

# ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2005 - JUNE 2006

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

**RESTORE**

**EDUCATE**

**MONITOR**

**VOLUNTEER**

**PROTECT**



**SKAGIT FISHERIES  
ENHANCEMENT GROUP**

# SKAGIT FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUP OVERVIEW

## **Mission Statement:**

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.

## **Board of Directors 2006:**

Arn Thoreen, President,  
Retired Commercial Fisher  
Dan Ballard, Vice President,  
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Jim Johnson, Secretary,  
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Bob Carey, The Nature Conservancy  
-Skagit River Program Manager  
Ned Currence,  
Nooksack Tribe - Fisheries Biologist  
Bruce Freet, Environmental Mediator  
Jeanne Glick, Retired Business Owner  
Dick Knight, Retired Engineer  
Ken Urstad, Retired Forester

## **Staff Members:**

Alison Studley, Executive Director  
Lucy Applegate, Outreach Coordinator  
Perry Welch, Project Manager

## **Restoration Technicians:**

Kevik Rensink, Coordinator  
Bob Keller  
Dwayne Massey  
Joel Breems  
Reid Armstrong  
Danny Cain, Washington Conservation Corps  
Liz Leavens, Education Assistant through Washington Service Corps



## **SKAGIT FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUP**

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The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group is dedicated to involving our community in restoring wild salmon populations for future generations. We are a nonprofit organization dependent on memberships, grants and donations to implement community based restoration work for salmon. This past year we engaged hundreds of local community members in habitat restoration and education programs to increase local salmon populations.

Our region is very large including the Skagit and Samish River watersheds as well as the watersheds of the San Juan Islands and Northern Whidbey Island. The Skagit River is the largest river in Puget Sound and has the largest populations of Chinook salmon, pink salmon and bull trout. Our watersheds are relatively un-urbanized for Puget Sound and maintain a rural character. Population growth is one of the largest threats to salmon resources in our watershed, along with how to maintain economically viable farming while balancing our growing human needs with habitat restoration efforts.

Due to the large geographic size and diversity of habitat types in our region, we have identified eight Focal Areas where we feel we can have the greatest benefit to salmon with limited financial resources. The purpose of identifying these Focal Areas is to better integrate our education and restoration programs and make both programs more effective. By developing education programs to engage community members and landowners within these focal areas, we hope to garner greater support for habitat restoration projects and ultimately have an increased impact on the health of salmon populations.

Focal areas in which we concentrated work this year were the Nookachamps, Day Creek and Finney Creek watersheds. In each of these watersheds, a number of restoration actions took place this year. Projects ranged from large scale riparian restoration projects, building fences, installing large woody debris and community planting parties. SFEG has launched outreach and education programs which are targeted to the particular community living in each watershed. By specifically tailoring our education programs to these communities we intend to increase engagement and action with local landowners and volunteers. SFEG also spent particular time investigating additional problems that exist in these watersheds, in order to identify future restoration projects. Assessing habitat above fish passage problems was a priority throughout the Skagit Watershed, not just these three watersheds. In all, 79 miles of habitat were assessed in order to identify and prioritize future restoration actions.

The only way to make certain that future generations will have an opportunity to enjoy wild salmon is to actively work to protect and restore the watershed we call home. Implementing stewardship actions for salmon habitat now, will not only bring larger salmon populations, but also a healthier, cleaner watershed for all of us to live, work and enjoy far into the future.

We hope you enjoy reviewing the accomplishments of the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group for 2005-06. We appreciate all your contributions to assist us with these efforts. Our accomplishments would not be possible without our many volunteers, landowners, project partners, members, and donors. We look forward to another great year of education, restoration and protection in 2006-07.

# RESTORATION AND EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

## **LOWER SKAGIT WATERSHED**

**River Awareness Month:** Funding from the Skagit Community Foundation and USBancorp allowed SFEG to sponsor River Awareness Month at the Children's Museum of Skagit County. Nearly 2,000 children visited the museum during the month of October learning about the Skagit River and its salmon through exhibits and activities.

**Trumpeter Stream Stewards:** Volunteers living in the Trumpeter Creek Watershed in the City of Mount Vernon remained active conducting stewardship projects to ensure that salmon continue to thrive in the urban creeks that flow through their neighborhood.



## **NOOKACHAMPS WATERSHED**

**Riparian Restoration:** Riparian restoration projects were conducted at six sites in the Nookachamps watershed. Projects were primarily funded by a Centennial Clean Fund Grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology. Volunteers, staff and school groups all contributed to revegetation efforts in order to reduce water temperature for salmonids.

**Nookachamps Stream Stewards:** A new Stream Stewards program was launched in 2005 for Nookachamps watershed residents with Centennial Clean Water Funds from the Department of Ecology. Twelve Stream Stewards attended nine workshops and field trips to learn what they can do to be good stewards of the watershed and take actions to help keep their watershed clean and healthy for salmon.

## **DAY CREEK COMMUNITY WATERSHED**

**Anderson Creek Habitat Enhancement:** A partnership with Seattle City Light is restoring 125 acres of land protected around Anderson Creek and Ross Island Slough within the Day Creek Community Watershed. SRFB funds are being used to develop a restoration plan for Anderson Creek in partnership with City Light. In the mean time community volunteers have begun a riparian planting effort along Ross Island Slough.

**Iron Mountain Ranch Habitat Enhancement:** At the far east end of the Day Creek Community Watershed, Seattle City Light has permanently protected 235 acres along 2 miles of the Skagit River. This property is adjacent to prime Chinook spawning habitat and in desperate need of riparian restoration in areas.

The Skagit Land Trust holds the conservation easement for City Light and a local farmer continues to lease land that is currently not being restored. This project is an excellent example of how farming can continue in partnership with restoration efforts. Volunteers and staff restored nearly 2,000 feet of riparian area during this past year and restoration will be continuing for the next several years. Restoration funds are primarily coming from SRFB.



**Morgan Creek:** A grant from the Resource Action Council through the US Forest Service funded an assessment of Morgan Creek to determine restoration options. A restoration plan has been developed to fix a fish passage problem and enhance stream habitat. Grants have been requested to fund this future project.

**Day Creek:** A feasibility study funded by the SRFB in partnership with the US Forest Service and National Park Service was completed. The study identified and prioritized actions within the lower Day Creek watershed that would enhance salmon habitat. The projects include installation of large woody debris, planting riparian areas, correction of fish passage barriers and removal of riprap. Several riparian projects have already been started along Day Creek with local landowners and one fish passage project is funded on Day Creek Slough.

**Outreach and Education:** Funding from the National Fish and Wildlife's Community Salmon Fund has provided an excellent opportunity to engage local landowners in learning more about the creeks in the Day Creek Community Watershed. Workshops and field trips have been held to share information and help the community learn more about the valuable resources within their watershed. The hope is that through this community outreach project, more landowners will become interested in taking actions to protect and enhance the Day Creek watershed.



# RESTORATION AND EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS



## ***FINNEY CREEK WATERSHED***

**Habitat Restoration:** SFEG partnered with the US Forest Service to continue to restore degraded habitat in Finney Creek. A new partnership was formed with Olympic Resource Management, a local timber manager. Funding from SRFB and Department of Ecology's Centennial Clean Water Fund were used to install roughly 250 logs in a one-mile reach of Finney Creek. As of June 2006, our partnerships have restored 4 miles since 1999 for this incredibly valuable lower Skagit tributary. Additional restoration efforts are planned for the summer of 2006 with new timber partners.

**Outreach and Education:** An outreach and education program began in the Finney Creek watershed for the first time utilizing new funding from Department of Ecology. Workshops and field trips are scheduled to occur throughout the summer in order to engage community members in habitat restoration efforts and teach them stewardship actions that will help protect and enhance their watershed for salmon.



## ***MIDDLE SKAGIT WATERSHED***

**Childs Creek Habitat Enhancement:** With funding from The Mountaineers Foundation, the Trout and Salmon Foundation and the FishAmerica Foundation, SFEG completed enhancement work on Childs Creek. Large woody debris was installed through a 600-foot section of creek and volunteers planted the riparian area to improve habitat for coho salmon.

**Red Creek Habitat Enhancement:** SFEG assisted the Upper Skagit Indian Nation to install large woody debris on Red Creek to improve habitat for coho salmon.

**Wiseman Creek Feasibility Study:** SFEG worked with a large group of partners including WDFW, Skagit County, NRCS and the Skagit River System Cooperative to develop restoration alternatives for Wiseman Creek. Six alternatives have been developed and will be taken to the public for input later this summer. Restoration actions are needed to improve habitat for coho and steelhead.

**Brickyard Creek Stream Stewards:** SFEG continued to work with volunteers living in the Brickyard Creek watershed in Sedro Woolley on stewardship and enhancement projects.

## ***SAUK AND SUIATTLE WATERSHEDS***

**Berry Patch Fish Passage Improvement:** The Landowner Incentive Program funded a project to improve fish passage on this Sauk River tributary. A culvert which blocked fish passage was removed and the stream banks replanted by volunteers.

**Suiattle Slough Fish Passage Improvement:** SFEG partnered with the Skagit River System Cooperative, WDFW and the US Forest Service to replace a dysfunctional fishway off the Suiattle River. The fishway was replaced with log weirs opening 3,100 square meters of excellent off channel habitat to salmon.



## ***UPPER SKAGIT WATERSHED***

**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 9,976 carcasses from the Marblemount State Hatchery back to natural streams. Other partners contributing to these nutrient enhancement efforts include: the USFS, Wild Steelhead Coalition, Puget Sound Anglers, and ALEA Volunteer Cooperative Funds.

**Cascade River Tributaries:** SFEG received funding through the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program to work with landowners in the Cascade River Community Park to fix 4 fish passage barriers. During the summer of 2006, SFEG will completely remove two culverts and replace two other culverts in order to provide better fish access to this Cascade River tributary.

# RESTORATION AND EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

**Salmon and Eagle Education:** A new partnership with WDFW, US Forest Service and the Upper Skagit River Eagle Festival resulted in SFEG volunteers giving Hatchery Tours during the peak of eagle viewing season. These tours are meant to give visitors an opportunity to learn about salmon and how healthy salmon populations are vital to Skagit River eagle populations. Over 400 people attended the tours.

## **SAMISH WATERSHED**

**NP Creek Fish Passage Improvement:** A long planned project to correct a fish passage problem and provide better access to 1.5 miles of habitat was finally implemented in 2005. Funding from the SRFB and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation made this project possible, along with a willing property owner. Several thousand coho salmon are expected to utilize this reconnected habitat.

**Ennis Creek Habitat Restoration:** SFEG continued to work with the Whatcom Land Trust to restore the historic path of Ennis Creek through 50 acres of protected wetland in the Upper Samish Watershed. SFEG is working with Whatcom County to implement this project in 2006. Riparian restoration efforts have already begun with staff and volunteers. Funding is provided by SRFB, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Landowner Incentive Program. Thousands of adult coho salmon will benefit from this restoration project.



## **ESTUARY AND NEARSHORE:**

**Thatcher Bay:** Funding was received through the San Juan Salmon Recovery Process to study the restoration potential of Thatcher Bay on Blakely Island. SRFB funds will be used to assess the removal of wood waste deposited by an old saw mill. Removal of the wood waste may make it possible for valuable eelgrass to reestablish itself in the near shore area providing juvenile rearing habitat for salmonids. Pacific Lutheran University and the University of Washington are both major partners on this project.

**Deepwater Slough:** SFEG has partnered with the WDFW and the Skagit River System Cooperative to restore native vegetation to portions of Deepwater Slough where dikes were removed in 2000 reestablishing estuary habitat. While funding for invasive species control and planting from the SRFB expired in 2005, SFEG received a

new grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program to install additional native plants and to continue invasive species control.

**Storm water Education:** SFEG worked with four local Girl Scout troops, two Skagit County youth groups, and one high school class to educate participants about storm water, non-point source pollution, and what individuals can do to reduce pollution to Puget Sound. Between October 2005 and June 2006, 99 students stenciled 144 storm drains in La Conner and Anacortes with the stencil "Dump no Waste- Drains to Bay" in order to raise awareness in these communities and to decrease non-point source pollution. In all, participants contributed 73.5 hours of volunteer service to storm water awareness.



## **Summary of Accomplishments 2005-2006:**

<b>Habitat Enhancement:</b>	Riparian plantings	10,630 feet
	Riparian maintenance	50 acres
	Riparian fencing installed	1,973 feet
	Instream habitat improved	1.5 miles
	Isolated habitat reconnected	2.25 miles
	Habitat assessment above blockages	79 miles
<b>Community Outreach:</b>	Nutrient enhancement	9,976 carcasses
	Community education	1,253 individuals
	Volunteer involvement	9,020 hours

# RESTORATION AND EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS



## **MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT:**

**Habitat Assessment:** Funding from the Pacific Salmon Commission's Southern Endowment Fund was used to assess habitat conditions above man-made fish passage barriers in high priority areas throughout the Skagit Watershed. Over 79 miles of streams were walked by SFEG staff and volunteers to assess habitat conditions above 54 fish passage barriers. Barriers were then prioritized based on the amount and quality of habitat that exists above them. This habitat assessment project fills a major data gap for the Skagit Watershed. With over 900 barriers that have been identified and 150 of these barriers thought to be a high priority, this inventory supplies a priority list of which projects should be the highest priority for salmon.

**Volunteer Monitoring:** Four monitoring workshops were held, and 86 volunteers were trained to assist SFEG staff with spawner surveys, habitat assessment, and biological monitoring. 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 with the Earthwatch Institute to train their volunteers from around the world to assist with collecting data.

**Skagit River Stewards:** During its final year, the Skagit River Stewards program engaged volunteers who contributed 335 hours for training and collecting biological samples at restoration sites. This program has been 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 have primarily collected 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.



## SALMON ENHANCEMENT PARTNERS:

ALEA Volunteer Cooperative Grants	North Cascade Networks	Upper Skagit Indian Tribe
American Rivers	Pacific Salmon Commission	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Children's Museum of Skagit County	Padilla Bay NERR	US Forest Service
Dike District #25	Pioneers for Conservation	University of Washington
Ducks Unlimited	Puget Sound Anglers	Washington Conservation Corps
Earthwatch Institute	Resource Action Committee	Washington Service Corps
Family Forest Fish Passage Program	San Juan County Marine Resources Committee	WA Salmon Recovery Funding Board
FishAmerica Foundation	Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe	WA State Department of Ecology
Landowner Incentive Program	Seattle City Light	WA State Department of Fish & Wildlife
Marblemount Hatchery	Skagit Conservation District	WA State Department of Transportation
Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest	Skagit Conservation Education Alliance	WA State General Administrative Services
Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club	Skagit County	Wetlands Reserve Program
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	Skagit Land Trust	Whatcom County
National Park Service	Skagit Stream Team	Whatcom Land Trust
Natural Resource Conservation Service	Skagit River System Cooperative	Wild Steelhead Coalition
NOAA Restoration Center	Skagit Valley College	Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program
North Cascades Institute	Skagit Watershed Council	
	The Nature Conservancy	

## MAJOR DONORS:

Nancy Applegate	Jeanne Glick	Project AWARE
Dan and Linda Ballard	Oscar Graham and Pat Bunting	Puget Sound Anglers-Fidalgo Chapter
Lance Basset and Shelby Pearson	Greater Everett Community Foundation	Willis C. Royall
Lyn and Jim Bishop	Steve and Gail Hopley	Steve Sahlin
Black Dog Productions	Dr. Brad Smith, Huxley College	Jim Smith
The Burning Foundation	Ryan and Christina Jepperson	Skagit Community Foundation
Barbara Cheney	Jim Johnson	Skagit Valley Food Coop
Concrete Nor'west	Dick Knight	Senator Harriet Spanel
Ned Currence	Mary and David McDonald	Mark and Diane Studley
David Downey	Curt Miller and Shirley Solomon	Paul Tappel
Ken Evans	The Mountaineers Foundation	US Bancorp
Bill and Carol Fairey	Steve and Rebecca Murray	Washington Native Plant Society
The Ferguson Foundation	Northwest Women Fly Fishers	Wildlands, Inc.
Fidalgo Fly Fishers	Don Parry	Dennis and Trudy Wilson
Drew Fleshman and Alison Studley	Dave Pflug	
Brian Gentry, Landed Gentry		

## BUSINESS DONORS:

Thais Armstrong	Lincoln Theatre	Rosabella's
Blau Oyster Company	Lee Mann	Safeway
Christianson Nursery	Lone Tree Point Seafood	SeaBear Smokehouse
Clay Design Studio	Master Marine Services	Seabolt's Smokehouse
G.I. Joe's	Max Dale's Steakhouse	Skagit River Brewing Company
Roxanne Grinstad	Microsoft Corporation	Skagit River Ranch
Eagle Haven Winery	Mount Vernon Red Apple	Stanwood Grill
Fidalgo Bay Roasting Company	National Wildlife Federation	Steel Perceptions
Food Pavillion	Ed Newbold	Taylor Shellfish Farms
Holiday Sports	Oliver-Hammer Clothes Shop	Thompson's Greenhouse
Island Adventures	Outback Steakhouse	Village Pizza
Island Outfitters	Porterhouse Restaurant	Wizards of Ooze
Ivar's Restaurants	Rainy Daze	Work Now Services
Libby Mills	ReSources	Work Outfitters

## LANDOWNERS:

Murray Benjamin	Larry Hower	Sierra Pacific Industries
Tom Berry	Betty and Thayer Hughes	Skagit County
Gabe Carson	Ron Kesselring	Skagit Land Trust
Cascade River Park	Lynn Lennox	Stonebridge Condo Association
DeVries Dairy	Nan and Michael Mahaffey	Fred Tewalt
Peter Edelson	Rebecca Murray	Upper Skagit Indian Tribe
Cynda and Bryan Garver	Burt and Llana Rusnak	WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife
Goodyear Nelson Timber	Seattle City Light	WA Dept of Natural Resources
		Whatcom Land Trust

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2005-2006

	<b>Income</b>		<b>Expenses</b>
Public Funds	\$600,237	Project & Programs	\$647,743
Private Funds	\$78,637	Administration (12.5%)	\$92,943
Total Cash Income	\$678,874	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$740,686</b>
In-Kind Donations	\$208,300		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$887,174</b>		



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INSIDE...

SKAGIT FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUP  
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BEFORE: FISH PASSAGE PROBLEM ON  
SUIATTLE SLOUGH



AFTER: NEW WEIRS PROVIDE IMPROVED  
FISH ACCESS (PHOTO BY MIKE OTIS)

*Help enhance habitat for salmon.*  
RESTORE | ASSIST | MONITOR | EDUCATE | VOLUNTEER

*Dedicated to Restoring Wild Salmon for Future Generations*