Committed to Restoring South Sound Salmon Habitat Summer 2008

SalmonGram

The South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group Newsletter



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On the cover:

Kim Gridley on a SPSSEG-built Mashel River log jam. Photo By Jamie Glasgow

Message from the Executive Director

We recently updated our organizational Mission to reflect our role in South Sound salmon recovery. A clear and meaningful mission is critical for us



as regional leaders. Our new mission is: "Protect and restore salmon populations and aquatic habitat with an emphasis on ecosystem function through scientifically informed projects, community education, and volunteer involvement".

The highlight of our community education program is the Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail. We work with the Mason Conservation District to strengthen the Kennedy Creek curriculum each year. Limited funding, however, is preventing us from maintaining and expanding the program. This year, we're raising funds at the first annual "Kennedy Creek Salmon Splash." The fundraising event will be held on August 16th from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. A free Mason County Transportation Bus will depart the Kamilche Transit Center at 3:30 pm and return after the event. Tickets are \$30 per person; for every ticket purchased, nearly 10 students will visit the Trail in 2008. Admission tickets include a shellfish dinner, beer, wine, and desserts, and music by local band RiverHouse. Also, consider visiting the Squaxin Island SalmonFest prior to your departure to Splash. SalmonFest, a free family event, runs from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Kamilche.

Please RSVP by August 11 for the SPLASH. If you are unable to attend, please consider providing a financial contribution. SPSSEG is a 501 (c)(3) organization and all donations are considered tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Your continued interest and dedication will keep the Trail thriving. We have definitely come a long way since Jeff Cederholm and others drew the overall Trail concept on a napkin 10 years ago. I am looking forward to seeing our progress over the next 10 years!

Sincerely,

Lance Winecka

SalmonGram is published twice per year by the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group (SPSSEG), a 501(c)3 non-profit, volunteer-based organization that conducts salmon restoration, salmon enhancement, and community education to increase salmonid populations in the South Puget Sound Region.

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

SalmonGram





Is the Sky Falling?

Wherever you turn these days, it seems as though the salmon fishing sky is falling. The Oregon and California fisheries are in shambles, Washington ocean fisheries are more restricted than ever, and even many rock-steady Alaska fisheries are facing low abundance forecasts. Relatives are calling, friends are e-mailing, and even my doctor wants to know: what is happening to the salmon, and what are "they" going to do about it?

The widespread concern is easy to understand: the media has had a field day with the emergency fishing closures. A few days ago, I watched a barely-updated 60-Minutes report originally broadcast in 2000. The report was fashioned in true government-waste exposé style, complete with reporter Lesley Stahl rolling her eyes at the seemingly ridiculous measures taken to mitigate for the wanton destruction of the Columbia River watershed. The report treated all salmon as endangered, those who fished them as wasteful, those who worked to save them as foolish, and the whole debacle as an enormously expensive lost cause. While the Columbia River is certainly troubled, and the problems often seem insurmountable, the whole picture may not be as grim as my relatives, friends, and doctor think.

Here in South Puget Sound, we are still in the heart of salmon country. Almost every little freshet, creek,

and stream flowing into South Sound support salmon in some way; even waterways too small for adult salmon provide shelter and food for ocean-bound juveniles. Every fall, local streams such as Kennedy Creek fill with swirling masses of chum salmon, and high mountain streams such as the Greenwater River host thousands of broad-shouldered coho salmon. Entrepreneurial pink salmon are returning to

the Puyallup in greater numbers than ever in recent history. They may not be the prized "California kings" of the Sacramento River, or the fabled "June hogs" of the lower Columbia, but they are salmon, and they are in our backyard.

The perceived demise of salmon runs on the West Coast is typically blamed on a litany of ills: habitat loss and degradation, dams, over-allocation of irrigation water, poor water quality, predation, over fishing, hatcheries, fish farms, and this year especially, poor ocean conditions. Here at SPSSEG, we tend to focus on quality, quantity, and accessibility of salmon habitat. So far, this has been a successful strategy. On any given fall day, I can visit one of our project sites and see salmon where none swam ten years ago. We build logiams to feed and house juvenile salmon and provide spawning beds for returning adults. We plant young trees along rivers and streams, providing shade and structure. We replace fish-blocking culverts with bridges and large, fish-friendly culverts. We use our funding as efficiently as possible to support local wild salmon populations. This is the side of salmon recovery that 60-Minutes missed: devoted people making a difference in their own backyards.

Thousands of good people are working on a daily basis to make salmon recovery a reality, including federal, state, local, and tribal agencies, non-profit

organizations, and individual citizens. When my doctor asked me what "they" are going to do about the catastrophic salmon returns this year, I took liberty with my answer: "I don't know everything that 'they' are doing, but I am working every day to ensure that we in South Sound will always be in the middle of salmon country."

Eli Asher manages restoration projects for SPSSEG and takes every opportunity to enjoy the fruits of his labor.



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Quantifying Su

Mashel River

Near Eatonville, monitoring restoration projects in the Mashel River has been a long time joy for SPSSEG and Nisqually Indian Tribe employees. During the summer of 2002, snorkeling surveyors counted fish in several river reaches to establish a baseline for comparison. In 2004, the team added two reaches to the survey. The first begins near the Highway 161 bridge and continues upstream past Smallwood Park; the second extends from Alder Cutoff Road to Boxcar Canyon. The team added these reaches to track the effects of restoration projects scheduled for construction in 2006 and 2007.

Prior to construction of the 13 log jams, surveyors typically found around 500 coho in the 1,000-meter reach near Boxcar Canyon and 700 coho in the Smallwood Park reach (also 1,000 meters). With 10 of the 13 planned logjams installed last year, surveyors counted approximately 1,200 coho in the Boxcar Canyon reach and 1,500 coho in the Smallwood Park reach. The fish tended to congregate near the log jams, especially at the riffle break as the oxygen saturated water enters the pool. While these counts seem

to suggest that populations increased in just one year, it will take many years of monitoring to determine the effect of the log jams.

Analyzing the results of the monitoring surveys is no easy feat, given the variety of habitats, the multi-year life cycles of salmon,

and the many variables that cannot be controlled. Even so, the team is excited at preliminary results demonstrating such great numbers of fish using the restoration sites!

Ohop Creek

hop Creek is an extremely low gradient, lake-fed creek in the Nisqually watershed near Eaton-ville, Washington. In partnership with the Nisqually Indian Tribe, Nisqually Land Trust, and several others, SPSSEG is working on a project to remedy over a century of diking, ditching, and land clearing by early farmers. In conjunction with the valley-wide restoration project, baseline monitoring has been initiated to track the effectiveness of the project.

In April, SPSSEG and Nisqually Indian Tribe staff took the opportunity to visit and learn from two similar projects in southwestern Oregon. While these projects seemed successful, useful monitoring data was in short supply. The project sponsors were unable to gather enough up-front information to prove what a great job they had done designing and implementing this project.

Since the Ohop restoration project will affect many different types of wildlife (essentially the entire valley floor will be restored to pre-settlement condition), we are broadening our scope and enlisting the help of

groups such as Tahoma
Audubon and Northwest Trek. These groups
will be using the Nature
Mapping System to collect important information about what species
of wildlife are present
and where they are
being found. Nisqually
Indian Tribe staff have
installed groundwater monitoring wells

installed groundwater monitoring wells throughout the valley to track changes that occur in the water table over the course of the restoration project. Finally, the Tribe and SPSSEG will be working together to look at the changes to habitat complexity and fish usage.



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Successes

Sherwood Creek

Sherwood Creek is in Mason County near the town of Allyn. This small river begins in an extensive wetland complex, then enters and exits six-mile-long Mason Lake before passing through a matrix of rural residential developments and beaver ponds down to North Bay, in Case Inlet. Near its mouth, Sherwood Creek is joined by Anderson Creek, a much smaller spring-fed stream. In 2002, the SPSSEG completed a \$1.2 million fish passage barrier removal. This project replaced two undersized culverts under the Navy railroad with a bridge.



This summer we have the opportunity to complete much-needed effectiveness monitoring in this system. We will be snorkeling Sherwood and Anderson Creeks from the North Bay to Mason Lake. We are partnering with members of the Allyn and Mason Lake Communities. The Allyn Salmon Enhancement Group and the Squaxin Island Tribe are offering technical support and historical information.



Community-Based Shoreline Monitoring Coming this Fall!

Do you live on or near the shoreline? Do you want to help restore Puget Sound? Do you enjoy combing beaches, mucking around in tide pools and walking through the woods?

We are currently developing a community-based monitoring program to support future shoreline restoration in the South Puget Sound Region. We are seeking enthusiastic individuals from the shoreline communities of Tacoma, University Place, Steilacoom and DuPont to form a group of dedicated volunteers that will help develop and monitor potential shoreline restoration sites between Point Defiance and the Nisqually Delta.

This is a great opportunity for school groups, community organizations, and

individuals to learn about their neighborhood shorelines while providing useful information to the nearshore science community. Free, age-appropriate training will be provided to all participants, and time commitments are flexible.

You are never too old or too young to get involved, so please contact Kimberlie Gridley or Kristin Williamson at (360) 412-0808 to learn how you can get involved!



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Family Forest Fish Passage Program



SPSSEG's Huge Creek FFFPP project

Ramily Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP), approaching its 100th project in Washington State, is a voluntary program to assist small forest landowners in correcting fish barriers. The program is supported by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, and Recreation and Conservation Office. These agencies provide financial and technical assistance to landowners who wish to replace undersized culverts with fully passable structures – often a larger culvert, arch, or bridge. The state provides 75% - 100% of project design and construction costs. Projects are prioritized statewide, and several are completed each year. Interested landowners can contact SPSSEG for free assistance with implementing a project, or Scott Potter, Washington Department of Natural Resources, at (360) 902-1404 for further information and an application.

Completed FFFPP projects managed by SPSSEG:

WRIA 14 (Kennedy-Goldsborough Watershed): McDonald Projects (three projects)

Gosnell Creek Tributary

Frye Cove Creek

Perry Creek Tributary

Schneider Creek Tributary

WRIA 15 (Key Peninsula):

Rocky Creek Tributaries (two projects)

Huge Creek

WRIA 11 (Nisqually Watershed):

Kronis Creek (Little Mashel Tributary)

McKenna Creek

Engaging



Calling All Kennedy Creek Docents!

It is that time of year again to prepare for the November Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail season. The Trail has been in operation since 2000 as the region's premier salmon watching venue, thanks

in la doce

Welcome, South Sound Estuary Association!

new group is beginning to emerge in the southern most pockets of Puget Sound: the South Sound Estuary Association (SSEA) envisions the establishment of an interpretive center with an emphasis on Marine and Estuarine life in Puget Sound. This interpretive center poised to be located in downtown Olympia will be aptly named the SSEA Center. The goal is to provide hands on learning for children and adults and promote strategies to protect and restore Puget Sound, in an effort to raise awareness within the community and among it's visitors. This locale could also serve as a point of contact for folks to find out about current events and how to get involved. If you would like to participate in the planning and/or implementation process of this South Sound gem, contact: sseacenter@hotmail.com or check out their blog (sseacenter.spaces.live.com).

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Communities

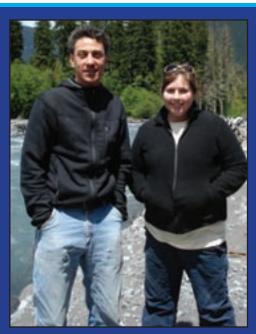


in large part to the efforts of our excellent trail docents. If you have served as a docent in the past, please consider returning with a new recruit - it'll be a splash!



Sea Cucumbers on docks at Boston Harbor Marina. Photo by Sarah Clarke

White River Stewards



White River Stewards Thomas Mohagen and Jessica Moore pose in front of the White River

PSSEG is partnering with the United States Forest Service (USFS) to increase river stewardship and educational opportunities along the White River & Greenwater River. Both of these watersheds are critical for the survival of Chinook, steelhead, bulltrout, and coho.

SPSSEG has hired two new River Stewards to work each Saturday from June through August. Most of our efforts will be focused in the Forest Service campgrounds at The Dalles and Silver Springs. We will provide stream and nature walks from designated areas within the campgrounds. Topics will include native vegetation, salmon life history, forests, and rivers. Our program is modeled after a successful three year pilot by our Regional Fisheries Enhancement (RFEG) friends up to the north in the Nooksack region. We were able to borrow some curriculum materials and excellent ideas that jump started our efforts this summer.

If you are going to be recreating in the White River area please stop by the Dalles or Silver Springs campgrounds for a quick tour. Living in the Pacific Northwest is definitely a treat that most of us take for granted. Get outside and explore the White River and riparian forests with Thomas and Jessica this summer.

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Summer 2008

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Summer Construction Update

With fuel prices at all-time highs, and local, state, and federal permit processes being revamped, the run-up to this summer's construction season has been unusually tense in the SPSSEG office. Some projects that were considered sure bets for this summer are no longer so certain, pending permits and bids. Even so, we have a great lineup of projects that will directly benefit South Sound salmon populations:

Two separate projects, both with major funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB), are scheduled this summer in **Frye Cove**, a small bay in Eld Inlet. First, with additional funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), a large bulkhead that juts into the tideland will be set back to the toe of the bluff and softened with large wood and boulders. Second, a failed bulkhead constructed of angular rock will be removed from the beach at Frye Cove Park. These two projects, in concert with a previous SPSSEG culvert replacement project on Frye cove Creek will improve the overall habitat value of the Cove for Chinook and other salmon.

The Kronis Creek Culvert Replacement project, funded by the FFFPP program, will replace a 24" diameter concrete pipe with an 11'9" diameter galvanized steel ellipse culvert to improve fish passage and restore natural stream hydrology. Kronis Creek is a tributary to the Little Mashel river on the Colburg Tree Farm near Eatonville.

The Clover Creek Improvements at Parkland Prairie project, funded jointly by NFWF and Pierce County Surface Water Management, will remove 600 linear feet of asphalt channel on Clover Creek and recreate a natural, meandering stream profile. The

project will improve habitat complexity, riparian cover and spawning and rearing capacity of Clover Creek where it passes through Parkland Prairie. This approach will serve as a pilot project to streamline restoration techniques for the entire 7,040-foot asphalt-lined reach of Clover Creek.

The **Nisqually Pines** project, funded by NFWF and South Sound Flyfishers, will replace a 12" diameter culvert with a concrete footbridge over Walden Creek in the Nisually Pines Community Wildlife Corridor, allowing off-channel access to juvenile salmonids.

Funded by the Pacific Salmon Commission, USFWS, and the SRFB, the **Powell Creek** project will remove three fish barrier culverts and one overflow culvert, a defunct bridge abutment and associated rip-rap adjacent to the Nisqually River, and decommission 2,900 feet of private road, all on Nisqually Land Trust property. This will provide fish passage to Powell Creek for spawning salmonids and will increase hydrologic connectivity from the Powell Creek wetland complex to the Nisqually River.

After a year-long design-related delay, the **Hiawata** Creek Culvert Replacement project will get underway in mid-July. Funded by SRFB and Mason County, contractors will remove an undersized culvert from under Island View Road and replace it with a 20' wide aluminum arch culvert.

If permits are issued in time, the **Pirate's Cove Restoration** project will begin in early fall with the restoration of an historic tidal spit. Funded by SRFB and the Washington State Department of Ecology, the project will vastly increase the quantity and quality of Chinook rearing habitat in the Pirate's Cove lagoon.



Kids' Corner



fish Trivia

- 1. How many eggs does a salmon lay?
- 2. Is a fish warm or cold blooded?
- 3. What are the names for Chinook salmon?
- 4. Do salmon and trout have teeth?
- 5. How many miles can a salmon swim up a river in one day?
- 6. What is the largest salmon ever caught on record?
- 7. What is a very young salmon with dark stripes on its sides called?
- 8. What is the study of fish called?

Answers at bottom of page!

Salmon Word Search

There are 20 "salmon words" hidden in this puzzle. Can you find them all?

salmon fry smolts steelhead chinook estuary coho habitat hatchery pink chum restore food chain sockeye life cycle snout predators gravel migration spawn

Trivia answers:
1.) Up to 5,000 eggs; 2.) Cold blooded; 3.) They have lots!--King, blackmouth, tyee, springer, etc.; 4.) Yes, but not for chewing!; 5.) Up to 30 miles; 6.) 127 pounds; 7.) Parr or fry; 8.) Icthyology

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Support Our Mission: Recruit a New Member!

s conservation-minded individuals, we all do what we can to benefit the resources that we value so highly. Here at SPSSEG, employees work on a daily basis to restore and protect salmon runs in South Puget Sound. We also, however, support other causes as individuals. Depending on our personal interests, we are members of various organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and the Capitol Land Trust. We understand that our contributions to these organizations allow them to keep their office lights lit, their front doors unlocked, and their employees seeking grant funding to accomplish their missions. These are not glamorous contributions; we are not single-handedly building an education center or securing vast tracts of land. But we are supplying an essential resource: flexible funding.

Most large projects and programs that SPSSEG undertakes are funded largely through state and federal grant monies. These funds allow us to do significant, on-the-ground restoration projects, but they come with stringent spending requirements. The grant applications often require several days of staff time to develop and submit, none of which is

reimbursed by the grant. Many grants do not allow payment for overhead expenses such as rent and electricity bills. These are often the limiting factors to our work, but could be alleviated with donations of unrestricted funds from members.

In an effort to attract new members, we're offering a membership premium: a SPSSEG logo T-shirt. These organic 100% cotton shirts feature the SPSSEG logo on the back, and "South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group" printed across the front. Please consider asking friends and relatives to support SPSSEG. Their contributions will allow us to continue to seek out beneficial projects and the funding to implement them.

As a member of SPSSEG, you, your friends, and your family members will be directly supporting local salmon recovery efforts. For every dollar in unrestricted funds that we receive from members and business partners, we are able to leverage hundreds of dollars of grant funding that directly fund habitat restoration projects in the region. Now *that's* a Sound investment!

SPSSEG Strategic Plan Updated

A fter much hard work, the SPSSEG Board of Directors has approved an updated strategic plan for the organization, featuring the mission and vision statements below.

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.

We envision:

- 1. Robust and persistent salmonid populations supported by South Puget Sound region ecosystems.
- 2. A leadership role in South Puget Sound freshwater and marine conservation and restoration.
- 3. Broad-based community support and involvement in accomplishing our mission.
- 4. A long-term and sustainable organization.

If you are interested in learning more about the updated plan, or organizational progress toward achieving the goals identified in the plan, please feel free to contact Lance: lancew@spsseg.org, or (360) 412-0808

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