

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2004 - June 2005



SKAGIT FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUP

The mission of the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group is to build partnerships that educate and engage the community in habitat restoration and watershed stewardship in order to enhance salmonid populations.

Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group Overview

The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group is a nonprofit organization dedicated to involving our community in restoring salmon populations for future generations. Our mission is to build partnerships that educate and engage the community in habitat restoration and watershed stewardship activities in order to increase salmonid populations. By educating community members and involving them in hands-on restoration and monitoring activities we intend to meet our goal of increasing local salmon populations through citizen action. Established in 1990 as one of 14 Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups in Washington State, SFEG is part of a coordinated effort to educate and involve the public in salmon enhancement activities across the state at the community level. SFEG works cooperatively with local landowners to identify restoration opportunities on their property and find the funding to implement them. SFEG's region is large including the Skagit River and Samish Bay watersheds as well as the watersheds of the San Juan Islands and northern Whidbey Island. The Skagit Watershed alone is the largest Puget Sound drainage; covering over 3,000 square miles and contributing roughly one-third of the freshwater to Puget Sound. While development and timber activities have impacted the health of the Skagit Watershed, its overall salmon habitat conditions are excellent relative to other more urbanized Puget Sound watersheds. The Skagit Watershed continues to provide significant spawning and rearing habitat for all five species of Pacific salmon as well as steelhead, cutthroat and bull trout. Currently, one-half of the remaining Puget Sound Chinook salmon (which are listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act) return to the Skagit Watershed to spawn. This designation makes it all the more important for us to work collectively to keep the Skagit Watershed healthy.

Due to the large geographic size and diversity of habitat types in our region, this year we embarked on a strategic planning process that prioritized Focal Areas where we feel we can have the greatest benefit to salmon with limited financial resources. The purpose of identifying Focal Areas is to better integrate our education and restoration programs and make both programs more effective. Eight primary focal areas were prioritized out of 48 geographic areas identified as important to salmon resources in our watershed. Over the next several years we hope to target our energies to these 8 Focal Areas by developing education programs to engage community members and landowners and garner support for habitat restoration projects.

We continued to try to diversify our funding sources this year. Several large grants were awarded from new sources including the Department of Ecology's Centennial Clean Water Fund, the Pacific Coast Salmon Commission's Southern Fund, and the Puget Sound Action Team's Public Involvement and Education (PIE) fund. PIE funds were awarded in 2004 and used to start a new educational program called Stream Stewards in two local communities. Ecology funds were immediately put to use in the Nookachamps watershed where we are working with several local farmers to implement riparian projects to reduce water temperature and improve water quality for salmon. The Stream Stewards program was such a success in 2004, that we used Ecology funds to start a new Stream Stewards program for Nookachamps watershed residents in 2005. In addition we continued to deliver educational presentations and engage volunteers in planting trees, monitoring habitat conditions, counting returning salmon, flinging dead fish, stenciling stormdrains and much more.

Summary of Accomplishments, July 2004-June 2005

Outreach:	Community Education	1,502 individuals
	Volunteer Involvement	8,455 hours
Habitat Enhancement:	Riparian Revegetation	10,140 feet
	Riparian Maintenance	80 acres
	Estuary Restoration	6 acres
	Nutrient Enhancement	10,240 carcasses

Habitat Enhancement Projects

Nookachamps Watershed: New grant funds from the Department of Ecology's Centennial Clean Water Fund allowed SFEG staff and volunteers to implement several important riparian projects in the Nookachamps watershed. These riparian projects are intended to decrease water temperature and improve salmon habitat, which is currently limited by high temperatures. Projects were implemented on the main stem of Nookachamps Creek with a local dairy farmer and the Skagit Land Trust, while partnerships with NRCS and Ducks Unlimited resulted in expanded projects on the East Fork of Nookachamps Creek and on Turner Creek. Five sites were worked on with this grant. Volunteers and staff prepared the sites for planting and planted 1,700 linear feet with native trees and shrubs on 48 acres of riparian habitat.

Samish Watershed: Several new projects were identified and implemented through a Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant in the Samish Watershed. Volunteers and restoration staff removed noxious weeds and planted native vegetation at 7 sites including Friday Creek, Thunder Creek, Thomas Creek and the Samish River. Just over 2,500 linear feet of planting was accomplished with this grant. A large salmon enhancement project was started at the confluence of Ennis Creek and Samish River, where the Whatcom Land Trust has protected 50 acres of habitat for restoration purposes.

Edgewater Park: SFEG partnered with the City of Mount Vernon Parks Department and the Skagit Watershed Council with funding provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to restore the riparian area of Edgewater Park. Over 65 volunteers donated 337 hours to plant 500 feet of Skagit River shoreline. Due to the park setting, volunteers had to adhere to strict planting specifications including supplementing the soil, mulching the plants and finally watering each plant manually. Shortly after the planting, an automated watering system was installed by the Parks Department to keep plants healthy through the dry summer months. Volunteers planted 765 plants, and our professional restoration staff installed an additional 1,050 plants on the steep banks next to the Skagit River. SFEG's restoration staff has also been tasked with controlling the nonnative Japanese Knotweed that has infested the banks over the years. In June, the Parks Department began moving dirt for the second phase of this large scale habitat restoration project. The second phase of the project is funded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and involves recreating historic landscape processes and a functioning off-channel slough system. This type of habitat is rare in the lower Skagit River, where most slough habitat has been cut off by the dike system that protects property from flooding events. The newly created off channel habitat will act as a refuge for wildlife and offer protection and shelter to salmon at various life stages during times of high water.

Childs Creek: With funding from The Mountaineers Foundation, the Trout and Salmon Foundation and the FishAmerica Foundation, SFEG began restoration work on Childs Creek. An instream project was developed and designed for the installation of large woody debris into the channel in order to improve pool habitat for summer rearing coho salmon. A planting workday was accomplished with volunteers on 500 feet of riparian area. Additional plantings are planned for after construction. During the summer, SFEG will install large woody debris in this section of creek. A similar project was completed upstream in 1996.

Deepwater Slough: This was the last year of a grant from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board to perform adaptive management needs at the Deepwater Slough Estuary Restoration Site on WDFW's Fir Island Wildlife Area. SFEG has been tasked with controlling invasive weeds such as reed canary grass, blackberry, scotch broom, knotweed and cattails and to reestablish native vegetation such as sweetgale. This project is led by Skagit River System Cooperative and would not have been possible without assistance from the Wildlife Area's Manager John Garrett. This year an additional 1700 feet of estuarine slough was treated as well as 6 new acres of vegetation management.

Native Plant Nursery: This past year volunteers contributed over 305 hours to SFEG's native plant nursery to help produce higher quality plants in greater quantities than what is available at local nurseries. Volunteers and staff expanded the native plant nursery to hold roughly 7,000 plants (up from 4,500) in seven raised beds. Volunteers watered, weeded, potted and maintained these plants throughout the year. Our AmeriCorps volunteer spearheaded several structural improvements this year. This included improving drainage by adding gravel to the beds to improve flow and prevent flooding. An improved shade structure was designed and installed on two beds to withstand heavier weather conditions and to provide shade tolerant plants improved growing conditions. Lastly a much needed semi-automated irrigation system was installed to reduce manual watering time, improve coverage, and reduce overall water consumption.

Nutrient Enhancement: SFEG continued to work with volunteers from the Fidalgo Fly Fishers to help with nutrient enhancement this year. Fidalgo Fly Fisher volunteers distributed 10,240 carcasses from the Marblemount State Hatchery back to natural streams. This was primarily done as a weekly event loading totes from the hatchery filled with fish into a truck and flinging the fish back into the streams with pitchforks. With assistance from the US Forest Service, we were also able to redistribute carcasses above the Baker River Dams into the Upper Baker River via helicopter. Over 1,400 Chinook carcasses were dropped in the Upper Baker River.

Project Development: Our Project Manager was kept very busy this past year working on the development of instream projects. A culvert removal project was designed, funded and permitted for Berry Patch Creek in the Sauk River watershed. Another fish passage project was funded, designed and permitted in the Upper Samish Watershed on NP Creek. SFEG worked with the Whatcom Land Trust to secure protection of 50 acres of wetlands in the Upper Samish watershed, where a habitat restoration project for Ennis Creek will occur in partnership with Whatcom County next year. Another large woody debris project was planned, funded and permitted in partnership with the US Forest Service for Finney Creek. A helicopter will be used to place 1.5 miles of log jams in the creek in 2005. Additional design progress was made on Morgan Creek and a future fish passage project was scoped out to open passage on Day Creek Slough and Morgan Creek. A new partnership was solidified with Seattle City Light to implement restoration projects on two sites owned by them in the middle Skagit floodplain.

Education and Outreach

Stream Steward Programs:

Trumpeter Creek: This Stream Stewards program engaged residents of Mount Vernon in learning about three urban tributaries. This educational workshop series was funded by the Puget Sound Action Team's Public Involvement and Education (PIE) fund. In this 9-month workshop series, participants learn about all aspects of a healthy salmon stream, and how they can directly affect the salmon stream running through their neighborhood. In return for training, Stream Stewards agree to contribute 40 hours of their time toward the conservation and restoration of streams in their neighborhood. In the first season, 14 Stream Stewards from this Mount Vernon community contributed 530 hours toward stream clean ups, riparian planting, and educational programs throughout Skagit County.

Brickyard Creek: This Stream Stewards workshop was also funded by the PIE fund and concluded in November 2004. Sedro Woolley community members spent 9 months attending workshops and field trips to learn about the urban creek that flows through their community. Six Stream Stewards from the Sedro Woolley community contributed 227 hours toward stream clean ups, riparian planting, and educational programs.

Nookachamps Watershed: This Stream Stewards workshop began in February 2005 with funding from the Department of Ecology. This group, composed of 20 residents of Lake McMurray, Big Lake and Clear

Lake communities, has so far contributed 310 hours toward learning about the Nookachamps watershed and volunteering in restoration and education programs. This program wraps up in October 2005.

Student Service Learning: Programs in the last year have involved 288 local youth in projects such as riparian planting, stormdrain stenciling, and stream clean-ups. Students from Immaculate Conception Regional School, Emerson Alternative High School, Mount Vernon High School, Clear Lake Elementary School and several local youth and scout groups have learned about riparian and stream ecosystems, and how to prevent stormwater pollution from entering salmon streams.

Community Education: Programs for children and adults in the last year have resulted in presentations to 1,502 people, and SFEG participated in community festivals and events that drew approximately 8,855 people. These festivals include the Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival, The Smelt Derby, the Anacortes Waterfront Festival, and the Penn Cove Water Festival.

Skagit Watershed Council: SFEG is an integral part of the Lead Entity for the Skagit and Samish Watersheds. SFEG is one of seven founding members of the Skagit Watershed Council which consists of 40 member organizations working together to restore and protect salmon resources in our watershed. SFEG's staff and board serve on key committees that review and prioritize projects as well as creating a monitoring plan for projects. Working with the Skagit Watershed Council has been instrumental in forging new diverse partnerships with entities such as Seattle City Light and Western Washington Agricultural Association.

Monitoring, Studies and Design

Monitoring: Volunteers assisted SFEG's monitoring coordinator at 40 project sites to perform spawner surveys, monitor vegetation, conduct instream habitat monitoring, and take photos at reference points. About 70 volunteers were trained at workshops to utilize protocols for the different monitoring programs. Dedicated volunteers walked 19 miles of creeks each week to count returning salmon this winter. Monitoring has become an essential component of all restoration projects. Documenting results from projects provides much needed data to funders and partner organizations. We continued to nurture a partnership which began last year with the Earthwatch Institute to train their volunteers to assist with collecting data. SFEG's monitoring staff gave 2 presentations at Earthwatch's Aquatic Research Conference, sharing the results of our monitoring efforts.

Skagit River Stewards: During the eighth year of the Skagit River Stewards program, 26 volunteers contributed 135 hours for training and collecting biological samples at 8 restoration sites. This program is a successful partnership with the Forest Service and North Cascades Institute to conduct monitoring to track the health of tributaries to the Wild and Scenic Corridor of the Skagit River. Volunteers are primarily collecting aquatic macroinvertebrates to track stream health, but must also be trained to collect a variety of other physical parameters in order to make the biological data useful.

Wiley Slough Baseline Data: With funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, SFEG helped collect baseline data for the Wiley Slough Estuary Restoration Project. This information was used in for the Wiley Slough Design Report led by Skagit River System Cooperative in partnership with WDFW. SFEG installed groundwater monitoring wells at several locations throughout the site. Surface water flow information was collected at a variety of flow and tide levels from several locations leading into and on the site. A longitudinal profile was also conducted for Wiley Slough. Information was compiled into the design report which has been proposed for funding to restore 160 acres of tidelands on WDFW property.

Salmon Recovery Partners 2004-2005

- Adobe Software
- ALEA Volunteer Cooperative Grants
- Thais Armstrong, artist
- Danny Beatty
- Boy Scouts of America
- Blau Oysters
- Boy Scouts of America
- Gabe Carson, landowner
- Cascade Job Corps
- Children's Museum of Skagit County
- Chinook Engineering
- Christianson Nursery
- City of Concrete
- City of Mount Vernon Parks Department
- City of Sedro-Woolley
- Diana Davis, landowner
- Ducks Unlimited
- Jim Duffield
- Earthwatch Institute
- Fidalgo Bay Roasting Company
- Fred Meyer
- Leland Fox, landowner
- Cynda Garver, landowner
- Going in Style Photography
- Gretchen's Kitchen Store
- Roxanne Grinstead
- Holiday Sports Center
- Island Adventures
- Island Outfitters
- Island County
- Ivar's Restaurants
- Kapteins Ace Hardware
- Krispy Kreme
- Landed Gentry Development, Inc
- Ledger Line Business Services
- The Lincoln Theater
- Don Lucinger, landowner
- Lee Mann, photographer
- Marblegate Community Association
- Master Marine Services
- Max Dales Restaurant
- Microsoft Corporation
- Libby Mills, artist
- Miller Consulting
- Mount Baker National Forest
- William & Rebecca Murray, landowner
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
- National Wildlife Federation
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- National Park Service
- Northern Sales
- Olympic Resource Management
- Pacific Salmon Commission
- Padilla Bay National Estuary Research Reserve
- People for Puget Sound
- Porterhouse Restaurant
- Printwise, Inc.
- Project AWARE Foundation
- Puget Sound Action Team
- Tom Quinn, University of Washington
- Maggie Rose
- Salmon Recovery Funding Board
- San Juan Conservation District
- Sauk Mountain View Golf Course
- SeaBear Smoked Fish
- SeaBolt's Smokehouse
- Seattle City Light
- Seattle IMAX
- Scott's Bookstore
- Skagit Conservation District
- Skagit Conservation Education Alliance
- Skagit County Noxious Weed Control Board
- Skagit Land Trust
- Skagit River Brewing Company
- Skagit River Stewards
- Skagit Stream Team
- Skagit River Ranch
- Skagit River System Cooperative
- Skagit Valley College
- SkagitValley.com
- Skagit Valley Herald
- Skagit Watershed Council
- Sports and More
- Stanwood Grill Restaurant
- Steel Perceptions
- Taylor Shellfish
- Fred Tewalt, landowner
- The Nature Conservancy
- Thompson's Greenhouse
- Thrifty Food Pavillion
- Upper Skagit Indian Tribe
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Forest Service
- Village Pizza
- Washington Conservation Corps
- Washington Service Corps
- WA State Department of Ecology
- WA State Department of Fish & Wildlife
- WA State General Administrative Services
- Wetlands Reserve Program

- Bill Neat, artist
- NOAA Restoration Center
- North Cascades Institute
- North Cascade Networks

- Whatcom County Public Works
- Whatcom Land Trust
- Wildcat Steelhead Club
- Woods Logging Supply
- Wizards of Ooze

Major Donors 2004-2005

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dan & Linda Ballard ➤ Lyn Bishop ➤ Black Dog Productions ➤ The Burning Foundation ➤ Bob Carey & Kari Odden ➤ Concrete Nor'West ➤ David Downey ➤ Ken Evans ➤ The Hugh & Jane Ferguson Foundation ➤ Fidalgo Fly Fishers ➤ FishAmerica Foundation ➤ Fourth Corner Fly Fishers ➤ Bruce Freet ➤ Brian Gentry ➤ Jeanne Glick ➤ Oscar Graham | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Steve & Gail Hopley ➤ Jim Johnson ➤ Dick Knight ➤ Curtis Miller & Shirley Solomon ➤ The Mountaineers Foundation ➤ Don Parry ➤ Puget Sound Angers-Fidalgo Chapter ➤ Wills Royall, Jr ➤ Skagit Community Foundation ➤ Skagit Valley Food Coop ➤ Mark & Diane Studley ➤ Paul Tappel ➤ Trout & Salmon Foundation ➤ US BankCorps ➤ Peter Van Der Nailen ➤ Wildlands, Inc |
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Budget Summary, July 2004 - June 2005

INCOME

Public Funds	\$ 411,148
Private Funds	\$ 81,403
Total Cash Income	\$ 492,551
In-Kind Donations	\$ 163,363
Total	\$ 655,914

EXPENSES

Projects & Programs	\$ 378,644
Administration (15%)	\$ 69,264
Total	\$ 447,908

Board and Staff

Board of Directors:

Dick Knight, *President*, Retired Chemical Engineer
 Dan Ballard, *Vice President*, Retired Business Owner
 Stephen Hopley, *Treasurer*, Port of Anacortes
 Jim Johnson, *Secretary*, Retired Educator
 Deene Almvig, Retired Educator
 Lyn Bishop, Elementary Teacher
 Bob Carey, The Nature Conservancy-Skagit Manager
 Ned Currence, Fisheries Biologist-Nooksack Tribe
 Bruce Freet, Environmental Mediator
 Jeanne Glick, Printwise co-owner
 Arn Thoreen, Retired Commercial Fisher
 Ken Urstad, Retired Forester

Staff:

Alison Studley, Executive Director
 Lucy Applegate, Outreach Coordinator
 Perry Welch, Project Manager
 Dan Jacobson, Restoration Supervisor
 Kevik Rensink, Monitoring Coordinator
 Bob Keller, Restoration Technician
 Dwayne Massey, Restoration Technician
 Joel Breems, Habitat Restoration Assistant
 Laura Clemmer, Education and Outreach Assistant

SFEG is a non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible. Tax ID#94-3165939



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INSIDE...

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Dedicated to involving our community in restoring salmon populations for future generations.