



THE REDD

Dedicated to Restoring Salmon for Future Generations



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SKAGIT FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUP

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Wild & Scenic Film Fest
- 4-5 Internship Highlights
- 6 Planting Parties Schedule
- 7 Ways to Give
- 8 Salmon Sightings

Why Monitor?

By Yuki Reiss, Restoration Ecologist

Monitoring is a term that gets used a lot, but what does Skagit Fisheries monitor, and why?

Monitoring is making observations and collecting data (documenting our observations) over time. Skagit Fisheries has several ongoing

monitoring programs, including spawner surveys, vegetation surveys, and juvenile fish surveys. We are also starting a new environmental DNA (eDNA)



Devon Bedard showing off a juvenile lamprey encountered during a survey on Little Carey's Creek, one of SFEG's restoration sites. Monitoring for lamprey presence prior to stream restoration helps us to better protect this intriguing native species during construction.

monitoring program. In the future, we would like to do more rigorous monitoring of stream temperature at our restoration sites, and potentially begin a bird monitoring program, to better demonstrate where our salmon habitat work is also benefiting bird species.

There are three primary reasons why monitoring is important.

One is to gather data to inform decision making. For example, with our vegetation monitoring program, we hire college interns that visit sites where Skagit Fisheries has completed a riparian planting project. At each site, random plots are selected and visited multiple times over a ten-year period to document the survival and overall health of plants within that plot. With this information, we can determine where replanting is needed, which plant species are doing the best, or where further maintenance is needed to suppress regrowth of invasive species. We believe that there are even more clues to be mined from this long-term data set, and we have new funding from the Department of Ecology's Climate Resilience Riparian Systems grant (in partnership with the Skagit Watershed Council) to work with a local university to analyze our 10+ year vegetation monitoring data set.

The second purpose for Skagit Fisheries' monitoring programs is community involvement. Our Spawner Survey program has been working with volunteers of all ages since 1998 to walk selected streams in the Skagit and Samish watersheds to count spawning salmon and document redds (salmon nests). This program provides valuable information to the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) on yearly trends, but it also provides volunteers with a chance to intimately know a stream system, observing changes over each season, and across years. Our dedicated volunteers walk their assigned stream each week during the spawning season (Oct-Jan) and report their data back to Skagit Fisheries to be compiled and analyzed and shared with the co-managers.

The third reason that monitoring is crucial, is having data allows us to tell the story of what is happening on the ground in response to the restoration work we are doing. Our newly funded eDNA program will allow us to collect water samples at fish passage barriers before and after culvert replacement, and document fish moving higher into previously blocked stream reaches. This

**CONTINUED
ON PAGE 3**

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 and the resulting nest is called a redd.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pat Stevenson, *President*
Erik Young, *Vice President*
Bob Everitt, *Past President*
Rick Haley, *Treasurer*
Kimberly Cauvel, *Secretary*
Matt Desvoigne
Bill Hebner
Steve Ranten
Dr Ken Raedeke
Austin Rose
Scott Schuyler
Wayne Watne

STAFF

Alison Studley, *Executive Director*
Yuki Reiss, *Restoration Ecologist*
Lucy DeGrace, *Outreach Manager*
Melody Meyers, *Finance & Operations Manager*
Rebecca Rising, *Riparian Project Manager*
Bengt Miller, *Stewardship Manager*
Myrriah Crowley, *Habitat Restoration Coordinator*
Muriel Troka, *Restoration Crew Coordinator*
Ben Molenhouse, *Restoration Technician*
Kelly Williams, *Education & Outreach Specialist*
Devon Bedard, *Monitoring Program Specialist*

CONTACT US

360.336.0172
sfeg@skagitfisheries.org
P.O. Box 2497
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

WILD & SCENIC[®] FILM FESTIVAL



environmental advocacy & adventure films • raffle • live music

6pm Music & Reception • 7pm Program Begins

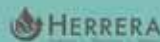
Thank you to our MAJOR SPONSORS:



Tickets: SkagitFisheries.org/WSFF25/

\$20 Presale • \$25 At the door

a fundraiser for



PURCHASE



TICKETS

lincoltheatre.org/film-event-wild-scenic-film-festival-2024

Skagit Fisheries staff working with biologists from WDFW and USFWS to survey via kayak and paddle board for amphibian species in a coastal wetland at Bowman Bay, in Deception Pass State Park. Monitoring data is helping inform restoration options for this wetland habitat that will benefit the entire ecosystem.

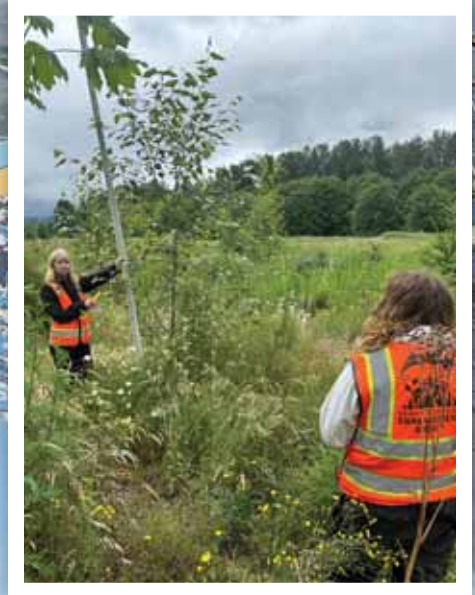
Why Monitor? – cont'd from page 1

form of fish monitoring is non-invasive, because water is collected and filtered to capture DNA particles from stream organisms. This DNA is sent to the lab (we are partnering with the Rocky Mountain Research Station's National Genomics Center for Wildlife and Fish Conservation) to be analyzed for the presence of 10 different fish species that are commonly present at our sites. A further advantage of this type of monitoring is that extracted DNA will be preserved and can be reanalyzed in the future if there is a desire to look for the presence of additional species.

With all this monitoring, current and future, we are happy to announce that former AmeriCorps member Devon Bedard will be starting September 1 as our Monitoring Program Specialist. This is a temporary position, as funding is uncertain, but we will continue to seek funding to make this a permanent position with Skagit Fisheries. **If you are interested in donating to continue these valuable monitoring programs, or want to learn more about our monitoring efforts, please visit our monitoring page: <https://www.skagitfisheries.org/habitat-restoration/monitoring/>**



Spawner survey volunteers documenting the length of a salmon carcass in Ennis Creek in the Samish watershed. Volunteers also collect data on species and habitat characteristics.



Interns Anna and Sage measure tree height with a stadia rod at the Big DeBay's Slough riparian restoration site. These data help inform the success of our past riparian planting projects, and the program gives student interns hands-on experience.



Explore ways to help on our **Monitoring page**



Internship Highlights from two

By Sage Hagopian, Vegetation Monitoring Intern

I am so grateful and excited about the opportunities the Vegetation Monitoring Internship with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) provides for me. As an Environmental Studies GIS (Geographic Information Sciences) student at Western Washington University, with an interest in river restoration and water resource management, getting firsthand experience working with a prominent non-profit in the world of salmon recovery has long been a dream of mine. GIS focuses on the visualization and analysis of spatial data; the vegetation monitoring program uses GIS data collection to create dynamic adaptive

management plans for the many acres across which Skagit Fisheries performs

restoration and stewardship work.

The air smells fresh and the early morning light casts a bright glow on the day. At the office, we gather our gear and plan for the sites we will complete that day, chatting about various projects with the many staff members focusing on a wide range of salmon recovery work. After completing our preparations, we set out for a day of

“By far the most impactful part of my internship was experiencing what it is like to be a part of a collaborative group of colleagues...”

monitoring. Today’s site is on the edge of a wide grassy meadow, below tall red alders, and a few full-grown western red cedars. Birds can be heard chirping a chorus throughout the trees and the day has not turned hot yet as it is still hours before noon. Different sites often bring different rewards and challenges, and we unintentionally have begun to practice our navigational skills in finding plots amongst thickets of grass or forest.

Among the various skills this internship has sharpened, one of my most strengthened is identification of Pacific Northwest native plants. What once looked like a jumble of green plants with an occasional one or two I recognized from my childhood in the PNW, now has become a variety of plants I recognize, native as well as non-native, by their leaf shape, flowers, stems and sometimes even smell (sweet nettle vs. hemp nettle). By far the most impactful part of my internship was experiencing what it is like to be a part of a collaborative group of colleagues, working together towards a common passion and joy. In June, we helped install a sign posting information about the restoration and fish life at Hansen Creek, watched SFEG’s construction project form a new stream bed at a site full of coho fry, went along for a stewardship visit to one of the Seattle City Light properties that is full of large native plants and a healthy forest, and spent time tending to the plants at our native plant nursery.

As we continue with the internship throughout the summer, I look forward to strengthening my identification of more plants, traversing new creeks and exploring the data we have collected to see what insights it might unveil.

Intern Sage measuring tree canopy cover with a densiometer. These data tell us the change in shade cover provided by plants at a site over a given time.



Monitoring Interns

By PJ Heusted, Spawner Survey Intern

Hello! My name is PJ Heusted and I worked at Skagit Fisheries as the Spawner Survey Intern last season. This internship was the highlight of my fall and winter giving me the opportunity to continue working in the field completing surveys in the Skagit and Samish watersheds on Ennis, Dry, and Barrell Springs Creeks. This position allowed me to flex my “data brain” and gain important fisheries science skills by processing data submitted by our 50 spawner survey volunteers. I worked with office and AmeriCorps staff to create the final Spawner Survey Report and made new meaningful connections with professionals in the world of fish.

This internship was the perfect fit for me to refine skills and techniques learned in Bellingham Technical College’s Fisheries Science program and apply them to the work that we do to support Skagit salmon. Not only was this internship a valuable educational experience, but it also helped to confirm that this is the career path that I want to continue in my future. I am incredibly grateful to Skagit Fisheries, our many volunteers, and the generous donors who make this opportunity a reality for me and other young professionals. **Please consider donating to ensure this valuable monitoring program continues.**



Spawner Survey Intern PJ (right) and WCC member Eva Copley with coho carcasses from Ennis Creek.

Check out the final **SPAWNER SURVEY REPORT** from last season.



Salmon Sightings

September 27
Cumberland Creek
October 18 Clark Creek
November 1 Oyster Creek

NOON-3:00PM

Details on back



Fall Planting Parties 2025



**Join us to help improve habitat for salmon and more!
Bring your club or work group, social circle, scout troop,
get school volunteer hours, or just come because you
want to do good and have fun!**

Gloves, tools, and snacks will be provided!

Saturdays, 9am-Noon

- **Oct 25 & Nov 8: Upper Day Slough**
- **Nov 15: West Hamilton**
- **Nov 22 & Dec 6: Hwy 9 Bridge**

MORE INFO AND REGISTER



360-336-0172

SkagitFisheries.org/events/

Funding is Needed to Keep Spawner Survey Program going

The Spawner Survey program enables community volunteers to get outside and see fish in action. Volunteers really come to understand the salmon's place in the Pacific Northwest ecosystem. Staff are needed to plan and carry out volunteer training and coordinate ongoing communication and logistics with volunteers throughout the season to ensure safe, rewarding experience for volunteers as well as quality data for our monitoring record.



Help by making a donation or becoming a sponsor to keep the Spawner Survey program afloat.

EXPLORE OTHER WAYS TO GIVE

www.SkagitFisheries.org/ways-to-give



DONATE

Show your commitment to the future stewardship of our local watersheds by making a donation today, or consider a recurring donation.



LEGACY GIVING

Make a lasting impact on the future of Salmon.



GIFTS OF STOCK

Skagit Fisheries accepts donations of stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. These gifts may include significant tax benefits to the donor.



GIFTS OF IRA

Retirement plan assets can be used to make a charitable gift to Skagit Fisheries.



Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent that the law allows. Tax ID#: 94-3165939



**SKAGIT FISHERIES
ENHANCEMENT
GROUP**

PO Box 2497
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

SALMON SIGHTINGS



Sept. 27 at Cumberland Creek
Oct. 18 at Clark Creek
Nov. 1 at Oyster Creek

Learn all about salmon and habitat restoration happening in the Skagit and Samish River Watersheds.
All events Noon-3:00PM. All ages welcome!



**SKAGIT FISHERIES
ENHANCEMENT
GROUP**



**Scan the
QR Code for
more info**