

# **The Salmonpeople Tour**

## ***Building Salmon Nation***

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### ***What is Salmonpeople all about?***

Salmonpeople is a watershed of projects based on the power of stories. The story we are currently living is shifting in exciting ways from the last days of the industrial economy to the dawn of the sustainable economy. Sustainable technologies and market-driven innovations are catalyzing a new kind of maturity in business, governance and citizen behavior. Time to look into this new story. It's a good one.

At the headwaters of this effort is a hilarious and poignant solo theatrical performance revealing the economic and ecological interdependence of salmon and people in the past, present and future story of the Pacific Northwest, Salmon Nation.

All around us, a new story is emerging, the story of sustainable prosperity. Solutions abound and modern day storytellers have a crucial role to play in getting the word out.

*“Nothing compares to the journey I experienced attending a performance of Salmonpeople.”*

Jennifer Sutherst, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada

### ***What do we plan to do?***

The Salmonpeople Tour is a long-term outreach and education strategy in partnership with local and regional players. The tour engages 5-8 watershed communities each year building coalitions to design and measure sustainable prosperity. Our goal is not to preach to the choir but to add new members and learn to sing big harmonies.

In 2005, the Salmonpeople Tour reached 1,734 audience members through 13 performances in four communities, 3,995 youth through seminars, assemblies and conferences, 175 teachers, and 30 community leaders through workshops on sustainability indicators. These numbers will double as the Salmonpeople Tour travels this fall to seven northwest cities from Tillamook, Oregon to Victoria, BC. The goal is to catalyze, amplify and communicate conditions for sustainable prosperity.

*“Performance after performance, including student matinees, Peter walked onstage, sucked everyone in, and didn’t let them go until after the standing ovation.*

*In addition to his stunning work onstage, Mr. Donaldson was a crucial collaborator in local coalition building, partnership marketing and new audience building. His ability to draw diverse audiences to the project was nothing short of amazing.”*

Scot Whitney, Managing Artistic Director, Harlequin Productions, Olympia Washington

## ***One simple purpose***

Achieve sustainable prosperity.

## ***Four broad strategies***

1. Use the arts to broaden the audience and deepen the message.
2. Integrate sustainability principles in education to grow the next generation of citizen stewards.
3. Apply tools to measure progress towards sustainable prosperity.
4. Use mass media to broadcast learning.

## ***Three ways to tell a story***

***The Tour:*** The Salmonpeople Tour is a fully produced one-man show touring professional and community theaters throughout Salmon Nation. Salmonpeople tours 3-5 towns every fall when the salmon are running to catalyze citizen campaigns among local champions for sustainable prosperity. The annual tour is produced in partnership with a beloved local theater and a local coalition of ten or more organizations representing broad mission overlap towards a sustainability agenda.

***The Campaign:*** The Salmonpeople Campaign is a public involvement strategy based on one tool, sustainable community indicators, two habits, coalition building and success chronicling, and a multi-year commitment. The campaign champions education over regulation and supports communities in learning to measure what they truly value instead of only valuing what is easiest to measure.

***The Curriculum:*** The Salmonpeople curriculum is a strategic conversation to effect change over generations, linking student learning to the real-time needs of the watershed community as measured by local indicators. Understanding sustainability invites systems thinking, good science, clear-headed economics, and a reason to read, write and communicate well. In learning about sustainability, students discover a rich context for the application of academic excellence. Components of this strategy are linked to educational standards and best practices in teaching and learning.

## ***How does it work?***

A coalition of local entities unites to co-produce Salmonpeople as a civic centerpiece for catalytic change. The shared goal is to awaken stewardship behavior in an ever-widening circle of citizens. The Salmonpeople performance catalyzes a host of events expanding those arenas of action where mission overlap is greatest.

The central strategy is to partner with a local theater to co-produce Salmonpeople. The tour will only come to town if a coalition of local entities agrees to cross-promote it and work towards measuring what matters. This guarantees strong attendance, builds new

audiences for the theater, and creates a lively platform from which the community coalition can explore ways to develop indicators and measure local progress.

### ***A working template***

1. A given community wants to use the Salmonpeople Tour to step up local progress towards sustainable prosperity and figure out ways to measure it.
2. We plan a year ahead. We secure dates in a beloved community theater and work out a marketing plan for cross-promoting local programming along with the show.
3. A series of workshops on community indicators, integrating curriculum, and coalition building, precedes the show by several months or weeks.
4. We launch a collaborative ticket sales campaign, encouraging coalition members to offer price-reduced tickets to reward their members, seek new members, honor volunteers, call attention to champions, or invite new habits of sustainability. Proceeds from ticket sales that exceed production costs are redistributed to the coalition for investing in the development of community indicators.
5. The Salmonpeople performance runs for one day, one weekend, or for several weeks as part of the regular season of local offerings, depending on the professional capacity of the theater and the size of the community.
6. At each show we celebrate local projects and champions. Ushers hand out a "Companion Reader" filled with local and regional information about what's working.
7. In the wake of each performance run, coalition leaders meet to assess how best to capitalize on new energy and interest.
8. In time, a sister watershed exchange evolves so that communities working out ways to measure what matters can network peer-to-peer.
9. Meanwhile, schools are supported in ongoing integration projects. Outcomes are measured in student projects of value to community sustainability efforts.
10. The Salmonpeople Tours engages 3-5 communities a year and chronicles the emerging stories of each community for the good of the whole.

*"As Mayor of Olympia, I want to recommend a unique civic campaign unfolding across our shared bioregion. The campaign is called Salmonpeople. The purpose is to get citizens of all stripes, strata, and political persuasions thinking about sustainability. It's working. Mr. Donaldson's sly, informal approach engages the audience in a shared sense of possibility, solutions, and communal partnership. He is a model of curiosity and learning, gently advocating a new commitment to measuring progress. As a city, Olympia is well down this road, and Salmonpeople was and is a tremendous catalyst for deepening the conversation."*

Mark Foutch, Mayor of Olympia, Washington

## ***By what criteria will we measure success?***

### **1. Use the arts to broaden the audience and deepen the message.**

The tour reaches 3-5 communities each fall through 2010.

In each community, a coalition of 10 or more local entities comes together to promote the show, work on ways to measure progress, and integrate youth in the ways of citizen stewardship. The coalition is drawn from across sectors of civic life.

Ticket sales reach at least 75% capacity for the performance venue. Attendance includes local decision makers.

A "Companion Reader" is published and distributed to every audience member celebrating the good work of coalition partners.

### **2. Integrate sustainability principles in education to grow the next generation of citizen stewards.**

At least 20 school workshops and seminars are delivered each touring season reaching 500 youth.

At least 5 teacher workshops on how to integrate sustainability education are delivered each touring season reaching 100 teachers.

At least one local college in each community joins the membership of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, a network of colleges and universities working to advance sustainability across campus life. [www.aashe.org](http://www.aashe.org)

### **3. Apply tools to measure and communicate progress towards sustainable prosperity.**

A working group within the local coalition takes responsibility for developing or extending existing sustainability indicators. A suite of tools representing best practices in Salmon Nation are shared to stimulate and refine local initiatives.

Youth are integrated in the process of gathering, analyzing and reporting data.

At least 5 workshops on sustainable indicators are delivered each touring season.

A "Sustainable Habits Survey" is administered to local audiences and workshop attendees to benchmark perception, knowledge and behavior. Results are communicated immediately to local stakeholders and on an annual basis to bioregional stakeholders.

### **4. Use mass media to broadcast learning.**

Website upgrades include a weekly blog, online "Sustainable Habits Survey," extensive educational resources, and links to coalition activities.

Local success stories are captured in video towards developing four pilot projects; (1) "Televised Town Meeting" documenting next steps in establishing a local indicator process, (2) regional TV broadcast of the "Sustainability News," (3) a radio show for the same purpose, and (4) WebTV curriculum of real people talking about real solutions for classroom use.

### ***What's the show like?***

Peter Donaldson's one-man show is a spellbinding work of theater; a homespun tapestry of character insight, history lesson, and astounding freehand cartography. At one point he draws the entire map of our bioregion, naming a hundred rivers from memory! With good humor, good science and audacious storytelling, Peter Donaldson's Salmonpeople reaches all ages, everybody's bottom line, and one big landscape. It's a one man show with everybody in it.

The story is told through a modern day everyman named Cyrus Jackson who finds himself employed up at the local dam driving a salmon taxi to transport spawners up past where there is no fish ladder. Cyrus has been scratching his head lately about this whole endangered species thing. By nature a curious man, Cyrus' self-taught, wide-ranging lessons in economics are a triumph of the vernacular, an arresting synthesis of complex patterns and changing values in the name of common sense for the common good. You'll never think about your watershed address the same way again.

### ***The play is the thing...***

Every fall the performance of Salmonpeople tours a new region of Salmon Nation engaging new communities in the possibility of sustainable prosperity.

- The tour introduces the great story of our bioregion, Salmon Nation.
- The tour catalyzes and broadens local coalitions for sustainable prosperity.
- The tour empowers local coalitions to "measure what matters."
- The tour links academic excellence to community service learning.
- The tour passes along success stories among sister watershed communities.

### ***What is Salmon Nation?***

Salmon Nation is a cultural identity built around the soil and streams touched by Pacific Salmon. It stretches from Alaska down to California and inland to Idaho and even Montana. It crosses state and national borders. It reaches from the deep seas miles off shore to the high mountain streams that still run ice cold. It's map covers the hard pavement of cities, the watered lawns of suburbs, the steep forested hills of the coast range, and the rolling rich farmlands of the Palouse. It is a landscape that goes by different names these days; the Pacific Northwest, Cascadia, the Rain Forest Coast. Yet salmon were here before, and the first people knew the districts of this nation, long before the mountains were named for English nobility.

Those people were rich because of the salmon. Indeed the very lands of Salmon Nation have been enriched by the bodies of salmon over millennia. More than 137 species in Salmon Nation depend on the nutrients brought back from the ocean by this heroic fish.

Beyond salmon, we are bound in this region by other issues, by water, by power, by trade and history. We face common problems, share common interests and look to each other with a common history. Salmon Nation is a place where the economy is not in conflict with the ecological health of the land. A place of diverse ideas, species and cultures. A place where riches flow from the vibrance of the streams, soils and seas. It is a place in which both salmon and people not only live, but thrive. For more information visit: [www.salmonnation.org](http://www.salmonnation.org)

## **Background on Peter Donaldson**

Known as the Johnny Appleseed of Salmon Nation, Peter's spirited campaign is based on his ancestral relationship to salmon. His grandfather, Lauren Donaldson, Professor Emeritus of Fisheries at the University of Washington, was world renown as a salmon expert. His father, Jack Donaldson, directed Fish and Wildlife agencies in the State of Oregon and the Columbia River Basin for two decades. Peter's son, Oliver, was the original webmaster for [www.peterdonaldson.net](http://www.peterdonaldson.net). Daughter, Alexandra, is pursuing her goal of owning a sustainable café and community gathering place. Four generations of the one family have stepped into the streams where salmon and people negotiate the future. Peter is a master storyteller, educational consultant, and innovative facilitator, with 25 years experience in supporting learning communities, managing non-profits, designing curriculum, building partnerships and promoting new forms of organizational learning. Peter is a veteran facilitator of Open Space group process supporting learning communities across disciplines and across the nation. Peter has authored fourteen plays, produced some sixty others, and self-publishes his poetry in an annual collection. He has created numerous public school partnerships integrating history, the ecological sciences, excellence in writing, drawing from observation, and theater. Peter is well known for his one man touring shows, *Leonardo da Vinci* and *Salmonpeople*.

## **Background on Ecotrust; partner and fiscal agent**

Ecotrust was created in 1991 by a small group of diverse people who sought to bring some of the good ideas emerging around sustainability back to the rain forests of home. Today with a staff of 45 and annual operating budget of over five million that same mission is articulated in the phrase "Building Salmon Nation." The work of nation building is pursued through three core goals:

- Articulate a vision of Salmon Nation,
- Demonstrate tangible examples of success, and
- Grow constituencies for place.

Salmonpeople is a voice helping to meet these objectives. For the 2004 annual report on Ecotrust activities visit [www.ecotrust.org](http://www.ecotrust.org)

*"I've now seen Salmonpeople three times, first as a rough cut, second in audience testing and finally as a complete production. It is an amazing show... Simply put, the character of Cyrus Jackson is a perfect cipher for the many views of economics, science, culture, law, policy and ecosystems surrounding the fate of Pacific Salmon. Donaldson's character, Cyrus, is not, however, a salmon or environmental expert or activist. Cyrus, like many other people, is a complex, thoughtful and occasionally puzzled, self taught modern day citizen who cares deeply about salmon, people and common sense."*

Peter M. Lavigne, President and CEO, Rivers Foundation of the Americas