Winter Newsletter 2010

SOUTH PUGET SOUND Salmon ENHANCEMENT GROUP

SalmonGRAM

Committed to Protecting and Restoring South Puget Sound Habitat

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This Issue:

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The SPSSEG is administered by a nine-member volunteer board elected by the general membership.

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Brian Combs - Project Manager
Kimberlie Gridley - Project Manager
Jerilyn Walley - SPSCC Work Study

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Cover: Beautiful male chum from Kennedy Creek. Photo: Jamie Glasgow

Message from the Executive Director

Hello reader,

Thank you for picking up the latest and greatest SPSSEG Salmon Gram. In this issue we will be sharing our most recent project accomplishments and also offering a glimpse of the near future. When you're finished please pass it along to a friend and visit our web-site to learn more about our organization.

SPSSEG Staff and Board have been working diligently to make a meaningful difference and to help protect and restore salmon habitat in the South Sound. I feel that we have collectively done a tremendous job this year and we are continually striving to make improvements.

Our organization and annual budget remain healthy. However, we are always looking for better ways to serve our Northwest salmon. You can help us save salmon by providing much needed unrestricted funds. Show your support by becoming a member or renewing your membership (Page 11). You can also make a one-time donation by mail or at our web-site.

It seems we are becoming well known in the South Sound region and we are very excited to have received some national media exposure for the Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail. In the November 2009 issue of National Geographic Traveller the Trail is featured with a wonderful full page article titled *Fall Salmon Spectacular*. The article can be seen on our web-site. SPSSEG is continuing our search for diverse and stable funding for this awesome Trail program. We will be targeting local corporate partners this winter with a goal to raise $5,000 by fall 2010. Please let us know if you are interested in being part of this successful Trail program. Each year over 5,000 people visit the chum and it's truly a community gem.

It is becoming increasingly clear to me that in order to ultimately save our iconic salmon, we must work together. Please get involved in our community by volunteering for a salmon friendly organization or just by talking to your neighbors, co-workers, and family about some easy ways to help salmon. Changes don't have to be drastic or happen overnight. Start off slowly and work up to significant salmon improvements. I know it sounds like rhetoric, but we can and will do it together.

Thanks again for all of your support over the past year and we look forward to your continued support in 2010.

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 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 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.

Thanks Partners & Supporters!

Organizations:

- American Fisheries Society
- Capitol Land Trust
- Conservation Districts
- Department of Transportation
- Wild Fish Conservancy
- Education & Research Assoc.
- Gig Harbor Commercial Fishermen's Civic Club
- Lead Entities
- Nisqually Land Trust
- Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
- People for Puget Sound
- Pierce County Stream Team
- Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group (RFEG) Coalition
- South Puget Sound Community College
- South Sound Fly Fishers
- St. Martin's University
- Tacoma Poggie Club
- Tacoma Metro Parks
- Taylor Shellfish
- Trout Unlimited
- Thurston County Parks
- US Forest Service
- University of Puget Sound
- Washington State Parks
- Washington Conservation Corps (WCC)

Major Supporters

- Sue Asher & Jim Williams
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- Herrara Environmental
- Hancock Resources ?????
- Kennedy Creek Quarry
- Mike McClung Construction
- National Geographic Traveller
- Non Profit Solutions Northwest
- Parametrix
- Tacoma Power
- The Nonprofit Center
- RV Associates
- Wholesale Sports
- Waterfall Engineering

Tribes

- Nisqually Tribe
- Puyallup Tribe
- Squaxin Tribe
- Muckelshoot Tribe

Grantmakers

- Department of Ecology
- Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW)
- Estuary & Salmon Restoration Program
- Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP)
- Mason County
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)
- National Resources Conservation Service (NCRS)
- Pacific Salmon Commission
- Pierce County
- Puget Sound Partnership
- Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)
- Thurston County

Splash Attendees

Kennedy Creek Docents

Ione and Mary Sue?????

Habitat Restoration

By Brian Combs, SPSSEG Biologist

In 2009, SPSSEG saw the completion of year-one construction for the Ohop Valley Restoration Project, near Eatonville, WA. However, although the construction season came to an end in October, SPSSEG and project partners were just getting started on one of the most important aspects of the project: **re-vegetation**.

Plants provide critical functions for fish on every scale of the landscape, whether they are acting as hosts for insects that juvenile salmon will eat, or standing as a massive cedar tree that will become a piece of Large Woody Debris in a stream. Without plants, there is no shade, no food, and no hiding places for juvenile salmon.

Willows harvested at Ohop

SPSSEG staff & WCC Crew Planting Willows at Ohop

The re-vegetation plan for the Ohop project site is multi-faceted, and while the plan includes dozens of plant species, one group of plants stands above the rest – the Willows.

The Willow family (Salicaceae) is represented locally in the lowlands of western Washington by a half-dozen or so species of willow, the large black cottonwood tree, and occasionally, the quaking aspen. Humans have found many uses for willows over the centuries as material for fences, ceremonial houses, hedgerows, and even as the pre-cursor to aspirin (white willow was the initial source of salicylic acid, the active pain killing ingredient in aspirin). Perhaps, however, the primary uses for willows world-wide are for erosion control/stabilization and stream/wetland restoration. This is due to their adaptive ability to grow vigorously from hardwood cuttings, or "live stakes."

Except for aspens, all species of the willow family in the Puget Sound region are adapted to grow from live stakes, providing a convenient and powerful source of re-vegetation material for restoration projects. Cuttings are typically taken in the fall or winter and are called live stakes because they are shaped like wooden stakes and they are literally "alive." Live stakes are

with Willows

best planted during the dormant season when they will begin making roots almost immediately and by the following spring they will begin growing into shrubs or trees.

Willows as Fish Habitat, Bio-mass, and Carbon Sinks

Willows provide nearly instant fish habitat. They grow vigorous root systems in their first year, stabilizing stream banks and reducing sediment transport from denuded soils. Stems and shoots will begin to grow rapidly after the first year or two, providing shade for the stream and initializing food-chain production. Willow branches will hover over or dangle in the water making areas for fish to feed and rest. Live stakes of cottonwood will become massive trees that provide numerous ecological niches over their lifetime.

Willows are a catalyst for bio-mass production and carbon sequestration. Within only a few years after live stake harvest, the donor plants will re-grow their branches, while the newly planted live stakes grow into new shrubs or trees. A single willow plant can provide hundreds of cuttings which can collectively increase the bio-mass potential exponentially.

Our ability to use willow cuttings to produce woody growth on large-scale restoration projects increases oxygen output, carbon sequestration, and habitat diversity on the landscape scale.

Not only are willows a great tool for re-vegetation, they are also cost effective. Standard live stakes are on par with bare root nursery stock prices and are much less expensive than one-gallon, potted nursery stock. Furthermore, because willows are common in most watersheds and are prolific along many stream corridors, they are ecologically appropriate for many watershed restoration projects. Alas, they are not always the best choice for some conditions; however many habitat restoration sites provide prime palettes for working with willows.

For the Ohop Project, SPSSEG coordinated a large-scale, sustainable harvest effort and procured over 10,000 willow cuttings from the project site and nearby properties, allowing us to use genetic material from the Ohop and Nisqually watersheds. The Washington Conservation Corps, the Nisqually Tribe, and others helped harvest and plant over 4,500 cuttings in the new stream channel and several thousand more in the adjacent flood plain.

Now, it's time to let the willows take over. Over time, the dry, open pastures of the Ohop valley will once again become a dense forest mosaic and, with time, the salmon will rest and feed in the shade of the willows.

WCC Crew Preparing willows for planting

2009 - 2010 Ann
Completed and Curre

SPSSEG covers a large and diverse area with many unique opportunities for salmon restoration. Our region includes the Puyallup, Nisqually, and Deschutes River systems, their respective tributaries, and hundreds of small streams draining directly to South Puget Sound.

The following few pages are highlights of our current projects and overviews of projects in the planning stage.

CURRENT PROJECTS BY TYPE: RIPARIAN PLANTING

Volunteers Planting

Powell Creek – SPSSEG partnered with the Nisqually Land Trust and Tribe to plant several hundred plants at Powell Creek adjacent to the Nisqually River.

Ohop Planting – SPSSEG has partnered with Nisqually Land Trust, Washington Conservation Corps, National Resource Conservation Service, and Nisqually Tribe to plant over 80 acres in the Ohop valley. The project area has been planted with willows and other native plants; more plantings are scheduled for fall 2010.

Clover Creek - SPSSEG, Pierce County Stream Team and local school groups to plant several hundred native riparian and prairie plants adjacent to the creek. (See pictures below)

IN-STREAM HABITAT PROJECTS:

Greenwater ELJ and Road Removal – The Greenwater Engineered Log Jam and Road Removal project, funded by SRFB, WSDOT, and the USDA Forest Service, will continue the restoration efforts in this clear-water tributary of the Upper White River. Construction is scheduled for the summer of 2010.

Powell Creek Culvert Replacement – This project was funded by FFFPP and NRCS and replaced a failing culvert with a 50' steel-beam bridge. Three log jams were installed to recreate historic in-stream woody debris. The project was completed in summer 2009.

Ohop Restoration – The Ohop Restoration project, funded by SRFB, USFWS, Nisqually Land Trust, Nisqually Tribe, Tacoma Power, and NRCS corrects

Clover Creek Pre-project

Clover Creek - Reshaped

nual Report
ent Project Updates

Powell Creek Culvert Replacement

historic ditching and draining of a one-mile reach of Lower Ohop Creek, which is a major tributary to the Nisqually River. A new channel was constructed to recreate a sinuous stream that is better connected to the floodplain. The floodplain was replanted with native vegetation, and the formerly ditched channel will be partially backfilled and replanted next summer.

Construction on the Ohop project began in 2009, but will continue in phases for years to come.

Lackamas Creek – This project was funded by FFFPP to removed a barrier culvert and install a 40 foot steel-beam bridge. The bridge was completed in summer 2009.

Clover Creek Stream Restoration – NFWF and Pierce County funded this pilot project to remove asphalt from the streambed. The banks were reshaped and wood was added to the channel for complexity. The project was completed in summer 2009. SPSSEG will monitor water quantity for two years. (See pictures facing page)

Woodland Creek – SPSSEG partnered with St. Martin's University to restore a small reach in Woodland Creek. A partial fish barrier was fixed using a roughened channel approach. The project improved fish passage and sediment delivery downstream. A small timber bridge was also replaced by the university. This project was completed in fall 2009.

Beachcrest – SPSSEG will restore a small pocket estuary in the Nisqually Reach. The project will restore fish passage and increase tidal inundation. Construction is scheduled to begin this January.

Ohop - Large Woody Debris

Ohop - s

2009 - 2010 Annual Report
Projects & Assessment

Frye Cove County Park – This SRFB-funded nearshore project removed 450' of a rock rip rap bulkhead along a local Puget Sound beach. Large woody debris was incorporated into the final design. The project is located at popular Thurston County Park. Construction was completed in spring 2009.

Eld Inlet Culvert Removal – SPSSEG partnered with NFWF and a private landowner to remove a barrier tidal culvert at the mouth of a small estuary. This project was completed in Summer of 2009.

Jarrell Cove – SPSSEG has partnered with Mason County to replace an impassable culvert at the tidewater mouth of Jarrell Cove Creek, a tributary to South Puget Sound. The project will result in better access for fish and increased tidal inundation. Construction is scheduled for summer 2010.

Big Cove – SPSSEG will partner with three private landowners NFWF, and SRFB to remove a failed earthen dam and restore a small estuary. The project is scheduled to begin in fall 2010.

Titlow – SPSSEG is partnering with WDFW, Metro Parks and People for Puget Sound to assess feasibility and develop designs for restoration of fish passage and estuarine habitat.

Penrose Point Bulkhead

Penrose Point – SPSSEG is partnering with Washington State Parks to develop restoration alternatives for removal of a 750 foot long creosote and rock bulkhead (pictured above right).

ASSESSMENTS, MONITORING, RESEARCH:

Nearshore Assessment – This project assessed the shoreline between Point Defiance and the Nisqually Reach for quantity and quality of nearshore habitat available to support salmonids. Project goals and

Lackamas Creek - Pre-project

Lackamas Creek - Post-project

Assessment & Education

objectives include: compilation of new and existing data; restoration recommendations for the project reach; a list of potential restoration projects; and preliminary design for two to three site-specific projects. Project partners include: the Nisqually Indian Tribe, Pierce County, WDFW, Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railway Co. and many others.

Mashel River Effectiveness Monitoring – The Mashel Monitoring Project is funded by the Nisqually Indian Tribe as a pilot study to assist in the development of a Nisqually Basin Chinook Recovery Monitoring Plan. The Mashel River is the largest tributary to the Nisqually River and has been the focus of a myriad of restoration projects by SPSSEG.

Sherwood Creek Monitoring – SPSSEG is partnering with the Squaxin Island Tribe and Allyn Salmon Enhancement Group to monitor summer fish presence in the creek at several locations throughout the watershed.

WRIA 10 and 12 Project Development – SPSSEG has partnered with the Pierce County Lead Entity to develop Clearwater River and Chambers Bay restoration plans.

WRIA 13 and 14 Nearshore Project – SPSSEG and stakeholders selected 20 projects and developed them into conceptual designs. To date, 13 of the 20 projects have been funded for implementation.

WRIA 15 Nearshore Restoration Design – This project will utilize the Key Peninsula / Gig Harbor Islands nearshore habitat assessment to identify high priority restoration areas and target specific salmon habitat restoration projects along WRIA 15 shorelines in Carr Inlet, part of Case inlet, Anderson Island, McNeil Island, and Fox Island. 10 projects will be selected and designed to conceptual levels.

EDUCATION

Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail – The trail provides public access to one of the South Sound's healthiest chum salmon runs. Taylor Shellfish has donated a 20-year land lease for a half-mile interpretive trail along Kennedy Creek. Over 40 volunteer trail guides educate school groups and visitors. During the 2009 season the trail had 5,200 total visitors. SPSSEG partners with Mason Conservation District, Taylor Shellfish, and the Kennedy Creek Advisory Committee to help organize the trail.

Shoreline Community Outreach – SPSSEG coordinated local volunteers and school groups to help monitor and clean up sections of beach along the Point Defiance/Nisqually reach.

Sound Gardens Save Salmon – SPSSEG is working with many stakeholders to incorporate local and community rain gardens that can help reduce storm water impacts on salmon streams.

Education and Outreach – SPSSEG staff, Board, and volunteers are always looking for ways to provide salmon education and outreach for our community. This year SPSSEG participated in Kids with Conservation Knowledge, Northwest Fly fishing Academy, Nisqually Watershed Festival, and numerous other educational and outreach events.

Bruce Stewart dissecting a salmon for Kennedy Creek Docents

2009 Accomplishments

- 5,200 Kennedy Creek Visitors
- 120 local school classes
- 41 Volunteer Docents
- Planted over 15,000 native plants
- Released 30,000 chum fry
- Completed four culvert removal projects
- Improved over 1.5 miles of stream habitat
- Taught over 1,000 students about the importance of salmon
- Designed over 20 preliminary restoration projects

Suport our Mission:
Recruit a New Member!

As conservation-minded individuals, we all do what we can to benefit the resources that we value so much. Depending on our personal interests, we become members of various organizations, such as the Capitol Land Trust, Citizen's for a Healthy Bay, South Sound Fly Fishers, and Tacoma Poggie Club.

As members, we understand that our contributions to organizations allow them to keep their office lights on, their front doors unlocked and their employees seeking additional grant funding to accomplish their missions. Often these are not glamorous contributions; we are not single-handedly building an education center or securing vast tracts of land, but we are providing an essential resource for success: flexible funding.

Most projects and programs that SPSSEG undertakes are funded largely through state and federal grants. These funds allow us to do the significant, on-the-ground projects highlighted in our Annual Report, but they often come with stringent spending requirements. Many grants do not allow for payment of overhead expenses such as rent, electricity or general office supplies. These are often the limiting factors to our work, but can easily be offset with donations from the communities we serve (yes, people just like you!).

As paid members of SPSSEG, you, your friends, coworkers, and family members are directly supporting local salmon recovery efforts. Your contributions allow us to seek beneficial projects and the ability to implement them. For every dollar in unrestricted funds that we receive from members, businesses, and partners, we are able to leverage hundreds of dollars of grants that directly fund habitat restoration projects in the region. Now, that's a *sound* investment to be proud of.

Show Your Support! Join or Renew with SPSSEG Today! A One Year Individual Membership is Only $20 and is tax deductible.

Name_____

Street_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Email_____

Please Return form to:
SPSSEG
6700 Martin Way East, Suite 112
Olympia, WA 98516

- Individual Membership.....$20
- Family Membership.....$30
- Business Membership.....$200
- Corporate Sponsorship.....$500
- Other Tax-Deductible Donation.....$_____

For our generous state employed supporters:
Please donate to SPSSEG through the Combined Fund Drive (#0315035).

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

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

Natural Log Jam on the Greenwater River

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.