



THE REDD

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

Volume 17, Issue 3 • Fall/Winter 2011

The Fall 2011 Planting Season-A Great Success!

By Katie Lutz

Fall 2011 saw SFEG staff and volunteers hard at work on three very successful plantings throughout the Skagit River watershed. Our first planting found us far upriver at the Forest Service-owned Marblemount Boat Launch on what ended up becoming a gorgeous late fall day of crisp weather, blue sky, myriad colors in the surrounding forest, and eagles soaring overhead. It was also a day of remembrance for the late volunteer Pat Hurley. He attended 15 SFEG planting parties in 2.5 years and in that time planted at least 1,000 trees! Volunteers planted a memorial cedar in his honor and kicked off fundraising for the Pat Hurley Memorial Fund (see page 7).

Our second planting found us a little closer to home at Thunder Creek in Alger. The weather was a lot less friendly this time around, but our volunteers were very busy nonetheless! We were excited to have students from our Junior Stream Stewards program get out of the classroom and join us for the day. We were also privileged to have Chris Burkhart, the property owner, join us too!

Our final planting was back upriver at the Forest Service Larsen Memorial in Concrete. After some snow and freezing temperatures Thursday and Friday, we thought "Who would be crazy enough to come out and plant trees?" Well, apparently a lot of people! The weather miraculously became a beautiful, sunny, and not too cold day and a lot of birds, especially eagles, made their presence known while we planted trees. One of the main highlights of the day was having a Junior Stream Stewards student and her family join us, and combined they planted well over 100 trees!

Altogether our fall plantings had a total of 53 volunteers with 159 hours of service and 1,251 trees planted. A big thank you to Burlington Haggen and Mount Vernon Food Pavilion for donating tasty treats for our events. And of course an even bigger thank you to all of the volunteers who took time from their weekends to come out and give us a hand. We hope to see you again in the spring!



Don and Dakota Ross plant trees at the
Larsen Memorial site

Youngest volunteer of the day at
Marblemount Boat Launch



It's written in Concrete...

Check out the new blog <http://writteninconcrete.com/>. In it you'll find frequent musings about everyday life upriver, and it may even make you want to take a road trip!

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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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BOARD MEETINGS

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

Staff:

Alison Studley, Executive Director
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Contact us:

360-336-0172
sfeg@skagitfisheries.org
PO Box 2497
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

From the DIRECTOR

Recently the Skagit Watershed Council asked several of us to talk about "Why we do the conservation work we do" at their annual luncheon. For myself I actually found it an enlightening experience to go back and think about my past, my childhood, my educational path and why I chose (and enjoy) the career path I have chosen with SFEG.

I grew up on a hobby farm in the Skagit Valley. Unlike many Skagitonians, my parents are not from here, which may be why they invested so much of our family's free time exploring this place. When I wasn't stomping around the farm, our family was generally backpacking in the North Cascades. Later, my family was fortunate enough to let river rafting take us to unique places around the world. I discovered that floating a river is an incredible way to become acquainted and fall in love with a place.

I honestly don't think I understood the impact of this early introduction to nature, water, the forest, the mountains or even the mighty Skagit River had on me until many years later. When taking my first Environmental Studies course at UC Santa Barbara I suddenly realized I wanted to pursue a career in conservation. My coursework uncovered for me my deep devotion for the natural world and gave it a purpose. I realized that these places I grew up exploring were actually at risk of being lost. I had taken for granted that these places existed not realizing that it took many people caring for them to ensure their survival. I began to comprehend that the future of everyone and everything on our planet was interconnected and dependent on a healthy functioning environment and I wanted to be a part of ensuring this existed in our future.

I am proud to work for SFEG and be doing something that I believe is good for all living things. I am proud that when my kids are asked what mommy does, their answer is "she saves the fishies!". Sure SFEG uses salmon as a surrogate, however really we are trying to make this a better place for salmon, for forests, for birds, for people, and for future generations.

We at SFEG are trying to leave the Skagit Valley better than we found it. One person, one project, one landowner, one child at a time. We believe change can happen, one action at a time. Assisting, educating, empowering individuals to take one action at a time that ultimately collectively leads to better habitat, cleaner waterways, and healthier ecosystems for all living things now and the future.

Thank you for doing the conservation work you do with SFEG. You (the volunteers, members, and landowners) are the reason I keep doing the conservation work I do. I continue doing this work in hopes that I can help introduce people to the wonders of the Skagit as my parents did. So I can help give people the tools to take actions to preserve the Skagit for future generations, like my own sons, Ervin and Zakary, so they can continue to have meaningful experiences in the natural world here and beyond.

In the words of The Lorax by Dr. Suess (another inspiration for my conservation work) "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. Its not. ... Plant a new truffula tree, treat it with care, give it clean water and feed it clean air. Grow a forest. Protect it from axes that hack and then one day the Lorax and all of his friends (including the salmon) may come back."

To read this speech in its entirety, please visit our website at www.skagitfisheries.org.



Alison Studley
Executive Director

Samish River Family Fest: a Community Celebration

On October 8 SFEG and many program partners converged on Donovan Park in Alger to hold the first-ever Samish River Family Fest. We set out to hold a free, fun event in which the public could view salmon while learning about the habitat and water quality issues of the Samish River.

You may have heard that the Samish harbors excessive amounts of fecal bacteria and other pathogenic bacteria, particularly during high water events. This has led to regular closure of any shellfish harvesting in Samish Bay. Obviously, fecal pollution is bad for people on a number of levels, and we need to clean up our act. To that end, agencies and organizations like SFEG have banded together under the title Clean Samish Initiative to clean up the Samish, and raise awareness among residents and recreationists of the Samish watershed.

For more info on the efforts to clean up the Samish, and how you can help, go to www.skagitcounty.net, and click on the Clean Samish salmon and shellfish icon to the right of your screen.



Sammy Salmon and Wade Besset of the Skagit County Public Health Department

It's a fish-eat-fish world

Photos by Christine Farrow



Educational Passport to the Samish almost complete



Near Right: Visitors of all ages played The Poop Toss Game to learn how to properly dispose of pet waste (don't worry—it's not real!)

Far Right: Skagit County Commissioner Ron Wesen discussing the Clean Samish Initiative



Restoration Project Updates from the Field

By Sue Madsen

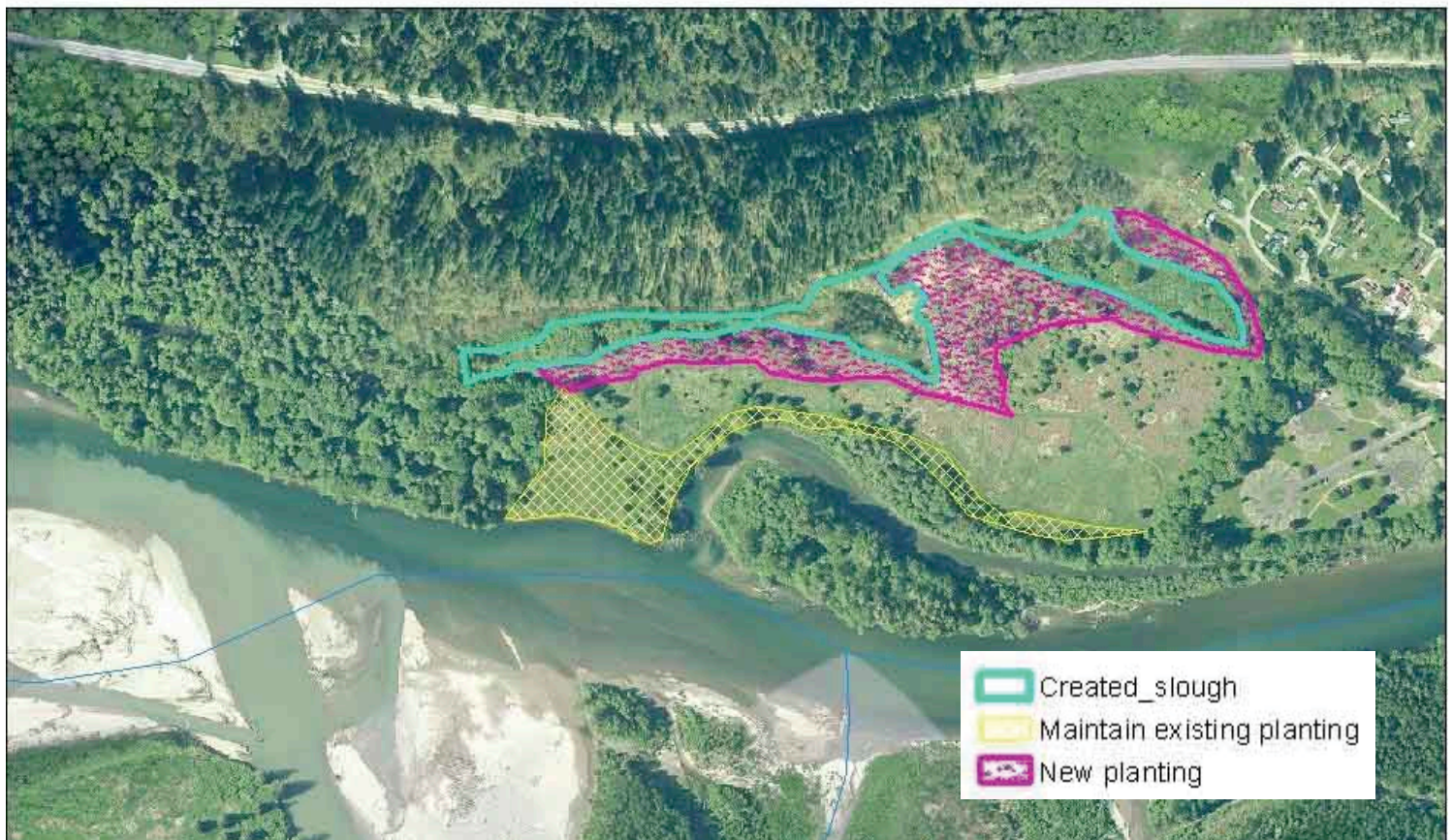
SFEG is excited to embark on three new major projects in 2012. Design work on the Howard Miller Steelhead Park off-channel habitat project (funded by the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board-SRFB-in 2010) is nearing completion. SFEG and Skagit County Parks held a public meeting in Rockport on October 26 to solicit input from community members on boardwalk design and planting plans. We anticipate construction of this project will start in June 2012, and be completed by September 2012. Project elements include the creation of approximately 11.5 acres of new stream and wetland habitat, construction of a boardwalk across the new channel at the western end of the park to maintain loop trail access, and installation of a new park access bridge. We'll be hosting planting parties at the site next fall, and hope to work with local school groups and/or scout troops to develop interpretive signs, construct wood duck boxes and control invasive ivy and other plants in the project area.

Our "Hobbit Corner" floodplain restoration project has been recommended for funding by the SRFB in 2012. This project will involve re-planting 14 acres of floodplain that had been converted to pasture, working with landowner Seattle City Light to remove an old house, outbuildings, fencing and trash, and placing large woody debris structures in a side channel of

the Sauk River. The site is located off of the Concrete-Sauk Valley Road east of Concrete between the US Forest Service Sauk-Schaeffer property that volunteers helped plant last year, and The Nature Conservancy's Smith property, site of an earlier SFEG planting and instream habitat restoration project. Students from the Concrete Middle School will use the site for service learning projects and assist with restoration work.

We are also excited to embark on a new partnership with the Samish Indian Tribe in the Samish basin. The tribe received funding from the EPA in 2010 to control invasive knotweed along the Samish River and tributaries. SFEG worked with the tribe to secure funding from the Washington State Department of Ecology to pay for additional knotweed control, replanting, water quality monitoring and outreach events. Knotweed treatment was initiated this summer, and will continue through at least 2013. Planting projects will begin in the spring of 2012. If you know anyone who owns streamside property in the Samish basin that has knotweed and would like to participate in this project please contact Michelle Murphy at 360-336-0172 extension 305 or (mmurphy@skagitfisheries.org). Stay tuned for future volunteer opportunities associated with this project. We look forward to working with you on these and other projects in 2012.

Howard Miller Steelhead Park off channel enhancement



Welcome New AmeriCorps Interns!



**Katie getting eaten by
FIN the Giant Salmon**

Salutations! My name is Katie Lutz and I am the brand spanking new Washington Service Corps (WSC) Education and Outreach Intern... Well, the somewhat new intern because I have been working with SFEG since September 1st! I was born and raised out on the peninsula in Hoquiam and also spent a significant amount of my growing up phase in Quinault. You will more than likely see me out and about in shorts and sandals because of my developed immunity to rain and to those who are bound to ask, "Yes, I believe the

moss is starting to crack off my shoulders because of how little it rains here!"

I earned a B.A. from Willamette University in Salem, OR in Sociology and Spanish. The summer leading into and after my senior year I had the privilege of working for the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry as a summer science camp counselor. The last year of my life was devoted to my first AmeriCorps term with the AmeriCorps NCCC program. I lived and worked with 10 amazing people from across the country. We did projects as varied as tutoring in high schools in Sacramento to environmental work along I-90 here in WA and on Catalina Island to finishing our year in Anchorage, AK with the Boys & Girls Club. Somehow all of that happened in 10 months!

I have already had a blast working for SFEG and I hope the rest of my term is just as crazy, memorable, and fun! I look forward to meeting you dear reader at some point during my time with SFEG (if I haven't already). Adios for now!

Greetings! My name is Casey Costello and I am the new WCC Restoration Assistant for Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. My year long term with SFEG began on October 3rd. I am originally from Vermont and most recently from California. I came west after finishing high school and attended Western Washington University. After graduating from Huxley in December 2008 with a B.S in environmental science I left for Morocco. There I completed a two year term of service with the Peace Corps as an

environmental educator and community development volunteer. Upon returning from that I interned with the National Park Service in Lassen Volcanic National Park and worked on invasive plant management for their natural resources division.

Community service based projects and the environmental sciences are two things I have always had a vested interest in and this position allows for combining the two. It's great to be back in the Pacific Northwest and after two years of planting trees in the desert and a summer of walking transect lines through the cinder under the piercing central valley sun I am ready for some rain! I look forward to working with SFEG as their values and goals regarding the environment and restoration so closely match my own. The PNW is where I want to be and habitat restoration is what I want to do so here's to you salmon!



**Casey Costello planting
at Marblemount Boat Launch**

SFEG's restoration staff would like to thank Karin Grimlund, Mike Minifie and Molly Alar for their assistance with our monitoring programs this past summer. Karin logged countless hours assisting with vegetation monitoring, as well as helping out with planting projects and our Day Creek LWD cabling. Mike and Molly coordinated instream monitoring volunteers. We would also like to welcome spawner survey interns Andrew Larson and Crystal Bogue. Andrew and Crystal are walking streams from the Samish basin to Marblemount for us weekly to help document salmon use of SFEG projects. SFEG offers unpaid internships quarterly, working with students and recent grads from WWU, Skagit Valley College and Bellingham Technical College. Contact Sue Madsen if you would like information of SFEG internships smadsen@skagitfisheries.org.

Species Profile

As a new feature of the Redd, guest contributor and former SFEG board member David Beatty will provide a profile of a different salmonid species in each newsletter. We begin with the biggest (and some say tastiest) of them all.

Chinook Salmon of the Skagit and Samish Rivers

by David Beatty

Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*; aka king, spring, blackmouth and tyee) have the largest body mass, in excess of 100 pounds (45 kg) in certain populations, of the Pacific salmonids and is the least abundant of the five species of eastern Pacific Ocean salmon.

Chinook salmon exhibit a substantial diversity of life history patterns among its different stocks. Within a river system, the stock of a species represents populations that tend to share the same life history characteristics thereby resulting in reproductive isolation from other stocks of the same species. The timing of the spawning migration into freshwater is the major characteristic in distinguishing Chinook stocks (e.g., Spring, Summer and Fall Chinook stocks). A stock's run timing and time of spawning; the tendency for homing to its natal stream; and where populations of that stock spawn in a particular region of the stream are temporal and spatial reproductive isolating mechanisms to maintain this life history diversity within and between stocks. However, migratory straying occurs and interbreeding between individuals from different populations provides for genetic variation within populations, and straying is necessary for colonizing areas where salmon have been lost. On the other hand, excessive straying can reduce both the diversity between populations and the highly important local adaptations in a population that favor survival during environmental disturbances.

Native (of Skagit River origin) Spring, Summer and Fall Chinook stocks occur in the Skagit River Watershed. The Spring run fish enter the river from April through June and migrate to the upper regions of the Cascade, Sauk and Suiattle Rivers containing large pools where these adults reside prior to spawning a few months later. All Pacific salmon stop feeding upon entering fresh water. Consequently, Spring (early run) Chinook depend for months on their stored energy reserves for completing reproductive maturation and maintaining basic metabolism. Summer run fish enter the river in June through July and spawn in August and early September in the upper mainstem and lower Sauk. Fall (late run) Chinook enter the river in late August through September and spawn in the major tributaries (e.g. Hansen, Jones, Finney) of the lower Skagit. These three Chinook stocks are managed for natural production. However, there has been some supplementation over the years from the Marblemount Hatchery. Historically, the Skagit River watershed has produced over 50% of the Puget Sound Chinook



Samish River Chinook by Drew Flesham

The Samish River has only a fall stock (non-native) whose origin is from the Green River stock transplanted in the late 1930s. The Samish River stock is primarily a cultured stock produced at the Samish Hatchery on Friday Creek. Excess fish are passed through the hatchery trap for natural spawning in the river and major tributaries (e.g., Friday Creek). Samish River Chinook are managed for harvest.

Among Chinook stocks, there is a tendency for juveniles of Spring Chinook (often referred to as stream-type) to remain at least a year in fresh water before migrating to the ocean. Juveniles of Summer and Fall Chinook (often referred to as ocean-type) tend to out migrate for rearing in the river's estuary within a few months after emerging from the spawning gravel. However, there are exceptions to these generalizations on juvenile out migration behavior. Spring Chinook juveniles are known to out migrate at the fingerling stage, a few months after emergence. An anadromous juvenile salmonid must undergo physiological, morphological, behavioral and ecological changes as it transforms into a seawater tolerant smolt. The process is smoltification. For all anadromous salmonids, the most visible changes are an increased silvering of body scales, especially ventrally, and, except for juvenile pink salmon which lack parr marks, the loss of parr marks (dark vertical bands). Adult Chinook entering freshwater in the spring to early summer (Spring stock) and spawning in mid- to late summer and whose juveniles remain in freshwater for a year or more (stream type) are likely to be more adversely affected by impaired freshwater habitats than those stocks which spawn

soon after reaching the spawning grounds (Summer and Fall stocks) and whose juveniles out migrate to estuaries within a few months of emergence (spring to early summer, ocean-type). However, ocean type juveniles are highly dependent on fully functioning estuaries and tidal backwaters for rearing prior to movement into the ocean. Since the early 1900s, about 70% of the Skagit River Delta has been diminished. Consequently, salmon recovery depends not only on the restoration and protection of freshwater habitat but also on the restoration and

protection of estuaries and near shore habitat.

In 1999, Puget Sound Chinook were identified as an Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) and were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Recovery of Skagit River Chinook populations to what the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration determines is a Viable Salmonid Population will be necessary if the entire Puget Sound Chinook ESU is to be delisted under the ESA.

Pat Hurley Memorial Fund

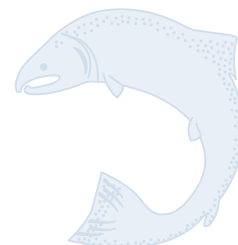
There are individuals that make outstanding contributions to our community and are deserving of special recognition. SFEG has been fortunate to have many of these individuals volunteer and touch our lives over the years. On November 5th the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group planted a special tree at the Marblemount Boat Launch in memory of Pat Hurley, a recently passed volunteer who was very active in planting parties during his brief time with SFEG. The boat launch was a site at which Pat planted several times, and SFEG took some time to honor his dedication to salmon habitat restoration at this recent volunteer planting event.

Friends of the late Pat Hurley have established a memorial fund to honor Pat for the thousands of trees he planted to improve salmon habitat during his brief stay in Skagit County. Memorial funds will be used to purchase a commemorative bench accompanied by a bronze plaque. The bench will be

installed by Skagit County Parks on a walking path which runs from Fruitdale Road in Sedro Woolley to the Northern State Recreation Area. The location seems fitting because Sedro Woolley became Pat's home late in life and Pat, an inveterate walker, often walked this way on the current "rough" path. Pat's friend, Stephen Farmer, tells of Pat troubling to make his own improvements to this path as he walked along. This rough path is to be formalized and improved by Skagit County Parks in 2012 at which time the memorial bench and plaque will be installed.

Your donation to this effort can be made at any Skagit State Bank branch to the "Pat Hurley Memorial Fund" or a check may be sent directly to:

"Pat Hurley Memorial Fund"
c/o Skagit State Bank
PO Box 432
Sedro Woolley, WA 98284



Volunteers plant a cedar in memory of Pat Hurley at Marblemount Boat Launch



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If your address label has a **red** mark, it means your membership for 2012 is due. Please use the enclosed envelope to join or renew today.

Dedicated to Restoring Wild Salmon for Future Generations

Calendar of Events & Volunteer Opportunities

December 4-Jan 29 Guided Hatchery Tours; 10am-3pm 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 and hatching salmon and feasting bald eagles! For more info call the SFEG office at 360-336-0172. To check on Marblemount road conditions call the hatchery at (360) 873-4241.

Volunteer today! Call 360-336-0172 or visit www.skagitfisheries.org

February 9, 2012: SFEG Annual Meeting; 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 buy raffle tickets for fabulous raffle prizes in our fundraiser.

March and April 2012: Spring Planting Parties; Each Saturday in March and into April, 10am-1pm at various locations throughout the Skagit Watershed. Check your mail or our website in February for details.



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.