

SUMMER 2025
NEWLETTER



SOUTH PUGET SOUND
Salmon
ENHANCEMENT
GROUP

SALMON GRAM



A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT



We've had an incredible year at SPSSEG! Through the guidance of our Executive Director, Lance Winecka and the expertise and diligent efforts of the SPSSEG staff, we have been able to make great strides in restoring and enhancing salmon habitat in the South Puget Sound region.

In the past year, we've worked on over 45 active salmon habitat restoration projects at various stages from grant procurement to planning, design, permitting, and final construction. The organization has been awarded several new grants valued at over \$20 million. We recently completed 3 salmon habitat restoration projects, totaling \$1,426,932 in construction costs alone. SPSSEG plans to spend several million dollars over the next two years that will improve riverine infrastructure while also contributing funds to the local economy.

While we've had an exemplary year at SPSSEG, we are faced with some financial challenges and uncertainties in the upcoming years. At the end of June, we were informed that USFWS was pulling back a large portion of our base funds awarded through their federal Partners Program. The impact on SPSSEG is a loss of \$70,000 annually to our organizational funds. SPSSEG utilizes these funds to pay for our work that is not covered by project grants, such as administration and grant writing. In addition, we have federal funding for ongoing and awarded grants and projects. While these funds have already been appropriated, we face the uncertainty of these federal awards being cancelled. Regardless of these fiscal challenges we will face in the coming years, the SPSSEG board and staff are committed to diligently pursuing and working towards regional salmon recovery.

Board President
Carlos Herrera

Carlos Herrera

Board

President and Treasurer: Carlos Herrera
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Staff

Executive Director: Lance Winecka
Project Manager: Kristin Williamson
Project Manager: Cole Baldino
Project Manager: Kylie O'Driscoll
Project Manager: Casey Allen
Education Coordinator: Jessica Linkemyer
GIS Analyst & Field Coordinator: Alex Arams
Accounts: Harold Schmidt
Intern: Scout Abbott

MISSION AND VISION

The South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group (SPSSEG) is a local voice for regional salmon recovery. From the highest peak in the Cascades, to the fertile shorelines and estuaries of Puget Sound, we restore salmon habitat with willing landowners. We seek out and partner with other organizations to help plan, fund, carry out, and monitor fishery enhancement and habitat restoration projects. We believe that by collaborating with local communities, schools, and individuals in King, Pierce, Kitsap, Thurston and Mason Counties, we can increase salmon numbers in our rivers and streams. Our non-profit non-governmental status helps us to get real results.

We envision:

- 1. Robust and persistent salmonid populations supported by South Puget Sound region ecosystems.
- 2. A leadership role in South Puget Sound freshwater and marine conservation and restoration.
- 3. Broad-based community support and involvement in accomplishing our mission.
- 4. A long-term and sustainable organization.

Financial Overview

In 2024, SPSSEG realized a total of \$4,040,957 in revenue. SPSSEG funding comes from Base funds from WDFW and USFWS, with capital design support from Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), along with Grant Agencies, Donors, and Foundations in Washington State (nationally & local).

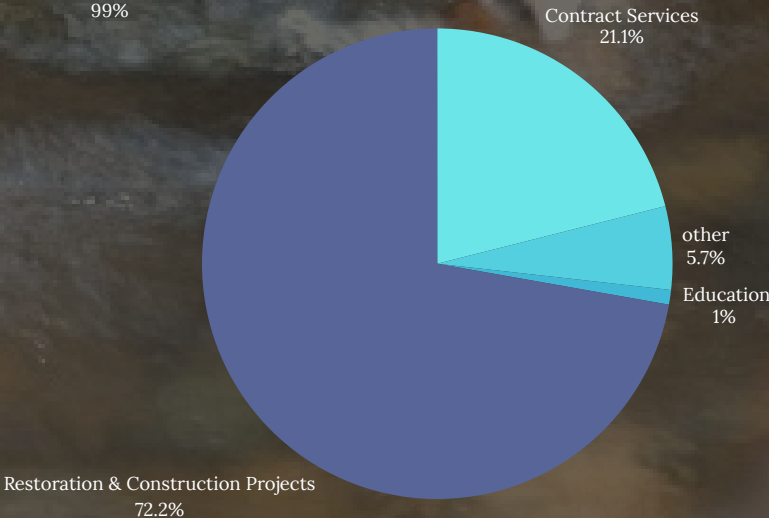
Support and Revenue

- Grants & Contracts \$3,996,365
- Donations \$44,569
- Misc/Interest Income \$23
- Total Support & Revenue **\$4,040,957**

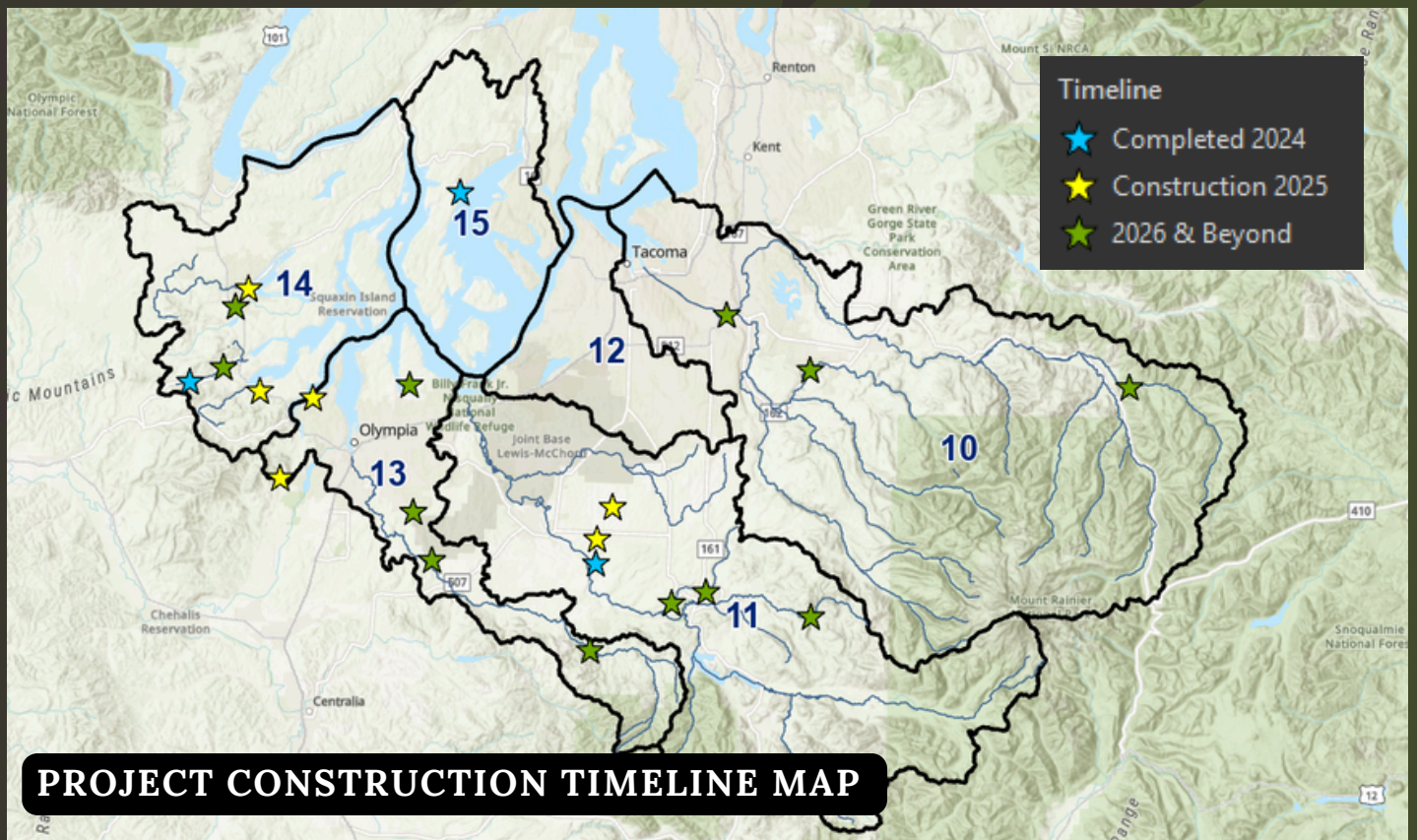


Expenses

- Program Expense \$1,091,972
- Contract Services \$845,124
- Education \$57,169
- Other \$189,679
- Restoration & Construction Projects \$2,880,090
- Total Expenses **\$3,972,062**
- Net Income \$68,895



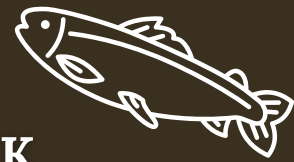
HIGHLIGHTED FINISHED PROJECTS IN 2024



THOMPSON SPIT

This site is on a tributary to Carr Inlet, Puget Sound. This 98.4-foot-long, 3-foot-high dam served as a road crossing. An upright concrete box controlled the pond water level. A round pre-cast concrete culvert installed provides an overflow outlet through the road and onto the beach just below the high tide line. Correcting this barrier provides chum and coho salmon and searun cutthroat trout with access to 0.69 miles of high-quality spawning and rearing habitat. The project also restored fish access and tidal flow to a small, forested estuary embayment.





LOWER HORN CREEK

This fish passage construction project focused on two adjacent fish passage barriers at approximately RM 0.3 on lower Horn Creek, a tributary to the Nisqually River. The lower barrier created a 5 foot waterfall that partially blocks passage for adult and juvenile salmon. The treatment for this site was to improve fish passage around the low gradient side of the waterfall. The upper barrier was a bridge deck with an underlying concrete control structure at a private road crossing that severely restricted fish passage. A new bridge was installed at this upper site to restore full fish passage. Horn Creek supports ESA listed Chinook salmon and steelhead, as well as coho, pink, and winter chum salmon. There are over eight miles of estimated fish riparian and in-stream rearing and spawning habitat upstream of the project site.



SKOOKUM CREEK

RIVER MILE 6.5

This stream and riparian restoration project included main-stem, riparian, and off-channel treatments along a ~400-foot reach of Skookum Creek at River Mile (RM) 6.5. There were very few wood pieces that provided gravel retention, pool formation, and other functions. Wood key pieces and wood clusters were installed to benefit in-stream processes. Portions of the riparian zone are lacking in conifers and native tree cover, instead shrouded by blackberry and other non-native vegetation.



SALMON IN THE SCHOOLS

South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group provided this program to schools in North Thurston, Olympia, Shelton, and Pioneer School Districts. We work with 11 different schools in total. Students receive chum salmon eggs in January and help raise them until the fry stage. They get the opportunity to learn about the life history of salmon and release them into a local stream.

Due to recent budget cuts, the salmon in the schools program is in need of funding. Many Teachers have expressed the need for continuing this program and have shared how these opportunities leave a lifelong impact on the children. If you would like to donate, please go to SPSSEG.org under the 'Donate' tab or contact Jessica Linkemyer at Jessica@spsseg.org



Total of 1853 chum fry released into the local creek



Combined total of over 5,000 hours of Salmon Education

