



**SKAGIT FISHERIES  
ENHANCEMENT GROUP**

***STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2018***

*Adopted 1/27/2015*

**"Healthy Watersheds, Healthy Communities"**

***MISSION***

Educate and engage the community in habitat restoration and watershed stewardship to enhance wild salmonids.

***VISION***

We envision a healthy watershed ecosystem with abundant and self-sustaining wild salmonid populations in our region enjoyed by present and future generations. The community recognizes the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group as a leader and integral partner in local salmon recovery. The community is actively involved in the stewardship and restoration of local watersheds and supports our enhancement and educational programs. The community understands the interdependence of the health and well-being of our human communities with the health and well-being of ocean, estuary and river ecosystems.

***Build Partnerships that Educate and Engage the Community in Watershed Stewardship. . .***

***GOAL 1: OUTREACH PROGRAMS***

***GOAL 2: VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT***

***GOAL 3: YOUTH EDUCATION***

***Restore Habitat to Enhance Wild Salmonid Populations. . .***

***GOAL 4: RESTORATION WORK PLANNING***

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***Fund, Popularize and Improve the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group . . .***

***GOAL 7: FUNDING SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT***

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## ***Build Partnerships that Educate and Engage the Community in Watershed Stewardship. . .***

### ***GOAL 1: OUTREACH PROGRAMS***

Deliver outreach programs and activities in geographically based priority Outreach Areas to build greater public awareness and support for stewardship and restoration work in the greater Skagit watershed to benefit humans, fish and wildlife.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1.1 Develop and implement effective outreach and stewardship programs to educate and engage communities and define the principal results desired for the various engagement activities
- 1.2 Identify and establish a strategic priority list of Outreach Areas where education and stewardship programs would maximize the number of community members, including landowners, that could be engaged in these programs.
- 1.3 Identify and recruit interested and respected community members in these areas to act as liaisons/leaders in each priority outreach area.
- 1.4 Strengthen our bonds with existing stewardship and restoration groups such as local tribes, state and county agencies, land trusts, and other conservation organizations.
- 1.5 Develop new partnerships with organizations and entities working on similar objectives within priority Outreach Areas.
- 1.6 Strengthen and establish more relationships with the agricultural community.

### ***GOAL 2: VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT***

Recruit, motivate, and retain dedicated community volunteers to assist with restoration, monitoring, stewardship, and education projects.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 2.1 Measure and monitor the number of volunteers involved and number of volunteer hours contributed each year in order to demonstrate a positive growth trend in community involvement.
- 2.2 Instruct volunteers with clear and understandable instructions relevant to each task with emphasis on important safety precautions.
- 2.3 Solicit feedback upon the conclusion of volunteer projects to improve satisfaction and help guide the design, organization and logistics of future projects.
- 2.4 Thank volunteers, landowners and participating businesses for their contributions immediately after service and recognize them at least annually. Highlight exceptional contributors in print media.
- 2.5 Encourage volunteers to become members, donors, and/or take on leadership roles with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group.
- 2.6 Ensure volunteer tasks are effective and meet the project objectives and results are shared with restoration community.

### ***GOAL 3: YOUTH EDUCATION***

Engage students in hands-on indoor and outdoor field educational programs, teaching about salmon and habitat needs and promoting watershed stewardship, especially in priority Outreach Areas. Explain the multiple benefits of healthy salmon runs for ecosystems in the entire watershed, estuaries and the open ocean.

OBJECTIVES:

- 3.1 Develop and deliver education programs consistent with school curriculum, such as Junior Stream Stewards to schools, environmental clubs, FFA and other youth organizations.
- 3.2 Create take-home media for each student participating in classroom programs for "trickle up" communication of the experience to other family members. Connect salmon habitat restoration to other watershed health (water quality, whales, birds, economy, etc).
- 3.3 Expand the education programs to include Native American culture and interests, and explain the tribal relationship to our watershed and fishing rights.
- 3.4 Seek additional funding to expand programs to more schools and engage more students in outdoor learning opportunities.

***Restore Habitat to Enhance Wild Salmonid Populations.***

***GOAL 4: RESTORATION WORK PLANNING***

Develop and maintain geographically based Focal Areas to focus restoration work planning, based on established restoration priorities, current scientific information, watershed conditions, and community support and partners.

OBJECTIVES:

- 4.1 Evaluate SFEG's region and create a Focal Area plan identifying at least 4 Focal Areas where project development and restoration efforts can be directed. For each Area identified, SFEG will (a) determine threats and opportunities; (b) identify potential partners and willing landowners; (c) assess community support to develop outreach strategies; and (d) prioritize restoration actions.
- 4.2 Review the Focal Area Plan and update as needed when Strategic Plan is updated to ensure those areas remain aligned with high priorities for restoration.
- 4.3 Conduct an internal assessment and identify specific projects and partnership/grant opportunities that are available in each Focal Area.
- 4.4 Create and maintain an up-to-date Focal Area Assessment document listing landowners/projects for use by the project committee as funding opportunities arise.
- 4.5 Implement a decision matrix that the project committee can use to identify and rank projects with the greatest benefits and least risks to the organization.
- 4.6 Incorporate monitoring results and recent scientific findings to guide the selection and design of future restoration projects.

***GOAL 5: RESTORATION IMPLEMENTATION***

Implement high quality habitat restoration projects consistent with the Focal Area Assessment.

OBJECTIVES:

- 5.1 Meet with existing and potential partners in priority Focal Areas to coordinate project development and implementation.
- 5.2 Participate in habitat restoration planning with Lead Entity partners and, annually, engage in at least two projects funded through the Lead Entity processes. Keep participating landowners informed and apprised of project development.
- 5.3 Work with landowners to correct priority fish passage barriers

- 5.4 Ensure SFEG has the adequate expertise, skills, resources to design, permit, contract and construct high priority salmon recovery projects
- 5.5 Explore opportunities for efficiency by contracting and partnering with other entities (e.g. County, timber companies, etc.) to leverage SFEG's expertise in planning and executing priority, large scale restoration projects.
- 5.6 Solicit feedback from landowners and other partners on completed projects.
- 5.7 Maintain an efficient nursery operation using volunteers to produce high-quality, cost effective native plants for riparian projects.

***GOAL 6: RESTORATION MONITORING***

Improve the effectiveness of our restoration work in local watersheds through science-based monitoring programs that provide valuable feedback.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- 6.1 Implement volunteer-based monitoring programs that provide SFEG the information needed to evaluate project success and to inform future efforts.
- 6.2 Ensure monitoring program remains consistent with Lead Entities and other major salmonid recovery planning entities for our region.
- 6.3 Establish lists of monitoring elements that relate to each project and document the effectiveness in achieving desired goals.
- 6.4 Produce an annual monitoring report for each funded project. Produce a tabular summary of results for projects with no funded monitoring.
- 6.5 Participate and coordinate annual spawner survey monitoring work with Co-Managers (WDFW & tribes).
- 6.6 Monitor ecological benefits of restoration projects by working with partner organizations (such as the Audubon Society or Skagit County Stream Team) to document the effects of riparian restoration.
- 6.7 Work with WDFW and other RFEs to obtain permit to handle ESA listed salmonids for monitoring and assessment purposes.
- 6.8 Identify external funding opportunities to support staff participation in monitoring activities.

***Fund, Popularize and Improve the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group . . .***

***GOAL 7: FUNDING SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT***

Enhance sustainability of financial resources by maintaining existing sources and diversifying sources through development of new revenue streams to fund the current and future needs of the organization.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- 7.1 Develop a greater understanding of the funding landscape and how it may be influenced by the political process to minimize budgetary impacts. Identify actions the organization can take to broaden and improve funding continuity while maintaining an ongoing awareness of the funding landscape.
- 7.2 Build relationships with local, state, and federal government funding agencies, e.g. WDFW, USFWS, NOAA and USFS, as well as state and federal legislators through regular contacts and updates to promote their understanding of SFEG's efficiency and value.
- 7.3 Increase board and staff's fundraising expertise, initially through training and engaging outside professionals, and subsequently through recruiting new staff and board members with that skill.

- 7.4 Create an array of member benefits/incentives to attract new members and convert volunteers to members.
- 7.5 Develop an active grant writing initiative to seek additional funding for education, capacity building, project development, and monitoring programs.
- 7.6 Determine the requirements and begin laying the ground work to establish an endowment fund to support the work of the organization.
- 7.7 Establish an annual fundraising goal and a plan to meet that goal through a diversity of events and programs directed at local sources, and other firms and organizations that have interests within the community (e.g. timber and oil companies).
- 7.8 Work with RFEG Coalition to develop ideas and pursue solutions for long term stable funding sources for the RFEG program.

### ***GOAL 8: MARKETING***

Capture broader community engagement by developing professional marketing and public relations capabilities that deepen awareness of our mission, motivate volunteers, create project opportunities, enhance stewardship, increase membership, and facilitate fundraising.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 8.1 Create a broader SFEG message by using a strategy that includes the many diverse interest groups that benefit from salmon vitality such as birders, fishers, whale watchers, hikers, boaters, tourists and the local business community.
- 8.2 Increase staff/board marketing expertise initially through training and engaging outside professionals, and subsequently through recruiting new staff/board with that talent.
- 8.3 Develop a new set of marketing collateral, e.g. logos, tag lines (e.g. Healthy watersheds, Healthy communities), mementos, and brochures, that effectively communicates the message of the organization. Ensure that every event, activity and program we do provides a "take home" that is part of this marketing collateral, including the Annual Report.
- 8.4 Broaden the target audience for Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (e.g. the business community associations, high school volunteer programs, college internships, tribal members, politicians (federal, state, county, and local), Oak Harbor Naval Station, Whidbey and San Juan Islanders, and diverse interest groups mentioned above in 8.1) through marketing and P/R actions that expand our reach.
- 8.5 Activate a program to expand relationships within the business community, e.g. through board member recruitment, sponsorship opportunities, participation in local chambers and events of local associations (Chambers of Commerce).
- 8.6 Create a calendar of events each year to build awareness of SFEG through participation and coverage by local media.
- 8.7 Ensure all our publications, presentations, and marketing collateral are professional, scientifically relevant, consistent, fresh, aesthetically pleasing, and that there is always an opportunity for individuals to leave with something from SFEG for every event we do.
- 8.8 Expand online presence through an active update and refresh cycle of the web sites, e-newsletters, social media sites, crowd-funding initiatives, YouTube videos and feeds that engage new viewers and elevate search result rates.
- 8.9 Actively court local media representatives from Mt. Vernon, Skagit County, and Greater Seattle (e.g. NBC's Evening Magazine) to increase donor and public awareness.
- 8.10 Develop clear, consistent and compelling talking points / messages that can be

adapted to a diversity of interests and ensure that Board and staff understand and know very well.

- 8.11 Communicate SFEG's important work through local, regional and statewide scientific conferences or workshops.

### ***GOAL 9: ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT***

Maintain a robust, flexible infrastructure that produces the financial and organizational resources needed to deliver the 2015 - 2018 strategic goals.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 9.1 Review the organization chart as it relates to the Strategic Plan and revise it with updated job descriptions, potential promotion layers, and competitive salary tiers to drive strategic skills recruitment and the retention of staff members. Review annually and revise as needed.
- 9.2 Design and implement a management training program, directly related to the job descriptions, that enhances the professional growth of both individuals and the organization.
- 9.3 Ensure that SFEG regularly highlights the organization's gratitude to staff members that have made special efforts and achieved difficult goals.
- 9.4 Review this Strategic Plan annually citing progress made and identifying specific actions targeted at addressing shortfalls to ensure that the Plan remains visionary, achievable, and current.
- 9.5 Develop and publish by November an Annual Operating Plan and supporting Budget that specifies the various actions and resources needed to achieve the objectives planned for the coming year. .
- 9.6 Expand the technology infrastructure required to support this plan including a capable Client Relationship Management (CRM) system to support facile coordination with all constituents.
- 9.7 Expand website functionality to enhance usability, allow for volunteer sign-ups, accept financial contributions, access project site and monitoring information, and procure feedback from key constituencies.
- 9.8 Assess and refine the current Board orientation program and implement a mentorship program for both new members and pending officers to assure a smooth transition into their roles.