



THE REDD

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

Volume 17, Issue 1 • Spring 2011

Fish Stories

By Joe George and Kyle Koch

Well, it has been another season of walking creeks and counting fish. Since the abundant pink salmon return only in odd-numbered years there were not as many fish to observe as last year. For those who remember trying drastically to keep track of the deluge of humpies last year, this may have been a relief. Fortunately we had a fun and enthusiastic team of volunteers that diligently surveyed 35 streams.

Numbers for chum, coho and Chinook salmon in the Skagit basin were all down. Some creeks fared better than others. West Fork Trumpeter had live coho for the first time in three years, and Suiattle Slough supported the highest number of spawners since we started surveys in 2005-06. In contrast, Jones and Alder creeks both had declines in coho and chum as compared to previous years.

If you were fortunate enough to have volunteered on creeks in the Samish basin, it was a different story altogether. I had a couple prospective volunteers for next year who live in Bellingham and wanted to see what spawner surveys were about. Ennis Creek is close to Bellingham and I knew there would be fish to see there. I asked John Rohde, the volunteer

are fish everywhere!” Between the months of October and December almost 5,000 coho were counted in Ennis Creek. In all, volunteers documented about 552 live fish per survey, and more coho than we’ve seen in Ennis Creek in the past three seasons put together.

Also in the Samish Watershed: Mud, Finnegan, Barnes and Dittrich Creeks had the second highest counts of kokanee seen since the surveys began in 1999. Parsons creek had Chinook for the second year in a row, as well as over nine times the number of coho observed last year.

New for this season were the Baker River Tributaries. It was a record year for sockeye, and some of our interns had the opportunity to witness droves of these beautiful, bright red fish in action. SFEG hopes to continue work with the Upper Skagit Tribe next year to continue Baker Lake sockeye surveys.

As usual we hosted a potluck dinner to wrap up the season. There was lots of great food along with a slide show and pictures of the fish volunteers saw during their surveys. And yes, there were plenty of fish stories. I would like to thank all who came and made it a very memorable time.

Speaking of records, for those of you that remember the 2009-2010 season, a record number of pink salmon returned to the Skagit that year. Pink salmon have a two year life cycle, so all of those baby pinks are now adult fish and are gearing up to return in 2011, and surveys this fall are bound to be very exciting. If you’ve thought about volunteering for SFEG in the past but have

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Baker Lake Sockeye

walking Ennis Creek this year, to let me know when he saw fish so he could show the new volunteers what spawner surveys are all about. John called me the first three weeks to let me know there were no fish sighted. On John’s fourth walk he called me with great excitement to say he hadn’t even walked a quarter of the survey reach and he had already counted 60 coho; “There



Barnes Creek Steelhead

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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.

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- Ned Currence, President
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- Chris Kowitz, Treasurer
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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
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- John Rohde, Restoration Technician
- Anna Mostovetsky, WA Conservation Corps Restoration Assistant
- Carolyn Feffer, WA Service Corps Outreach Assistant

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From the **PRESIDENT**

I grew up in the rolling hills of the Southern Appalachians where I loved to fly fish for trout. In those parts, native brook trout were the species in trouble. Even in fairly pristine habits of the Great Smokey Mountains their range continued to shrink, where they competed with introduced rainbow and brown trout. These were also fine quarry. My favorite river was the Little Tennessee, also home to a fish called the snail darter. That fish was interfering with TVA’s proposed Tellico Dam, and with the blink of an eye Congress exempted it from the Endangered Species Act (ESA). One of the finest trout rivers was then lost forever.



Ned Currence
President

At this point I have spent half my life in Western Washington. The moment I hooked my first steelhead fly fishing, I knew my resident trout days would be limited. I mostly caught hatchery summer run steelhead, and I wasn’t keenly aware of the paucity of wild summer steelhead. I have terrific memories. But it wasn’t so long until Puget Sound steelhead followed Chinook and bull trout in being listed as ESA threatened species.

Our Puget Sound salmon runs garner far more political interest than the snail darter. That stems from strong cultural, commercial and recreational interest in pursuing these magnificent fish. It has been that way for a very long time. The Skagit wild runs are the strongest in Puget Sound, but they need and deserve our help. As habitat quality declines, fewer salmon are produced from each spawning pair. That diminishes the population productivity.

Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group is trying to help reverse this decline, through education and by improving habitat with willing landowners. Consider joining the cause and helping us out. Wild salmon runs are at the heart of our local quality of life. Let’s work together so future generations can enjoy them, just as we do. They are our heritage to cherish and recover.

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never gotten around to it, 2011 would be the year to join us. Check back with us in September for our spawner survey workshop, scheduled for Saturday, October 1. You (and we) will be happy you did.

Spawner Survey Totals for 2010-2011 (Samish and Skagit basins combined)

| | Live | Carcass | Redds |
|----------------|------|---------|-------|
| Chinook | 90 | 40 | 14 |
| Coho | 7109 | 1209 | 745 |
| Chum | 51 | 20 | 14 |
| Kokanee | 1037 | 48 | 40 |

Acknowledgements: I want to thank everyone involved in making these spawning surveys possible this year. I want to specially thank Lucy DeGrace for recruiting **volunteers:** Kurt Buchanan, Jim Johnson, David Farrow, Christine Kitch, Patrick and Carol O’Hearn, Mike Oster, David Miller, Chris Brown, Sheila Tomas, Danny Rambo, Jack Middleton, John Patton, John Rohde, Maggie Taylor, Marina Schmidt, Pete Haase, Sharon Demuth; **landowner** Ken Goodpastor for looking after our crew and assisting with surveys; **SFEG Americorps interns** Anna Mostovetsky and Carolyn Feffer; **SFEG Spawner Survey Interns** Morgan Whetsell and Wes Lemire; **Upper Skagit Tribe’s** Christine Gourley and Lisa Hainey; **Sauk-Suiattle Tribe’s** Scott Morris, Kevin Lenon, Michael Wolten and Lucas Wilson; and **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife’s** Brett Barkdull and Kurt Perry. We greatly appreciate all the hard work and effort that everyone puts into this very important part of salmon recovery. Thank you, for we could not do all of this hard work without you.

Spring Planting Season- It's a Wrap

By Carolyn Feffer

Muddy boots, familiar faces, hot cocoa, and hard workers: sounds like spring planting season with SFEG. There are many reasons why volunteers, students, and staff come out to planting parties. Many lessons are shared while working as a steward of salmon habitat. We are continually reminded of these lessons at plantings by our middle school students. Lessons include:

1. When people recommend knee boots, use them
2. When you pull at one thing, you find it connected to everything else
3. You must take the plant out of the pot before planting it, or rather, pay attention to demonstrations
4. Cottonwood buds were once commonly used to create waterproof glue
5. It hurts your face when you kiss a shore pine
6. When people work together a lot can get accomplished

To sum it up, I leave it to the 7th grader who said: "I think this is really good for the Earth." Reviewing the numbers of hours worked and plants planted by our hearty volunteers it is clear to me that our volunteers are surely doing something that is "really good for the Earth." At our Earth Day planting alone we had 94 volunteers show up to help restore the banks of Hansen Creek. Students and community members alike have donated over 1,237 hours this spring to help with our streamside restoration planting projects, planting a total of 5,365 native trees and shrubs. Thank you to the volunteers, and also to those who partnered and/or donated to help make this season a success: Mount Vernon Red Apple, Albert's (Concrete) Red Apple, Mount Vernon and Sedro Woolley Food Pavilion, Mount Vernon and Burlington Haggen, Mount Vernon Safeway, Starbucks, and Skagit County Parks and Recreation.

Are you interested in following up on these restoration sites? Check out our Habitat Monitoring workshop on June 4 and volunteer to help us study and track changes in salmon habitat availability over time. At this workshop you will learn how to document bankfull width, spawnable gravel, shade cover, pool formation, and more. This monitoring is crucial to determining the success of SFEG's restoration projects.



Local Cub Scouts planting along Hansen Creek, Earth Day



"kissing a shore pine hurts your face"



Left – Concrete Middle School Junior Stream Stewards.
Above – Sacha Johnson planting at Marblemount Boat Launch.

Celebrating 2010 at the SFEG Annual Meeting

SFEG held its Annual Meeting on February 16, and by all accounts was a success! We reviewed the projects and people of 2010, said goodbye to retiring Board Member Deene Almvig and hello to new Board Member Jim Somers. We celebrated Volunteer of the Year John Rohde, who has since been hired as our newest Restoration Technician. Thank you so much to all the volunteers who helped make this event a success- we'll see you next time!



Guests Nate Fore and Amy Hollingsworth check out the raffle



Volunteers Gordon Stacey and Dan Ballard grilling salmon at the Annual Meeting

Skagit Fisheries Keeps the Salmon in the Classroom Program Running

Perhaps you have a memory of raising salmon eggs in your classroom when you were in elementary school. Or perhaps you can recall the excitement your child shared with you when they returned home from school to tell you their salmon eggs hatched and they named their fish "Finney." The Salmon in the Classroom program has existed in Washington state through funding and coordination from the Washington Department of

Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for the last twenty years. As of this spring the WDFW lost funding to coordinate and run this important program for over 490 schools across the state. Due to grant funding, Skagit Fisheries has been able to provide three fourth grade classes in two elementary schools in Mount Vernon with the chance to raise and release salmon this year and through the next two years. Here is a glimpse of the fun!



Steve Stout leads a tour of Marblemount Hatchery



Releasing coho into Maddox Creek

Friends of Fish Art Show a success!

The town of Edison was the place to be for opening night of the *Friends of Fish* art show at the Edison Eye Gallery on April 16th. Hundreds of community members gathered to meet artists, view (and buy!) fabulous art, visit with old friends, and in general have a wonderful time celebrating the beauty of fish all around us. The evening was made even more wonderful by the sun (yes, I did say the sun) setting over Edison Slough and a full moon rising over the flats. Guests were also treated to an impromptu jam session with flutist Peter Ali and drummer Kevin Paul. It was truly an inspirational event for us, who are usually busy digging in the dirt on Saturdays with volunteers.

Friends of Fish was graciously presented by the Edison Eye through May 1. The art show “explored the beauty of fish in depth” through the submission of over 80 artists in many different media. A portion of all art sales from the show benefits SFEG’s education programs. The event was SFEG’s first attempt at an art show and a smashing success on many levels. The effort was a collaboration with Edison Eye and we are very grateful to gallery owners Dana and Toni Ann Rust for enabling this art show to occur. It was a wonderful opportunity to depict SFEG’s message through a different outlet in our community.

In addition to Dana and Toni Ann Rust, we would also like to thank our sponsors for making this event possible: Puget Sound Energy, Lakeside Industries, Westport Shipyards, Swinomish Fish Company, Breadfarm, and Terra Blanca Vineyards-a certified Salmon Safe winery.



Whales Need Salmon Too!

SFEG’s work to restore salmon populations is not just good for salmon. It’s also good for the 137 other species of fish and wildlife that depend on healthy salmon populations, including Orca whales. Southern Resident killer whales (the Orca whales most frequently seen in the San Juans) are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The National Marine Fisheries Service has recently been exploring the relationship between salmon and Orcas in depth. Preliminary findings indicate that Chinook salmon is by far the whale’s preferred diet choice from May to September, shifting to chum salmon in the fall. While this is not new information that Orcas eat salmon, documenting the importance of salmon in their diets does reaffirm the Orcas’ need for healthy salmon populations. **Island Adventures**, a local whale watching company, has long recognized this interdependence and has been a significant supporter of SFEG’s work for a number of years. The last two years, SFEG has been the recipient of funds raised through Island Adventures “Round Up” program. This passenger-donated fund asks customers to “round up” when paying for trips and merchandise. At the end of the year, Island Adventures matches these passenger-donated funds and donates them to worthy causes such as SFEG. This year Island Adventures donated over \$1500 to SFEG! Thank you very much!

If you are interested in taking a whale watching trip this summer please visit: www.island-adventures.com



Far Left - Drummer Kevin Paul
Near Left - Flutist Peter Ali
Below - visitors to the Friends of Fish Art Show



Keep Our Waters Clean

Did you know that on an average day, it is estimated that **140,000 pounds of toxic chemicals** – including petroleum, copper, lead, zinc, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) – enter Puget Sound?*

The worst part is that it is not from the factories, nor the mills, nor the large businesses; their pollution output is regulated by the government. It's us. 75% of Puget Sound water pollution comes from the yards, roads, roofs, parking lots, and living spaces of all 4.3 million people living in the 12 counties that encompass Puget Sound*. Our storm water runoff has become a toxic soup of oil, grease, metals, soaps, feces and yard chemicals which all inevitably end up in what used to be the pristine waters of Puget Sound.

Throughout Puget Sound, organizations are banding together to raise awareness of the issues so that we can start making the lifestyle changes needed to clean up our water. Seemingly unimportant pollution adds up when it is being contributed simultaneously by millions of people. Some of the things you can do are:

- Pick up your dog's poop.
- Wash your car at a commercial carwash or wash your car on a permeable surface like gravel or grass (allowing the soil to filter some of the toxins)
- Be sparing with (or eliminate) lawn chemicals
- Visit the website www.pugetsoundstartshere.org for lots of information and solutions regarding the various problems that our area is facing.

*Statistics from Puget Sound Starts Here website



Hosting a Carwash Fundraiser? Borrow a free Car Wash Kit and cut down on pollution! Car Wash Kits are available to borrow from the following locations:

- Skagit County Public Works (360) 336-9400
- City of Anacortes (360) 293-1920
- City of Burlington (360) 755-9715
- City of Mt. Vernon (360) 336-6204
- City of Sedro-Woolley (360) 855-0771
- Skagit Conservation District (360) 428-4313

For more information, Please contact Michael See at (360) 336-9400 or Michaels@co.skagit.wa.us or visit the website <http://tinyurl.com/6g4cw4g>



Neighbors Helping Neighbors Stream-side Hedgerow Planting on Joe Leary Slough

by Dorothy Haase

On Sunday, November 14, 2010, 35 volunteer friends and neighbors gathered to plant 135 native trees and shrubs for a small hedgerow on private land along the Joe Leary Slough in Bow. All the work and materials, along with site preparation and technical advice, was donated.

The hedgerow will eventually help protect water quality in a variety of ways: (1) Restricting large animal access; (2) Creating shade which will control invasive reed canary grass; (3) Taking up excess pollutants and nutrients before they can enter the stream. In addition the hedgerow will also provide a habitat for small animals and birds.

The result can be seen along Benson Road, about mid-way between Avon-Allen Road and Allen West Road – a stand of blue protector tubes that will grow into magnificent trees and shrubs during the next few years.

This idea of “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” reminiscent of historical “Barn Raising” events was contributed by Glen “Alex” Alexander from the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. The intent was to provide a low-cost, fun

and appealing approach to getting necessary stream-side water quality protection without government agency involvement or conditions.

Although small, it was a successful model. A fun, food-filled celebration followed the actual planting work.

We hope other landowners along streams and rivers, such as those in the troubled Samish Watershed, will try the same thing. Many of the organizations and participants of this event stand ready to help. Now is the time to begin organizing for the Spring Planting Season.

Contact Peter and Dorothy Haase (360) 707-5877 for more information to get your own project started.

(Donors for this project included: Sakuma Brothers Farms, Taylor Shellfish Farms, Chuckanut Shellfish Farm, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, Salal Native Plant Society, Skagit Land Trust, Skagit Conservation District, Skagit County, and Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.)

Become a Member

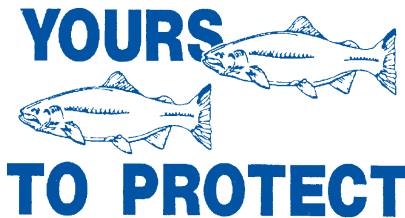
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MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

- 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.

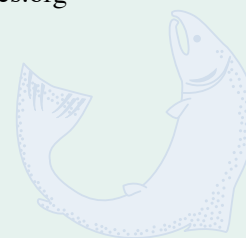
You can also do your shopping at GoodShop.com. 1,500 stores, from Amazon to Staples, have teamed up and will donate percentage of virtually every purchase to your cause.

Scholarship Opportunity for Graduating High School Seniors

The Paul Ancich Memorial Scholarship was established in 2011 by the Washington State Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group Coalition in honor of Paul G. Ancich, a lifelong commercial fisherman and a passionate advocate of the conservation of wild salmon.

Graduating high school seniors accepted to a two or four year college or university and planning to pursue a course of study in the natural sciences are encouraged to apply.

The application deadline is July 31, 2011. Contact SFEG for application requirements at 360-336-0172 or sfeg@skagitfisheries.org





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Dedicated to Restoring Wild Salmon for Future Generations

Calendar of Events & Volunteer Opportunities

June 4: SFEG Stream Monitoring Workshop. 9am-3pm at Cascades Job Corps, Sedro Woolley

June 18: World Oceans Day CamOcean Day Festival. 10am-4pm at Cama Beach State Park, Camano Island

July 9: SFEG Volunteer Appreciation Picnic 11am-2pm on Day Creek; If you're a volunteer, then watch your email or mailbox or your invitation!

July 16: 9th Annual Samish Bay Bivalve Bash and Low Tide Mud Run - 10am-5pm at Taylor Shellfish in Bow. More info at <http://www.bivalvebash.com/>

August 20: Burlington Back to School Fair. 10am-2pm at Maiben Park, Burlington

September 17: Fidalgo Bay Day. Staff the SFEG educational display and coordinate salmon-related kids' activities

September 24: Day Creek Humpy Tour

October 1: SFEG Spawner Survey Workshop

October 8: Samish River Family Fest

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