

## Floating the Skagit River

Reported by Arden Thomas, UW Graduate Student

The University of Washington AWRA chapter (<http://students.washington.edu/awra/>) greeted early spring with a raft trip down the Skagit River.



**Raft guide and UW student Jess Taylor leads us out of the put-in and our trip commences.**

The weather held out as students from the Civil Engineering, Forest Resources, Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, and Urban Planning departments floated from Marblemount to Rockport, Washington. Cleve Steward (Steward Associates/WA AWRA board), Larry Wasserman (Skagit River System Cooperative), and Chris Kowitz (Skagit County) donated their time to accompany us and share their expertise.



**Our raft guide Jim, owner of River Rider Inc., shares his knowledge of the Skagit.**

On the river we learned about Chinook and steelhead life history and habitat requirements, and how the diverse needs and circumstances of the Skagit watershed affect the local fishery.

The Skagit River is special in that it sustains productive salmon runs that are not driven by hatchery production. We learned about progress that has been made to help improve the health of the watershed. Changes in hydroelectric dam operations now help prevent fish stranding and redd dewatering.



**Students share a potluck lunch as AWRA student member Arden Thomas introduces the guest speakers for our trip.**



**University of Washington students and guest speakers are all smiles after an early April raft trip down the Skagit River.**

We also gained a glimpse of the challenges this watershed faces with increasing human population growth and urban development. Thank you to all of our participants for a great trip! ☺