

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

PHOTO: © JESSICA NEWLEY

SKAGIT FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUP

2013 ANNUAL REPORT



SKAGIT FISHERIES
ENHANCEMENT GROUP



TO OUR FRIENDS



Each and every year I am thoroughly impressed with the body of work that a small group of dedicated staff and volunteers can accomplish. This year was no different. We found ourselves incredibly busy working with local landowners to improve fish passage at four sites during the summer months. These projects were all funded by the Family Forest Fish Passage Program, and collectively brought over \$550,000 to our local economy that we used to purchase goods and services from local stores and contractors. Access to over 5.5 miles of habitat was immediately opened for salmon and trout to utilize at the completion of these projects. As we look ahead to this year, we are excited to be working on several more fish passage projects with new landowners through the same grant program. We look forward to sharing more success stories as we document salmon returning to these streams after removal of impassable culverts.

As the new year begins I find myself with the very rewarding task of writing all of you, our supporters, notes of thanks for your recent donations. It is such a pleasure to see the names of so many volunteers, landowners and donors cross my desk, reaffirming your trust in us to help leave our corner of the world a little better for future generations. We are so privileged to count all of you as our supporters and the reasons why we are able to continue to do the work we do to restore healthy watersheds for salmon and our communities. I look forward to seeing all the faces that go with all these names over the coming year at planting parties, educational workshops, and community events. Thank you for being wonderful stewards of our watersheds.

Alison Studley

Alison Studley
Executive Director



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ENHANCEMENT GROUP**

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2013 SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Riparian plantings

35,646 NATIVE PLANTS

covering 148 acres
along 2.5 miles
of waterways

Riparian maintenance

210 ACRES

of native plant care
and invasive plant
removal

Habitat opened

5.5 MILES

stream miles opened
by removal of fish
passage barriers

Protection for

76 MILES

of riverine habitat
surveyed for
knotweed infestation

Community education

8,700 INDIVIDUALS

Volunteer involvement

8,281 HOURS

Kids educated

1,801 STUDENTS

2013 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

\$ Income

Public funds: \$1,450,726
Private funds: \$140,335
In-kind donations: \$294,247

\$1,885,327

{ \$ } Expenses

Projects and Programs: \$1,473,654
Administration (9%): \$140,256

{ \$1,613,910 }

FISH PASSAGE IMPROVEMENT

Four fish passage improvement projects were completed and opened over 5.5 miles of habitat to salmon and steelhead. These projects were funded by grants from the Family Forest Fish Passage Program and brought over \$550,000 to the local economy to employ local people, purchase products from local vendors and contract with heavy equipment operators. These projects were located at Silver Creek, East Fork Silver Creek, Bridle Creek, and Summer Creek.

“I love my new bridge! Being able to see the new channel really makes one more aware of both the stream and fish. And I can tell you that the neighbors have all been stopping by to watch spawning salmon.”

Nancy Quivey, landowner



SILVER CREEK FISH PASSAGE

SFEG worked with Chinook Engineering, Harkness Contracting and landowners Jeff and Nancy Quivey to replace two driveway crossings that had impeded fish access on Silver Creek in the Samish Watershed. Removal of two small 8-inch culverts that were completely blocked restored access to a large side channel and a 50-foot bridge was installed across the main stream channel. Chinook and coho salmon were immediately observed using the newly accessible habitat.



EAST FORK SILVER CREEK FISH PASSAGE

SFEG worked with Chinook Engineering, DG Buchanan Construction Inc., and landowners Fred Binschus and John and Vicky May to replace a driveway crossing that had impeded fish access in East Fork Silver Creek. The new 40-foot bridge provides access to 1.42 miles of stream and several large pond complexes for coho salmon, steelhead and sea-run cutthroat trout to utilize.



BEFORE



BRIDLE CREEK

SFEG worked with Chinook Engineering, Dirtworks Bellingham Inc. and the Silver Creek Road Maintenance Association to replace an undersized culvert that had impeded salmon and trout access in Bridle Creek. The new 12.5-foot arch culvert restores access to 1.23 miles of habitat that includes a large beaver pond complex for coho salmon, steelhead and sea-run cutthroat trout to utilize.



BEFORE

RIPARIAN RESTORATION

Volunteers and staff worked with many partners to restore over 55 sites and assisted 44 landowners by removing non-native invasive plants and by planting over 35,636 native trees and shrubs along streams, rivers and shorelines. These projects improve water quality in our watersheds, as well as help salmon and over 130 other species of wildlife that depend on healthy riparian areas for survival.

CORONET BAY

Volunteers, staff and WCC installed over 4,500 plants in partnership with Deception Pass State Park to establish nearshore vegetation at Coronet Bay. This project, funded by the Northwest Straits Foundation, is restoring shoreline habitat following removal of a bulkhead in 2012.

NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

This program represents an ongoing partnership between Skagit County Public Works and SFEG. Since funding began in 2009, 30 landowners have been assisted to protect and restore riparian areas, improving water quality and fish habitat.

KNOTWEED CONTROL

The Upper Skagit Knotweed Program has been working since 2001 to control knotweed in the upper Skagit watershed. In 2013, SFEG staff and WCC crew completed knotweed surveys along 75.8 miles of rivers and tributaries. The program has eliminated 70% of the 2,273 knotweed patches in the project area since 2001.

NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

Our native plant nursery grows high quality, large-sized plants for SFEG's restoration projects. Volunteers keep the 7,000 plants at the nursery healthy and in 2013 contributed more than 1,200 hours establishing the nursery at its new location on Samish Tribal property.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Encouraging community involvement is a major priority for the on-going stewardship of our watersheds. Providing diverse and fun ways to involve volunteers in learning and participating in habitat restoration activities is one way we hope to ensure healthy watersheds for future generations.



Photo by C. Farrow

EARTH DAY

On Earth Day at Edgewater Park along the Skagit River in Mount Vernon, 57 volunteers planted 1,200 trees, removed invasive ivy, and picked up trash to clean up this tremendous community park.

HATCHERY TOURS

Trained volunteers lead tours for the general public at the Marblemount Hatchery during eagle season. Many thanks to the 20 volunteers who provided tours for 1,100 members of the public during this two-month season.

SKAGIT RIVER SALMON FESTIVAL

SFEG was a major sponsor for the second annual Skagit River Salmon Festival which drew nearly 5,000 people to learn, engage and celebrate the amazing Skagit River and its resources.

CLEAN SAMISH INITIATIVE

SFEG continues to take an active role in helping to educate Samish community members via outreach events, as well as provide funding and assistance to implement restoration efforts that restore riparian areas and help improve water quality in partnership with Skagit County, the Samish Indian Nation and the Department of Ecology.



EDUCATION

Education is the key to ensuring that our next generation of leaders is enthusiastic and passionate about protecting and conserving our watersheds. Our education programs engaged over 1,800 youths in hands-on learning experiences in order to inspire the future stewardship of salmon resources. Our three main student education programs are described below.

JUNIOR STREAM STEWARDS

Unique year-long learning opportunity for middle school students provide in-depth, hands-on experiential learning about watersheds and salmon habitat restoration.

SALMON IN THE CLASSROOM

Students from local elementary schools learn about the amazing journey of salmon by raising salmon eggs from a local hatchery and releasing them into the school's neighborhood stream.

KIDS IN CREEKS

Kids in Creeks provides teachers a custom-designed program that gets students outside to make a difference in their communities by completing a service-learning project.



“I can’t believe this is school! That went by so fast- I guess time flies when you’re having fun!”

Cascade Middle School 7th Grader



MONITORING

Collecting data at habitat restoration sites to document success is necessary long after grant funds expire. We train volunteer citizens to be scientists for our watersheds in order to continue to monitor changes in habitat and fish use for 10 years after restoration projects are implemented. This year, volunteers donated over 1,500 hours collecting valuable data assessing habitat and conditions at sites throughout the Skagit watershed.



SPAWNER SURVEYS

The Skagit River is fortunate to have all five species of salmon return to its rivers and streams. This year, volunteers and staff visited 17 streams walking over 10 miles each and every week counting returning adult salmon. Since pink salmon (AKA humpies) return to the Skagit River in large numbers during odd years, volunteers and staff documented more than 22,200 adult salmon returning in 2013.

VEGETATION MONITORING

Each year staff and volunteers plant thousands and thousands of native plants in riparian areas. Our goal is to have 80% survival of the trees and shrubs planted at each site. Citizen scientists were trained to assist staff with monitoring 33 planting sites this year to evaluate planting project success.



“Hearing the fish splashing and fighting around us is a most special experience I never get tired of witnessing.”

Chris Brown, Spawner Survey Volunteer



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.

DONORS

Acupuncture Clinic
Scott Adams
Adara Salon and Spa
Deene Almgvig
American Alpine Institute
Anchor QEA
In Memory of Del Anderson
Annie's Pizza Station
Steve Applegate
Nancy Applegate and Jim Palmer
Scott Ashworth
Aulos Design
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Danny Beatty
Barbara Bennett
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Calico Cupboard
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Chris Grieve
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River City Screen
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PARTNERS

ALEA Volunteer
Cooperative Grants

Allen Elementary School

Bayview Elementary School

Beachwatchers of
Island County

Beachwatchers of
Skagit County

Cascade Middle School

Cascades Job Corps

Chinook Enterprises

Concrete Elementary School

Conway Elementary School

Edison Elementary School

Emerson Alternative
High school

Family Forest Fish
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Habitat Stewards

Immaculate Conception
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Resources Committee

Island County Public Works

Jefferson Elementary School

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National Fish and
Wildlife Foundation

National Park Service

Natural Resource
Conservation Service

NOAA Restoration Center

North Cascades Institute

Northwest Straits
Foundation

Padilla Bay Foundation

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Puget Sound Corps Crew

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Puget Sound Partnership

Salmon Recovery
Funding Board

Samish Hatchery

Samish Indian Nation

Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe

Seattle City Light

Skagit Bald Eagle
Awareness Team

Skagit Conservation District

Skagit Conservation
Education Alliance

Skagit Coop Weed
Management Area

Skagit County Fire District 16

Skagit County Marine
Resources Committee

Skagit County Parks
and Recreation

Skagit County Public Works

Skagit Land Trust

Skagit River System
Cooperative

Skagit Stream Team

Skagit Valley College

Skagit Watershed Council

Swan Lake Watershed
Preservation Group

Swinomish Indian Tribe

The Nature Conservancy

Upper Skagit Indian Tribe

US Fish and Wildlife Service

US Forest Service

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

Washington
Conservation Corps

Washington
Service Corps

Western Washington
Agricultural Association

Wetlands Reserve Program

Whatcom County

Whatcom Land Trust

Whidbey Camano Land Trust

Wild Fish Conservancy

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Mt. Vernon, WA
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Dedicated to Restoring Wild Salmon Populations for Future Generations

