



THE REDD

The Newsletter of the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group
Dedicated to Restoring Wild Salmon for Future Generations

Volume 16, Issue 3 • Fall/Winter 2010-2011

Volunteer Efforts Make For an Impressive Planting Season

By Carolyn Feffer

Here at Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group our restoration efforts would not be complete if it weren't for the hard work of our volunteers. We are especially reminded of their diligent efforts as we reflect on the accomplishments of our fall planting parties. This fall 54 volunteers donated 162 hours of work to help plant an impressive total of 2,890 trees and shrubs! These native plants our volunteers installed will help improve salmon habitat for generations to come. By providing shade and cover for salmon, native plants help control water temperature while also providing places for salmon to hide from predators or to rest. As the trees and shrubs shed their leaves, aquatic insects feed on the fallen foliage, which in turn allows for salmon to feed on the insects. Riparian habitat also improves water quality by stabilizing banks to control erosion, filtering pollutants, and increasing dissolved oxygen available in the water. Our staff looks forward to continue caring for these newly planted riparian zones and providing opportunities for volunteers to be involved in salmon habitat restoration. Thanks to all of our volunteers who prove year after year that they are passionate stewards of our watershed and salmon populations.

We were pleased to be able to offer delicious baked goods, fruit, and beverages donated by the Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion, Burlington Haggen, Calico Cupboard and Bakery, and the Mount Vernon Red Apple. Thank you donors!



Volunteers finish this planting at the Cedar Springs Renewal Center on Day Creek. A total of 961 trees and shrubs were planted!

Nan Monk and Michael Mahaffey own the Cedar Springs Renewal Center, and site of our lower Day Creek restoration efforts. Here they explain a bit about their property and experiences working with SFEG:

Cedar Springs is a non profit educational and healing center that was founded by Michael and Nan in 1995. We, with the help of two close friends, purchased this farm on Day Creek in 2002. It took almost 2 years to remodel the 100 year old dairy barn into the residential center that now sleeps 16 people. We teach people about the healing benefits of organic live foods which means nothing is cooked in the center. This helps people detox their bodies from processed and refined foods. We also teach yoga, hands on kitchen classes and dialogue which is a method of clearing out old and unhealthy beliefs. This helps people find their own truth and in the process clear the mind of toxic beliefs. We also grow some of our own food and are currently seeking experienced growers to lease some of the acreage in order to farm organic vegetables and fruit crops.

We are very grateful for the enhancement of this land by Skagit Fisheries and all the volunteers that have helped with the planting and maintenance of all the native shrubs and trees. You have been the best organization that I have ever had the pleasure of working with and what a great gift for this piece of land. What a blessing for Day Creek, Cedar Springs and guests that walk this land and the farm in general.

Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.

Nan Monk and Michael Mahaffey



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From The President ~ Bruce Freet.....	page 2
Welcome New Americorps Interns.....	page 3
Stories From the Field.....	page 4
Volunteer Spotlight.....	page 6

Restoration Project Update.....	page 6
Become a Member.....	page 7
Annual Meeting and Silent Auction.....	page 7
Calendar of Events.....	page 8

What is a Redd?

A female salmon uses her tail to dig a nest in the gravel. After she deposits her eggs the male fertilizes them. The female then covers the fertilized eggs with gravel from upstream and the resulting nest is called redd.

Our mission is to build partnerships that educate and engage the community in habitat restoration and watershed stewardship in order to enhance salmonid populations.

Board of Directors:

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BOARD MEETINGS

The SFEG Board meets the 4th Tuesday of each month. The public is welcome to attend.

Staff:

Alison Studley, Executive Director
Sue Madsen, Restoration Ecologist
Lucy DeGrace, Outreach Coordinator
MaryMae Hardt, Finance Manager
Michelle Murphy, Stewardship Manager
Joe George, Restoration Technician
Kyle Koch, Restoration Technician
Andy Beckman, Restoration Technician
Bengt Miller, Restoration Technician
Neil Vargas, Restoration Technician
Anna Mostovetsky, WA Conservation Corps Restoration Assistant
Carolyn Feffer, WA Service Corps Outreach Assistant

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From the **PRESIDENT**

After two years as the president of the Board of Directors, it is time to give someone else this volunteer leadership role. While it isn't like a paying job, there is a wealth of salmon and steelhead habitat restoration projects --- past, present, and future --- that the president can get involved with and easily devote 20+ hours per week. Working with our highly motivated and talented staff is certainly a pleasure ... and the best that we have had. We can't thank them enough for their dedicated work!



Bruce Freet
President

The leadership guidance is to keep out of daily operations as much as possible and focus upon what should be ahead of us. The critical contribution is looking ahead, keeping true to our mission and objectives, and occasionally asking questions about the past and present projects to assure that we are evaluating our work and maintaining quality control. We want a Board of Directors that brings a variety of talents and perspectives to our organization, and similarly, we are constantly striving to diversify our projects and funding sources. Some examples are:

- While it has been less than a year since we assumed the knotweed control program on the upper Skagit River from The Nature Conservancy, we exceeded the treatment goal and funding for next year. In the future we may be assisting the Samish and Upper Skagit Indian Tribes with revegetation work associated with their knotweed control efforts in other parts of the watershed.
- In addition to continuing our restoration work on several Seattle City Light owned properties, we are monitoring the ecological "health" of 14 City Light properties along the Skagit River, and are developing plans for some needed restoration here.
- We need to continue our involvement with the Skagit Watershed Council's Middle Skagit Restoration Group and the Puget Sound Energy's Baker River Fisheries Group for the long term salmon and steelhead habitat restoration work in this area.
- While it is an all too slow and tedious process, we need to continue our involvement with Skagit County's flood hazard management plan. For now, its focus is primarily along the Burlington and Mount Vernon stretch of the Skagit River. We need to help educate the County's Flood Hazard Management Advisory Council that the past and present strategy of continuing to build dikes higher and wider doesn't provide sufficient protection for today's economic development nor is it sustainable. Moving the dikes back to create a wider river corridor fulfills the above needs and provides improved fish and wildlife habitat as well as improved shoreline recreational opportunities such as trails --- these objectives are not mutually exclusive. In the future, we could partner with many organizations to restore habitat and reduce overall costs.
- While we have diversified and increased our annual funding, we haven't been as fortunate with expanding our membership. We need to re-commit ourselves on this objective and strengthen our community base. You can help us by informing friends and neighbors of our efforts, telling them about our website (www.skagitfisheries.org), and inviting them to join you at one of our events.
- And last, but definitely not least, our education programs. We are currently serving more than 400 students at 5 middle schools in the Skagit and Samish watersheds through the Junior Stream Stewards program. We have a new Salmon in the Classroom program occurring at two elementary schools. And Kids in the Creek continues to be a very popular way to engage those schools and classrooms that have less time to devote to environmental learning.

You, our SFEG members, provide the volunteer base and valuable community connection. We simply could not accomplish our restoration projects without your donations of time, volunteer work, and money. Please accept my very sincere Thank You.

Once again, our staff and Board of Directors are looking forward to seeing you at our Annual Meeting on February 16, 2011. It is a fun evening to re-connect with our members, bid in our fund-raising silent auction and raffle, share a salmon dinner, and celebrate the year's achievements.

I hope to continue to serve you as a volunteer on the Board of Directors.
 Bruce L. Freet

Please join us in welcoming our new Americorps interns for the coming year

Greetings all! My name is Anna Mostovetsky and I come to you from a far away land of bagel stores, skyscrapers and Broadway plays. I'm originally from Odessa, Ukraine and I moved to Brooklyn, NY when I was eight years old. Though I grew up in a city, my passion for the outdoors was ignited by my father who frequently took us on camping adventures throughout the Northeast. I am now an avid hiker, backpacker, biker, forager and general nature lover. I became hooked on field work and the West Coast upon finishing high school and made every effort to fly across the country during summer breaks for work and exploration. I studied environmental science at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Try saying that three times fast! After working as a Park Ranger in the North Cascades and Hydrologic Technician for the Forest Service in California, I made my way back to Washington and stumbled upon the splendor of the West Side. I am now fortunate enough to be working with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group as the new WCC Restoration Assistant. I look forward to a year of field work, to working with all of you and to restoration extravaganza!

Hi there I am Carolyn the new Washington Service Corp intern. After falling in love with whitewater rafting as a teen I moved to Washington from the Chicago suburbs to explore the wild, beautiful, and diverse rivers of the Evergreen State... and, on a secondary note, to attend Western Washington University. When not busy enjoying adventures on the river I completed a self designed degree in Sustainable Landscape Design and I earned two minors from Huxley College of the Environment. In my last year of college I realized that all the hard work I could do for the environment wouldn't hold as much weight as I wanted it to if future generations weren't on board. Since then I have been grateful to be charged with the refreshing energy of young kids working with children at Common Threads Farm, the Lummi Island Boys and Girls Club, and the Whatcom Family YMCA. I am most proud of my work with the Lummi Island Heritage Trust where I designed an outdoor education program for youth called "Nature Explorers." I've taught environmental education in a variety of settings from multi-day river rafting excursions with teens to training adults in Permaculture Design at local farms. My love for connecting with nature infuses everything I do in my life. I enjoy rock climbing; learning to telemark ski; dancing; and finding, creating and devouring delicious local meals with friends. I am extremely honored to be apart of the impressive and fun group of people who work for Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. I am most excited to spend time teaching environmental education in a less familiar setting, the classroom, and finding creative ways to remind kids that getting wild and dirty outside is way cooler than Facebook or video games!



Left – Carolyn and Anna at the Oct 30 Day Creek planting party.
Above – Anna and Carolyn try to keep warm during spawner surveys.

Stories from the Field - Adventures in Spawner Surveys

We've been hitting the cobblestones, rocks, gravel, bushes, and logs (literally) since the beginning of October. More water seems to really make a difference in the world of a salmon's sex life.

In the first weeks of surveys after initially recording half dozen old rotting Chinook carcasses, we had a couple of 'no fish sighted' surveys. We actually did find plenty of fingerlings in the quiet, deeper pools, probably both cutthroat and coho as we found last year. Then a few weeks ago the coho started running. We started encountering pairs and trios of them roosting on redds. Usually they were a female and two males. We call these 'salmonage a trois.' The dominant male would spend much time drifting off the redd back downstream toward the other male intruder and pushing or bumping him back down current using his body-blocking ability. Sometimes he'd turn back sharply on the intruder and bite him with his big, over curved beak-like jaw. One redd had a fresh, clean, green-and-cranberry red buck on the nest with the female while a battered and deeply scarred male waited on the periphery four feet away. We then spied a small jack salmon that slipped quietly up from behind everyone and moved onto the nest when the other two males were distracted in combat.

We saw many more redds with fish on them than we did all of last year. We also seem to have gotten better at spotting the fish in the stream rather than spooking them up and frightening both fish and us. This season we are stealthy and have a better sense of anticipation of where the fish might be in the stream channel. We search upstream for their dorsal fins swaying back and forth in the current like sharks.

The first big news of the year was that we found several coho salmon on redds further upstream on Parsons Creek this year than last. In mid-October, we had found a spot less than 100 yards below the culvert that was a dry stream bed. The waterless area was about 60 feet long and just above a large multi-tree blow down area that we cross over on logs. The next week it was full of water again following a rainfall, and coho had made a redd. Three fish were actively splashing and cavorting at the base of a cedar tree that grows into the stream.

Each week we observed more coho and chum in redds, sometimes counting over 90 live coho. Coho were still moving upstream and fighting for dominance, their dorsal fins swaying back and forth out of the water. The female does the nest digging with her side turning body 'flop' and cleans the small rocks away, the males move in close and 'shiver' next to the female over the redd.

We watched the spawning behavior and continued to move on up to the culvert with no other sightings. In the culvert the water was higher than we'd ever seen from side to side with large rocks jutting out forming numerous channels in the noisy, rushing watery tunnel. We stood in the middle of the dark culvert chatting, shining our little flashlight around the creek. Suddenly the light hit a coho immediately in front of us just a few feet away. Holy Cowho, Batman! It was as shocked as we were. It flopped and slithered against the rocks and cruised safely between my boots, and went back downstream.

Upward we went stopping at a huge log weir about 2.5 feet in diameter that lies firmly across the stream with a back up pool above it making it a good step up to climb over. The stream here is about 6 feet wide, and evenly flows over the log, but it makes at least a three foot, steep drop into a deep pool below. I've always contemplated that on Parsons Creek this would be the biggest hurdle for a salmon to overcome to make the spawning journey further upstream. But as I stood on the edge of the foaming, boiling, bubbling, white pool, I spied one, no two, pink/red colored things swimming in the white water. I yelled at Sheila who was clearing more of our trail nearby. She hopped over to the pool and verified my observation. This is a major thing for a city boy like me. And then it happened. A huge pink/red bodied coho buck jumped up against the big log weir, but unfortunately it didn't get high enough to get over the log. This big male coho was well over ten pounds. I held out my little pocket digital camera and froze for another shot at the jump. It was as quiet as a roaring waterfall could be as we awaited another jump. Sure enough, after another five minutes the big boy tried again near an obstructing smaller log which deflected its vertical trajectory. After another long pause, it tried again, then again, each time just short of its goal-- the tranquil, shallow pool above the log. It just looked hopeless, no way could it get high enough. And, then magically it happened. Again, up it went touching near the top of the log. It mechanically kept flapping its tail as though swimming, to barely make it over the top and into the calm pool above and behind the big log weir.



Coho males vie for females

By Chris Brown and Sheila Tomas



Chris Brown tires out his special 'fish call' whistle

This fish had managed to hatch and grow up in this stream, swim out to the ocean, spend a few years avoiding predators and subsisting on life in another environment and then with some odd urge it turned around and headed back up the Samish River and into Parsons Creek, slithering up the fish ladder culvert under Prairie Road past Don Stewart's farm and Samson, the huge barking guard dog, and through the dark restored culvert under an unnamed old logging road to jump an Olympic-sized log weir to swim even further upstream. Sheila and I followed this fish right up past our survey terminus-- a three foot in diameter cottonwood tree almost a mile and half from the Samish River. We went another thirty yards upstream where the creek water slowed a bit more and reverted back to the lovely, slower, meandering spawning stream we know from below the culvert. This particular fish never really slowed down. He just kept moving, unlike most of the others we've observed on the stream. He may still be moving upstream; I just hope a female is already up there waiting for him.

On most surveys we are led up the stream by a dipper (aka water ouzel), a small gray, wren-like bird that does knee bends on rocks in the middle of the creek. Nearly every good sized rock exposed in the middle of the creek has what we call 'ouzel poo' on it. They dive into the stream and hunt for insects on the bottom. They like to stay close to, leading the way, usually flying off ahead of us for thirty or so feet and exercising on a rock and diving until we catch up, then flying off again and alighting on another stone midstream and repeating the performance. This time I spied the ouzel on a log weir with something in its beak. As I stopped to get a better look through

the mass of thimbleberry branches, I saw that it was holding a bright orange salmon egg. It's the first time in many trips that we witnessed this, and certainly explains the regular appearance of our aquatic avian friend on Parsons Creek.

In the second, more dramatic experience, we spotted a large male coho carcass exposed and lying on its side in the shallow midstream. I carefully reached down and grabbed the carcass by the peduncle and brought him over to the nearby bank to measure, cut open and cut the tail. I placed one end of the tape measure in the notch of the tail and drew the tape across the fish's decomposing body to the tip of the nose. And just then its jaw moved--opened and closed. I jumped back in disbelief. It continued to respire on the bank, so I quickly put it back in the water so it could revive a little, contorting as though swimming again. The current carried it a short distance downstream as we looked on in reverence for a moment. That was a truly moving and inspiring moment. Amazingly, both of its eyes were decomposed away leaving just empty sockets. So sad and macabre, but I know he had done what he was put there to do and that's what this is all about. Soon he will nourish other life forms in the cycle of life and death.

On a final, lighter note regarding Aquatic Emergency Technology, Sheila and I are working diligently on a potentially ground-breaking emergency lifesaving technique we call CCPR. It stands for Coho/Chum Pulmonary Resuscitation. Basically, you pinch closed the nostrils on the snout of a dying salmon and spray water into its mouth trying not to get nipped by the huge canine-like teeth. This is still in the preliminary stages of development, but we've found it's easier to do on females than males because of the peculiar curvature of the male's rostrum. There is some question, however, as to the effectiveness of this highly advanced, humane technique as after the salmon recovers, it tends to die anyway. In the future, we will be working on some new ideas that include the Heimlich Sal maneuver for when male salmon choke in the redd and Sea Sections to facilitate egg-laying.

And that's our story--we're sticking to it until another coho shows up and we all go through this again, and again.

Salm On, Chris and Sheila.

Male coho carcass



Volunteer Spotlight - John Rohde

I started volunteering with SFEG in April 2010, after my instructor Earl Steele at Bellingham Technical College suggested I contact them for volunteer opportunities. After getting connected with the group I participated in vegetation monitoring, instream monitoring, potting native plants, spawner surveys, and many other projects. What I like most about volunteering with SFEG is the variety of opportunities but most importantly is the positive professional environment of the group. I am looking forward to more spawner surveys in the future after seeing the volume of coho in Ennis Creek this fall.



Restoration Project Update

By Susan Madsen

Maintenance season is over and fall planting has just wrapped up. We had a great summer, culminating in the placement of 30 new large woody debris (LWD) structures in Finney Creek, the final installment in our ongoing restoration efforts there. We also worked with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Goodyear Nelson Timber Company to remove a damaged culvert from the West Fork of

Colony Creek, restoring fish access to a channel that had been blocked since 2002. Our staff also assisted with a hydraulic and geomorphic analysis of proposed LWD placement in lower Day Creek that is scheduled for next year. Planning and permitting for that project is in full swing, and we are also initiating efforts on a new instream project at Howard Miller Steelhead Park. Stay tuned for more information as the projects develop.

Many thanks to all of the volunteers who attended our instream workshop and helped monitor past restoration sites. We completed instream surveys on 11 streams, and monitored vegetation at 19 planting sites.



**SFEG Restoration Technicians
Kyle Koch and Joe George secure
log jams in Finney Creek**

Become a Member

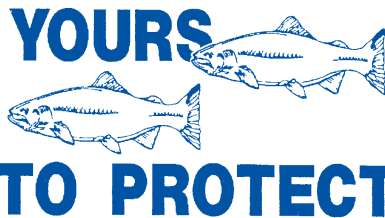
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Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____



MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

- Individual \$20
- Family/Household \$35
- Supporter \$100
- Benefactor \$500
- Other \$ _____

Please make checks payable to S.F.E.G and send to P.O. Box 2497, Mount Vernon, WA 98273
SFEG is a non-profit 501 c(3) organization. All contributions are tax deductible.

* OR give online at www.skagitfisheries.org using a secure server *

Over the last two decades **people like you have played a vital role** in ensuring the future of local salmon resources through volunteering and financial contributions for the projects, programs and infrastructure that make this work possible.

Your membership contribution will ensure that valuable projects and programs continue to exist in our community to keep our watersheds healthy and clean for salmon and people.

Becoming a member of SFEG helps **support unique education programs** such as Junior Stream Stewards as well as **volunteer monitoring efforts** vital to understanding the impact of our restoration efforts. Becoming a member supplies **critical funding to these important efforts** and links you with like-minded individuals working to ensure the future of salmon and the health of our watersheds.

We hope you will consider becoming a member or updating your membership today.



Raise Funds for SFEG with Internet Searches and Online Shopping

Don't forget: you can direct funds to SFEG each time you do an internet search. Goodsearch.com allows you to choose from a list of charities, schools, and nonprofit organizations to receive funds. You can designate a different charity every time you search if you like.

Here's how it works:

- On the GoodSearch homepage, choose from hundreds of thousands of organizations or add your favorite cause to our list.
- Search the Internet just like you normally would — the site is powered by Yahoo!, so you'll get the same high-quality search results you're accustomed to.
- Fifty percent of the revenue generated from advertisers is shared with the charity, school or nonprofit organization of your choosing.

You can also do your shopping at GoodShop.com this holiday season. 1,500 stores, from Amazon to Staples, have teamed up and will donate percentage of virtually every purchase to your cause. These merchants are also now posting thousands of money saving coupons and free as shipping deals on our site!

Save the Date - February 16, 2011 for SFEG's Annual Meeting and Silent Auction!

Mark your calendar for Wednesday, February 16, 2011 for our Annual Meeting and Silent Auction fundraiser. Once again this year we'll provide a tasty grilled salmon buffet dinner, present volunteer and partnership awards, hear informative presentations on local salmon recovery, and offer a wide range of items in our silent auction fundraiser. Look for an invitation in your mail (or email) in early January. We hope to see you there!

Silent Auction Donations

SFEG's Annual Meeting will feature a Silent Auction to help raise funds for our outreach programs. Board members have solicited some wonderful items from local businesses and artists. If you have an item you would like to donate, please contact Lucy DeGrace at 360-336-0172 or ldgrace@skagitfisheries.org. Items need to be received in our office by January 31, 2011 to be included in our Auction Program.



SKAGIT FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUP
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Dedicated to Restoring Wild Salmon for Future Generations

Calendar of Events & Volunteer Opportunities

December 5-Jan 30: Guided Hatchery Tours.

10 am - 3 pm each Saturday and Sunday through the last weekend in January, trained volunteers will offer tours of the Marblemount Fish Hatchery. See the incubation room, learn about hatchery operations, and maybe even see spawning salmon and bald eagles! For more info call the SFEG office at 360-336-0172 and to check on Marblemount road conditions call the hatchery at (360) 873-4241.

January 14-April 8: 2011 Beach Watcher Lecture Series.

These lectures are co-sponsored by WSU Skagit Beach Watchers and Friends of Skagit Beaches. They are held at Anacortes Library, 1220 10th St, are free and open to the public. View full schedule at <http://www.beachwatchers.wsu.edu/skagit/events/index.htm>.

February 16, 2011: SFEG Annual Meeting and Silent Auction.

6 - 9pm at Hillcrest Lodge in Mount Vernon. Join us to celebrate the past year's restoration efforts and give recognition to partners and volunteers who helped make it happen. Enjoy a grilled salmon dinner and bid in our silent auction fundraiser.

March 2011: Spring Planting Parties.

Each Saturday in March, 10am-1pm at various locations throughout the Skagit Watershed. Check your mail or our website in February for details.

April 16: Art Show at the Edison Eye. Save the date for our first fish-themed art show at the Edison Eye Gallery. Check our website for details in March.

**Volunteer today! Call 360-336-0172
or visit www.skagitfisheries.org/opportunities.html**