

SalmonGRAM

Committed to Protecting and Restoring South Puget Sound Habitat



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

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Cover: Kennedy Creek

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Message from the Executive Director

LANCE WINECKA



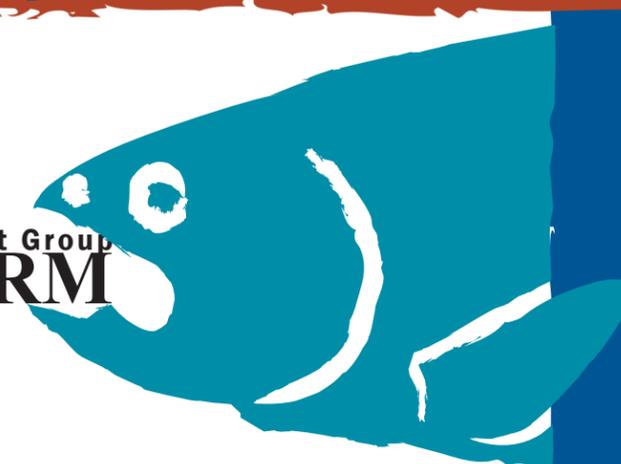
The Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group (RFEG) program was created in 1991 by the Washington State Legislature. Since 1995 the RFEG's have successfully implemented 856 fish passage projects, completed 3,831 salmon projects, opened up 1,118 miles of streams, released over 78 million fish, distributed over 1.6 million carcasses as nutrient enhancement, and have coordinated nearly 3 million hours of volunteer time. RFEG's receive funding from several important sources including Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the State of Washington. We are able to leverage these organizational base funds to maximize salmon restoration opportunities across the Puget Sound and Washington State. Since 1995, the RFEG project has leveraged over \$257 million dollars for salmon projects. These projects are intended to improve salmon habitat, but they also directly contribute to the economy of Washington State.

A lot has changed since the program began nearly 30 years ago. One thing that hasn't changed is that addressing the problem of declining salmon populations takes committed and dedicated teamwork. Projects have become increasingly more expensive, complex and they tend to extend across a longer timeline. Funding these large-scale projects can be challenging, and it is not uncommon to utilize several large grants to fully fund a restoration. It is a complicated process to identify matching funds and to implement project using various grant agreements, deadlines, and construction windows. Often large projects can take 5 to 10 years from inception to completion. It could begin to look like a daunting process if not for the fact that SPSSEG and the other RFEGs are not meeting these challenges alone. All the projects undertaken by RFEGs are voluntary, meaning willing landowners are essential. Behind every project is a team of enthusiastic, knowledgeable and dedicated partners. This work takes time and we are fortunate to be in a great position to help people, help fish.



The SPSSEG is one of fourteen Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups created in 1989 by the Washington State Legislature. Base funding for the RFEG program comes from a grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, a portion of state commercial and recreational fishing license fees, and excess egg and carcass sales administered by the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife.

SPSSEG is working hard to make your membership a more fulfilling and valuable experience. Our members come from all walks of life and we could not be happier to have every one of you as part of our SPSSEG family. Please consider renewing your membership or, if you are thinking about registering as a new member, fill out the information below and WELCOME!



South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: Home: _____ Work: _____

Email Address: _____

Type of Membership: _____

- Individual Membership.....\$20
- Family Membership.....\$30
- Business Donation.....\$200
- Corporate Sponsorship..... \$500

Please return form to Board or Staff directly, or mail to:
 SPSSEG, 6700 Martin Way SE, Suite 112, Olympia, WA 98516
 or register for your membership online at spsseg.org/about/support

FISH RETURNS IN THE SOUTH SOUND

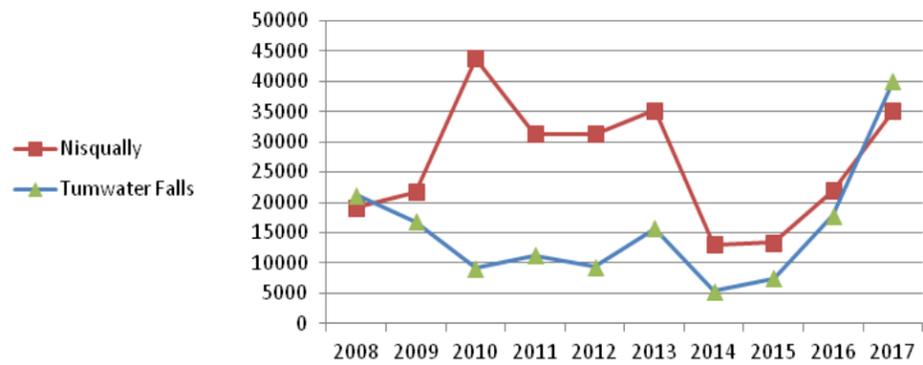
Strong numbers of adult Chinook salmon returned to some of our South Sound rivers during the 2017 summer and fall season. Returning hatchery adult numbers were tracked by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Nisqually and Deschutes Rivers (Tumwater Falls). We were able to obtain data from WDFW showing the number of returning adults for each year going back to 2008, showing the relatively strong run we saw in 2017. Gabe Madel of WDFW provided the following information:



“In the Nisqually River 35,079 hatchery Chinook returned which is about 9,000 fish above the 10 year average, and at Tumwater Falls 40,031 hatchery Chinook returned which is about 25,000 over the 10 year average and is the highest return we have seen dating back to 1992. Both had good

returns while Tumwater Falls (Deschutes) had an exceptional return. It appears that marine survival for 3 year old Chinook was pretty high relative to recent years and this resulted in a large number of 3 year olds returning this year in both the

Chinook Returns Since 2008: Nisqually and Deschutes Rivers



Nisqually and the Deschutes. Due to the complexity of factors affecting juvenile Chinook survival in both Puget Sound and the Pacific its tough to say exactly why that age class had improved survival compared to recent years. The high survival

occurred during ocean conditions that were unfavorable for juvenile salmon, so biologists from WDFW and other agencies are examining variables in the marine environment or climate that could be related.”

DESCHUTES RIVER RANCH

Deschutes River Ranch Wetland Restoration & Lower Lake Lawrence Fish Passage projects reverse legacy agricultural impacts to 192 acres east of Lake Lawrence. The property hosts a spring that provides cold water to the Deschutes via the Lake Lawrence Outlet channel. This landscape-scale restoration will fill a series of agricultural ditches, create a meandering channel from the spring to the outlet channel, enhance wetland hydrology, replace a barrier culvert with a bridge, and install over 100 pieces of large wood throughout the restoration areas. The entire parcel will be planted with wetland emergent plants and native riparian vegetation. Long-term outcomes include decreased temperature through shading, increased off-channel habitat for rearing juvenile salmonids, better fish passage and improved ground water recharge. SPSSEG is happy to coordinate these two projects with the Cities of Olympia, Lacey and Yelm.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN 2018



SOUTH PRARIE CREEK

In coordination with the Pierce Conservation District and Pierce County, the South Prairie Creek Floodplain Restoration Project will restore the former Inglin Dairy south of Orting. Construction activities include creating a over a mile of new side channel habitat with 30 log structures, installing 3 channel spanning log structures designed to reduce channel incision, demolishing 10 remnant farm buildings, replacing a condemned bridge with a bridge in a lower impact area and planting approximately 36 acres with native wetland and riparian vegetation. After completion, South Prairie Creek will be connected with over 80 acres of floodplain, improving groundwater recharge and creating cold water storage for lowering summer water temperatures. This reach of South Prairie Creek is highly incised, resulting in high velocity winter flows which force juvenile salmonids out of the reach. The new channel and wood structures will slow the velocity and create off-channel habitat for rearing fish.

WEST OAKLAND BAY

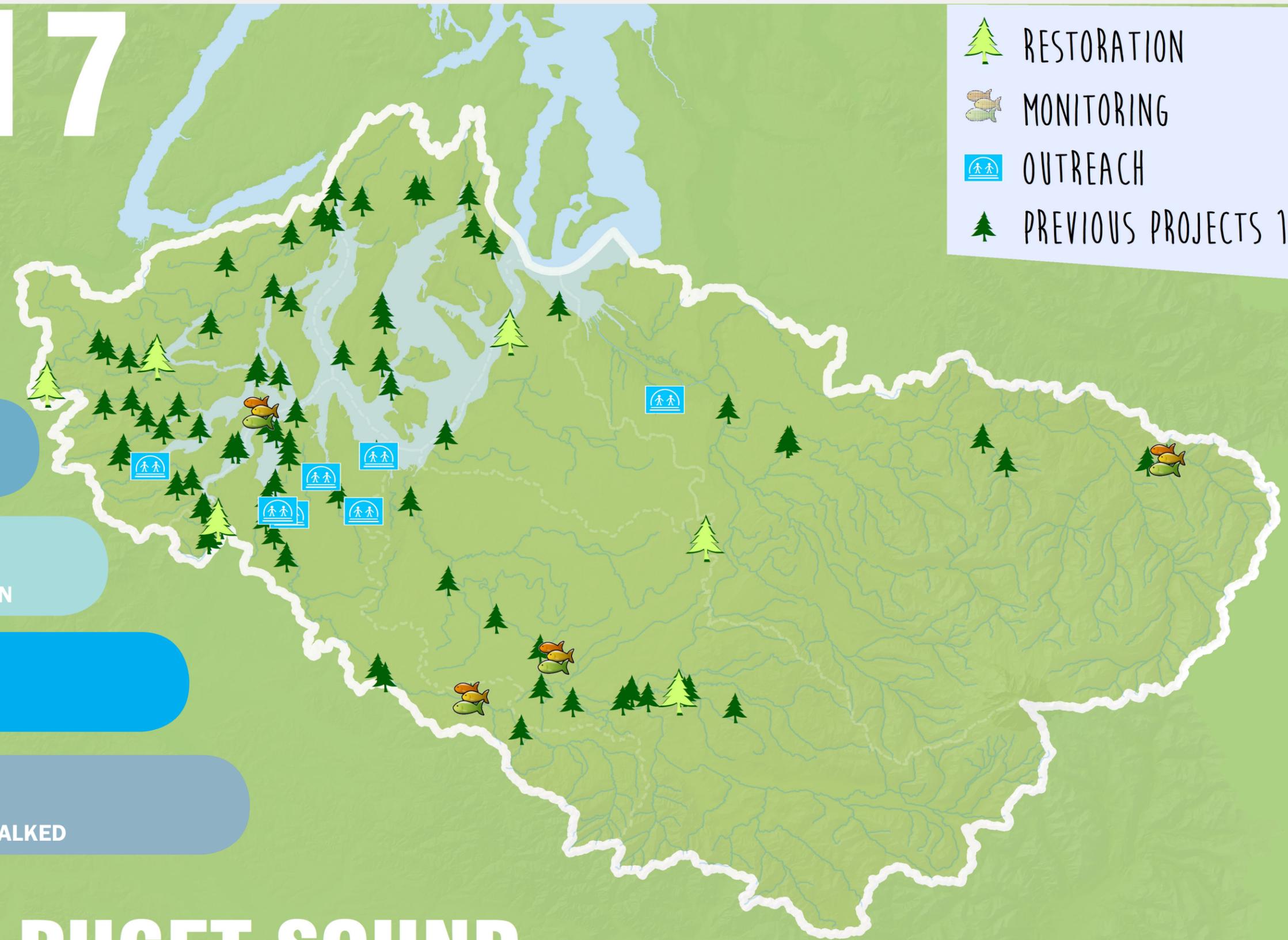
West Oakland Bay Restoration in Shelton Harbor will continue the Goldsborough Creek delta restoration by importing sediment to expand the creek delta and create saltmarsh habitat. The created microtopography allows for various intertidal plant communities and will capture mobile sediment. By virtue of being a marine area, the site is a known feeding and migration corridor for salmonids and is linked to non-salmonid species that are important contributors to the ecosystem, such as forage fish, marine invertebrates and numerous migratory and resident shorebirds. The restoration of Oakland Bay addresses rapid and widespread development of the waterfront by early commercial interests in the late 1800's/1900's. Project partners include the Squaxin Island Tribe, Simpson Timper Co., Port of Shelton, Capitol Land Trust and Mason Conservation District.

LITTLE MASHSEL RIVER

Outside the Town of Eatonville, where the Little Mashel enters the Mashel River, a construction project started in 2017 and will be completed in summer of 2018. In cooperation with the Town of Eatonville and the Nisqually Land Trust, 5 large wood structures will be added to the 4 completed last year. The Little Mashel River Confluence Restoration project treats 3.5 miles of mainstem river with 9 large wood structures to ensure gravel trapping, sorting and pool formation. Historic side channels will be reactivated, 400' of rip rap armoring removed, and 5.25 acres of riparian area planted with native vegetation. The Mashel River has undergone a series of projects over the past 15 years to address a lack of habitat diversity resulting from past poor forest practices.

2017

-  RESTORATION
-  MONITORING
-  OUTREACH
-  PREVIOUS PROJECTS 1999-2016



6
PROJECTS COMPLETED

116
ACRES OF LIDAR FLOWN

5,023
STUDENTS REACHED

8,046
METERS OF STREAM WALKED

SOUTH PUGET SOUND SALMON ENHANCEMENT GROUP

SMALL PROJECTS MAKE BIG IMPACTS

The Family Forest and Fish Passage Program (FFFPP) is a great way for small forest landowners to do their part in restoring fish passage and increasing habitat for our native salmon populations. The program assists private land owners by providing funding to repair or remove fish passage barriers on their property. This year SPSSEG had the opportunity to assist with two FFFPP projects, Panhandle 4-H and the Ward Tributary to South Creek.

PANHANDLE 4-H

The Panhandle 4-H project is located in Mason County on the property of the Panhandle Lake 4-H Camp. The project reconnected the upper two and a half miles of stream habitat on a tributary to the South Fork of the Goldsborough Creek. An undersized culvert was located under a logging road also frequented by hikers and horseback riders from the camp. The culvert was a complete barrier to fish due to multiple issues



including a hole at the outlet that fish would just fall through. The primary species that frequent the area's waters include coho salmon, cutthroat trout, and potentially steelhead trout.

The landowners were enthusiastic to be selected for the program and were receptive and great to work with throughout the process. After multiple deliberations and design modifications, it was determined that a bridge would be the most affordable option, as well as offer the best passability for fish. Bids for the construction of the bridge were extremely close and the contract was awarded to True North Steel. The contract for



the installation of the bridge was awarded to Kysar & Koistinen. Both contractors were a pleasure to work with. At the time of construction the stream bed was dry which made excavation and preparation of the site much easier, not requiring any dams or pumping of water around the site. The barrier culvert was replaced with a steel bridge in September, 2017. The 40 foot long, 14 foot wide bridge restored fish passage to upstream habitat while maintaining access to the Panhandle 4-H property. In addition to the standard guard rail the bridge was also outfitted with a 54" high wooden rail to accommodate safe crossing by horses from the camp.

WARD TRIBUTARY TO SOUTH CREEK

After a long life in the proverbial pipeline, the South Creek Tributary finally has a shiny new culvert. This project was a small giant that has been passed around to multiple agencies and multiple project managers. With a great team of partners and two incredibly patient landowners, this project was brought to successful fruition in late September.

Nestled in the Nisqually watershed, this small unnamed tributary to South Creek was identified as a restoration opportunity in 2013. Opening up approximately two miles of stream habitat, this project replaced an undersized culvert with a 14 foot-



wide box culvert, moved a road, and removed an upstream relic culvert. The area has healthy beaver activity throughout the stream and a small pond situated between the two culvert locations. In an effort to better guide the inevitable construction of the ever-industrious



beavers, three beaver analogs- structures that simulate beaver dams (bottom left picture)- were placed in the pond along with strategically placed logs.

Along with the stream habitat this project has created access to, there is now a large wetland for steelhead, coho, sea run cutthroat and resident trout to utilize in this unnamed tributary. The importance of tributary habitat is becoming increasingly apparent. Funding programs like FFFPP fit well with small scale restorations that add up to create a big impact. These projects are collaborative from beginning to end and SPSSEG is lucky to get to work with such diverse and success-driven conservationists from all backgrounds.

BRINGING FISH TO OAKLAND BAY

Phase I of the West Oakland Bay Restoration Project was completed in the fall of 2017. Working in close partnership with the Squaxin Island Tribe, Simpson Timber Company, and other local partners, SPSSEG was able to complete this first phase of the larger West Oakland Bay Restoration. The first phase included the placement of 9 log-jam type sediment retention structures at the mouth of Goldsborough Creek. These structures will engage, sort, and capture natural creek bed sediments that will begin forming dynamic alluvial channels and salt marsh habitat in the Goldsborough Creek estuary. The project was completed by Quigg Bros. Construction utilizing a barge and crane.

Phase II of the project, the re-creation of a large salt marsh estuary, will begin later in 2018.



For upcoming reports and information follow the project website at www.sheltonharbor.org.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT SPSSEG

We are ramping up our volunteer opportunities in 2018! Check out our events calendar at spsseg.org/events/ to stay up to date on upcoming events and opportunities!



Another Season at Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail...

Despite some challenges to get the trail ready for our thousands of November visitors, 2017 gave us another fantastic season at Kennedy Creek. Check out the pictures from this season's volunteer events to see the work accomplished by some great folks who got the trail up and running this year.



SPSSEG has been lucky to partner with Pierce Conservation District and others to restore the South Prairie Creek Preserve, a former dairy farm that is now well on its way towards restoration. Pierce Conservation District is hosting two planting parties that build on a 2.5 acre planting they completed last fall. Volunteers will be needed to plant another 3.5 acres with over 2,200 plants. If you are interested in joining the fun check our piercecountycd.org to register!

Coming Up...

South Prairie Creek Preserve Planting Party

Saturday, March 10, 2018
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

AND

Saturday, March 24, 2018
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
South Prairie Creek Preserve





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!



OUR 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.