

DAYCREEK

COMMUNITY WATERSHED

About SFEG

Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group is a private nonprofit organization. Our mission is to build partnerships that educate and engage our community in habitat restoration and watershed stewardship opportunities in order to enhance salmon populations.

You can help restore salmon habitat. Join Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group in planting native trees along stream banks, or join one of our volunteer monitoring programs.

To learn more about salmon habitat restoration efforts in the Day Creek Community and beyond, contact us at **360-336-0172** or **sfeg@skagitfisheries.org**. Visit our website at **www.skagitfisheries.org**



Produced by Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group with funding from The Washington State Department of Ecology



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Steelhead caught in the Day Creek system, 1967



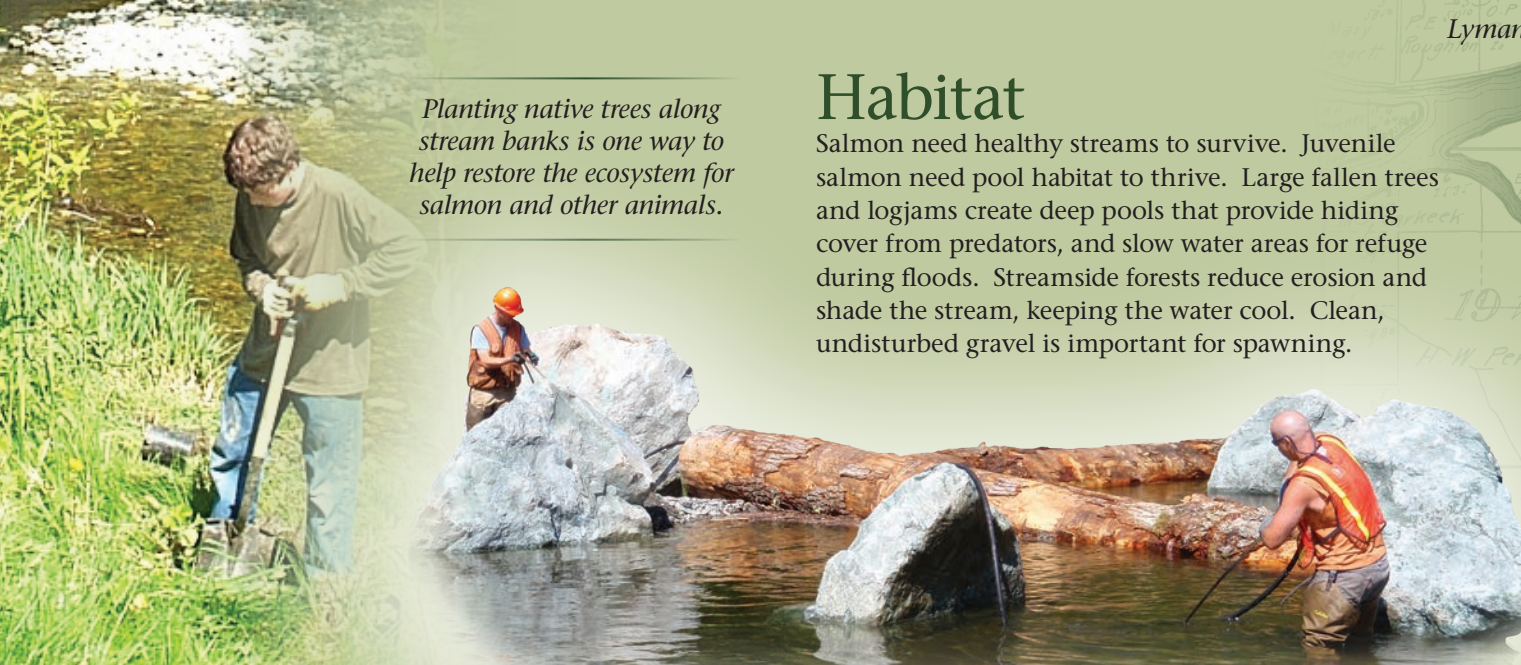
A History

The Day Creek Community Watershed consists of 11 salmon-bearing streams flowing north into the Skagit River. The largest, Day Creek, is a major tributary to the Skagit River.

Day Creek itself was once renowned as a “steelhead Shangri-la”. The quality of habitat in Day Creek and surrounding creeks has been reduced over the years, and supports a fraction of the numbers of salmon it once did. The Day Creek Community Watershed project is an ongoing effort to engage and involve residents of the Day Creek Community in restoration and stewardship of this valuable resource.

“Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.” JOHN MUIR

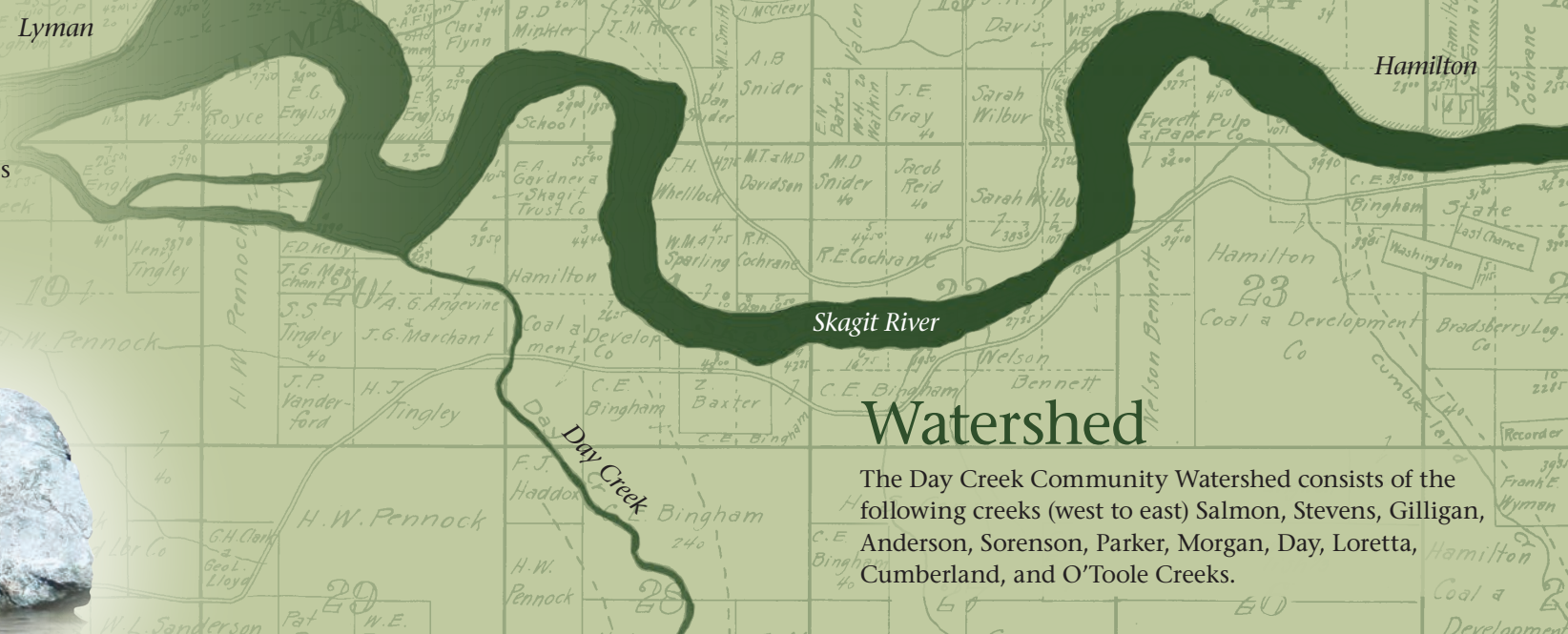
Partial image from Ralph E. Wahl Photographs and Papers, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225-9123.



Planting native trees along stream banks is one way to help restore the ecosystem for salmon and other animals.

Habitat

Salmon need healthy streams to survive. Juvenile salmon need pool habitat to thrive. Large fallen trees and logjams create deep pools that provide hiding cover from predators, and slow water areas for refuge during floods. Streamside forests reduce erosion and shade the stream, keeping the water cool. Clean, undisturbed gravel is important for spawning.



Watershed

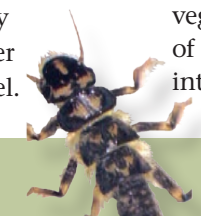
The Day Creek Community Watershed consists of the following creeks (west to east) Salmon, Stevens, Gilligan, Anderson, Sorenson, Parker, Morgan, Day, Loretta, Cumberland, and O'Toole Creeks.

Health

Day Creek and its associated sloughs historically provided miles of excellent salmon habitat and were renowned as superb producers of large steelhead trout. Historical logging practices, residential development and agriculture along lower Day Creek have reduced the quality of this habitat. These factors, in combination with fishing pressure and impairment of marine nearshore habitats outside of the watershed have resulted in substantially reduced numbers of fish returning to Day Creek. Erosion from natural landslides and failing logging roads has introduced large quantities of sediment to the stream. Loss of streamside vegetation has resulted in reduced shade and increased bank erosion. Monitoring data collected from 2002 to 2010 show that Day Creek suffers from high water temperatures during the summer, and lacks deep pools and wood that represent important habitat features for both juvenile and adult salmon.



The larvae of mayflies (left) and stoneflies inhabit the streambed and are a primary food source for juvenile salmon. Like salmon, they are very sensitive to impairment such as high water temperatures, siltation, and loss of gravel.



Help

New forest practices regulations and improved forest road maintenance are helping to reduce sediment inputs and maintain shade on timberlands in the upper watershed. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) has been working in cooperation with the US Forest Service and local landowners to improve fish habitat in the Day Creek Community watershed. Working with volunteers and residents from the Day Creek Community, we have hosted community workshops and field trips, erected signs delineating the Day Creek Community Watershed, and completed several habitat improvement projects.

SFEG can provide trees to landowners interested in re-foresting stream banks, and host volunteer work parties to replant native vegetation. In 2011 SFEG completed the first of several planned wood placement projects intended to improve fish habitat.



Salmonids of the Day Creek Community Watershed:

Day Creek supports seven species of salmon and trout. Salmon and steelhead are anadromous, meaning that they hatch from nests of gravel (redds) in freshwater streams, then migrate to saltwater where they mature, and then migrate back to freshwater to spawn, or reproduce.

The five Pacific salmon die after spawning, whereas steelhead trout are able to complete this cycle more than once.

Chum and pink salmon migrate to saltwater shortly after hatching; coho spend up to 18 months in streams before migrating to saltwater, and steelhead juveniles spend 2-3 years in the stream before migrating to saltwater. Day Creek also supports both resident and sea-run cutthroat trout, while bull trout are known to pass through.



Coho Salmon
(*Oncorhynchus kisutch*)



Pink Salmon
(*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*)



Chum Salmon
(*Oncorhynchus keta*)



Chinook Salmon
(*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)

Listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.



Steelhead Trout
(*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)

Listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

What can you do?

Don't disturb or harass spawning fish

Keep ATVs and livestock out of the stream, and avoid walking in the stream when fish are spawning

Keep the stream clean; do not dump soap, oils, litter or other harmful substances in the stream, and keep yard waste, lawn furniture and other items above the level of floodwaters

Maintain native trees and shrubs along stream banks, and do not remove logs or wood from the stream