shoot. I have a hard time doing that when I have hard ground underneath me, let
alone trying to do it against the current” (Anonymous, personal communication, August 10, 2011).

Almost all participants expressed some kind of respect for salmon. The life cycles of the salmon were usually described within a narrative in which salmon hatched in swift, freshwater, swam downstream, grew into adults in saltwater, returned to spawn in the rivers they were born in, and finally died, all the while avoiding predators and navigating through hazardous natural systems. As participants navigated obstacles in their own lives, the obstacles salmon faced provided a way in which participants could identify and empathize with the species.

**Salmon as a Source of Loss**

The word “loss” represents the loss of salmon itself, but also the loss of the whole culture that relies on the species. Loss of salmon as a species represented loss of a way of life. Many participants, both native and non-native, could no longer rely solely on salmon as a source of sustenance. Fishing opportunities decreased, representing a decrease in social situations that enabled people to connect to themselves and each other. A Port Angeles resident described the following when asked what salmon meant to him. As an avid fisherman, who spent his youth in the Pacific Northwest fishing with his father and brother and his adult life fishing near Seattle, salmon were more plentiful in the past: “People being able to go out and fish and hunt is part of America’s culture and our
background and I like to see that continue in that we are doing all kinds of things to stop it” (Anonymous, personal communication, August 24, 2011).

Loss of the salmon and the resulting decline in fisheries in the Pacific Northwest represented a loss of all the other meanings participants connected to the species. These included loss of: fishing opportunities, Native American culture, American culture, a food source, ecosystem health, and wildlife.

In almost all cases, conversations about salmon were tinged with longing. Most interviewees contrasted the Elwha after dam construction with the Elwha before dam construction. Although participants associated this loss with the loss of direct experiences, such as seeing a bear along a river or netting a fat Coho salmon in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, salmon represented the loss of memories and traditions to many participants. They were a reminder of loss in that salmon were once a species that provided beneficial opportunities. A member of the Klallam told many stories that highlighted a sense of loss connected to salmon. She talked of the loss in terms of salmon being wasted by fishermen, the species dying from habitat destruction, a way of life disappearing, and decreased availability of a food source. In the following excerpt, the participant described what it was like for Klallam people who struggled after losing their rights to fish for salmon in the Elwha when she was a child:

There’s a lot of heartaches and ill feelings. When I think about the treatment, the treatment that we had. I don’t remember what year people from ( . . . ), they’d come down and catch the fish just for the salmon eggs. That way they just kill the
fish what I was telling you when ( . . ) told my mother if she wanted to dry or whatever she wanted to do. She could take, and she did, she was drying it when they were going to arrest her.

Most participants blamed the loss of salmon on mismanagement of the species and unfair appropriation of the allowable harvest. Almost all participants expressed uncertainty about the viability of salmon populations. To most participants, it was a delicate species in need of protection. The same tribal member continued her narrative of what salmon used to be like in the Elwha. She described how she and her relatives tried to save young salmon as the fish struggled to swim downriver to the saltwater:

The city of Port Angeles or whatever they did, they always shut the water off, the Elwha River off, on a Sunday and you could see over the *Unclear* fish dying because of lack of water because some of them were little tinies. We were just children then and we’d get buckets of water and we’d put them in there and put them in the main river. So there were plenty of fish in that era too, but they were slowly dying off to the point they were scarce. In the meantime, all those years we were not allowed to fish, not even for our own use; and as a Native we couldn’t even buy--what is that?--a license to fish, like other races.

This participant highlighted how she pitied the salmon and connected their plight to the restrictions imposed on her tribe. As the salmon struggled, so too did her tribe. Due
to mismanagement in the past, salmon represented uncertainty to all participants and were a reminder of pain: salmon once provided opportunities that had been lost.

Summary

This research provides insight into the cultural connections between a broad selection of key stakeholders and salmon. While salmon is a well-known symbol in the Pacific Northwest, why it is a symbol is less understood. In all cases, both native and non-native participants ascribed meanings to salmon as an extension of their identities. Those participants who had more experience with salmon, either through direct experience, such as fishing, or indirect, such as listening to memories from family members, described deeper connections to the species. Salmon was a medium for individual and shared experiences that created and maintained memories and relationships. In many cases, salmon were not the direct source of these experiences, however, without salmon, these experiences would not have existed.

Salmon are often described as an icon of the Pacific Northwest. From the indigenous tribes harvesting salmon with scoop nets in the Columbia River for thousands of years to commercial trawlers currently harvesting fish in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, salmon is a source of economic, recreational, and spiritual benefit for many Pacific Northwesterners. Symbols of salmon can be found throughout the region and attest to the incorporation of the species into Pacific Northwest culture. This symbol is found from art galleries to company logos; food packaging in grocery stores to sidewalk drains in cities;
and it invokes a variety of meanings and responses. The salmon spray painted on a storm
drain along with the writing, “No Dumping,” is a symbol of environmental stewardship.
The wild salmon purchased in Pike Place Market in Seattle for a family dinner
symbolizes an event at which people meet and connect. It is a symbol of the Pacific
Northwest’s regional identity.

The various meanings ascribed to salmon by participants speak to the power of
salmon as a symbol to direct people to take specific actions. This symbol allowed most
participants to ascribe personal meanings to salmon, while at the same time uniting them
towards a common goal: restoring the Elwha River and removing the two dams.

Common beliefs and goals held by a society are called charter myths. Webster
(2005) described these myths as, “belief-systems set up to authorize and validate current
social customs and institutions.” In other words, these myths, or stories, are our guides
within our society. They inform society about how things are supposed to be. Salmon
symbolize a charter myth about healthy ecosystems, and restoration of the landscape as it
is supposed to be. With this guiding myth, members of society can be motivated towards
the common goal of restoration. As Turner (1975) described, “Symbols are triggers of
social action--and of personal action in the public arena. Their multivocality enables a
wide range of groups and individuals to relate to the same signifier-vehicle in a variety of
ways” (p. 155). In this sense, salmon represent a variety of meanings centered around a
desired landscape.

While participants’ narratives did highlight strong connections with salmon and
the landscape, they were tinged with a sense of loss or longing. There was a duality
present within participants’ narratives about salmon as it reminded people of what had been lost, while at the same time representing how they currently defined themselves. D’Alisera (2004) provided an example of how symbols can be used as a reminder of what has been lost, while at the same time serving to situate people within their culture. For Sierra Leoneans’ in Washington D.C., the image of a “cotton tree” connected them to their homeland, while reminding them of the distance between themselves and their home. The symbol represented informants’ home and their longing for this homeland. She described this phenomenon as the following:

Symbolizing the distinct identity of the nation as a separate space, and thus constructing difference and separation, at the same time it creates a symbolic bridge between homeland/nation and host country that merges both spaces into a transnational flow. As a symbolic representation of transnational flow, the tree not only blurs the boundaries between here and there, it is also the vehicle through which the resulting continuity is produced. (p. 80)

Although D’Alisera (2004) is specifically describing use of the cotton tree as a symbol used by her informants to connect with their homeland while living in Washington D.C., similarities can be drawn to this research project. Participants are still living in the Elwha region and have not been displaced as D’Alisera’s informants were, yet they long for their home to be a certain way. Salmon was used by participants to negotiate identities in the present, but also connections to the past and future. As Sierra
Leoneans in Washington D.C. longed for their home, so too, do participants long for how their home should be. And the Elwha should include salmon, as it did before. The cotton tree is a symbolic bridge between homeland and a new place, while salmon is a symbolic bridge between different states of the Elwha over time.

Symbols, represent places, such as homelands, but, more importantly, these symbols define people within those places. We want and need symbols to bind us to some and to differentiate us from other people. These symbols are used as points of reference as we situate ourselves in the world around us. Attachments to these symbols can be strong. As Tuan (1977) described, the desire for these symbols can lead to, “The passion for preservation” (p. 197). Tuan used the example of an edifice, such as a church, which is preserved not only for its aesthetic value, but because of other meanings that symbol represents, such as cultural rules and traditions.

As salmon faded from the Elwha, participants appeared to long for its presence. In this way, nostalgia shapes participants’ desire for a future Elwha. The Elwha river was ideal when it was undammed and salmon were allowed to spawn upriver uninhibited. Participants called on this knowledge, through personal experience and collective memory. Their prior experiences with salmon and the Elwha provided the motivation to support landscape change, while the symbol of salmon united them towards a common goal: to bring back salmon in order to return the Elwha to its natural state. This desire goes beyond altering the landscape’s physical appearance; participants want to experience this landscape differently. To most participants, changing the Elwha landscape will result in a place that fosters meanings they hold dear.
CHAPTER VII
CONNECTIONS WITH THE ELWHA POST DAM REMOVAL AND RETURN OF SALMON

Introduction

In this chapter, I examine expectations for the Elwha in the future based on dam removal and return of salmon. The Elwha is a prime case of a landscape that currently cannot be remembered undammed by any living person; however, many of the stakeholders expressed a longing for how the Elwha used to be with salmon spawning in unobstructed waters. Stories, newspaper articles, photographs, and memories passed from one generation to the next gave participants an idea of how the Elwha used to be. Most participants considered that the ERR would return salmon to the Elwha, thus, returning the Elwha to its natural state, and they longed for an Elwha that once was. Nostalgia played an important role in determining participants' perceptions of the future Elwha. In the following sections, I explain how nostalgia shaped participants' perceptions of the Elwha and, ultimately, inspired the majority of participants to anticipate a future landscape that would not only be idyllic itself, but would provide the framework for an idyllic society.

Nostalgia: Looking to the Past Elwha to Shape the Future Elwha

Even though participants often described intense attachments to the Elwha landscape and its resources, many of them not only supported changes to the landscape,
they were anxious for changes to begin. This occurrence is striking in that much sense of place research reveals that landscape change can be incredibly painful for those with attachments to resources (Davenport & Anderson, 2005; Eisenhauer et al., 2001; Jorgenson & Stedman, 2001; Smaldone et al., 2008; Stedman, 2003). Despite this risk, only two of the 18 participants expressed negative feelings or reservations about changes to the Elwha landscape. Even participants who described the Elwha as the most beautiful, pristine place they had known were minimally concerned with draining the lakes, demolishing the dams, and releasing sediment.

Participants were fully aware of how these changes threatened the Elwha. Water quality would decrease. Lakes Mills and Aldwell would be reduced to barren craters. The glacial waters of the river would turn murky with sediment. Blasting could alter the river canyons. Despite this knowledge, participants were primarily concerned about whether or not salmon would return. As Lang (1999) described, although sense of place is influenced by the physical characteristics of the landscape, sense of place ultimately hinges on deeper emotions people attach to the landscape. For most participants, loss of aesthetics was temporary as they hoped that the salmon would return to the river, thus, returning the river valley to a healthy ecosystem. For most participants, the return of salmon was the key reason they supported changes to the Elwha. The long-term benefits of the ERR outweighed the short-term losses.

The absence of salmon from the Elwha landscape reminded participants that the meanings associated with salmon were in jeopardy. Memories assisted in retaining these meanings, but participants lost opportunities to directly engage in experiences involving
salmon. The loss and continuing decline of salmon from the Elwha landscape was painful for all participants. Whether it was a tribal member who subsisted on salmon as a small girl growing up on the Elwha or a former commercial fisherwoman who grew up fishing with her brothers, father, husband, and children, many participants described salmon as an integral part of their identity, and the loss of salmon represented losing parts of themselves. For example, a Port Angeles resident who grew up fishing in the Pacific Northwest described the decline of the salmon fishery:

I think it’s kind of sad that the salmon fishery has so decreased. Whenever we go down by the Marina, we see all these fishing boats and you see them because they’re not out there fishing, they’re just floating in the water because there isn’t a salmon fishery anymore. There’s no charter boats out of Port Angeles anymore because, I asked about that, because I was hoping he [my husband] would be able to go on a fishing trip on a charter boat and we had some company from California who were wanting to go out on a charter boat or something and, you know, Port Angeles doesn’t have a fishery anymore. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2011)

Nostalgia about something can include “bittersweet, wistful” feelings (Holbrook, 1993). The following story was told by a Port Angeles resident who remembered how the Elwha used to have plentiful salmon about a decade after completion of the Glines
Canyon Dam. He described going down to the Elwha to fish with his parents and siblings while laughing at the memory:

In '39, we went down and, oh Lord, it was awful. It was like, I can see that yet, it was like looking at the surface was moving, like a mass of maggots and they were actually forcing fish, bright fish right out on the beach. There were so many. And so we simply, the folks just grabbed them by the tail and us kids put them in sacks. (Anonymous, personal communication, June 29, 2011)

As Holbrook (1993) described, nostalgia situates experiences of the past in a positive light, while casting present and future things in a negative light by highlighting what is missing. Songs, possessions, books, and other symbols can all inspire a sense of nostalgia. The process of connecting with the past creates context for the present. As Lowenthal (1975) wrote, “We selectively perceive what we are accustomed to seeing; features and patterns in the landscape make sense to us because we share a history with them” (p. 5). The following story was told by a member of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe in which she described how her life on the Elwha River used to be. She looked back to the Elwha of her youth while foregrounding positive experiences she had with her family and tribe:
I think the river played a lot in our childhood. We played a lot in the water. And there were streams that used to come from the top of the hill and now the population has moved and now also the streams have dried up or have diminished.

Relph (2001) maintained that memory and nostalgia play an important role in determining which places inspire connections based on his observation that older places, rather than newer places, receive much attention in the literature about sense of place. Although Relph was speaking of places that are decades, if not centuries old, the elements that make these “old” places special are the same as what makes the Elwha special to people: the presence of memories. These places are defined as “old” because of their age, and also because many people have experienced and remembered them. A sense of nostalgia can exist in older places, such as medieval castles that have been experienced and remembered for generations, and also newer places that may have only been experienced by a few generations or an individual. We constantly undergo this act of situating ourselves in landscapes by trying to make sense of them through reflections on the past.

As Lowenthal (1975) described, nostalgia is a desire to take what was familiar from the past and apply it to the present to make our surroundings more comfortable. We construct the environment around us to be more known and, thus, more comfortable to us (Tuan, 1977). To participants, salmon represented a time when life was better. For most participants, the Elwha with salmon provided a level of comfort in that the river would then include those meanings ascribed to salmon within the landscape. MacCannell (1976)
maintained that our modern society is constantly calling on the past to mold places in the present. He described people as yearning for a sense of “authenticity” in their places. It is not only a longing for how places used to look, but how people were able to live. For example, although participants live in a modern world, many of their stories exemplified a desire to see wildlife return to the Elwha as before the river was dammed.

Landscapes are reflections of our identities, and we choose to mold the landscapes around us to signal to others who we are and to remind ourselves who we want to be. While many researchers in the field of human geography describe cultural landscapes as built environments with features that clearly show the marks of human manipulation, whether constructing a new house or pruning a tree, all landscapes have been inhabited at some time, and are therefore in some sense culturally conceptualized and built. Even those places considered wilderness and free of human impact have experienced manipulation in some way. The Elwha is a cultural landscape and a built environment with salmon as one of its features. Without people, the Elwha dams never would have been built. Without people, the dams would never have been removed. Without people, salmon would not return to the Elwha. Therefore, the Elwha is a constructed environment with people shaping it into what they want. That people chose salmon as a feature in this built, cultural landscape speaks to the cultural significance of the species, and also provides clues about what they value. In this case, if taken at face value, people value salmon. But, as salmon is a symbol for various meanings, people value meanings salmon evoke, such as a healthy, vital ecosystem and a means by which to nurture relationships.
A landscape that includes salmon acts as a canvas on which participants can display valued cultural meanings.

Not all participants anticipated changes to the Elwha. For example, a long-time Port Angeles resident described the Elwha as beautiful before the dams were removed and the lakes drained (Anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2011). Even before dam removal and salmon reintroduction began, this participant was longing for the landscape that he knew would be lost. For those who were attached to the lakes, these waterbodies and activities they made available will be remembered with nostalgia. For these participants, changes to the Elwha and loss of certain species, such as certain birds, represented a loss of opportunities for shared experiences with friends and family (Anonymous, personal communication, August 24, 2012).

In most cases, qualities of the Elwha that participants valued before the return of salmon are expected not only to continue, but experiences through which those qualities are realized and expected to be more readily available after the return of salmon. For example, a Port Angeles resident, who grew up visiting the Elwha, cited the Elwha as a place to build relationships with family, particularly with his father. With the return of salmon, this participant talked about how he anticipated taking his grandchildren to the Elwha to fish for salmon, thus, building new memories, stories, and relationships:

I won’t mind coming up here and throwing my rod in the river and pulling out the big salmon every now and again when I’m a grandpa with all the littlest (…) kids running around. But just because I love the Peninsula so much I would like to see
it thrive as much as I can and bringing back salmon to this river that is so important to me. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011)

In supporting the ERR, participants are building a landscape in which they can engage in an imagined society. Within their narratives, participants did not just describe the landscape they wanted; they described the society they wanted. Through cultural performances, such as fishing, hiking, and/or camping, participants will be able to act out sacred meanings. It is not just the restoration of an ecosystem, but an opportunity to have society that revolves around the themes of well-being, safety, harmony, community, family, nourishment, and discovery. The Elwha and its salmon represent a place where participants can share and practice those meanings. It is important to note that all the meanings linked to the Elwha prior to dam removal and the return of salmon were present within their narratives about the future landscape. The following themes represent meanings that participants ascribed to the landscape upon the return of salmon.

Connections with the Elwha

*The Elwha as a Home and Safe Haven*

There was a sense of pride for some participants as salmon represented turning their home into how it should be and/or into the home of their ancestors. The following narrative was provided by a member of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe who described how he felt about the river that was part of his tribal lands and history. Although he gave
the following narrative while smiling, he described the Elwha as an embarrassment because it lacked salmon:

Well, I can tell you, you know, there’s not much to brag about when you have 5,000 fish coming back and two hydroelectric dams blocking passage on your river. Not too much. I mean, you can say, “Oh yeah, we used to have 100-pounders in our river.” Doesn’t impress anybody. But you know, you can’t, you are embarrassed that you have two hydroelectric dams blocking salmon runs on your river. When that river is healthy again we’ll be able to hold our heads high and be proud of the runs in the Elwha. Maybe even more so than a lot of tribes because they work hard to maintain their river. (Anonymous, personal communication, August 24, 2011)

Within this narrative, the additional themes of The Elwha as a Source of Environmental Injustice and Salmon as a Source of Loss emerged as the participant described challenges his tribe faced due to the decline of salmon. If participants could continue to partake in those experiences from which they ascribed meaning to the Elwha after the return of salmon, such as hiking and fishing, then the Elwha remained a safe haven. For a few participants, even if salmon return, it will not outweigh the negative effects of the changed Elwha landscape, as they no longer will be able to partake in their chosen activities and did not plan to use salmon to partake in new activities.
Most participants expressed that the return of salmon will nurture their identities. In addition, participants expected to pass lessons learned to future generations because of the return of salmon to the Elwha. Most participants planned to continue rafting, hiking, camping, fishing, and visiting when the Elwha becomes a salmon river. In particular, many participants expressed anticipation toward acting out culturally significant acts that rely on salmon, such as fishing. The participant who recounted the following narrative did not believe she would be able to see the Elwha with large salmon runs. But, to her, the Elwha continued to have meaning as a guide to her descendants:

I probably won’t see the large amount of fish like, you know, it was in the time when I was growing up, but there will be fish. I probably won’t be able to see that at my age, but I would say my grandchildren and great grandchildren and grandnieces will have the privilege of having the fish come back again and the medicinal plants and the wildlife again like they did. Because it seems to me when I still listen to the stories of my grandparents and everything—they used to go camping up the hills, they go up the river. So, I would say it will come back to those terms again. (Anonymous, personal communication, October 14, 2011)

Even if participants believed that they would not be able to personally pass along lessons, as long as salmon were in the Elwha, these lessons would continue. Changes to
the river and salmon populations will enable learning in that the combination of salmon and the Elwha will provide the framework for future generations to learn those lessons handed down from ancestors.

The Elwha as a Source of Loss

For some, salmon returning to the Elwha represented loss, such as loss of clean energy, jobs, aesthetics, and recreational opportunities. It also represented a loss of salmon in that some participants predicted that changes to the river, such as the release of sediment and change in river flow, would not only prevent salmon from returning, but annihilate the remaining, fragile populations. The loss of lakes and changes to the river represent a loss of place.

Without the lakes, participants may have fewer opportunities for recreational activities, which equates to a loss of opportunities to act out culturally significant activities. What was once a place to build and nurture relationships, in addition to building individual identity, would be gone. The lakes also acted as reminders of past experiences, stories, and memories. Those stories and memories still exist, accompanied by a sense of loss, dissatisfaction, frustration, and/or anger. This trend was exemplified by a participant who described the Elwha post dam removal as a dead place. When asked if he would continue to go to the Elwha in the future after dam removal he replied with: “No, you know, if a friend’s house burns down do you want to go and watch? (Laugh) I don’t” (Anonymous, personal communication, August 24, 2012).
Many participants replaced lost elements, such as the lakes and dams, with the presence of salmon. Whether they were 93 or 23-years old, for most participants, the Elwha before dam construction was better than the Elwha after dam construction.

The Elwha as a Changed Ecosystem

Salmon were the missing piece needed to have a healthy ecosystem. Because salmon represented nutrients, wildlife, insects, beaches, shellfish, and vegetation, the addition of the fish symbolized the return of these species as well. A 23-year-old Port Angeles resident, who does not have any personal recollection of healthy salmon runs in the Elwha, but only knowledge passed through the collective memories of his family and community, used the following metaphor to describe what the Elwha ecosystem will be like once salmon return:

It will be the way it’s supposed to be. Kind of like you’ve walked around for a few years with one hiking boot on and the other barefoot and it’s all weird and then one day maybe I’ll put a boot on the other foot and you walk around and you’re like, “This is the way it’s supposed to be.” This is right. I imagine that’s what it will kind of feel like when salmon are coming up the river. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011)
To all participants, salmon acted as an indicator for entire ecosystems. By providing nutrients, salmon provided the most basic foundation for ecosystems. The system will be loaded with nutrients on which all life depends. Insects will thrive on salmon. Vegetation will be healthier. In this sense, salmon represented the success of the ERR. For many participants, the clock will be turned back and the Elwha will be how it should be, in this case, how it once was.

The Elwha as a Place for Wildlife

For most participants, prior to the return of salmon, the Elwha was perceived as devoid of wildlife. A member of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe talked of the struggles wildlife populations have endured while the dams blocked salmon runs and she expected this to change after the removal of the dams (Anonymous, personal communication, October 14, 2012). From native to non-native, scientist to rafting guide, 16 of the 18 participants expected more wildlife upon the return of salmon. The following narrative is from a Port Angeles resident whose narratives primarily focused on wildlife as the largest benefit of the ERR. He expects the Elwha to be, “a real bonanza” for wildlife:

If you want to fast forward say 30 years, why, I think the chances that things are going to be [different are] really quite large. There should be good healthy runs of all stocks; the predators will once again come to the river. We’ll see them.
'Course otter, he’s never going to leave because he likes it there, but the rest of them will be back. (Anonymous, personal communication, June 29, 2011)

For others, removing the dams would result in loss of some bird and fish species. To most participants, loss of this wildlife paled in comparison to the wildlife that would be gained. For these participants, what was once a dead ecosystem will once again include those valued species that have not been able to thrive in the Elwha since the decline of salmon. The presence of this species represented a sense of contentment and satisfaction for most participants in that salmon represented vitality of the whole ecosystem.

The Elwha as a Provider

Many participants spoke of how the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe will be able to depend more on the salmon runs, and also how the community of Port Angeles will be able to depend on the river in ways that have not been available for nearly 100 years. An increase in the availability of salmon will increase dependency on the river. Not only will people remain attached to the Elwha, they will experience a change in the nature of those attachments by relying more heavily on the resource. For many interviewees, the Elwha will be a provider for current and future generations of tribal and community members. This will be accomplished through fishing. Themes of Salmon as a Representation of Fishing and a Salmon as a Provider are linked to this broader theme of The Elwha as a
Provider as they represent increased fishing opportunities, both commercially and recreationally, tribal and non-tribal. It represents returning to a way of life that was lost.

The ecosystem will be healthier and the flow of the river will be natural—all of which will promote healthy salmon populations that can be harvested for the benefit of the surrounding community. Even for those participants who did not plan to fish, many of the participants talked of how the Elwha would provide more for people who would fish. Interestingly enough, although participants highlighted the anticipation of using the Elwha more as a source of salmon in the future, many of them did not know when this would occur. Also, the 5 year fishing moratorium placed on the river in 2011, which closed both commercial and sport fishing, was not mentioned by many participants. These 5 years, in a sense, were skipped over as participants’ narratives focused on the fishing and subsistence opportunities available in the future. No two participants offered the same time frame for when this would be accomplished.

The Elwha as a Source of Environmental Injustice and Justice

To many interviewees, both native and non-native, the return of salmon represented an opportunity to right injustices suffered by the Klallam in the past. Salmon was identified as a Symbol of Tribal Culture. As salmon reenter the river, so too do the meanings ascribed to it. Other participants made sure to distinguish between salmon as a symbol of environmental justice and uncovering sacred sites as a symbol of environmental justice. These participants acknowledged that salmon played a crucial role
in providing justice, but were adamant that salmon should not be the sole focus of
cultural benefit to the tribe and that people should focus equally on the restoration of the
ecosystem and of the sacred sites. Although both salmon as a cultural symbol and the
sites as cultural symbols were talked of extensively, few of the participants connected
salmon with the sacred or village site. To these participants, salmon did not directly affect
their sense of place of a future Elwha or impact the meanings they ascribed to the
landscape as they looked forward to the tribe gaining back sacred places. Many
participants made it clear that removing the dams went beyond the physical return of
salmon, and that it signified the revitalization of Klallam culture. One Port Angeles
resident highlighted this distinction:

Salmon and reintroducing the fish is very important, but a lot of people are
pessimistic that they will ever be able to recover. So people need to look at it as
much more than salmon restoration. Restoring it to [the] wild river where we have
the opportunity to do that because so much of it is already protected. And giving
back the habitat that the Klallam people used. The salmon that come out of it is
great, but there’s other things important to the Klallam, like the creation site and
other cultural resources. So that’s how I view it more. It’s more than salmon.
(Anonymous, personal communication, June 22, 2011)

A member of the Klallam offered the following narrative about what the tribe is
looking forward to in addition to the return of salmon:
We’re all looking forward to seeing that big rock that’s hollowed out. That was special to the Klallam Tribe here, and it was, I would say, almost like a tenuous rock. (Anonymous, personal communication, October 14, 2012)

Many participants cite the return of salmon as providing increased economic and cultural opportunities for the tribe. The return of salmon represented an improvement in tribal members’ quality of life. In addition, the emergence of their sacred sites, will confirm the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe’s history and claim to the Elwha.

The Elwha as a Laboratory

_The Elwha as a Laboratory_ was prevalent in people’s narratives of the Elwha before the return of salmon. Secrets of the Elwha will be unlocked. Participants will know more about the Elwha and become more familiar with it. For many participants, the Elwha will continue to be a laboratory to learn about the landscape. An employee of Olympic National Park who has been involved with the ERR since the 1990s described these new discoveries: “We see the Elwha as a living laboratory and the pre-dam removal studies are really important in terms of setting the baseline so that we can actually measure the change after these dams are out” (Anonymous, personal communication, August 9, 2011).
As the largest dam removal and river restoration in United States history, many of the participants described the opportunity to be a part of the project as an unprecedented experience. Many professionals working for both the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and NPS described working on the project as the highlight of their careers. They were proud of being part of the project, of the work they were contributing, and of the resulting ecosystem they had a hand in building. Out of all the themes identified, this theme of The Elwha as a Laboratory had the most continuity. As salmon return, people will be able to continue learning about the Elwha. Certainly, new discoveries will be made, but this process of discovery was already in place before the return of salmon.

*The Elwha as a Source of Uncertainty*

Many participants, although expressing hope and anticipation that the Elwha River will change for their benefit once salmon return, expressed uncertainty about whether or not this will happen and/or when salmon will return. This uncertainty referred to both the aesthetics of the Elwha and the ability of salmon to return. The following narrative was provided by a long-time Port Angeles resident who had reservations about the ERR. Within this narrative, additional themes of *The Elwha as a Source of Loss* and *The Elwha as a Changed Ecosystem* were woven together with the broader theme of *The Elwha as a Source of Uncertainty*. As the Elwha changed, certain features were lost. The participant was unconvinced that the river would return to a natural, healthy state:
It's something I feel sad about. It's very unfortunate. And I don't think that people realize just what's going to happen because for a century those lakes existed. And that river is a violent river, and it's mostly fed by rain. And it gets--some of it [what is] coming down no--is from snowpack, but in the wintertime when it rains up in the mountains when it does a lot, that river is violent. Those lakes, besides what they say, had a very calming effect. There's something like 48,000 acre-feet of freshwater storage there was in those lakes. An enormous amount of stuff that was washed down the river has built up behind those dams and that's one of the reasons they're taking three years to do this because they know that stuff is going to come down the river but I don't think three years is going to take care of it. I think they should prepare for at least 20 years. It's going to be a big problem. 

(Anonymous, personal communication, September 22, 2011)

Another Port Angeles resident who worked for Olympic National Park talked about how she did not know when salmon would return to the Elwha. She expressed concern that salmon were the focus of the project because if the species did not come back, in many people's minds, the ERR would fail. To her, it was important for the dams to be removed so the river could return to its natural flow:

[The return of salmon is] what they'll hold up as the success. And that's, like I've said, we're here for such a short time if you think about it this, it's not just for us. It will be for generations and generations and it would never happen if the
restoration didn’t happen—salmon don’t come back. They could come back in four years, eight years, ten years. Maybe not in our lifetime. I’m just speculating. I don’t know that much about salmon, but I think the importance is that we make the move and do it and let the river be free. (Anonymous, personal communication, June 22, 2011)

Salmon are a controversial species. As discussed previously, participants attached the meanings of “Loss” and “Resource” to salmon. Participants assigned meanings, such as mismanagement, controversy, and pain to salmon. The return of this species to the landscape included the addition of these meanings to the landscape as well.

Many participants used the phrase, “wait and see” when describing the Elwha in the future. Although participants initially were waiting to see if salmon returned, their talk returned to the restoration of the landscape. In this sense, the themes of The Elwha as a Source of Uncertainty and The Elwha as a Changed Ecosystem are closely linked, as physical changes to the landscape are represented by the latter theme. In addition, the meaning Salmon as an Indicator of Ecosystem Health dictated the level of uncertainty that participants felt toward the ecosystem being restored. The more confidence participants had in salmon’s ability to return and restore the Elwha ecosystem, the fewer reservations participants expressed about changes to the landscape. Although participants expressed some uncertainty about physical changes to the Elwha and return of salmon, they are ultimately “waiting to see” if they will be losing or gaining elements of their individual and cultural identities as the ERR progresses.
Although I categorized participants' narratives into dominant themes, all the meanings participants expressed were connected. The themes expressed by most participants were representative of an anticipated ideal society that they projected onto the anticipated landscape. These meanings were elements of a whole that participants used to express their intricate connections with the landscape and what they anticipated their connections to be in the future. For example, *The Elwha as a Provider* was one identified theme. The Elwha was a provider in that it supplied sustenance, such as fish, plants, crops, and game, for generations of people. The effectiveness of the Elwha to be a provider relied on other identified themes, such as *The Elwha as a Changed Ecosystem* and *The Elwha as a Source of Wildlife*. A less healthy ecosystem and decreased presence of wildlife also decreased subsistence opportunities for participants. Salmon is the factor that determined how well the Elwha fulfills expectations of it as a “Provider,” “Changed Ecosystem,” and “Source of Wildlife.” Seeing a salmon in an ecosystem represents the presence of wildlife in that ecosystem. They may not see other wildlife directly, but because they will see salmon, they know that wildlife will be present.

The return of salmon to the Elwha will bring about drastic changes to the landscape. The Elwha will look different. Lakes will disappear. The river will change course. Sediment will shift the shape of the river’s mouth. For most participants, the river as their home and safe haven was not disappearing, but changing for the better. As Tuan (1977) described, a home may change, but it will still be a home. The ability of the
participants’ home to change for the better hinged on the ability of salmon to return. Participants’ sense of place was affected by the faith they had in salmon coming back. The certainty or uncertainty with which participants viewed salmon returning to the Elwha influenced their perceptions about whether changes to the landscape were, in essence, worth it. Although people positively anticipated changing the landscape in order for salmon to return, their narratives were tinged with trepidation. No other project of this magnitude has ever been done. The only reference point for participants to draw from to paint a picture of the future comes from their own perceptions of the pre-existing landscape. A longing, or nostalgia, for the Elwha before it was dammed provided the motivation for imagining how their home will be in the future. The following narrative is from a Klallam tribal member who described the Elwha returning to how it once was. To her, salmon will pull the past Elwha into the future, enabling people to experience the landscape as it once was; a natural and bountiful ecosystem:

To see the salmon runs to come back, it’s going to be exciting and when the beaches will get sandy again and maybe the shellfish will come back. The king salmon is the one that is most, I don’t know, the most highly prized because the king salmon would get really big, travel the furthest up the river. I’m just looking forward to the salmon runs coming back, people being able to fish. Salmon will be a major part of their diet again. (Anonymous, personal communication, February 20, 2012)
As Hobsbawm (1991) describes, nostalgia moves us. The longing we experience can move us to constantly want to connect with and recreate those places we hold dear, especially those places we consider home. “Home” can mean two different things as Hobsbawm describes. There is the home of our childhood, complete with a roof over our head, which is called Heim, and there is also Heimat, which is the broader place, or land, a person considers home. Heim is private while Heimat is public. This Heimat is a shared community. It is a place, such as a town or county or region, which is defined not so much by its physical boundaries as by the society that inhabits it. It is a social construction that when people look back to it and describe it to others, they are describing a society.

The Elwha could be considered an example of Heimat. The Elwha is part of all participants’ home. It is theirs; however, it is not their Heim. The Elwha is a larger place defined by its borders, but, more importantly, defined by the meanings society projects onto the landscape. As salmon were key to the Elwha they hoped for, so too were they necessary for the culture they hoped for and projected onto the landscape. Within this idyllic world, the themes of well-being, home, health, relationships, harmony, cooperation, and nourishment are all prevalent. For example, for many participants, the return of salmon will right many injustices the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe suffered in the past. Participants will work together to create a society in which people live in cooperation and harmony. This new society resembles the Elwha that participants currently live in, but the imagined future Elwha embodies the perfection of these themes. The restored Elwha will be a perfect landscape that will sustain a more perfect society.
For example, one Port Angeles resident said that after salmon return to the Elwha, the river, “is actually going to be a paradise” (Anonymous, personal communication, July 26, 2011).

The changes to the Elwha landscape provide insight into who participants were, who they are, and who they wish to be. As Sinha (2006) described, the symbols featured within landscapes provide insight into what societies value. She defines “landscapes” as, “Open spaces and structures ranging in scale from a grove of trees to a region, from a building to a city.” These landscapes and features of landscape can act as guides to understanding those connected to resources. Knowing the cultural meanings attached to resources, such as the Elwha and salmon, will assist resource managers in managing a constructed landscape in ways that echo with people’s values. Greider and Garkovich (1994) had the following to say about insights into cultures that built environments provide:

Our understanding of nature and of human relationships with the environment are really cultural expressions used to define who we were, who we are, and who we hope to be at this place and in this space. Landscapes are the reflections of these cultural identities, which are about us, rather than the natural environment. (p. 2)

Through memory and cultural performances, participants demonstrated their connections to the Elwha. The meanings ascribed to salmon provided insight into their support of the ERR. Drawing on their past experiences in the present, participants
demonstrated how they wanted the future Elwha to be by selecting the meanings they projected onto the anticipated landscape.

For most participants, generations will be connected to each other with the return of salmon. Future tribal generations will be connected with their ancestors that relied on the river for sustenance. Future generations of community members will be connected to past and current generations that relied on salmon during fishing events to bring people together. These acts allowed participants to build relationships and form their cultural and individual identities. The future Elwha will be a collection point for meanings that the river and salmon evoke. Most participants will no longer be wistful about the Elwha, because to them, salmon will return it to its rightful state. These benefits will be available to their descendants and, in some cases, themselves, as they build an imagined and better society made possible by a healthy salmon river.
CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSION

From a resource-rich peninsula inhabited by Native Americans, to a hub of
tourism and industry connected by a network of roads and towns, communities associated
with the Elwha River have defined themselves by the surrounding resources, in
particular, salmon. The history of the Elwha is fraught with change, controversy, and
competition. At the center of this battle are the river’s salmon. The Elwha salmon
epitomize culturally constructed struggles between nature and progress; tribal rights and
environmental injustice; lost lifeways and increased economic opportunities. Dependence
on historic salmon runs resulted in connections between participants and salmon.
Participants within this study demonstrated that various stakeholders have vested interests
in managing this species as they rely on salmon and its habitat to maintain well-being.

Participants’ narratives were accounts of salmon, people, and place. For many,
salmon and the Elwha landscape were integral components of their individual and
cultural identities. Connections to these symbols were powerful, but the combination was
even more so. With dam removal, most participants will no longer have to speak of
salmon and the Elwha separately; the Elwha will once again be a salmon river, which, as
many participants described, is how the landscape should be.

Connections between participants and salmon varied, but all participants, both
native and non-native, pro-dam removal or anti-dam removal, expressed some sort of
connection with the species. In many instances, salmon were a medium between people
and culturally significant events and practices. For example, the following narrative was provided by a Port Angeles community member and NPS employee who described using salmon fishing as a means by which to experience the Elwha River:

For me, it’s more about me being on the river than necessarily the catch and I just really enjoy walking and studying these rivers and when you catch a fish, that’s sort of an added bonus and as a biologist, it’s sort of, kind of, fun to sample fish to see what’s actually in there. So, for me it’s not necessarily about catching a fish to eat it, it’s more about the experience on the river. (Anonymous, personal communication, November 9, 2011)

The narrative data collected for this project was neither right nor wrong. It was significant. Participants shared their stories for a reason. Foregrounding certain memories and experiences shed light on meanings that were significant to participants. Participants were asked not only how they thought of the Elwha before salmon returned, but how they will think of the river in the future. Memories of the past were the lens through which participants assigned meaning to the future landscape.

The return of salmon will be a powerful stimulus to most participants to construct a future landscape and society based on perceptions of the past. For many, the future Elwha landscape and its salmon will be a landscape on which to enact and reenact meaningful cultural performances. For example, participants will be able to teach their grandchildren how to fish for salmon. Most participants also expect that the Elwha will
produce food for future generations. Because of the lack of salmon, current generations did not have the experiences with salmon or the Elwha that previous generations did. Therefore, although this generation was unable to directly experience salmon as its ancestors did, the knowledge of that experience did not disappear. This generation had to use others’ knowledge to pass on these memories, thus, preparing future generations for new and direct experiences with salmon in the Elwha. Presence of salmon in the Elwha will activate these memories and cultural performances, thus, allowing the knowledge and skills to take root in future generations.

There were only a few voices that could recount what the Elwha was like when salmon were abundant in its waters. As these people passed, these memories became fragile and people’s collective memories about salmon and the Elwha River were at risk. An Elwha with salmon is eagerly anticipated by many participants, and has value because participants hope to be able to reenact direct or conveyed experiences. This reenactment will enable the continuation of traditions that are part of their individual and cultural identities. People will partake in new experiences with the Elwha and its salmon, thus, adding more memories and traditions to their knowledge of and experience with the landscape. Not only will people continue to experience a sense of place with the Elwha, but these attachments may be stronger with salmon added to the landscape. For others the places that these traditions depended on, such as Lakes Mills and Aldwell, will disappear.

Limited research is available about the connections between people and salmon in the context of dam removal. Research is also lacking on the influence of certain resources on people’s sense of place, yet many changes to landscapes are the result of restoration
projects that focus on the protection or conservation of certain species, such as salmon, spotted owls, and wolves. These species are symbols for entire restoration projects; projects that can dramatically affect the landscape and, ultimately, sense of place. Therefore, there is a need for research about the connections people ascribe to these species as it could strengthen support for restoration projects. Salmon and the landscape are intricately connected. This research demonstrated that places that harbor salmon take on different meanings from those that do not.

In the case of the Elwha, most participants did not express negative perceptions of changes to the landscape. This trend was unusual because of the strong attachments and multiple meanings participants ascribed to the landscape. Many researchers of sense of place focus on how attachments to places can be intense; therefore, changes to or destruction of these places can be painful for those attached to them (Basso, 1996; Kahn, 1996; Tuan, 1977). The expected changes to the Elwha landscape were outweighed by the return of salmon and the meanings the species evoke. Leopold (1943) described wildlife as part of American collective memory. So too are salmon in the Pacific Northwest. As Taylor (1981) described fishing as a means by which to act out meaningful, cultural performances, so too do salmon represent these traditions. As Tuan described, as tangible features, such as memorials, are representations of traditions, so too are salmon representations of culturally significant traditions. Because salmon also represent various meanings that make up ourselves, salmon management is a struggle over social values.
Dam removal, river restoration, and habitat rehabilitation projects are expensive, time-consuming, and controversial. Study after study argues that it is crucial to account for people’s perceptions of landscape changes during resource management projects. Public support is needed to sanction and sustain these projects. Previous research has examined how public perception of changes can negatively impact the progression of restoration projects. For example, rivers, such as the Columbia, Klamath, and Snake, have all been embroiled in controversy as society attempts to balance stakeholders’ landscape preferences.

My research offers insight into stakeholders’ perspectives on prospective landscape change in relation to key species. The connections among stakeholders were strong and the connections between stakeholders and salmon were strong. These bonds linked individuals to the Elwha as a place and also linked stakeholders to each other. Salmon and the Elwha were elements of how people defined themselves as individuals, and what brought them together as a community. Participants’ sense of place contributed to the identity of the community. The shared meanings that the resources of the Elwha and salmon evoked acted as a means by which individuals connected with others within their community and defined their community as a whole. The strong attachments to salmon, held by all participants interviewed for this research, demonstrated that changes to the landscape were sacrifices that most participants were willing to make. At this time, if participants believed salmon would return, they believed changes to the Elwha would be worth sacrificing other features and resources of the landscape. These preferences reflect the cultural values held dear by individuals and the community. These changes to
the Elwha landscape are supported by the majority of participants because the changes meant that salmon would be able to return.

Participants weighted salmon with meanings that ranged from competition over resources to wildlife; fishing as recreation to a symbol of tribal culture. Participants’ perspectives changed with the anticipated return of salmon. For example, someone who spoke of salmon fishing as a valued past experience likely will value the Elwha differently as salmon return and he or she is able to fish its waters. The Elwha will be a good home for salmon and, therefore, a good home for the majority of the participants as well. This change in meaning was positive for most participants; however, it was negative for some. For example, a Port Angeles resident remembered boating on Lake Aldwell. This was a meaning-rich experience filled with memories of family, friends, and fishing. This experience cannot be repeated once the lake has been drained, so the Elwha will now evoke a sense of sadness, loss, and nostalgia.

The majority of the participants were hopeful about changes to the Elwha as the changes represented not only the physical restoration of the landscape, but an opportunity to have a better society. These participants accepted levels of conflict and loss associated with the ERR, because they were optimistic about the return of salmon, and thus, the realization of a better society. But what will it mean for people if their anticipated future does not come true? How will individual and the community identities be affected? What challenges will people face as salmon populations change and decisions must be made about managing this resource?
This research provides a better understanding of the connections between people and resources, and can be used by agencies and communities to address the aforementioned questions. No one knows when the Elwha will be restored and salmon will return. One participant expected the river would be restored in 10 years. Another participant estimated 30 years. Many of the participants believed that they would be dead by the time the Elwha ecosystem was restored and salmon were spawning in great numbers. Knowing where people are “coming from,” in other words, what their underlying interests and values are, will help the agencies and community involved to address future issues, both the successes and the challenges, within the restoration process.

These data provided a window into the rich, deep meanings people ascribed to the landscape and salmon. These meanings are elements of people’s fundamental perceptions of the landscape, resources, and landscape change. When addressing future issues, it is crucial for resource managers to acknowledge and be aware of people’s and communities’ underlying perceptions of resource issues. As stakeholders and agencies negotiate the management of landscapes, the basis of these negotiations hinges on understanding stakeholder perceptions. This research provides resource managers with the fundamental tools to address resource management issues in which agencies, individuals, and communities are heavily invested. The meanings, or dominant themes, identified within this research project provide the foundation on which to base negotiations. For example, as the agencies and stakeholders vested in the ERR continue to address issues that occur as the project progresses, such as the release of sediment and
the status of salmon populations, having this research will provide those involved with a better understanding of stakeholders’ positions. As agencies and communities work to mitigate and mediate resource management issues that arise during the decision-making process, identifying and incorporating stakeholders’ underlying interests and values provides a means by which to overcome obstacles as projects are initiated and progress.

The ERR is the first project of its kind, however, the number of dam removals and river restorations is going to increase in the coming years. The topics of dam removal, river restoration, and species recovery are issues that we, as a society, are going to have to address with more frequency. I recommend that resource managers acknowledge the importance of connections between people and salmon and use these meanings to tailor management strategies when managing projects. As restoration projects require support from various stakeholders and communities, it would be beneficial to frame management strategies in multiple ways that resonate emotionally with various stakeholders and communities. For example, management agencies often frame the focus of restoration projects around the benefits that salmon contribute to ecosystems and Native American culture. I would recommend broadening this scope to include other meanings and benefits stakeholders link to salmon, such as salmon as a source of fishing and/or the various meanings this theme represented, such as a way to connect with others or a way to connect with yourself.

This research reveals not only the connections between people and resources, but how people connect with those resources. Memory, symbols, and nostalgia were crucial processes that shaped participants’ sense of place. Participants used memories to
showcase their connections with the Elwha. The symbol of salmon played an important role in rallying most participants to support changes to the Elwha. Nostalgia for an undammed Elwha provided the framework for how people hoped the Elwha would change in the future. As places continue to change and salmon continue to decline, these data provide insight into the emotions people invest in salmon rivers. The themes examined in this research can be used to design public approaches, such as promotional and informational materials, that will resonate with stakeholders and meanings they value. Resource managers can base future studies on the themes identified as potentially relevant and/or the process by which I discerned these themes. These data can provide a foundation for future mixed method or quantitative studies in order to collect data from larger sample populations.

As of August 2012, nearly one year after dam removal began, Chinook salmon were recorded spawning past the lower Elwha Dam and within the borders of Olympic National Park for the first time in nearly 100 years (McKenna, 2012). Lake Aldwell is gone; replaced by an expanse of exposed sediment and preserved tree trunks. Lake Mills is reduced to a small patch of water that huddles against the Glines Canyon Dam. The Lake Mills lakebed is a sediment-lined crater with new, sprouting vegetation taking hold. The beach along the mouth of the river is growing; fed by river water clouded with sediment. As of August 2012, however, the largest sediment release in the Elwha has yet to occur (Randall, 2012). The Elwha landscape is changing and will continue to change. As the world watches the largest dam removal and river restoration in our nation’s
history, participants will be watching salmon; the species that defines the Elwha landscape, themselves, and their community.


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