



# SalmonGRAM

Committed to Protecting and Restoring South Puget Sound Habitat



Message from the Director..... 2  
Restoration & Regulation..... 3  
Living with Streams ..... 4  
Allison Springs ..... 5  
Spotlight: Greenwater River..6,7  
Open ..... 8  
Kennedy Creek Trail..... 9  
Welcome Katie..... 10  
FFFPP Project Summary ..... 11

## *This Issue:*

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|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Message from the Director..... | 2   |
| Restoration & Regulation.....  | 3   |
| Living with Streams .....      | 4   |
| Allison Springs .....          | 5   |
| Spotlight: Greenwater River..  | 6,7 |
| Open .....                     | 8   |
| Kennedy Creek Trail.....       | 9   |
| Welcome Katie.....             | 10  |
| FFFPP Project Summary .....    | 11  |

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*SPSSEG is administered by a nine-member volunteer board elected by our general membership at the Annual Meeting.*

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Adam Sant - Project Manager

Kristin Williamson - Project Manager

Kathie Fulkerson - WCC Placement

Christine Garst - The Non-Profit Center

Jerilyn Walley - TESC Work Study

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Cover: Allison Springs Chum, September 2010

Photo: Brian Combs

## Message from the Executive Director

Lance Winecka



Hello SPSSEG Supporter,

Thank you for taking the time to read the Salmon Gram winter 2012 newsletter. We take great pride in creating the newsletter from scratch and we hope that you enjoy reading about our work! This edition will highlight the Greenwater River project that has been underway for the past several years. We are excited to finally complete this complex project and to start monitoring its success for future fish usage. Early indications show that the project is already shaping new habitat for endangered salmon in the Puyallup River watershed.

SPSSEG is also preparing to design and/or build several other beneficial in-stream and shoreline habitat restoration projects in 2012 and beyond. We are currently planning projects on the Deschutes River, Clearwater River, McLane Creek and Watershed Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 13 and 14 regions. Our goal is to identify meaningful projects that are supported by private landowners and the restoration community.

If you are interested to learn more about our great work completed in 2011 and our vision for 2012, please come to the **Annual Meeting on Thursday, January 26, 2012 from 5:30-8:00 pm** at the **Lacey Community Center**. This is a great snap shot into our organization and the types of projects that we complete. There will be shellfish and light appetizers for our guests to enjoy while listening to our guest speaker, Joe Kane tell dramatic stories about the Amazon and Nisqually Rivers.

Here's to restoring salmon habitat in the South Sound and beyond!

Cheers,

Lance

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SalmonGram is published twice per year by the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group (SPSSEG), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, volunteer-based organization.

The SPSSEG is one of fourteen Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups created in 1989 by the Washington State Legislature. The Regional Fisheries Enhancement Program is partially supported by United States Fish & Wildlife Service and by surcharges on sport and commercial fishing licenses. The Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife provides technical and administrative support to the program.

# Restoration and Regulation: Working Together for Salmon

By Lance Winecka

Restoration professionals are continually looking for ways to improve salmon habitat by implementing beneficial projects. Projects typically include adding large woody material to streams and floodplains, replacing fish passage barriers with a bridge and/or improved culvert, replanting riparian areas, and restoring armored shorelines to more natural conditions. However, some of the best possible salmon protection might actually come from existing federal, state, and local permitting regulations. The permitting process can generate strong reactions from some local community members due to increased land use restrictions, complexity, time, and cost. In fact, even restoration projects sponsored by SPSSEG require a lot of effort and experience to navigate through the piles of applications, forms, and checklists required for each permit. However, this imperfect and sometimes cumbersome process is at least well intended and is set up to protect the remaining valuable salmon habitat in the region. Even with all of the successful restoration projects underway in Washington State, it is important to recognize that it might not be enough and other tools are also needed.

The Hydraulic Permit Approval (HPA) is currently a free permit issued by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to complete work below the ordinary high water line. The intent of the HPA program is to provide a “no net loss” for fish and habitat through avoidance and/or mitigation of probable impacts. Statewide there are approximately 4,500 HPA permits issued each year to complete some type of construction activity that might have an adverse impact to fish or habitat. In contrast, only a few hundred salmon restoration HPA projects are completed per year. SPSSEG completes several restoration projects annually and over time has compiled an impressive resume for hundreds of diverse restoration projects. In that same time period, tens of thousands of permits have been issued by WDFW and other jurisdictions that have potentially impacted shorelines and streams. The WDFW is now updating the HPA rules through a public process in hopes to strengthen and improve this important tool. These rules have not been updated since the early 1990’s and should reflect the best available science of the times.

Many local South Sound jurisdictions are also in the midst of updating Shoreline Master Plans (SMPs). For example, Mason County is currently working with a joint citizens and technical advisory committee to update their SMP and to better protect their crucial salmon habitat. While this process is required by the Department of Ecology through the Growth Management Act, it is still important to have public participation throughout the comprehensive planning efforts. In fact, Mason County has recently submitted a grant proposal to support the development of programs that will allow them to better serve the public including:

- Hiring an **Enforcement Officer**
- Forming a **Resource Ordinance Working Group** to improve the permit and site inspection process
- Pay for **Staff Training**
- Develop **Educational Materials** for property owners and contractors that explain Resource Ordinances

Regardless of your position on the permitting or regulatory issues, it is important to participate and provide your comments to the process. There is hope that by working together we can protect and restore our iconic salmon and their habitats. Abundant salmon runs in the Puget Sound are part of what makes our region special and a great home for both people and fish.

# *Living with Streams and Rivers*

By Adam Sant

Many landowners in Western Washington enjoy streams, creeks and rivers on their private property. Living with water features can offer many joys as well as many challenges. Having flowing water on ones property can create soothing sounds, attract diverse wildlife species and can offer many learning and educational opportunities. Water on ones property can also cause flooding, erosion and much concern.

One action landowners can take to protect their property and to lessen their stress, especially during high flow events, is to plant or just maintain a well vegetated buffer of native plants. Without a dense buffer of plants along the stream and river banks, erosion and loss of land is more likely. Without the plants root structure in place to bind and stabilize the soils, large chunks of the bank (and property) can be lost. When landowners have lawns and pastures along streams and rivers, without adequate buffers, they run the risk of severe and rapid erosion. While lawns and pastures offer good views of the stream/river, they lack the deep and binding root structures to hold banks in place when under stress. Buffers of native plants also improve the stream's over-all health by shading the water, providing nutrients via leaves and insects, and needed woody material so crucial for stream, river and salmonid health.

One possible solution for landowners that want views of the streams and rivers on their properties is to maintain 'view corridors'. These view corridors can offer both sight and access of the river while still providing the banks with some stability. View corridors represent a small portion of the buffer that is left vacant and any areas of the banks that remain bare may still erode. View corridors can also be rotated; new ones can be created, while replanting the former. This offers landowners a chance to create more diversity within their buffer's plant communities.

Living with streams and rivers offers many enjoyable possibilities and experiences for Western Washington's diverse landowners. What one person does to the stream or river on their land will affect all downstream. With some care and learning, landowners can coexist with these beautiful features on their land and help to keep them healthy at the same time.

*Newly installed willow stakes*



*Three-year old willow stakes*



# Allison Springs: Shoreline habitats for many species

By Brian Combs

The perpetually flowing waters of Allison Springs course into lower Eld Inlet at Mud Bay, joining the McClane Creek estuary at the southern tip of Puget Sound. The shoreline along the bay is a rich landscape, a mosaic of farms and waterside properties rimmed with marsh grasses, crab apples, and towering cedar trees. The mixing bowl that is the bay pulses with nutrient rich salt water on the incoming tide which seemingly is pushed back by the outpouring of creeks and springs on the outgoing cycle.

Life is diverse. Herons, mergansers, shorebirds and fish of many species live here year-round or pass through, feeding, on their way to other haunts. It is here the Allison Springs restoration project unfolded.

Circa 1950's the historically pristine springs and tidal cove were captured and manipulated in a series of ponds, levees, and culverts to serve a private trout farm. Later the site was used by the state for artificial salmon rearing and tagging. During that time a run of chum salmon was established, complimenting the chum run in adjacent McClane Creek. Eventually the ponds and their associated infrastructure became unused, leaving part of the site inaccessible for returning salmon and tidal influences that host a multitude of fish and wildlife species. The springs no longer moved freely to the bay and likewise the tide could not pulse to its full extent.

The effort to enhance the springs and shoreline was spearheaded by the Capitol Land Trust. The Land Trust's Randall residential property and the adjacent, city-owned Allison Springs represented a several acre shoreline enhancement opportunity. With funding and support from a multitude of partners and with SPSSEG managing the project, the Allison and Randall sites were transformed into an unhindered complex of tidal and freshwater wetlands, spawning habitat, and a multi-use wildlife corridor. After a one year design process, six weeks of implementation and several more weeks of vegetation planting, the shoreline habitats of Allison Springs are once again connected to the bay.



# Greenwater River It Takes a Village

By Kristin Williamson



On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, project implementers and supporters gathered to celebrate the recently completed Greenwater River Floodplain Restoration Project. During the celebration of a very long and complicated project, the old adage “it takes a village...” resonated throughout my mind. It did take a village, of sort, and more than 12 years to raise this restoration project. Standing on the banks of the Greenwater River, on that beautiful September day, watching participants of the event gaze at pairs of spawning Chinook, coho, and pink salmon around the newly installed log jams, it was palpable, our collective efforts were worth it!

The restoration need at this site originated with poor logging practices in the early 1960s when the Greenwater River was logged to its banks and all functional wood was removed from the valley floor. As a result, the once sinuous, branching Greenwater River morphed into a single thread, plane bed channel offering little refuge for rearing juvenile salmon and limited gravel for spawning adults. Restoration planning at the project site, along an abandoned section of Forest Road 70 on the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest, began within the Forest Service around 1999. In response to the listing of White River Spring Chinook. In 2002, a proposal for restoring natural channel geometry at this location was prepared for the Forest Service, by Greg Laurie.

In 2005, SPSSEG joined key project stakeholders, the Forest Service, the Muckleshoot Tribe, and the Puyallup Tribe, in development of a restoration plan for this site. In 2006, SPSSEG was awarded a Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) grant because the Greenwater River was listed as high priority in the

# er Restoration akes a Village...

WRIA 10 Puyallup/White River by the Lead Entity and referenced in their Salmon Recovery Strategy. This initial grant served as a catalyst to begin focused development of this project. Once a conceptual plan was prepared, additional funding sources converged around the project with various partners including: a second SRFB grant, an Environmental Protection Agency grant through the Puget Sound Partnership and the Puyallup Tribe, mitigation funds from WSDOT, spill funds from the Natural Resource Damage Assessment, the Resource Advisory Committee of the Forest Service, and hours of in-kind time from the Forest Service, Muckleshoot Tribe, and Puyallup Tribe staff. Total funding support totalled over \$1.9 million dollars.

Cardno ENTRIX and Herrera Environmental Consultants provided the technical and engineering framework for the project. ENTRIX developed the initial project concept and Herrera developed the final plans and specifications with continuing review by ENTRIX. Members of the Greenwater community also put forward a concerted effort to participate in the public permitting process, and as a result, they were able to leave their fingerprint on a project happening in their own backyard.

And last, but certainly not least, when all the papers had been pushed, the permits signed, and the plans stamped, RV Associates turned paper dreams into a three dimensional reality. RV Associates' talented and dedicated crew, with assistance from Mason Conservation District's inspectors from the Olympic Region Engineering Cluster, spent 12 long months over a two year period moving 67,000 cubic yards of road fill and armor rock from the floodplain, and installing

13 mid-channel engineered log jams in the Greenwater River - totaling 559 pieces of large key logs, 1,950 pieces of smaller racking logs, and 2,600 cubic yards of slash material.

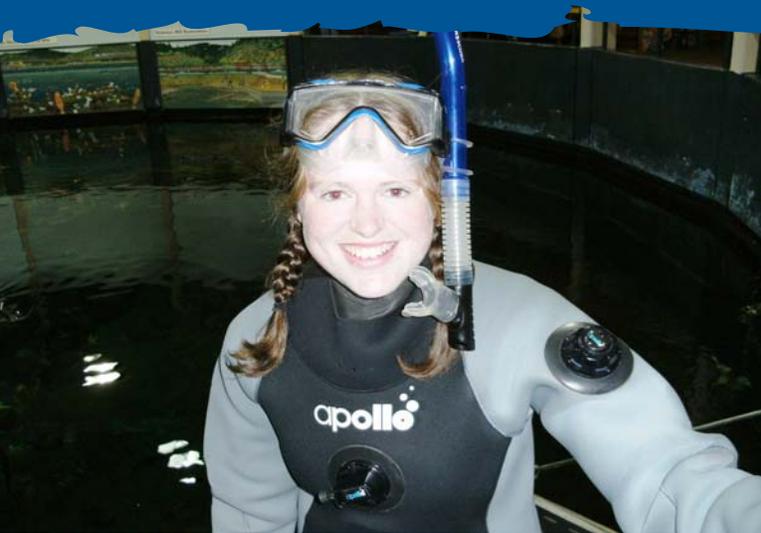
When project planning began over 12 years ago, the restoration proposal looked very different. The plan moved through several iterations with the insights of many. In the end, I think our hypothetical village raised a fine restoration project. In the first year following construction, we have observed: new side channels occupying areas which were formerly road prism, juvenile salmon utilizing the log jam pools, and adult salmon spawning on newly sorted gravel around the jams. We are pleased with the project's immediate performance and we expect great things in years to come as this project matures.

Many thanks to all of you whom helped to make this project a reality!



*Lance, Joe Williams, Bob Barnes and Kristin*

# SPSSEG welcomes Katie Fulkerson



*Katie loves  
everything fish,  
especially if you  
can put it in an  
aquarium.*



By Jerilyn Walley

Katie Fulkerson joined SPSSEG in October as a Year-Long Washington Conservation Core (WCC) Placement. This program, geared towards students 18-25 years old, provides an hourly wage, health insurance, and a generous college stipend at the end of their one-year of service. This stipend can be used for tuition or student loans. Most importantly, the Year Placement program provides students with real world experience in the environmental field.

Katie will be here until September working on the Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail, helping plan the Annual Meeting and Splash fund-raiser. She will attend community outreach events, help with the Beach Naturalist Program and assisting with water quality monitoring at two streams – Parkland Prairie and Clarks Creek. An important part of our education and outreach program, the WCC-YP also provides critical office support to our small four person staff.

Katie graduated from University of Washington with a BS in Aquatics and Fisheries Sciences in Spring of 2008. She loves all things fish, especially if you can put it in an aquarium. She volunteers at the Point Defiance Aquarium – you may see her swimming in a tank feeding the fish. Prior to working joining us, she was on a WCC crew working on combating Japanese Knot Weed. She plans on going back to school to get her Master's in Education so she can share her love of fish and the environment with students of all ages. Katie can be contacted at [katief@spsseg.org](mailto:katief@spsseg.org).

We ask for your assistance (corporations and members alike) to help provide funding for this important position. SPSSEG pays a full time WCC Individual Placement \$9,000 per year. That works out to \$800 per month, \$200 per week, \$44 per day. Please consider a financial contribution to SPSSEG to support next year's WCC-IP student. All donations are appreciated and fully tax deductible. SPSSEG is a registered non-profit 501(c)(3).

Come in for a visit of the new SPSSEG aquarium Katie has put together for the office.

# Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail

By Katie Fulkerson

By the time you read this article, the sounds of salmon splashing and cries of glee from students at Kennedy Creek will have fallen silent; waiting like salmon eggs about to hatch, for the spawning season to come again.

Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail is a half-mile trail that over looks Kennedy Creek and its tributary Fiscus Creek. Every year, around November, just as the Chum return to their spawning grounds, so too, do bus loads of students, tourists, and local families return to The Trail to watch the spawn. This year The Trail saw over 4,000 students and weekend visitors, including all the 4<sup>th</sup> graders from the Olympic School District. Guests to The Trail were lucky as the sunny days out numbered the rainy ones. 2011 was our first year with no cancellations due to stormy weather! Although, the lack of rain left Fiscus Creek on the low side, the freshet finally arrived, raising the stream level, and allowing Chum to begin their journey upstream. This year we watched females with their horizontal black stripes and white bellies industriously digging redds, observed the colorful males displaying classic acts of aggression such as biting and chasing, and played chaperone as males courted the females. Those guests lucky enough to visit near the end of the season experienced the perfume of salmon carcasses, as the fish gave back to the watershed that raised them.

The trail sees one other visitor during the month of the spawn, though one can hardly call these visitors guests as they practically make the Trail their home during this time year. They can be seen posted at a viewing station with polarized sunglasses, operating our fish camera, or leading classes along the paths. Who are these enigmas in the bright orange vests? They are volunteers, docents, or one of our many partners that makes this Trail a success! The Trail is a community supported and volunteer based program. If you would like to help ensure the continued success of the Trail, but don't have the time to serve as a Docent, a \$35 donation will support 10 student visits.

So next year, about November, please join us as a student, tourist, local family, or volunteer, to learn once again the story of the salmon as they splash their way upstream. We'll see you at the Trail!



# Partners: Sharing in Success

By Katie Fulkerson

From projects that involve giant bulldozers, engineered log jams, and culvert removals, to water quality monitoring, SPSSEG undertakes no venture without superb partners!

Of our many partnerships around the South Sound, I am currently lucky enough to be working with WSU Research and Extension on a Clarks Creek water monitoring study. Clarks Creek is a salmon bearing stream which supports populations of Chinook, Coho, Chum, Steelhead, and Cutthroat. It is located in the lower Puyallup River watershed. Historically, this stream has been marked by the Department of Ecology as having high fecal coliform bacteria levels. WSU Research and Extension plans to complete an environmental assessment, riparian buffer restoration, pathogen control at DeCoursey Pond, and citizen science engagement at this site.

Once a month I meet with a WSU field tech and two student volunteers. Together we brave the chilly weather and water to collect water samples, and measure the dissolved oxygen content, conductivity, pH, and flow rates of the stream at 12 locations along the creek. These samples are used to determine where the majority of the non-point pollution is originating from over time. An undertaking that would take one person working furiously two days to complete, we conclude in approximately 9 hrs. A beautiful dance of note taking, sampling, and measuring, the wealth of having good partners is shown in the ability of the group to get things done.

WSU Research and Extension is also undertaking a new storm water project, Raindrops to Rivers. This project seeks to improve water quality through the development of a series of rain gardens and permeable pavement at local businesses and homes. Rain gardens are essentially large depressions dug into the ground in areas where rain water from roofs or roads would naturally collect and flow onward to a stream carrying pollutants. The gardens, planted with aesthetically pleasing native plants, are designed to retain the storm water and slowly filter out contaminants as it seeps into the ground or is absorbed by the plants. To learn more about rain gardens, visit the WSU Research and Extension at <http://www.puyallup.wsu.edu/> or, better yet, schedule a tour of their wonderful facility.

Our partnerships are so extensive that it would take the entire newsletter to mention all of them, however, there are a few SPSSEG would like to highlight this year. First, we are working on building a relationship with Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium. You may see SPSSEG up in the North Pacific Gallery with fun games and activities for kids, all centered on salmon, of course. Capital Land Trust, City of Olympia, and People for Puget Sound just put the finishing touches on Allison Springs. Hundreds of Chum spawners have already discovered this newly restored piece of habitat! Hancock Forest Management is working with us to remove a 2000 ft section of abandoned road along the Clearwater River. This will help reduce sediment load, improve riparian function, and ultimately increase salmon spawning habitat. We are working with Green Diamond, Simpson, and Miles Sand and Gravel on fish passage projects in Goldsborough Creek. SPSSEG would also like to mention Taylor Shellfish who has donated a 20-year easement for SPSSEG to operate and maintain Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail.

Its partners like these that make restoring habitat and connecting those of use who live in the South Sound to salmon possible.

# Family Fish Forest Passage Program: Purdy Creek Culvert Replacement



- Replaced culvert passage barrier with 40 foot Big R Steel Bridge
- Completed in September 2011
- Adam Sant's first completed fish passage project at SPSSEG. Way to go Adam!
- Species present: Coho, Chum, Cutthroat, and Steelhead



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Please pass this newsletter on to a friend when you are finished. Thank you!

# 2012 Annual Meeting

*Thursday, January 26; 5:30 - 8:00 p.m.*

*Lacey Community Center - Open to the Public*



GREENWATER FLOODPLAIN  
RESTORATION PROJECT 2011

Keynote Address:  
back by popular demand!

**"Running the Amazon"**

recounted by

**Joe Kane**

Executive Director  
Nisqually Land Trust

***South Puget Sound  
Salmon Enhancement Group Mission:***

To protect and restore salmon populations and aquatic habitat with an emphasis on ecosystem function through scientifically informed projects, community education, and volunteer involvement.