Winter 2013 Newsletter

SOUTH PUGET SOUND Salmon ENHANCEMENT GROUP

SalmonGRAM

Committed to Protecting and Restoring South Puget Sound Habitat

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Cover: Priest Point Park Bulkhead, City of Olympia

Photo: Adam Sant

Message from the Executive Director

Lance Winecka

Thank you for reading our 2013 Winter SalmonGram newsletter. In order to keep receiving the SalmonGram and other informative SPSSEG electronic mail in the future, please send us an email to heatherd@spsseg.org. You can also follow our progress by periodically checking the organizations website at www.spsseg.org. Lastly, you can "Like" us on Facebook for quick posts and announcements.

You might notice in this winter's edition that we are focusing on shoreline restoration opportunities. Over the past few years SPSSEG has been working with many diverse partners to identify, fund, and remove bulkheads that restore natural beach processes. Many of these projects are located on State, Tribal, County, and City owned shorelines. These projects are primarily removing shore armor and re-grading the beach to better support salmon and people. Salmon and other marine species depend on natural shore forms throughout their life histories for migration, refuge, and food sources. Local and regional restoration opportunities such as Case Inlet, Priest Point Park, Penrose State Park, and Squaxin Island have provided the restoration community with an important opportunity to fully remove armor and to restore over 1,500 feet of linear beach. These collective efforts improve the ecological links between uplands and the marine environment.

As development pressures continue across the Puget Sound it is becoming increasingly important to restore habitat as quickly and effectively as possible. It also makes sense to follow existing preservation, protection, and conservation land use strategies prior to development to ensure that we are thinking ahead. Often times, unintended environmental consequences are difficult and expensive to restore. We are all better off to make good land use decisions the first time.

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.

Upcoming projects:

Below are two bulkheads SPSSEG is working on removing, a private and a public owned. Bulkheads can be determinantal to natural beach processes such as sandy material recruitment and drift cells. Loss of these functions increases homogenous cobble beaches and reduces areas of marine vegetation that are critical to forage fish spawning. Often, bulkheads in low energy environments, such as pictured below, are not necessary to stop erosion. Restoration treatments can vary from soft armor (gravel or wood) to complete removal, depending on site conditions.

Penrose Point State Park

By Kristin Williamson

Work to remove a large, 700 foot long creosote treated bulkhead and rip rap armor has begun! Heavy equipment was mobilized to Penrose Point State Park on January 15th, 2013 to begin the difficult task of dismantling and hauling away this old, failing bulkhead.

The bulkhead was built between 1969 and 1970 by Washington State Parks staff through installation of 110 creosote treated piles, backed by creosote treated planks cabled to deadmen anchors buried behind the bulkhead. The bulkhead was then backfilled to create an artificial terrace on the shoreline. Subsequent maintenance activities have placed angular rock behind and around the toe of the bulkhead. The resulting condition is a large, toxic structure which has truncated and armored the beach making it inhospitable to fish and wildlife and posing a threat to public safety.

Since 2009, the Salmon Enhancement Group and Washington State Parks Staff have been working together to develop a plan for removing this bulkhead and restoring the natural character of the shoreline. The plan is to completely remove all creosote materials and non-native rock fill to restore a bluff-backed beach offering sand and gravel for surf smelt and sand lance to lay their eggs between October and February, a shaded shoreline with overhanging trees for young salmonids to feed along between March and July, and a natural trail for people to safely access the beach all year round.

It took project partners 4 years to develop design documents, obtain permits, and raise the funding necessary to remove this bulkhead, and in just 6 short weeks all the creosote, fill, and armor will be taken away. Removal of the material will be accomplished using heavy equipment such as excavators and bulldozers. A tug and barge will be used to haul away the 110 creosote pilings, 210 cubic yards of creosote planking, and nearly 4000 cubic yards of rock fill. In the end, all of this work will take this shoreline back in time, to a more natural state, the way it was intended to be.

We are grateful to- the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the Puget Sound Partnership, the Washington Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who have provided funding for this project- Anchor QEA who provided technical design services in the development and implementation of this project- Sealevel Bulkhead Builders who will be providing the equipment and expertise to carefully remove and haul the bulkhead away- and Washington State Parks Staff, Deb Peterson and Janet Shonk, who have worked diligently with us these last 4 years to see this project through.

Priest Point Park Bulkhead Removal

By Adam Sant

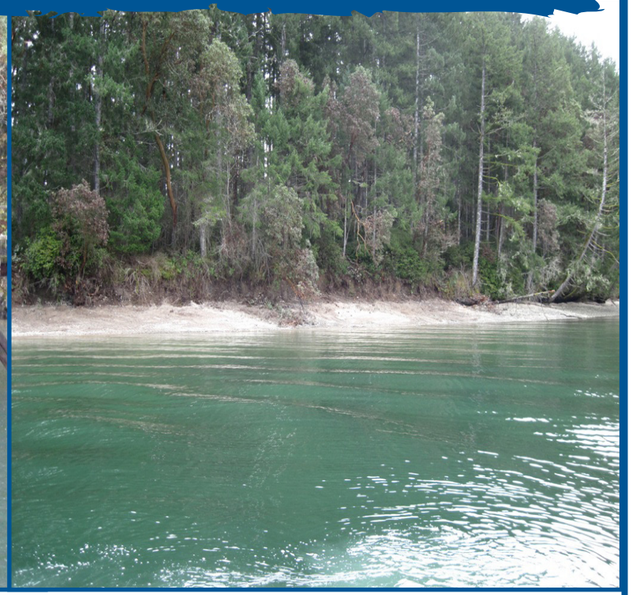
The 314 acres that encompass Priest Point Park offer South Sound residents picnic areas, hiking trails, wildlife viewing, access to Ellis Cove and over a mile of natural shorelines. One area in the park that was still in need of attention was at the far northern boundary. Here, a derelict bulkhead and abandoned well were interrupting natural shoreline processes that feed the beach and create productive habitats for forage fish and migrating salmon. With direction from the Lead Entity, SPSSEG partnered with the City of Olympia to secure grant funds from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board to remove the bulkhead, decommission the well and return natural processes to the site.

SPSSEG contracted with Coast and Harbor Engineering to develop plans for the bulkhead removal and SPSSEG worked with the Department of Ecology to decommission the well according to state law (WAC 173-160-010). Once permits were secured, SPSSEG contracted with Sea Level Bulkhead Builders out of Kingston for removal. Public notices were sent out, informational signage was installed and work began in early August of 2012.

The majority of the bulkhead was removed first, which allowed easy access to the well for filling and capping. While the remainder of the bulkhead was removed, other crew members carefully unloaded and spread nourishing beach gravels that have been absent along this stretch of the beach due to the scouring action of the bulkhead. In addition, crews from the WCC, City of Olympia and Sound Native Plants worked on the bluff above to remove invasive English ivy and other debris to allow for the replanting of native trees and shrubs.

The work proceeded smoothly and in just a few days, the beach was cleared of debris, the well was capped and nourishing beach gravels were spread. The new plantings on the bluffs are thriving and with natural shoreline processes restored, the beach can provide suitable habitats for years to come.

Squaxin Island Bulkhead Removal Before and After



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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.