



SalmonGRAM

Committed to Protecting and Restoring South Puget Sound Habitat



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Adam Sant - Project Manager
Kristin Williamson - Project Manager
Kameron Harper - WCC Placement
Christine Garst - The Non-Profit Center
Jerilyn Walley - TESC Work Study

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Cover: Newly installed Engineered Log Jam and side channel on the Greenwater River, Fall 2010

Photo: Kristin Williamson

Message from the Executive Director

Lance Winecka



Hello SPSSEG Supporters!

Please join other SPSSEG supporters as we host our 20th Annual Meeting on January 27, 2011 at the Lacey Community Center from 6:00-8:30 pm. For this special 20-year celebration, Taylor Shellfish will provide some tasty shellfish appetizers for our guests. The keynote speaker will be Joe Kane, Executive Director for the Nisqually Land Trust. Joe is also the author of a New York Times Best Seller "Running the Amazon" that describes the first journey from the river's source to the sea. He will share many great tales about these two iconic rivers, the Amazon and Nisqually.

SPSSEG will elect Board Members and highlight our 2010 project portfolio. We will also take a look at some of our previous projects completed from 1990-2010 and reflect on some of our other past accomplishments. Feel free to attend and learn more about South Sound salmon restoration and the type of work that SPSSEG undertakes. The meeting is free and open to the public.

As SPSSEG continues our transition into a more thriving and sustainable 20-year old organization I would like to thank all the previous board members, staff, members, volunteers, funders, stakeholders, agencies, tribes, and community for helping to build a solid foundation for SPSSEG. All current staff and board members are very appreciative of all of the dedication and hard work completed by our predecessors.

Our goal is to make improvements each and every year. We hope to learn from our mistakes to become an even more effective tool in long term salmon restoration. As you know there are many challenges along the way, but we are confident that we are doing great work and making a positive difference in our community. Thank you for entrusting us with this great responsibility and opportunity.

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 habitat 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 Fisheries 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.

SPSSEG: A 20-Year History

By Lance Winecka

In 1989, the Washington State Legislature created a new fishery program called the Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFE) (RCW 77.95.060). The legislative intent was to maximize local grass roots efforts of volunteers and leverage private donations to improve the salmon resource for all citizens of the state. There are fourteen non-profit RFEs and each one is eligible for financial and technical support through WDFW. Although South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group (SPSSEG) was officially incorporated by Washington's Secretary of State in 1991, we have been working with landowners, stakeholders, and our communities to restore salmon habitat since 1990.

SPSSEG has been recognized as a leader in South Sound salmon restoration and is an important resource for on-the-ground implementation. In the early years, (1990-1998) SPSSEG contributed RFE base funds and our Board of Director's expertise on nearly 90 sponsored or co-sponsored projects. Many of these "pioneering" in-stream habitat structures are still functioning for salmon today. In-stream habitat improvement projects typically targeted fish passage, large woody debris installation, fish ladders, spawning gravel, riparian fences, and planting native vegetation. Remote Site Incubators were also widely used at many different stream sites throughout our region. From 1999-present, SPSSEG projects became more complex, diverse and expensive. Our projects typically follow Lead Entity and Puget Sound Partnership strategies for regional salmon recovery.

Prior to having paid staff, the Board of Directors did all of the project coordination and management by volunteering. SPSSEG relied heavily on project partners. In 1998, SPSSEG hired Todd Alsbury as the Group's first full-time Project Coordinator. Hiring staff was a large organizational transition which increased our capacity to complete more time consuming and complex projects. SPSSEG continued to grow as more grant funding for projects became available to the industry. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and the creation of the Lead Entity program in 1999 provided a statewide framework for a citizen based competitive funding process. In order to adapt to the increased funding atmosphere, additional staff were hired in 2000 (in order of hire) Jacqui Elliot, Lenore Jensen, Lance Winecka, Courtney Pariera, Jeannie Beach, Joan Cosani, Cedar Bouta, Susan Treiber, Jason Lundgren, Christopher Ellings, Kristin Williamson, Cheryl Mongovin, Teresa Moon, Kim Gridley, Eli Asher, Brian Combs, Jerilyn Walley, and Adam Sant. SPSSEG also has had numerous interns including Ryan Crater, Terrence Lee, Geneva Karowski, Caitlin Braymer, Sarah Clarke, Rebeka Bahrt, and Kameron Harper (among others). SPSSEG has been housed in several South Sound offices including Lakewood, Puyallup, Shelton, and Tumwater. We have been at our current Lacey/Olympia location since 2003. We are located near Ecology and right next door to the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. We are very fortunate to have the support of many other like minded organizations.

SPSSEG has had over 40 Board Members with Terry Wright still serving as an original charter member. SPSSEG has completed over 170 projects totaling \$14 million dollars and our annual budgets have been stable since 2001. SPSSEG is confident that diverse funding will remain available to support our mission into the future. The RFEs and SPSSEG will continue to be an important tool for salmon recovery in 2011 and beyond. Our thanks to Washington State for thinking ahead and creating this successful RFE program back in 1989.



SOUTH PUGET SOUND SALMON
ENHANCEMENT GROUP
1990 - 1993



1994 - 1996

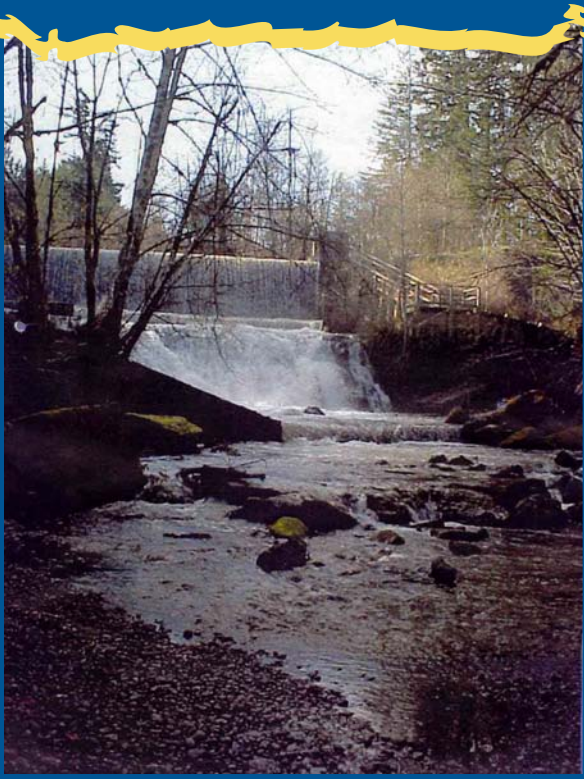


1996 - 2009



Current

Goldsborough Creek & the Elwha River



Above: Goldsborough Dam circa 1990's

Below: Coho found in Goldsborough Watershed



Two rivers with a similar fate

Goldsborough Creek and the Elwha River are two very different watersheds. While Goldsborough is a low-gradient stream winding its way to Oakland Bay in Shelton, the Elwha is a mighty river of the mountains, born of snow and rain from the northern reaches of the majestic Olympics and running its course to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. While these streams are so very different, they have one thing in common: both will soon share the distinction of having major dams removed from their paths.

“...the Elwha is a mighty river of the majestic Olympics...”

Although named as a creek, Goldsborough is a formidable stream and is a primary producer of wild Coho salmon in South Puget Sound. However, strong fish returns were only possible after the decades-old dam was removed in 2001. While small numbers of fish were able to get past the dam, salmon populations were pitifully small in the context of Goldsborough's historic potential. The post-dam, upward trend for Coho salmon in Goldsborough is undoubtedly a sign of the powerful restoration potential that comes with removing dams.

With the removal of not one, but two dams on the Elwha expected to be complete in the next one or two years we all sit in anticipation of what is to come. The Elwha historically hosted all five species of Pacific Salmon in addition to Steelhead, Bull Trout and Cutthroat Trout. Removing the two dams will restore approximately 50 miles of historic salmon spawning and rearing habitat. With a combination of good management and nature's good fortunes, the Elwha will become another restoration success story in the next few years.

Big Cove

An estuary reclaimed

If you've ever seen a cove at the mouth of a small stream while walking a local beach you have probably seen a pocket estuary. Pocket estuaries are small compared to large river deltas and usually occur in protected pockets behind the exposed shoreline. As such, these areas provide refuge and feeding areas for fish and wildlife, particularly for fish when the tide is high and the cove "fills up" to become a temporary pond where fresh stream water and salty sea water mix. Pocket estuaries can be important for non-natal (born in other watersheds) juveniles salmonids as they go on their sea-ward migration.

One such place is Big Cove, located not too far north of Kennedy Creek on Totten Inlet. The pocket estuary at Big Cove was blocked for several decades, cut-off by a full-spanning earthen-dam which prevented tidal waters from entering the cove. The dam also prevented upstream access for all fish. With the estuary voided by the dam and the upstream area behind the dam converted to a freshwater pond, an entire aquatic habitat was altered.

"...these areas provide refuge and feeding for fish and wildlife..."

With funding and support from landowners and multiple agencies, the dam at Big Cove has been removed and the estuary restored. Tidal cycles and fish migration can now move unhindered, shore birds and other wildlife can feed and rest in the cove, salt marsh vegetation will come back with time. Big Cove is in the process of returning to its historic feeding ground for birds, fish and other wildlife.

Top: Historical Photo of Big Cove

Middle: Prior to fill removal

Bottom: Post Construction in Fall 2010

Photo by: Duane Fagergren




Ohop Valley Restoration

By Kim Gridley



Historic Ditched Stream

Hwy 7



In 2010, Phase I of the Ohop Valley Restoration Project was completed. Construction of this project culminated 10 years of planning through a partnership with the Nisqually Indian Tribe, the Nisqually Land Trust, and the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group. The design, developed by the engineering firm Entrix, transformed an agricultural ditch into a one mile meandering stream, reconnecting Ohop creek with the historical floodplain in the Ohop Valley.

In the early 1900's settlers populated this valley in the Nisqually Basin. Decades of clearing and ditching allowed the settlers to graze cattle and plant forage crops in this historically wetland biome. The valley was desirable because of the wide flat valley floor, fertile ground, and slow moving water source.

Ditching the creek led to draining of the adjacent valley wetlands and groundwater and the eventual disconnection of the creek with the floodplain. In addition, clearing of native plant species from the banks of the creek increased solar radiation in the summer leading to higher creek temperatures. Ultimately, with lots of sunlight and regular inputs of nutrients from the grazing animals, algae flourished, fecal coliform concentrations spiked, and oxygen availability in the water plummeted. All of these factors combined created unnecessarily harsh conditions for migrating salmonids.

This creek, although not a major breeding ground for salmon in the Nisqually Basin, exhibits characteristics of an ideal refuge for growing juvenile and resting adult salmon. Low velocity systems with plentiful off-channel habitat provide cover from predators and support a diverse food web for foraging fish. The forested wetlands buffer water temperatures and release stored surface and ground water into the creek and the atmosphere.

In addition to channel remeandering, the project:

- Installed 40+ small log jams to add habitat complexity to the meandering stream using over 400 total pieces of wood.
- Reforested 80 acres of shrub/scrub and forested wetlands within the floodplain with nearly 60,000 plants.
- Decommissioned dairy farm manure lagoon to remove one million gallons of manure.
- Backfilled 1/3 mile of the old ditch.

This project is a success because of the collaboration of a fantastic team of dedicated organizations. In addition to those mentioned above, we would like to thank for their support:

- **US Fish and Wildlife Service** for technical support, monitoring, and funding;
- **RV Associates** for construction of the project;
- **NW Trek** for organizing Nature Mapping and monitoring activities;
- **Nisqually River Education Project** for organizing school plantings;
- **Pierce Stream Team** for organizing volunteer plantings;
- **WA Recreation and Conservation Office** for major funding of this project;
- **Natural Resources Conservation Service** for major funding and technical support;
- **WA Departments of Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, and Transportation** for permit assistance;
- **US Army Corps of Engineers** for permit assistance;
- **Tacoma Power Utility** for the donation of wood from Alder and Rife Lakes;
- **WA Conservation Corps** for harvest and installation of willow and cottonwood cuttings;
- **Mason Conservation District** for onsite inspection;
- **Max Swick** for donation and hauling of wood;
- **Steve Grace** for the manure lagoon decommissioning; and
- **The Ohop Valley Community** and all of the **volunteers** who generously gave their time.

SPSSEG News



Adam Sant

Hellos and Goodbyes

SPSSEG would like to introduce our two new staff members, Adam Sant and Kameron Harper. Adam will be taking over the duties of Kimberly Gridley. Kim accepted a position with Washington State University Extension and will be transitioning to WSU over the winter.

Adam Sant:

Born in the Bronx and raised in Los Angeles, Adam grew up as a city kid finding fish, frogs and fun in the creeks, canyons and oak woodlands near his home. He migrated to the beautiful NW for the first time in 1994, and after time spent in Hawaii and Big Bear, CA, he and his wife returned to the Northwest to put down roots just outside the town of Rainier. He received his BA from Antioch University with an emphasis in natural sciences and education and combines his passion for salmon restoration with scuba diving, zoology, botany and astronomy.

Adam's professional experience includes work as a Habitat Technician for Thurston Conservation District, a Naturalist Guide/Interpreter for Hawaii Forest & Trail, as well as a brief period doing Prairie Restoration with The Nature Conservancy. Adam is thrilled to be part of the SPSSEG family and looks forward to joining his coworkers as they seek to restore salmonid habitats throughout the South Sound.

Kameron Harper:

Kameron Harper is our new Washington Conservation Core (WCC) Individual Placement and joined the SPSSEG team on October 1, 2010. Kameron is scheduled to work with SPSSEG for a year, until September 2011.

Kameron is a life-long resident of the Olympia, Lacey area. She received her BA from University of Washington in 2010 in Political Science with an emphasis in environmental science.

Kameron spent the fall working at the Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail teaching kids of all ages about the salmon lifecycle, the importance of salmon in the Pacific Northwest and the steps they can take to save salmon. Her focus is community outreach and education. She will be active in planning events such as the upcoming annual meeting, next years Kennedy Creek Salmon Splash, and promoting SPSSEG at community events. If you see Kameron, please stop and say "Hello."



Kameron Harper

Conservation Education

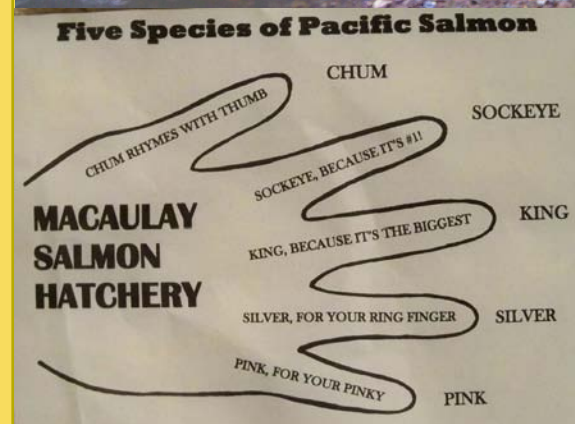
The Key to Success

Here at the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group, we do many different types of environmental restoration and enhancement projects. One very important project is to give back to our community by conducting education and outreach events. Each year during October and November SPSSEG staff, members and volunteer docents work diligently to provide an educational tool for students and members of the community to learn about salmon and their habitat, and much more.

The Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail is a wonderful educational experience for people of all ages to learn about how their actions and decisions directly impact natural processes; in this case salmon runs. Students get the opportunity to view the salmon life-cycle as chum journey up their natal stream to spawning grounds and complete their migration. This program allows people to experience a natural phenomenon as it takes place and aims to encourage them to become proactive and make changes toward a more sustainable future.

It is really incredible to see firsthand the many different areas of education that this trail can be applied. Students learn about the biological characteristics of salmon and their habitat, their spawning behaviors, the nutrients they bring to the forest, and more. They learn about the politics that are involved in working with landowners, Pacific Northwest Indian Tribes, and state agencies to enforce the protection of wild salmon. In addition, the Kennedy Creek Trail teaches environmental science and sustainability by showing how important it is to protect nature and what students can do to help. Lastly, this trail is a great way for students to learn how their everyday actions and decisions have a huge impact.

Environmental education programs are beginning to sprout up all over. They are infused into many curriculums because people know that we need a solution for the issues of environmental degradation. We have to start small and work our way up. Although many people feel that they can't make a difference big enough to matter, the truth is that even small changes can make all the difference in the world. The Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail is just a small community based program that offers many different aspects to be learned about. Even if the Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail is just one small program, environmental education is one huge step in the process toward a more sustainable future.



Partner Spotlight: WSU Extension

By Kim Gridley

New Center to change the face of stormwater management in the Puget Sound Region:

Construction of a Low Impact Development (LID) research center has just been completed at the Washington State University (WSU) Research and Extension office in Puyallup. Development of this center led by researcher and LID guru Curtis Hinman was funded through a partnership between WSU and Washington Department of Ecology. The center touts the ability to study the effectiveness of green development techniques such as rain garden infiltration and pollutant removal rates in a controlled field environment. Initially the researchers will be looking at a myriad of pervious pavement treatments and diverse plant palettes and a variety of soil mixes within raingardens. In the future, WSU hopes to add green roof research as well as extension opportunities for public education. This center promises to be the world leader in low impact development research within the next 5-10 years.

Together with the University of Washington Tacoma Center for Urban Waters, WSU is part of a statewide initiative to develop a Stormwater Technical Resource Center. The Center is tasked with the job of disseminating information to local jurisdictions and permit holders regarding changes in stormwater regulations and new developments in green infrastructure for stormwater management. The LID center will be the leading research and education arm in this process of funneling information on the effectiveness for new techniques to the policy makers, regulators, and general public.

Governor Chris Gregoire has created a new state agency to clean up Puget Sound by 2020. Stormwater is one of the biggest issues facing Puget Sound and one that we all take part in creating. The researchers at WSU Puyallup have taken this mandate to heart and intend to help meet the 2020 deadline.



Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail

2010 Season



The 2010 season at the Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail (KCST) was another success. Over 2,600 people walked the Trail last November. All Olympia area 4th graders were scheduled to attend this year but unfortunately the weather did not cooperate. Over 700 students were not able to visit due to several wind and snow related closures. Although the attendance was a little low this year, the Trail continues to be an excellent education and outreach event for the community. Since 2000, over 33,000 people have visited the KCST!

Each year, a committed group of volunteer docents help SPSSEG and Mason Conservation District coordinate the Trail. We also rely heavily on donations to offset the cost of the program. This year the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation provided a \$15,000 grant to rebuild a damaged viewing platform. All donations are tax deductible. Please take a look at our website for more details on how to donate or get involved.

The chum run was also early this year with the bulk of the run beginning in October. In total, there were an estimated 25,800 chum in the Kennedy and Fiscus Creek watershed. Thanks to all who participated as a visitor or volunteer. You can also follow SPSSEG and KCST on Facebook!

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A One Year Individual Membership is Only \$20
and is tax deductible.***

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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.