



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

*Celebrating 30 years of Community Based
Salmon Restoration*

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

Thirty years of restoring habitat in the Skagit Valley is a significant milestone worthy of celebrating! These accomplishments over the last 30 years would not be possible without you. We are so grateful to you and our community who cares so immensely for our natural environment. You as volunteers, landowners, partners, and supporters understand that having healthy waterways for salmon also means having clean water and healthy communities for all of us.

And while we have much to celebrate as we compile the impressive list of achievements over the last 30 years, there is no doubt that the last year has been a challenging one for everyone. During this unprecedented part of history, I have been repeatedly impressed by our staff, board, AmeriCorps, and volunteers who are willing to rise above and conquer the challenges of continuing to get great work done through this pandemic. Throughout the last year, these dedicated individuals have been reinventing and adapting all that we do to keep habitat restoration happening safely in the Skagit Watershed.

While this pandemic has been difficult for everyone, it has shown me the power of solid leadership provided by our board

of directors, the creativity of our outreach staff to develop new virtual programs for students and our community, the enthusiasm of volunteers to help ensure restoration efforts continue, and the resiliency of our field staff to continue to work no matter what the obstacles.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, last year SFEG's accomplishments continued to grow. Nearly **15,000 native plants** were planted along rivers, streams, and sloughs; two culvert crossings were removed and replaced with bridges to open nearly **3 miles of healthy stream habitat** to migrating salmon; and over **1,000 students** continued to participate in environmental education programs.

We are confident these watershed restoration efforts and community education programs are keys to having healthier populations of salmon. We understand that healthy habitat for salmon also means clean water to drink, more habitat for birds and wildlife, more salmon for orcas to eat, and more scenic places to recreate in our communities. The impact of habitat restoration stretches beyond salmon and our community. Throughout the last 30 years you have helped plant over **350,000 native trees** for watershed restoration. These trees

are absorbing over 1.7 billion pounds of carbon dioxide throughout their life span and helping to reduce the impacts of climate change not just in the Skagit Valley, but far beyond.

At a time when we are all seeking more natural spaces in the great outdoors to enjoy, we are so grateful to have you helping to keep the Skagit Valley a healthy beautiful place for salmon and our community. Thank you for your investment of time, energy, and enthusiasm for conservation over the last 30 years. Your continued support will help ensure a healthy vibrant community and salmon rich waterways for future generations to enjoy.



Alison Studley
ALISON STUDLEY
Executive Director



Our mission is to educate and engage the community in habitat restoration and watershed stewardship to enhance salmon.

Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group
PO Box 2497
1202 South 2nd Street, Suite C
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
Phone: 360-336-0172
www.skagitfisheries.org

SFEG is an independent nonprofit 501 c(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible to the extent that the law allows. Tax ID# 94-3165939



30 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

RIPARIAN PLANTINGS | **350,000** NATIVE PLANTS

Over 58 miles of streams and shorelines revegetated

FISH PASSAGE PROJECTS | **66** BARRIERS removed to restore fish access to 84 miles of habitat.

HABITAT OPENED | **84** MILES of stream opened by removing fish passage barriers

HABITAT ENHANCED | **21** MILES of stream habitat enhanced for salmon

COMMUNITY OUTREACH | **123,000** INDIVIDUALS reached through community engagement programs

VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT | **192,000** HOURS donated by community volunteers

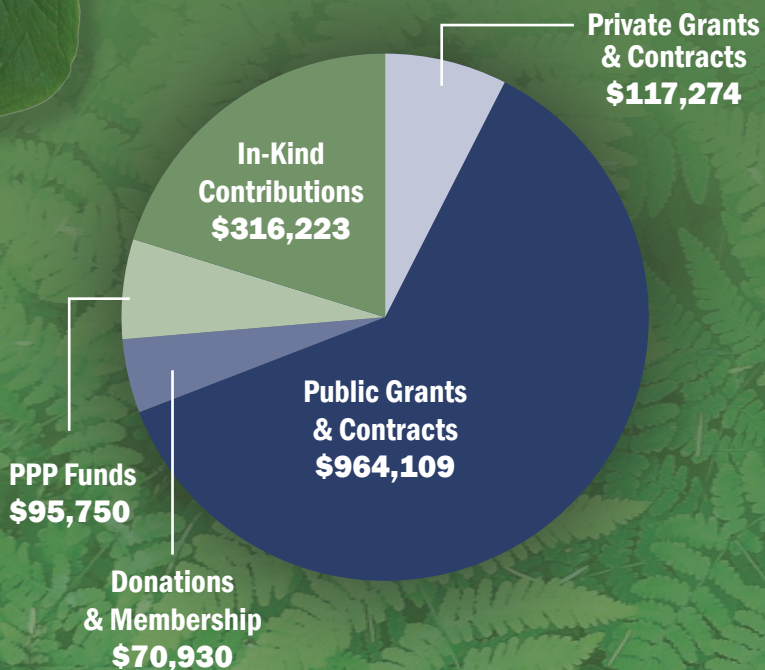
KIDS EDUCATED | **19,000** STUDENTS engaged in environmental science education programs

CREDIT: BRANDON COLE

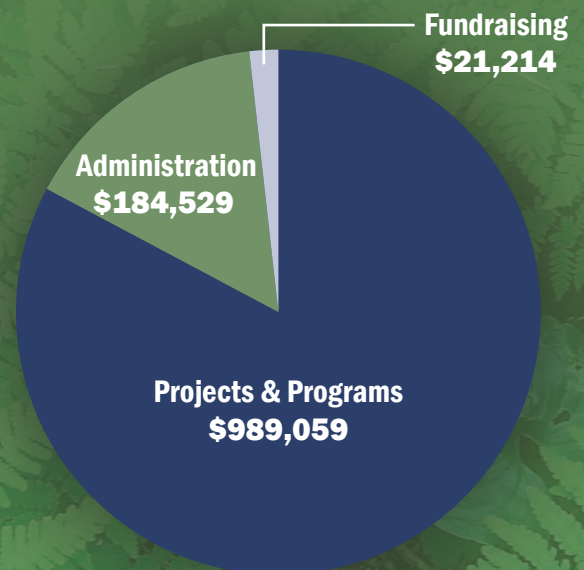


2020 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

INCOME
\$1,564,286



EXPENSES
\$1,194,801



IMPROVING FISH PASSAGE

CAREY'S CREEK FISH PASSAGE IMPROVEMENT

SFEG worked with a private landowner to restore habitat connectivity by removing two undersized culverts at a private stream crossing on Carey's Creek near the town of Hamilton. This undersized culvert was identified during a culvert survey as the highest priority private culvert in the Middle Skagit area that had not yet been fixed. These culverts were undersized and frequently plugging with debris causing an impediment to salmon migration. Funding for construction came via grants from Puget Sound Energy and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Mocer, Inc was hired as the contractor to remove the undersized culverts and place a 50 foot pre-fabricated steel bridge, built by RTI in place of where the blocking culverts were. During construction, SFEG staff conducted three fish rescues where fish were moved in order to not be harmed during construction. Over 150 juvenile salmon, rainbow trout/steelhead, and cutthroat as well as approximately 12 brook lampreys, 70 crayfish, and a large pacific lamprey were saved and relocated away from the construction work.

The project objective was to restore hydrologic and aquatic habitat connectivity within Carey's Creek and Carey's Lake including 1.5 miles of stream, a 6.5 acre lake and 7.5 acre wetland complex totaling 14 acres of rearing habitat for juvenile coho, Chinook, steelhead, and resident trout. After the bridge was set, SFEG staff observed large schools of 30-50 juvenile salmonids swimming just upstream and under the new bridge. Within 18 hours of construction work being completed, SFEG staff observed brook lamprey spawning in the newly placed gravel. These fish immediately benefited from the restored connectivity this project created.



SFEG staff rescues and moves young salmon out of harms way during construction activity at Carey's Creek



SFEG Restoration Technician, Ian Horning, holds up a coho salmon being moved away from construction activity at Carey's Creek

CARPENTER CREEK

SFEG is working on repairing multiple stream crossings that impede salmon passage on Carpenter and English Creeks just south of Mount Vernon. This 2020 project worked with private landowners, Chinook Engineering, and the Family Forest Fish Passage Program to remove an undersized culvert on Carpenter Creek and replace it with a 50 foot bridge in order to improve salmon migration. Replacing this culvert with a bridge at this stream crossing opens 1.4 miles of stream habitat to migrating coho salmon, as well as steelhead and cutthroat trout. This is the second fish passage improvement project SFEG has completed along Carpenter Creek and is contributing to a long-term goal of removing all 7 fish passage barriers in the Carpenter Creek Watershed.

Fish passage improvement projects are a collaborative endeavor made possible by the joint effort of local governments, tribes, non-profits, local businesses, and most importantly, community members who are open to working with these groups to improve fish habitat. The benefits to these projects are immediately felt by the local business that are paid to build them, the landowners whose properties are improved, and the many aquatic species who depend on these waterways.

SPAWNER SURVEYS

SFEG was excited to invite volunteers back to the Spawner Survey Program during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teams of two volunteers walked selected creeks (6 feet apart) to track the number and species of salmon returning to spawn. SFEG is especially interested in documenting salmon use upstream of where fish passage improvement projects have occurred. Volunteers are trained to identify salmon species and their redds (nests) and then walk their chosen creek each and every week throughout the fall and winter spawning season. Volunteers were thrilled to have the opportunity to get out safely and share news of salmon returning to their sites. SFEG has been training volunteers to count returning salmon for the last 22 years and providing valuable data to the fisheries co-managers at Washington State and the Tribes.



Spawner survey volunteers survey for salmon upstream of a recent fish passage improvement project at Carpenter Creek

RESTORING RIPARIAN HABITAT



JSS students with Earth Corps member planting Riverfront March 2020

RIVERFRONT PARK

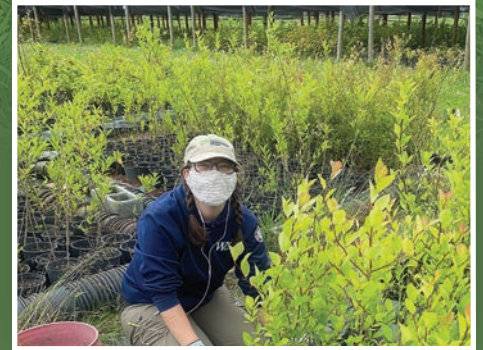
SFEG has been working with the City of Sedro Woolley to restore riparian area at Riverfront Park with funding from the Rose Foundation and a Water Quality Improvement grant from the Department of Ecology. During 2018 and 2019, the City of Sedro-Woolley mowed the blackberries along the stream banks to prepare the Riverfront Park restoration project to ensure that blackberry populations were sufficiently controlled before planting began. From fall of 2019 through fall of 2020 SFEG hosted 6 volunteer planting events where over 150 members of the community joined with SFEG staff and AmeriCorps members to plant over 4,000 native trees and shrubs, filling banks thickly where no native plants were growing before. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic volunteers also created a trail around the riparian area and installed interpretive signs about salmon, water quality, and site history. In all, despite the hardship of the COVID-19 pandemic and thanks to the hard work of many community members, 7 acres of Riverfront Park has been reforested to improve water quality and salmon habitat for the future.

KNOTWEED CONTROL

The Upper Skagit Knotweed Control Program works with partners throughout the Skagit Watershed to control knotweed along the upper Skagit River and its tributaries. SFEG has been a leader in controlling knotweed in the Upper Skagit Watershed since we inherited the program from The Nature Conservancy in 2010. The original project area was upstream from the Skagit-Sauk River confluence in Rockport. In 2018, after many years of intense effort and continued success year after year of finding less and less knotweed in these upper most reaches of the Skagit, SFEG thought that enough progress had been made to expand the program downstream of Rockport to Concrete. In 2020, SFEG surveyed 3,000 acres along 25.5 miles of the Skagit River and its tributaries from Concrete upstream. The incredible part about this program is that it has made a tremendous difference in controlling knotweed. In 2010 SFEG found over 600 patches of knotweed in the Upper Skagit Watershed, while in 2020 we found only 21 patches of knotweed. It's a tremendous accomplishment to see walk, float, or drive along the upper Skagit River and not see huge patches of knotweed like one does along rivers throughout the Puget Sound.



Surveying, documenting and controlling invasive knotweed in the Upper Skagit Watershed



AmeriCorps member Molly VanDam weeding at the nursery

NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

Since 2001 SFEG has had a volunteer based native plant nursery operation. In 2012 we moved this operation to a piece of land owned by the Samish Indian Nation along Thomas Creek in the Samish Watershed. This has been a very productive partnership, as the tribe has been very generous, enabling us to grow 10,000 native plants annually for riparian restoration projects. Each year we purchase thousands of seedlings from local nurseries, and volunteers and students pot them up, and then care for them. After a year or two in pots, these seedlings have grown to a larger size better suited to survive at habitat restoration sites. This year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our volunteer and student "potting parties" were cut short. Thanks to a PPP loan, we were able to pay our staff to pot the remaining 3,000 plants, something that would normally have been done by community members. Our AmeriCorps members played a large role in caring for the plants in the summer, until we believed it was safe to have one volunteer at time come and water and care for nursery plants. Thanks to the Leadership Skagit Team "Age of Aquarius", we are better prepared for volunteer and student nursery activities in 2021. This team of volunteers took on a large project to ensure all students are properly equipped for field trips with us, as well as improving many aspects of the nursery including building 8 new potting benches enabling volunteers to be safely distanced.



EDUCATION CONTINUES DURING COVID-19



Westview Elementary student placing salmon eggs in the Salmon in the Classroom fish tank

SALMON IN THE CLASSROOM

The COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted the Salmon in the Classroom program in 2020. Students at 8 elementary schools received eggs, watched their eggs hatch into alevin, and started to feed their young salmon fry. However, when students were sent home in March 2020, SFEG staff had to quickly scramble to ensure all these young salmon were quickly released into streams before the schools closed and no one was there to feed the young salmon. As the pandemic continued on, in the fall of 2020 SFEG formed a partnership with the Children's Museum of Skagit County to host a Salmon in the Classroom tank for the 2020-21 school year. SFEG staff is using this tank to film salmon as they hatch and grow and teach lessons to elementary students about the fascinating life cycle of salmon and their habitat needs. We look forward to returning tanks filled with young salmon for students to care for next school year.

JUNIOR STREAM STEWARDS

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic sending all Skagit County schools home in March 2020, SFEG continued to offer this STEAM based education program to over 500 middle school students. While we were able to squeeze in a few field trips in early Spring, as local students were sent home to do school virtually, SFEG quickly pivoted to continue to provide virtual lessons to students. Staff brought innovative videos from the stream to students' homes teaching them concepts about salmon, healthy watersheds, and their own role in being stewards of healthy habitat for the future. That are usually taught through hands-on activities in the classroom and field trips. While it's disappointing to not be offering hands-on lessons and field trips, we were thrilled to continue engaging these students while school buildings remained closed.



Olivia and Annika prepare a virtual lesson from the stream for local students



Concrete Junior Stream Stewards planting trees at Skiyou Slough

SALMON SIGHTINGS

Salmon Sighting events went virtual this year amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Salmon Sighting events enable our community to have the awe-inspiring experience of observing wild salmon spawning in local creeks. During the COVID-19 pandemic when hosting community events was not possible, SFEG created a web-based interactive Salmon Sightings Map. This online map had interactive, up-to-date information where community members could go observe salmon spawning in publicly accessible locations, as well as great interviews with salmon experts that could inform visitors what to look for at these locations. Additionally, SFEG created "Salmon Discovery Kits" to distribute to community members. These Discovery Kits contained a wealth of information about Pacific Salmon, the Skagit Watershed, and of course your very own polarized salmon viewing glasses! Next fall we hope to return to live Salmon Sighting events where community members can observe live salmon spawning in creeks led by docents. However the online Salmon Sightings map is likely here to stay as a way to enable community members to view salmon throughout the watershed if they can't make one of our events.





PEOPLE OF SFEG

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DON BUTTERFIELD
President, Acupuncture
Business Owner,
Sedro Woolley

ERIN LIETZAN
Secretary, Business
Owner, Anacortes

ALLISON ANDREWS
Educator, Bellingham

MARY JANDA
Concrete School Teacher,
Marblemount

SHIRLEY SOLOMON
Retired Environmental
Management Professional,
Fir Island

JON VANDERHEYDEN
Vice President, Retired
US Forest Service
Watershed Scientist,
Mount Vernon

DOUG DAVIDSON
Treasurer, Retired Boeing,
Anacortes

BOB EVERITT
Retired WDFW
Regional Manager

JAY KIDDER
Chinook Engineering,
Coupeville

PAT STEVENSON
Stilliguamish Tribe
Natural Resource Director,
Bellingham

DAVE PFLUG
Fisheries Ecologist,
Coupeville

ERIK YOUNG
Research Scientist,
Edmonds

STEVE RANTEN
Retired Dept of Natural
Resources, Burlington

OUR STAFF

ADAM AIROLDI
Riparian Restoration
Manager

LUCY DEGRACE
Outreach Manager

JOE GEORGE
Senior Restoration
Technician

SUE MADSEN
Restoration Ecologist

ERIN MATTHEWS
Habitat Restoration
Coordinator



MELODY MEYERS
Finance and Operations
Manager

BENGT MILLER
Stewardship Coordinator

ALISON STUDLEY
Executive Director

NATHAN WHITE
Restoration
Technician Lead

WASHINGTON
SERVICE CORPS
AMERICORPS
2020-21

DANIELLE GARTENBERG
Community Engagement
Associate

OLIVIA HUBERT
Education Associate

KATIE ISAAC
Riparian Restoration
Associate

WASHINGTON
CONSERVATION CORPS
AMERICORPS CREW
2020-21

MITCH BIGGS
Supervisor

NATALIE CUMIFORD
Assistant Supervisor

BRYANNE MCNAMARA

CASEY HART

MURIEL TROKA

BRYAN SOLIS



OUR SUPPORTERS

We are very grateful to our community who (even during a pandemic) continues to care so deeply for our natural environment. Our donors, partners, and supporters understand that having healthy waterways for salmon also means having clean water and healthy communities for all of us. We are thankful for your investment of time, energy, and funding to support our work. Please show your appreciation for those entities that support our work by patronizing those businesses that contribute to our healthy watershed. A complete list of this year's generous donors, businesses, schools, grantors, partners, landowners, tribes, and members is available in the online version of our **2020 Annual Report** at SkagitFisheries.org.

IMPORTANT SUPPORT FOR SFEG COMES FROM:



Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

2020 DONORS

192 Brewery
Cynthia Adams
Scott Adams
Carlos & Barb Agüero
Michael & Joan Airolidi
Deene Almvig
Amazon Smile
Anacortes Brewery &
Rockfish Grill
Christina Anderson
Ed Anderson
Allison Andrews
Anonymous
Apothecary Spa
Nancy Applegate & Jim
Palmer
Steve Applegate
Reid Armstrong
Shunji Asari
Steven Audette
Christina Avolio
Dan & Linda Ballard
Dave Beatty
Ken Beekman
Kasey Bell
Joline Bettendorf
Jean & James Birdsall
Feryll & Rich Blanc
Melanie & Dave Bloom
Boeing Company
Amanda Boston
Bow Hill Blueberries
Bill & Alexis Bowen
Richard Brocksmith
Laurelynn Brooks

Lynette Brower & Michael
Beemer
Christopher Brown
Kurt & Janice Buchanan
Fred Burke
Donald Butterfield & Joan
Lang
Coleman Byrnes
Hugh Campbell & Dianne
Dalton
Betty Carteret & Eric
Shen
Linda Castell
Chad and Colleen Fisher
Charitable Fund at
Schwab Charitable
Charities Aid Foundation
of America
Barbara Cheyney
Andrea Clancy
Bill Clark
Wendy Cole
Amelia Cook
Jane Coombs
Bob & Ann Cooper
Al Craney
Rob Crawford
Steve Crider
Joan Cromley
Ned Currence & Dennese
Kennedy
Douglas Davidson
& Lynne Wenberg-
Davidson
Patricia & Richard De La
Chappelle

Lucy DeGrace
Mitch DeGrace
Matthew Desvoigre
Janet & Mike Dillard
David Downey
Jerry & Marilyn Eisner
Tim Erickson
Amy Fenlon
Fidalgo Fly Fishers
Fidelity Charitable
Judy Fisher
Fisheries Engineers Inc
Drew Fleshman
Fourth Corner Fly Fishers
Fourth Corner Fly Fishers
Bruce Freet
Dave Garcia
Wendy Gartenberg
Steve Gates
Robert Gentz
Joe & Cathy George
Kirk Giloth
In Memory of Rich
Grendon
Patrick & Marta Gould
Oscar & Pat Graham
Peter Haase
Aaron Haddeland
Suzanne Hahn
Ray & Sandra Hambleton
Jennifer Harrington
Betty Harris
Richard Harris & Tricia
Chisum
Cheryl Harrison & John M.
Smith

Nicole Hemenway Bratz
Rick Hinkes
Veronica Hinkes
Ingrid & Charles Hinton
Steve Hinton
Angie & Jerry Homola
Steve & Gail Hopley
Charles Hornig
Claire Howell
Robert Huet
Paul & Marie Hunter
Tim Hyatt & Nicolette
Harrington
Derek & Melissa Isenhardt
Island Adventures
Ivar's and Kidd Valley
Ollie Iversen
Alex Jahn
Mary Janda
Peter & Susan Janicki
Ryan & Christina
Jepperson
Adam & Tara Jewell
Jim Johnson & Marilyn
Kenney
Chad W. Keck
Marilyn Kenney
Martin Kenzer
Connie Kersteter
Karin Kersteter
Jay Kidder
Phil Kincare & Gale
Masters
Jim & Kara Kintzele
Eric Knudsen & Judy
Farrar

Thomas Kovski
KPFF Consulting
Engineers
Kroger
Frank Lacey & Jeroldine
Hallberg
Lakeside Industries
Comer LaRue
Robin LaRue
Phil Latendresse
Hal & Hella Lee
John & Elaine Leighton
Lynn Lennox
Lori LeVander
Erin Lietzan
Mike Liljenquist
Lincoln Theatre
Bruce Lindsay
Douglas Loewen
Cheryl Lofgren
Erin Lowery
Sue Madsen
Tim Manns & Brenda
Cunningham
Marathon Petroleum
Anacortes Refinery
Nancy & Jeff Quivey
Callie Martin
Eric Martinez
Dwayne & Carolee
Massey
John & Vicki May
Rob Mazur
John McClain & Judith
Chilcote
James McDonald



Mary McFetridge
Jeff & Jody McGowan
Molly McNulty & Richard Revoyr
Microsoft
Jack & Anne Middleton
Moceri Construction, Inc.
Boshie Morris
Adam Morrow
Bob & Karen Mottram
Jim & Bev Mowrer
Mark Nihart
North Cascades Institute
North Cascades Institute
Northwest Ecological Services
NW Brewers Supply
Michael Olis
Oliver Hammer Clothes Shop
One Tree Planted
James Owens
Pacific Surveying & Engineering Inc
Dennis Parent
Murry & Shelley Park
Ben Perkowski
Dena Petersen & Ann Buzaitis
Scott Petersen
Bob & Susan Peterson
Doug Peterson
Anna Petrie & Dan Heimbigner
Erica Pickett

Puget Sound Energy
R.T.I. Bridge
David Radosevich
Dick Raisler
Dorothy & Gale Ramerman
Steve Ranten
Ashley Rawhouser
Graham Read
Fred Remlinger
Frank Repplier
Rob Richey & Jeanne Brovold
Douglas Robinson & Janice Martin
James Rohrbach
Harriet Rooks
Robert Rosenfeld
Samish Indian Nation
Samish Tyee
San Juan Excursions
Marjorie Sargent
Wendy Scherrer
Paul Schlenger
Scottie Schneider
Charles Schweizer
Schweizer Family Charitable Fund
Dean Scott
Mary Selting
Steve Seymour
Rich Shaughnessy
Shell Oil Products US
Mark Shinkle

Sierra Pacific Foundation
Gordon Sjogren
Skagit Community Foundation
Skagit Cycle Center
Skagit Valley Food Co-op
Tom Slocum & Judy Dudley
Marlies Slostad
Susan Smith
Shirley Solomon & Curt Miller
Jim & Melissa Somers
Soroptimist International of Burlington
Starbucks
John Stockman
Peter Strelinger
Alison Studley
Mark & Diane Studley
Matthew Studley
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Kelsey Taylor
Maggie Taylor
Phillip Taylor & Brenda Adair
The Mountaineers Books
George Thelen
Doug Thompson
Tiger Construction Ltd
Tom and Jerry's Boat Center
Sheila Tomas

Barb Trask & Ger Van den Engh
Bret Turner
Charlotte Underwood
United Way
Terry Uridil
Jon Vanderheyden & Kathy Kilcoyne
Jacob Venard
Vital Choice Seafood
George & Laura Jane Viverette
WA Native Plant Society
Duff & Pinky Walker
Maggie Walters
Regina Wandler
Bob Warinner
Wayne & Rebecca Watne
Ron Wesen
Western Prince Whale Watching
Marla Wilk
Shirley & James Wilkinson
Charlie & Susan Wilson
David Wilson
Anne Winkes
Erik Young
Stan Zyskowski



2020 LANDOWNERS

Chris and Jeanne Allen
Forterra
Richard "Tiny" Furman
Pat Gould
Larry and Josie Hedgepeth
Robert and Sheri Hornbeck
Mechel Bell Lawson
Leif Ericson Recreation Association
Lois Nersten
Lisa Noste
Robert and Peggy Pallow
Murry and Shelley Park
Jesalyn Pettigrew
Puget Sound Energy
Michael "Bo" Rains
Skagit Land Trust
Eric and Leah Swanson
Dean Van Vleet
City of Mount Vernon
City of Sedro Woolley
Town of Hamilton
Seattle City Light
Island County
Skagit County Parks
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington State Parks
US Forest Service



**SKAGIT FISHERIES
ENHANCEMENT
GROUP**

PO Box 2497
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MT. VERNON, WA
PERMIT #26

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



*Celebrating 30 years of Healthy Waterways,
Healthy Salmon, Healthy Communities*



Printed on on recycled paper