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





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



Tax ID# 94-3165939



Every day, the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group works hard with our community to improve habitat in our local watersheds for salmon. Most of our \$1 million budget pays for on-the-ground habitat restoration, and in 2012 we had another great year creating new partnerships, working with old friends, and restoring over 50 acres of riparian and aquatic habitat. We are very excited about the new partnerships we established this past year, especially on Whidbey Island with the Northwest Straits Foundation, the Whidbey-Camano Land Trust, and the Island County Marine Resources Committee. We are enthused about the new possibilities these partnerships will help us realize in the island communities.

In addition to on-the-ground habitat restoration projects, we continue to provide community outreach and youth education programs year 'round throughout our local watersheds. Our staff and volunteers partner with an amazing group of educators, organizations and enthusiastic individuals to reach more members of our community every year. This year, we played a key role with other sponsors, partners and funders to put on the first-ever Skagit River Salmon Festival at Edgewater Park in Mount Vernon. This event exceeded expectations when over 3,000 people attended to celebrate and learn about the natural and cultural resources of the Skagit watershed. We were thrilled to be a part of this Festival's inaugural success and are greatly looking forward to 2013's Festival!

We have been in our new home for over a year and are very pleased with our new surroundings. In 2012, keeping with our relocation theme, we also decided to end our 14 years of raising native plants at the Cascade Job Corps in Sedro Woolley. With the help of our tremendous board, we relocated our nursery to its new home on Samish Tribal property along Thomas Creek. We look forward to this new partnership with the Tribe and to be raising native plants on the same property where Samish watershed restoration is being done. And we are excited to be working with volunteers to develop our new nursery to have a more modern, water-efficient operation in 2013 and beyond.

Thank you for doing the conservation work you do. You are the reason our restoration and education accomplishments continue to grow each year. We thank you for sharing this devotion to our natural resources and look forward to your ongoing support.



Alison Studley Executive Director

HABITAT RESTORATION

SFEG works with landowners to enhance salmon populations by restoring aquatic, nearshore and riparian habitat. Restoration work is funded by grants and carried out by our skilled Restoration Technicians led by Restoration Ecologist Susan Madsen and supported by a partnership with the Washington Conservation Corps.







HOWARD MILLER STEELHEAD PARK RESTORATION

Howard Miller Steelhead Park is located in Rockport at the confluence of the Sauk and Skagit rivers. The confluence area contains the highest density of Chinook spawning areas in the entire Skagit watershed. In 2012, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board funded a project to re-route a channelized stream and create approximately 11.7 acres of additional backwater habitat. A boardwalk was constructed to maintain the parks loop trail, and a new equipment access/pedestrian bridge was installed across the former stream channel. Seven acres of floodplain plantings were installed and existing plantings throughout the park were maintained.

NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

SFEG and Skagit County are working with private landowners in the Samish and Skagit River watersheds to improve riparian areas and water quality. The projects involve constructing fences to exclude livestock from streams, installing log jams, removing and controlling invasive weeds, and planting native riparian trees and shrubs. In 2012 we completed projects on nine new properties by planting 7,451 plants on 11.9 acres along 1700 feet of stream bank. We also continued invasive weed control and maintenance at seven previously planted sites. Four new properties are ready for work in 2013.

SAMISH WATERSHED RIPARIAN RESTORATION

With funding from the Department of Ecology, SFEG is partnering with the Samish Indian Nation to battle extensive and devastating knotweed infestations along the Samish River. The Tribe is surveying and treating the knotweed with herbicide and conducting water quality monitoring, and SFEG is working with landowners to revegetate riparian areas once the invasive knotweed has been treated. SFEG is working with nine landowners to replant over 22 acres and restore healthy habitat for salmon and improve water quality for the Samish watershed.

- 1. WCC crew cables logs for the re-routed stream channel at Howard Miller Steelhead Park.
- 2. Excavating new backwater habitat for salmon at Howard Miller Steelhead Park.
- 3. WCC crew members and SFEG Techs install a fence to exclude livestock from the Samish River through NRSP.
- Michelle Murphy, Stewardship Manager, helps landowners and volunteers plant native trees along the Samish River
 where invasive knotweed has been treated and the riparian area is being restored to improve habitat and water quality.







Dugualla Heights Lagoon is important to early rearing of wild fry migrant Chinook salmon originating from the Skagit River. SFEG worked with the Whidbey-Camano Land Trust to plant the property with over 1,600 native plants.

Swan Lake currently is a coastal marsh near Oak Harbor with limited tidal connection and is not accessible to salmon. SFEG, the Swan Lake Watershed Preservation Group and Island County are assessing the best approaches for improving the lake's habitat quality and ecological function.

At Coronet Bay near Deception Pass, SFEG partnered with the Northwest Straits Foundation, Washington State Parks, volunteers from Island and Skagit County Beachwatchers and the Park Foundation to install over 1500 native trees and shrubs above the high tide line.

WHIDBEY ISLAND PARTNERSHIPS

In 2012, SFEG formed new partnerships on Whidbey Island which enabled us to work at Dugualla Heights Lagoon, Swan Lake and Coronet Bay (above).

UPPER SKAGIT KNOTWEED CONTROL PROJECT

Since 2001, this project has identified 2,107 patches of knotweed and achieved over 60% control in the Upper Skagit watershed. In 2012, SFEG staff and a WCC crew thoroughly surveyed 68.5 miles along the Upper Skagit, Sauk, Suiattle and Cascade rivers and their tributaries. Of the knotweed patches identified by SFEG in 2012, 78 percent were eliminated. SFEG and WCC received on-the-ground assistance from the U.S. Forest Service, Seattle City Light, North Cascades National Park, and the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe.

SEATTLE CITY LIGHT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

SFEG visits 18 properties purchased through City Light's ESA and Wildlife Land funds and conducts stewardship assessments every quarter. In 2012 stewardship actions included planting at two properties, site maintenance and invasive control at eight properties and the placement of rock barricades for site protection at three properties.

NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

SFEG moved its native plant nursery from the beautiful Job Corps facility in Sedro Woolley to a new location on Samish Indian Nation property near Thomas Creek. Thanks to our new landlords and the wonderful group of volunteers, board members, staff, and WCC, the move is a success. The nursery houses over 5,000 plants, with room for 10,000.

DAY CREEK WATERSHED

At Day Creek, SFEG staff and board members assisted a landowner to replace an undersized culvert on an unnamed tributary. About half a mile of habitat was opened as a result of this nearly all-volunteer effort.

- 1. Documenting a patch of invasive knotweed in the Upper Skagit watershed.
- 2. Volunteers Jan and Kurt Buchanan planting native trees at a Seattle City Light Stewardship property.
- 3. Staff, Board and Volunteers move 5,000 plants to our new nursery location.
- 4. Volunteers assist with the replacement of an undersized culvert in the Day Creek watershed.









EDUCATION

Educating our youth ensures stewardship of our salmon and watershed resources for future generations. SFEG's education programs engage students in the wonders of the watershed in which we live, the salmon that depend on these watersheds and the understanding that healthy watersheds are good for all living things.



JUNIOR STREAM STEWARDS

Thanks to funding from Skagit County, a WDFW ALEA grant and private donations, Junior Stream Stewards takes middle school students out of the classroom and into the field to learn about watersheds and salmon. During this year-long program, SFEG staff and volunteers visit classrooms each month to lead activities and service projects. Last school year we engaged 560 students at five Skagit County schools.



Salmon in the Classroom teaches students about the amazing journey of salmon by raising salmon eggs from the Marblemount Hatchery and releasing them into neighborhood streams. During the school year, 50 fourth graders learned the salmon life cycle and habitat needs by raising coho salmon eggs to fry stage as part of the program.



KIDS IN CREEKS

Kids in Creeks engages students in K-12 with a tailor-made classroom presentation and a service project at one of many restoration sites in Skagit County. In 2012 we taught 193 students from Emerson Alternative High School, Immaculate Conception Regional School, Anacortes High School, and Mount Vernon High School about stream ecology, how to plant native riparian plants and how to improve habitat for salmon and other animals.

In 2012 over 1,755 students participated in SFEG's hands-on education programs.



- Cascade Middle School Junior Stream Stewards brave the cold to plant trees at Hansen Creek for their service learning project with partner Michael Brondi of the National Park Service.
- 2. Students from Lincoln and Madison schools release coho salmon into local creeks after raising them from eggs in their classroom.
- 3. Mount Vernon High School student plants a tree as part of Kids in Creeks at Nookachamps Creek.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Engaging our community in habitat restoration and watershed stewardship activities is a primary aspect of our mission. Our volunteers are the backbone of our success. We could not accomplish the work we do without the amazing and enthusiastic community members who assist us year in and year out, rain or shine.

CLEAN SAMISH INITIATIVE

SFEG is one of many partners participating in Skagit County's Clean Samish Initiative, an effort to raise awareness of water quality issues in the Samish Watershed and offer assistance to landowners seeking to carry out corrective measures on their property.

SKAGIT RIVER SALMON FESTIVAL

SFEG was a key partner sponsoring the first Skagit River Salmon Festival attended by nearly 3,000 people. Thanks to generous sponsors and planners, the event featured conservation organizations, musical entertainers, and commercial vendors who provided an educational and festive environment that celebrated the rich, natural and cultural resources we enjoy in the Skagit watershed. Join us on September 7, 2013 for the next Festival!

MARBLEMOUNT HATCHERY TOURS

During the winter bald eagle season, SFEG trains volunteers to lead tours of the Marblemount Hatchery. In 2012, 23 volunteers were trained to teach 1,115 visitors about the hatchery, native salmon habitat and eagles.

EARTH DAY IVY PULL

High school students were among 53 Earth Day volunteers at Howard Miller Steelhead Park in Rockport who removed over a ton of invasive English Ivy and planted native plants and shrubs. The project was organized by SFEG's WCC intern Casey Costello, and made possible by our project partners Skagit County Parks and Recreation, local private landowners, the National Park Service, Washington State Parks, Starbucks and Puget Sound Energy.

COMMUNITY PLANTING PARTIES

SFEG hosts spring and fall planting parties to install native plants at restoration sites throughout our watersheds. In 2012 over 250 people attended these events and planted nearly 10,000 native trees and shrubs at sites from Whidbey Island to the Sauk River. Enthusiastic volunteers also installed plant protectors, removed invasive plants and mulched new plants as needed.

- 1. Promoting watershed stewardship and clean water in the Samish Basin at the Burlington Back to School Fair.
- 2. Skagit River Salmon Festival celebrated the natural, cultural and artistic values of the Skagit watershed to promote its protection.
- 3. Anacortes High School students help Earth Day volunteers in Rockport remove over a ton of invasive ivy.
- 4. WCC member Kristin Rine, shows volunteers at a planting party the best way to plant new trees to ensure survival.









MONITORING

We train and deploy student interns and citizen volunteers to document habitat conditions and fish use for 10 years after habitat is restored. In 2012 we trained over 50 individuals to map instream habitat, assess plant growth, evaluate large woody debris structure conditions, and to identify and count adult salmon and redds.



VEGETATION MONITORING

SFEG staff and volunteers in 2012 monitored vegetation at 32 planting sites and surveyed 231 plots to assess plant survival, growth rates, and invasive species. A large part of this effort was funded by The Mountaineers Foundation.



SFEG has trained volunteers to count returning adult salmon at our restoration project sites since 1998. Data are provided to state fisheries co-managers and combined with data from the rest of the state to determine an escapement count for Tribes, commercial fishermen and sports fishermen.



FINNEY CREEK EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING

Cross sections of Finney Creek were surveyed to document channel changes from the installation of 190 logjams throughout 7.6 miles of creek over the last decade. Data is being compared to previous years in order to evaluate effectiveness of this important salmon recovery project.



EDGEWATER SLOUGH MONITORING

Volunteers assisted staff to conduct monitoring of a new side channel re-created at Edgewater Park by the City of Mt Vernon in 2005. Monitoring is needed to document fish use and evaluate effectiveness of the restored, off-channel fish habitat. Skagit Watershed Council contracted SFEG to do the monitoring, which was done in partnership with Skagit River System Cooperative fish biologists. Fish species documented include juvenile Chinook, coho, rainbow and cutthroat trout, whitefish, sticklebacks, sculpin, lamprey, peamouth, largescale suckers, sunfish, bullhead catfish and bass.



- 1. Intern Judith DeBay measures growth of plants as part of SFEG's vegetation monitoring program.
- 2. Volunteers stop to pose for a picture while out collecting instream habitat data for Ennis Creek.
- 3. Bengt Miller, Restoration Technician, surveys cross sections on Finney Creek with staff and interns.
- 4. Kristin Rine, WCC member, measures flow in Edgewater Slough to collect data related to the effectiveness of the re-created Skagit River side channel.

SUMMARY OF ACOMPLISHMENTS

Riparian plantings

Riparian maintenance

Habitat improved

Protection for

31,185 NATIVE PLANTS

covering 43 acres along 2 miles of waterways 350 ACRES

of native plant care and invasive plant removal 11.7 **ACRES**

of instream backwater habitat

68.5 **MILES**

of riverine habitat surveyed for knotweed infestation

Community education

Volunteer involvement

Kids educated

5,710 INDIVIDUALS

10,369 HOURS 1,755 STUDENTS

2012 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

\$ Income

Public funds: \$1,113,503
Private funds: \$68,185
In-kind donations: \$348,093

\$1,529,781

{\$} Expenses

Projects and Programs: \$989,981 Administration (11%): \$121,653

{\$1,111,634}

OUR SUPPORTERS

We couldn't do this work without the tremendous support from our community. Our many thanks to all the donors, partners, landowners, grantors, local businesses, teachers and members who make the stewardship of our watersheds possible.

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High School Mount Vernon High School

National Fish & Wildlife

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National Park Service
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NOAA Restoration Center
North Cascades Institute

Northwest Straits Foundation

Padilla Bay Foundation

Puget Sound Anglers
Puget Sound Energy

Puget Sound Partnership

Samish Indian Nation
Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe

Seattle City Light

Skagit Conservation District

Skagit Conservation Education Alliance

Skagit Coop Weed Management Area

Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Skagit County Parks &

Recreation
Skagit County Public Works

Skagit Land Trust

Skagit Stream Team

Skagit Bald Eagle Awareness Team

Skagit River System Cooperative

Skagit Valley College Skagit Watershed Council

Swan Lake Watershed Preservation Group

Swinomish Indian Tribe

The Nature Conservancy
Town of Concrete

Upper Skagit Indian Tribe US Fish & Wildlife Service

US Forest Service

Washington Conservation Corps Washington Service Corps

WA Salmon Recovery Funding Board

WA State Department of Agriculture

WA State Department of Ecology

WA State Department of Fish & Wildlife

WA State Department of Natural Resources

WA State Department of Transportation

WA State Parks Department

Western Washington Agricultural Association

Wetlands Reserve Program

Whatcom Land Trust
Whatcom County

Whidbey Camano Land Trust

INTERNS

Derek Vilar, WWU fish sampling & restoration project assistance

Judith Debay, WWU vegetation monitoring

Thomas Peal, WWU vegetation monitoring

Grant Becker, SVC restoration project implementation

Brett Burns, SVC restoration project implementation

Anna Petire Spawner surveys

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