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Reflect on PGC and one specific moment where you felt like an eco hero. What was that moment and how did it play out? Write a short reflection (200 words or less).

Upload an image of you as an eco hero. Caption it with a quote that encapsulates your eco hero self. What will you champion? What will you do in the world to help heal our planet? Why? How? Post it on the social media platform of your choice and tag @turninggreenorg with #PGC2019.

For today's greenest challenge, we were asked to think of one time during Project Green Challenge when we felt like an eco hero. While it is normally difficult to believe that our small actions, however good, have any real impact, there was one time during the adventure challenge on day 12 when I really felt like an eco hero. As I was hiking through a local nature preserve I stopped to observe a native smallmouth bass holding in the current. I sat there a minute before I realised that it was acting weirdly. Upon closer inspection, it had been hooked, but improperly released. The line had snagged underneath a rock, trapping the fish in one spot in an open area in the creek, in fast current and under threat of predators. After I verified that my initial observation was correct, I took off my shoes and waded into the creek. I grabbed the line, and untangled it from the rock, and then walked back to shore where I could unhook the fish. I safely released the fish back into its habitat, where it slowly swam upstream before taking shelter under a log jam. This experience in a field I am passionate about, preservation of the commons, really helped motivate me to continue with the challenge, in a time when my physical and mental health was wavering after a series of days with little to no sleep. I believed that if an action as small as that could help something so much, the entirety of the challenge would accomplish so much more.

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“Earth is what we all have in common” - Wendell Berry

This challenge has shown me that I can achieve what I am passionate about if I act, and there is no better time than now to speak about it. I am incredibly passionate about the value of rivers, and the services healthy free flowing rivers provide to communities. I am especially focused on the impact that dams have had on wild salmon and the indigenous communities that depend on them in the Pacific Northwest.

I first got inspired to pay attention to this issue when demolition was wrapping up on the two dams on the Elwha River on the Olympic Peninsula. The lack of fish passage on these two antique dams obliterated the massive yearly salmon runs of more than 400,000 fish a year in the early 1900s to around than 4,000 fish a year up until the dams were removed.

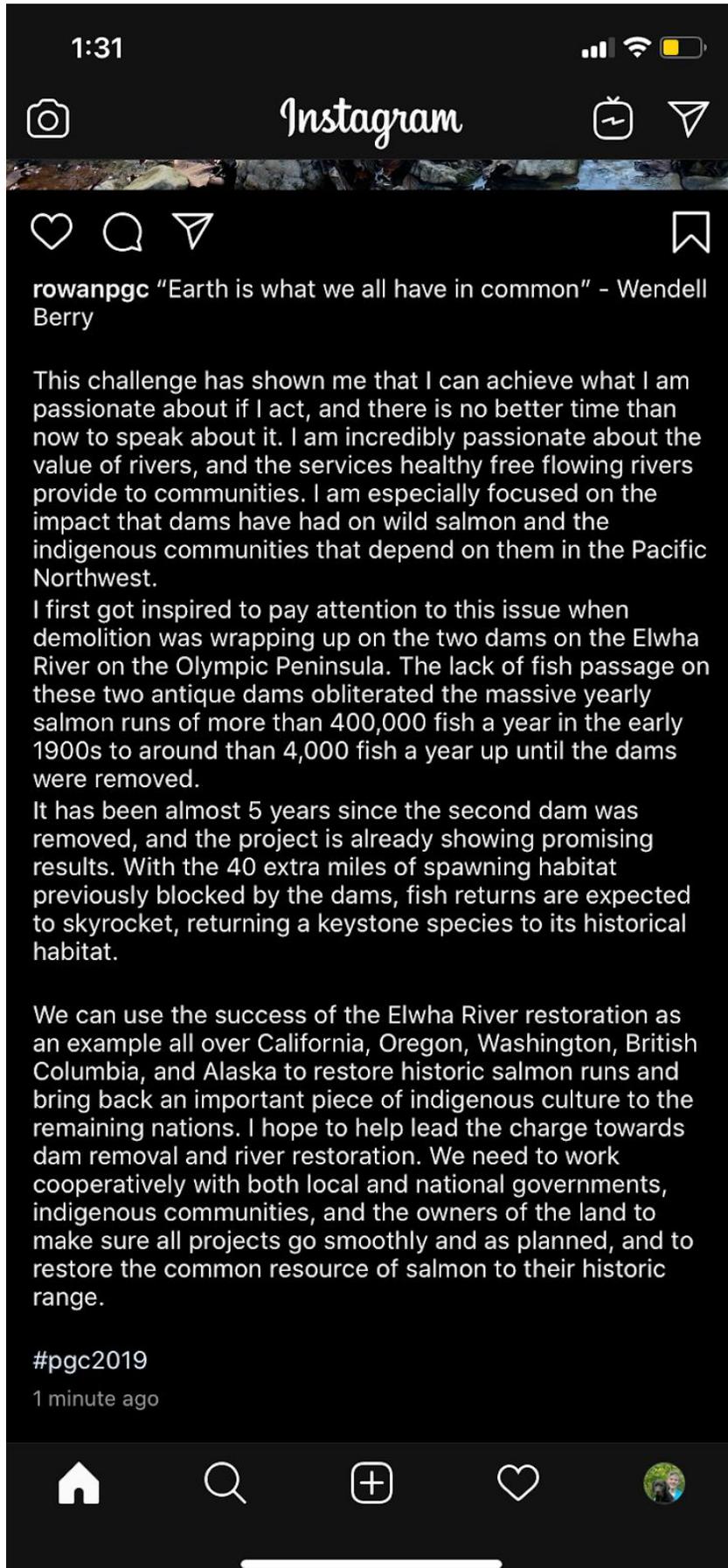
It has been almost 5 years since the second dam was removed, and the project is already showing promising results. With the 40 extra miles of spawning habitat previously blocked by the dams, fish returns are expected to skyrocket, returning a keystone species to its historical habitat.

We can use the success of the Elwha River restoration as an example all over California, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and Alaska to restore historic salmon runs and bring back an important piece of indigenous culture to the remaining nations. I hope to help lead the charge towards dam removal and river restoration. We need to work cooperatively with both local and national governments, indigenous communities, and the owners of the land to make sure all projects go smoothly and as planned, and to restore the common resource of salmon to their historic range.

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#pgc2019

1 minute ago