

How the Salmon Found that They Shouldn't Go Up Potlatch Creek

We learn much about the geography of the area in this story, especially about the various rivers that were not suitable for spawning because of a lack of spawning beds and gravel.

Once, Coyote was sitting on top of a hill when he saw that the salmon were starting to swim upstream. They were heading toward the place where the falls at Wasco, on the Columbia River, were broken. Coyote saw the salmon pass as he went up the first branch of the great Snake River. It goes up that way from the Columbia River, and its water is clear. Coyote saw then that the salmon were on their way up the Clearwater River to spawn, and were heading on upstream to Potlatch Creek.

Suddenly, he remembered that there was no gravel at the headwaters of that creek where the Chinook salmon could spawn. So he hollered after them, "You are going up where there are only split rocks. If you want to go to a good place to spawn, go on up the big clear river."

And so they did. Some of them went up to *Tamso-ypa*, one mile up from the mouth of Potlatch Creek. From there they jumped on over to the Clearwater River, over the saddle. Some of the other salmon were up near the mouth of the stream. They heard the other fish say, "We are going up this stream. It is better." (The Clearwater River.)

So they jumped over to Eagle Point, where the saddle is. From then on, the Chinook salmon never went up Potlatch Creek, for its headwaters are only split rocks. The Chinook salmon and steelhead salmon migrate on up the Clearwater River and the upper branches to spawn.