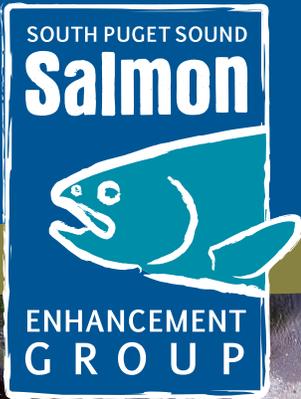


Summer 2017
Newsletter



SalmonGRAM

Committed to Protecting and Restoring South Puget Sound Habitat



Message from the Director 2
Brews & News 3
What's New at Kennedy Creek? 4-5
Lower McLane Creek Restoration 6-7
Goldsborough Creek, Restoration Success 8-9
Making Shelton Harbor Salmon Friendly 10-11

This Issue:

Message from the Director 2
Brews & News 3
What's New at Kennedy Creek? 4-5
Lower McLane Creek
Restoration 6-7
Goldsborough Creek, Restoration
Success..... 8-9
Making Shelton Harbor Salmon
Friendly 10-11

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www.spsseg.org

Cover: McLane Creek

Message from the Executive Director

Lance Winecka



SPSSEG, Metro Parks Tacoma, and project partners have made significant progress on the Titlow Lagoon restoration project over the past few months. This project was initiated over 10 years ago and the first construction phase was completed in February 2017. A large seawall and shoreline bulkhead have recently been removed and the natural shoreline and beach profile was restored. Additionally, a derelict house, septic, and oil tank was removed from the uplands. The transition from a hardened human shoreline to a more nature beach landscape is a welcomed addition to the park users and wildlife. This first phase is very important to complete to ensure that progress was being made to restore the adjacent lagoon. The lagoon restoration is a large and complex project to restore natural tidal fluctuation and increase fish usage into the embayment. In order to fully embrace natural tidal connectivity the existing tide gate culverts need to be replaced with a 96 foot long bridge under a BNSF railroad. SPSSEG and our engineering team (Shannon and Wilson) have been working diligently to update previous design documents. With funding from ESRP, we are getting much closer to submitting a design packet for BNSF approval. Then construction funding can be pursued in the near future. In an effort that started early on in my career, it is fulfilling to be able to get closer to completing a significant project for the Tacoma community and for all of the juvenile fish that happen to swim by. This project is crucial rearing area for salmonids from numerous watersheds.

Sometimes projects can be completed in a year or two, and some projects take 15 years or more to complete. I'm fortunate to be able to keep moving these landscape projects forward and it's a career highlight of mine to see them being put in the ground and functioning for salmon and a variety of other wildlife. Hopefully in an upcoming Salmon Gram we can provide a timeline for construction to restore the lagoon. But, until then, I'm confident our team will be successful.

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

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07.6.2017 // 6:30 PM
LISA BELLEVEAU: ECOLOGY OF ESTUARIES

08.3.2017 // 6:30 PM
MARY MIDDLETON: SCIENCE OF SHELLFISH

09.7.2017 // 6:30 PM
KWASI ADDAE: SALMON IN THE SOUND

10.5.2017 // 6:30 PM
JOHN CALAMBOKIDIS: WHALES
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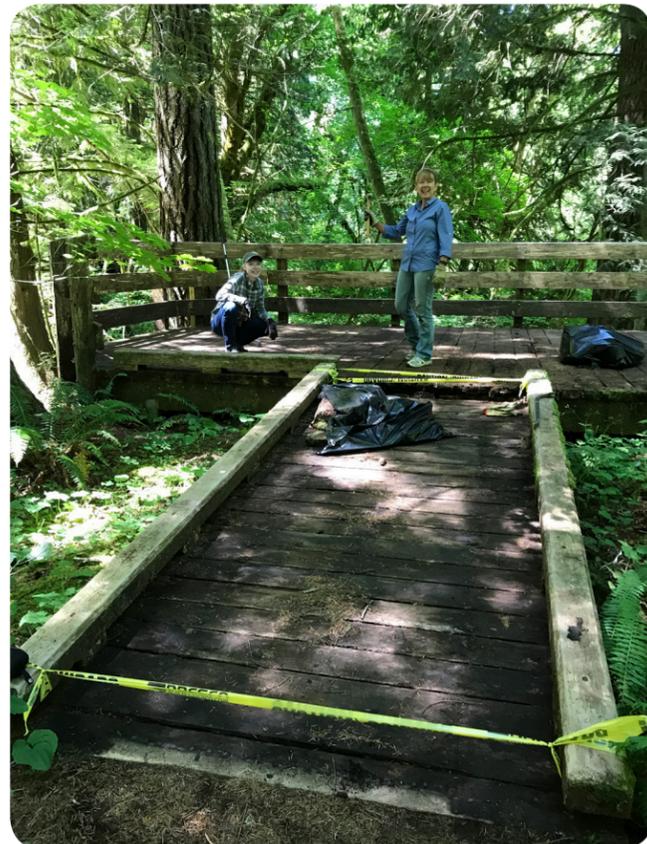
What's New at Kennedy Creek?

Our own "Gem of the West", Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail, is getting a facelift. After nearly 20 years of community appreciation and involvement, the Trail is beginning to show its age. The engineer who designed the Trail, Bob Droll, volunteered his time to visit for a safety check. While our foundations are sound, there is basic maintenance that is required on our 5 platforms, and the deck of viewing station 2 needs extensive rehabilitation. Additionally, the Trail experienced some vandalism over the spring months.



In an effort to begin the process of cleanup and rehab, the Olympia Chapter of the Mountaineers and the Oakland Bay Chapter of the Back Country Horsemen descended on the trail in force. SPSSEG is so grateful to have such excellent partners in this endeavor. More work parties will be scheduled for September and October to get the Trail ready for the thousands of booted feet that will be tumbling out of hundreds of school buses come November. We were also lucky to have our friends at Booz Allen Hamilton adopt the Trail for their Annual Day of Service, where they did an excellent job setting the trail up for it's 2016 season.

SPSSEG has started the Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail History Project, an endeavor that is gathering members of the original Steering Committee back together. Representatives from US Fish and Wildlife, Mason Conservation District, and others are working to create a timeline of events that lead to our beloved Trail's conception. A key member of the Steering Committee passed away last December; Brian Abbott will be honored at the Trail with a dedication ceremony and plaque, remembering his dedication to salmon, education, and community, reminding us how important the history of the Trail is to its future.



A phoenix rising from the ashes - or a deck being rebuilt. Come check out the newly renovated site 2 platform this November!



Kennedy Creek is lucky to have a team of over 40 devoted volunteers trail guides, who brave the rain, wind and mud to provide the 1.5 hr Trail tours. These hearty folks are the backbone of the Trail and the reach and scale of our educational program is thanks to their continued support and service. For the 2017 season, the Trail will open on October 28th and host community members of all ages until December 2. On weekends, Veteran's Day and the Day after Thanksgiving it will be open from 10:00-4:00. Our annual Chum, Chowder and Chocolate Open House will be hosted at the Trail on Veteran's Day. We eagerly anticipate over 6,000 visitors this year!

With so many visitors, the Trail requires consistent supervision. If you are interested in becoming a Kennedy Creek Volunteer and joining the ranks of our honored trail guides, please contact Claire Williamson or Jerilyn Walley. Getting folks out to the Trail is our number one priority. If you have a class or group of any kind that would like to schedule a guided tour of the Trail please email Claire Williamson at clairew@spsseg.org!



Our trail suffered some harsh vandalism this winter. KCST is lucky to have great partners and volunteers to help with the cleanup, all the way down to fixing the last bench!

Become a Chum! Support the Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail!

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Please Return form to:

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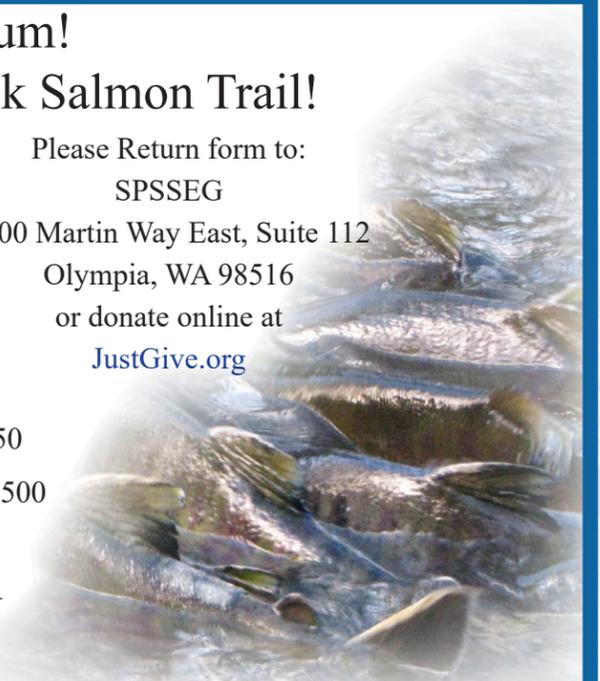
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Lower McLane Creek Restoration Project



We are lucky to work with fantastic contractors on our projects. Wrangling 50' long logs is a big job, but the excavator operators with RV Inc. are more than capable. Pictured above is the second instream log jam installation at the Lower McLane restoration site.

Vast areas of tidal wetland have faced extreme alteration in Puget Sound, especially at the head of estuaries. Intertidal forested marsh habitats have been impacted by historic logging practices, development and invasive plant species. These impacts disrupt food-web interactions, reduced stream shading and removed large wood from estuaries.

McLane Creek supports a variety of wildlife and several salmon runs including cutthroat, steelhead, coho, fall Chinook, and chum. The drainage is made up of four major tributaries: Swift, Perkins, East Fork McLane and Beatty creeks which have approximately 18.5 miles of fish habitat. The project is focused on the lower half mile of the creek.

The Lower McLane Creek restoration project enhances habitat in the lower reach of the stream, providing foraging areas for juvenile fish that leave the basin and resting places for adult migrating into McLane Creek and its tributaries. Large wood structures have been placed in three locations in the lower portion of the system. The structures provide increased hydraulic complexity, potential for wood accumulation and pool formation. The structures also increase refuge for juvenile salmon to avoid predation.

Although construction is complete, the project will continue through 2017 with subsequent phases and monitoring efforts. SPSSEG will host volunteer events this fall to install 1,211 riparian plants to increase stream-side shading, 8,400 willow stakes to treat reed canary grass in the floodplain and treat 900 square feet of knotweed. Plants are being purchased with a grant from Thurston Conservation District.

Olympia Trout Unlimited provided funding and are conducting site citizen science monitoring events. They are submitting a grant to continue monitoring efforts at the site. Their request would support a Benthic Indicator of Biotic Integrity (BIBI) survey at the site. The process involves getting in the stream, collecting bug samples, counting, and measuring the bug samples, recording findings, and then tracking findings. The goal is to engage local volunteers to get

into the stream and collect samples over the course of a year.

In addition to creating in-stream habitat, engaging volunteers in planting events and citizen science, this project involves four new landowners in salmon habitat restoration. While no individual project will restore salmon populations to their historic numbers, each small project eases the impacts of human caused actions that brought us to this place.



SPSSEG's projects wouldn't be possible without support and partnership from so many organizations in our region. We work closely with WDFW to ensure our project sites are safe for people and the fish. WDFW Area Habitat Biologist, Theresa Nation stopped by to check in and to help with the McLane fish out before the installation of the third and final log jam.

Goldsborough Creek: A Review of Restoration Successes



Goldsborough Creek is the jewel of Deep South Sound, a sparkling water diamond flowing from emerald hills to Shelton and the heart of Oakland Bay. It's a salmon highway that represents one of our region's most successful restoration stories. That's why we felt great satisfaction when on a recent site visit we were greeted with hundreds of fingerling, juvenile salmon boiling up and scuttling around every corner of the newly completed Likes Creek Fish Passage project. These are the first inhabitants of the newly opened habitat and they represent the seed stock of generations to come. Similar to the now four-year-old Midway



Upstream of the newly installed culvert, SPSSEG also installed a beaver deceiver. We love our beavers, but they do have a habit of incorporating fish passable culverts into their dams.

Creek project, the Like's Creek project culminated after a several year planning and fund raising effort and a great partnership between Simpson Lumber, the Squaxin Island Tribe, and many of our local watershed partners. Each of these projects are now home to salmon for the first time in over 100 years, since the inception of the railroad that has blocked fish passage for all that time, and each project is now contributing to the overall success of the restoration of Goldsborough Creek

How about a little back-story to set the context of the present scenarios? In 2001, local partners removed a 30-foot tall dam on Goldsborough Creek which had blocked salmon passage and impeded stream functions for the better part of the 1900's. Ineffective fish ladders at the dam had mitigated the outright extirpation of salmon but otherwise salmon populations dwindled to a fraction of their historic levels during the tenure of the dam's existence. The removal of the dam was the single most important restoration action in the history of Goldsborough Creek and, indeed, salmon populations are rebounding in a positive way. Coho salmon have particularly rebounded well and their numbers represent a bright spot for salmon recovery in South Sound. With that said, there was still work to be done. Disconnected wetlands, fish passage barriers, and a loss of large wood and habitat diversity were and are still factors impacting salmon recovery in the

watershed. SPSSEG and many watershed advocates have taken the task of full recovery head on. The Midway Creek and Likes Creek Fish Passage projects have restored fish passage to these two tributary streams for the first time in over 100 years. Now, we see Coho salmon regularly using these streams and moving into spawning grounds they have not seen in a very long time.



Two other recently completed projects are also adding to the success story. The Middle Goldsborough Project and a wetland re-connection project were designed to work in tandem to improve spawning and rearing habitat along a ¼ mile stretch of Goldsborough Creek. Again, we were greeted by juvenile salmon using these sites since the newly opened habitat has



become available. Pods of fat Coho juveniles now cruise the shallows of the new cold-water spring channel that feeds a 3 acre off-channel rearing wetland previously disconnected from Goldsborough Creek. Meanwhile, just downstream, a three-year-old constructed log jam is growing into a natural wood jam that supports rearing salmon while also metering flow into the newly restored, relict side channel (also a Coho magnet!). The adjacent living crib wall is adding shade, in-stream cover, and even more juvenile rearing area. All of these projects have opened a network of habitat that has been lost for decades. As fish continue to move into these new-old areas we look forward to seeing them locally adapt and to seeing their progeny come back again and again, as the cycle continues. Let's keep the fish coming back!



Making Shelton Harbor Salmon Friendly

Provided by: North West Indian Fisheries Commission

In the early 1990s, Goldsborough Creek in Shelton began creating a small canyon.

“What happened was that a ferry dock was taken out on the waterfront, which shortened the distance the creek had to travel before it met the harbor,” said Scott Steltzner, environmental program manager for the tribe. “The creek had been narrowed and straightened already, so when the dock wasn’t there to push it farther into the bay, the creek began a slow process of downcutting.”

The downcutting hasn’t just limited salmon habitat in the creek, but has threatened underground utility lines.

This summer the Squaxin Island Tribe and the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group will build 14 logjams designed to capture sediment at the mouth of the creek to help rebuild the creekbed. “Over the next decade or so, we’ll see the creek reach a new equilibrium, and it will start repairing itself,” Steltzner said.

The logjam project is part of a larger salmon restoration effort being led by the tribe on Shelton Harbor. The tribe is coordinating the effort with Simpson Timber, Sierra Pacific Industries, the Port of Shelton, Capitol Land Trust, Mason Conservation District and the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group.

“This project shows that we can accomplish significant gains in salmon habitat while also protecting the existing industry and jobs in the harbor,” said Andy Whitener, natural resources director for the tribe.



The first step of the multi-phase project was accomplished last winter when 1,600 feet of shoreline at nearby Eagle Point were put into permanent protection. With a grant written by the tribe, the Capitol Land Trust purchased the 14-acre property. The land trust then gifted the entire parcel to the city of Shelton, which plans to build nature trails to allow residents access to the shoreline.

Other phases of the project will include creating intertidal habitat by placing new sand and gravel near the creek mouth, restoring saltmarsh habitat, removing pollutant-leaching creosote pilings and removing shoreline armoring.

The work in Shelton Harbor builds off an earlier collaboration by the tribe and Simpson. Fifteen years ago the tribe and Simpson Timber removed a dam from Goldsborough Creek, boosting the coho run in a region where other coho runs continue to decline.

“Coho around the area are on a long-term downward spiral,” Steltzner said. “Our work on Goldsborough and in Shelton Harbor shows that we can reverse that trend, at least here.”



Artist's rendition of Shelton Harbor restoration

Shelton Harbor By the Numbers

Benefits

Restore and protect **0.8 miles** of marine shoreline

Conserve **14 acres** of riparian habitat

Protect **51 acres** of saltmarsh.

Add **14 log jams**

Remove **¼ miles of dikes** and **½ mile of shoreline bulkheads**

Restore **47 acres** of estuary saltmarsh.

Funding

Federal

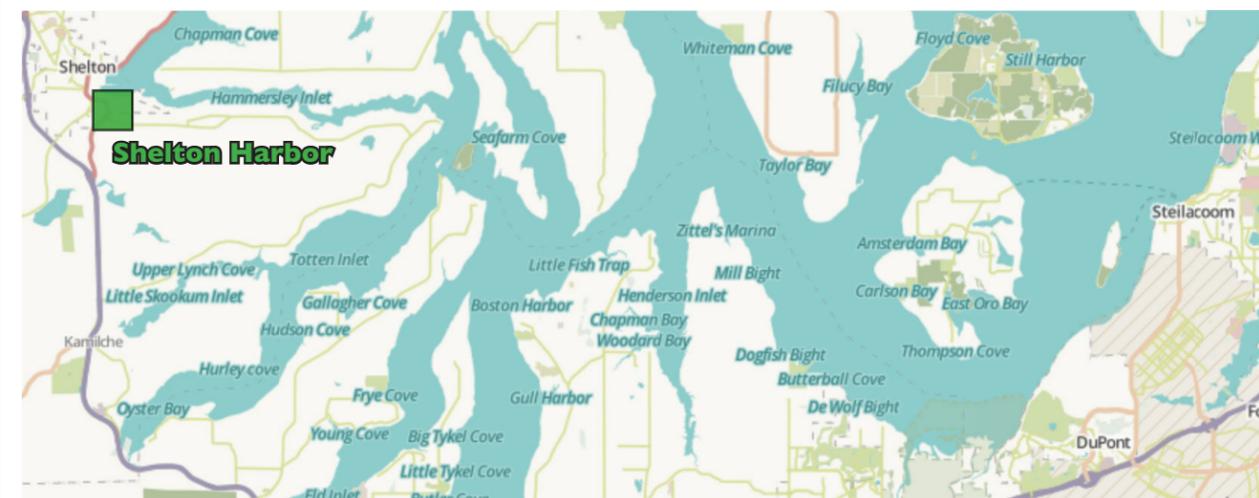
\$1,000,000
National Coastal Wetlands
\$82,000
National Estuary Program
\$50,000
National Fish and Wildlife Federation

State

\$1,565,000
Salmon Recovery Funding Board

Partners

\$60,000
Simpson Timber
\$30,000
Port of Shelton
\$20,000
Squaxin Island Tribe



For questions about overall project planning:

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Project updates at sheltonharbor.org



South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group
6700 Martin Way East, Suite 112
Olympia, WA 98516

Please forward this newsletter on to a friend. Thank you!



***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.