Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group
Request for Proposals for

East Fork Nookachamps Restoration Design Project

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Contact Person and Project Manager:
Yuki Reiss, Restoration Ecologist
kyreiss@skagitfisheries.org
360.770.3177

Proposal Submittal Due Date & Time:

5 PM (PST) March 11, 2026

Submit one PDF via email to:
Yuki Reiss
kyreiss@skagitfisheries.org

I. PURPOSE, BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVE

Purpose

The purpose of the East Fork Nookachamps Restoration Design Project (the "Project") is to restore tributary, floodplain wetland, and riparian habitat functions along the East Fork Nookachamps Creek and a tributary (locally known as Kennedy Creek) to improve salmon habitat. This phase of the project will develop alternatives to provide fish passage and potential stream realignment on Kennedy Creek, as well as data collection and potential design alternatives to enhance the existing wetland and floodplain area of East Fork Nookachamps Creek.

The Project is located on two parcels near Mount Vernon, WA (P24651 & P24652), along the East Fork Nookachamps Creek, approximately 0.5 miles upstream of the confluence with Turner Creek.

Background

The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) is a nonprofit organization formed in 1990 to engage willing landowners in salmon habitat restoration and watershed stewardship to enhance salmon populations. As a non-governmental organization, SFEG has unique cooperative relationships with local landowners, conservation groups, government agencies and tribes. Through the hard work of our volunteers and professional restoration crew, SFEG has been recognized as a local leader in salmon restoration. As one of 14 Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups in Washington State, SFEG is part of a coordinated effort to educate and involve the public in salmon enhancement activities across the state at the community level.

SFEG has been working with the private landowner on the ~13 acre parcel (P24651) since 2021. Kennedy Creek runs through their property, including an undersized culvert (site ID# NC39) at a driveway crossing. In 2022 SFEG contracted an engineer to complete final designs for a culvert replacement at the driveway crossing on Kennedy Creek (NC39). It was decided that prior to seeking permits for implementing culvert replacement, SFEG would work with an engineer to create design alternatives to remove fish weirs that were previously installed in Kennedy Creek downstream of the culvert location and now represent a fish barrier to juvenile fish movement. In the interim, the East Fork Nookachamps Creek began to flow extensively through the wetland/floodplain, resulting in sheet flow across fields of invasive reed canary grass, and potential fish stranding and passage issues. This Project aims to collect data to better understand the flow patterns and potential fish impacts and develop design alternatives to improve salmon habitat.

Kennedy Creek has traditionally flowed directly into the East Fork Nookachamps Creek mainstem channel, and there was an adjacent seasonally inundated wetland feature on the north end of the property (FIG 1). Over the last few years, due to sedimentation changes and hydrological features on the mainstem creek, Kennedy Creek and a large portion of the East Fork Nookachamps Creek mainstem now flow through this wetland/floodplain year-round. This wetland feature continues west onto the adjacent undeveloped property (~15 acres; P24652) which was acquired by the Skagit Land Trust in 2025 for conservation purposes. As mentioned above, Kennedy Creek has been impacted by historic agriculture use (grazing), was previously straightened and is held in place by a series of twelve weirs with large rock which are now fish passage barriers.

An additional element of this larger project is invasive plant removal and installation of native plants (field conversion and riparian & wetland buffer). In 2024 and 2025, SFEG crews did invasive species

removal, installed approximately 4,800 native trees, shrubs and livestakes across 2.7 acres and completed follow up maintenance (mowing) of planted areas on P24651. This was intended to be conversion of open fields to floodplain riparian habitat. The current conditions result in consistent inundation of new plantings and established vegetation, which has led to widespread tree mortality.

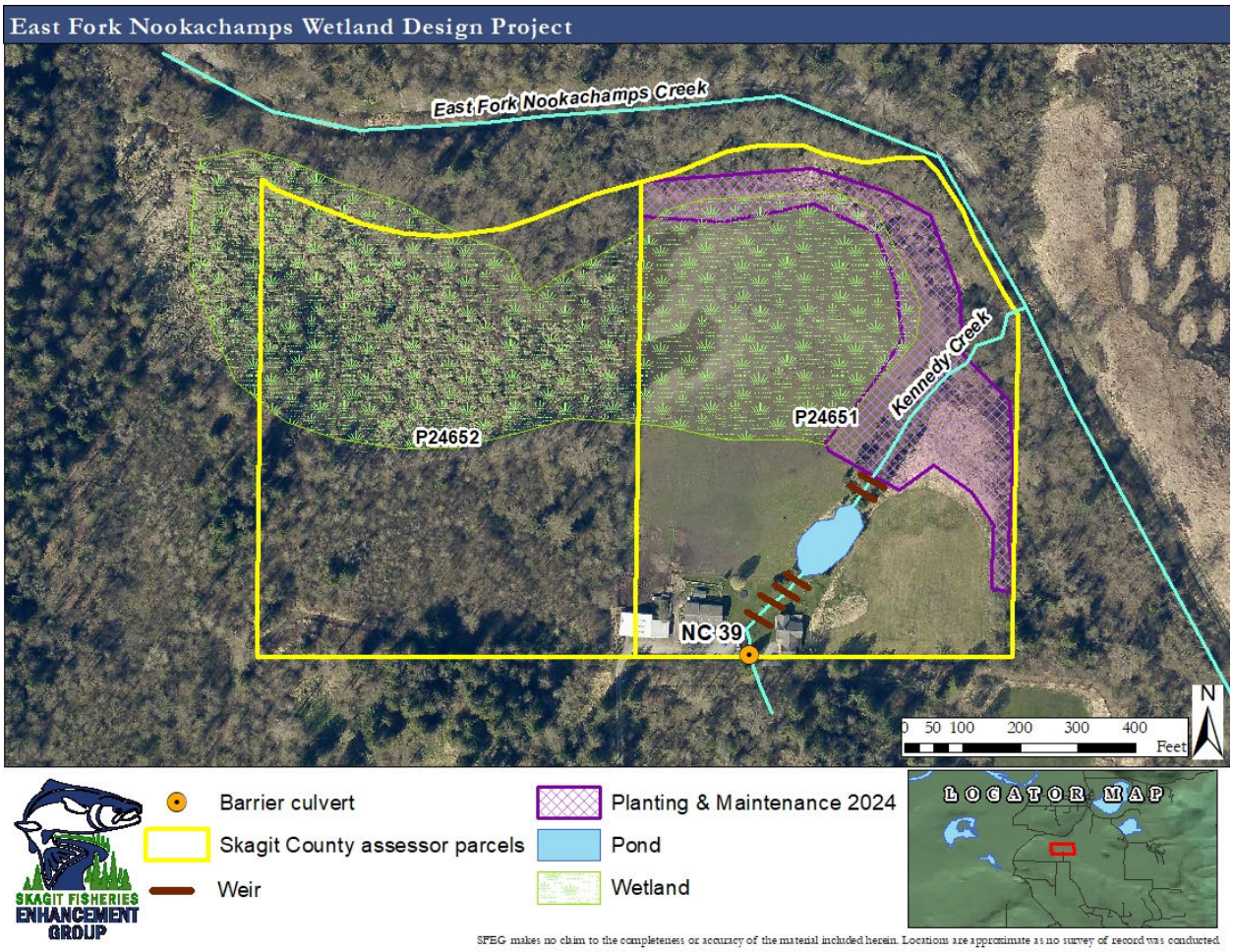

Fig 1: Project Map

Regional Context

There are seven species of anadromous salmon or trout documented in the East Fork Nookachamps Creek. These include Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), coho salmon (*O. kisutch*), chum salmon (*O. keta*), pink salmon (*O. gorbuscha*), steelhead (*O. mykiss*), and coastal cutthroat trout (*O. clarkii*) and ESA listed bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) are found in the mainstem Nookachamps Creek. In October 2023, SFEG and WDFW conducted lamprey electrofishing surveys in East Fork Nookachamps Creek and Kennedy Creek and found both Pacific lamprey (*Entosphenus tridentatus*) and brook/river lamprey (*Occidentis ayresii)* in both streams. The wetland habitat that is on these properties is also productive habitat for birds, amphibians and other terrestrial species that will be enhanced through riparian planting.

The East Fork Nookachamps Creek is identified in the Skagit Watershed Council 2022 Strategic Approach as a Tier 2 target area for tributary floodplain habitat containing significant rearing habitat for Chinook salmon (SWC 2022). The Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan (2005) also cites tributary spawning and rearing by Chinook salmon is an important life history for long-term viability as it provides additional capacity, refuge from mainstem disturbances (e.g., floods), and diverse spatial structure.

This project will implement actions described in the East Fork Nookachamps Creek Watershed Assessment & Management Plan (ESA 2024) that address larger hydrological function issues in this system. In the 2024 plan, the reach of the East Fork Nookachamps adjacent to these parcels is delineated as EF2. This reach is identified as the highest priority for multi-benefit restoration, addressing limiting factors for salmon habitat and for drainage/flood concerns. The recommended restoration strategy and 0-10 year goals include actions to 1) reconnect stream channel & floodplain processes; 2) create in-stream habitat complexity; and 3) restore riparian vegetation. Specifically, the plan calls for creation of side channel habitat and native riparian planting in this reach.

Objective

The objective is to 1) develop design alternatives and preliminary designs to improve passage conditions in Kennedy Creek, and 2) data collection and development of design alternatives to improve connectivity and habitat conditions along the floodplain of East Fork Nookachamps on parcels #24651 and #24652.

Project Constraints and Considerations that are already known include:

1) The landowners (private and Skagit Land Trust) and SFEG have a property agreement in place for data collection and associated access.
2) East Fork Nookachamps Creek is a dynamic system with changing conditions on the ground and potential restoration projects occurring elsewhere in the watershed that may impact flows, sediment transport and ultimately fish migratory corridors. This larger context will be important to consider in design alternatives.
3) During ground disturbing activities the selected firm will need to work with SFEG, landowners and an archeological consultant under contract with SFEG. In addition, any required ground disturbance during data collection (e.g. test pits for soil analysis or wetland delineation) may require coordination with SFEG's archeological consultant.
4) SFEG will be completing juvenile fish monitoring and/or eDNA sampling at the project site in 2026 to determine fish use on site. These data will be available to the selected firm.
5) Preliminary design deliverables must meet the standards described in RCO Manual 18 Appendix D.
6) The design alternatives must also take into account predicted climate change models and potential impacts to the Project.
7) This Project is estimated to cost $100,000-120,000.

This Project is funded through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB; PRISM #22-1462) and Puget Sound Energy (PSE) SA505 funds.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) will secure an Engineering Firm (Firm) to collect and analyze data, use these data to develop restoration alternatives and produce a preliminary design for a preferred alternative for Kennedy Creek restoration, and design alternatives for wetland floodplain restoration. The Firm is expected to work collaboratively with SFEG throughout the study process.

SFEG will weigh landowner, Tribal and stakeholder input in selecting the direction forward as the design study progresses.

SFEG will accept proposals from qualified Professional Engineers licensed in the State of Washington. This document provides additional information that will allow prospective Engineering Firms to understand the scope of the effort and develop a proposal in the required format. SFEG will evaluate proposals and select a Firm to complete the work based on the criteria outlined below.

II. WORK TASKS

Proposals should detail how the work tasks will be completed and how they fit within the timeline below.

SFEG expects the Firm to complete data collection and reporting that contributes to the proposed alternatives/preliminary design. These shall include, but are not limited to:

1) topographic surveys;
2) documentation of flow regime/water inundation on site;
3) Assessment of vegetation condition along wetland floodplain (live/dead trees, extent of invasive species etc.)

Justify/explain any additional data collection that the Firm believes will be necessary to complete the restoration design.

III. DELIVERABLES & MEETINGS

Overall Project Management

- Monthly progress reports shall be submitted to SFEG. The Firm shall account for costs in the monthly progress reports according to the tasks specified in the contract. Problems encountered shall be described in the monthly progress reports, but the Firm shall notify SFEG immediately if any problems arise during the course of the Project that will impact the budget, Project schedule, or adherence to the technical approach.

Site Review & Data Collection

- Conduct one site visit with SFEG and stakeholders to begin the Project.
- Complete site surveys, data collection and analysis necessary to inform the alternatives/preliminary designs.
- Provide draft reports for all reference studies, which will be circulated for SFEG and stakeholder review.
- Provide final reports for all reference studies, incorporating comments from reviewers.

Alternatives/Preliminary Design Development

- Compile all data collected by Firm, as well as relevant data provided by SFEG or partners.
- Provide alternatives analysis and preferred design concept to SFEG.
- On site meeting with SFEG and stakeholders to discuss design alternatives.
- Deliver selected Preliminary Design, Basis of Design Report and estimated restoration implementation budget to SFEG for future grant proposals.

- Provide a digital Preliminary Design in a PDF of 11"X17".

All draft and final reports, designs and survey work shall be provided to SFEG in PDF and in editable format (i.e., Microsoft Word, Excel).

IV. PROPOSED PROJECT TIMELINE

RFP Distribution to Potential Firms	2/25/2026
Proposal Due Date	3/11/2026
Projected date of Firm selection and start of contract negotiation	3/23/2026
Initial Site Visit with SFEG & stakeholders	Week of April 6-10
Data collection complete & alternatives developed	7/15/2026
Preliminary Designs and Final Reports	10/1/2026

The schedule outlined above is intended to support SFEG in submitting grant applications for implementation funding in Fall 2026.

SFEG encourages the Firm to lay out a realistic and more detailed timeline naming the critical steps along the way and a list of tasks at each step.

V. RFP SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS, FIRM SELECTION PROCESS, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Submittal Instructions
Each Firm shall prepare a technical proposal that must include these six elements:

1. A **cover letter** succinctly highlighting why your firm/team is uniquely qualified to complete this Project at a faster speed, lower cost, or other beneficial attribute that sets you apart.
2. A detailed description of the **technical approach** your firm/team will follow. Include demonstration of the understanding of river, wetland and floodplain habitat, fish habitat needs and how those intersect with your technical and design approach during Project delivery.
3. A detailed **staffing plan** including:
   Names, qualifications, and roles for the prime and any subcontractors; and the lead personnel: for the purposes of this proposal "lead personnel" shall include the lead engineer and the lead technician. Submit as many resumes as necessary to demonstrate the qualifications of your team highlighting experience working on riverine/wetlands projects driven by restoration goals and objectives. Speak to availability of lead staff and key subcontractors to prioritize this Project.
4. **Project descriptions** detailing work on 2-3 similar projects with similar constraints and settings and how those were expediently handled.
5. A detailed **timeline schedule** for this effort, including:
   Schedule with milestones. A significant delay behind the suggested timeline may result in a proposal being rejected. Schedules accelerating the suggested timeline are welcome. Discuss tools used to deliver on a restricted timeline.

Rejection of Non-Responsive Proposals:

Respondents may be eliminated from consideration for any of the following reasons:

1. Proposals that simply reiterate the verbiage of the RFP.
2. Proposals do not contain each of the six required items listed in the Submittal Instructions.
3. Proposals which are longer than 15 page (not including resumes).

Respondents may submit any questions to Yuki Reiss at kyreiss@skagitfisheries.org or 360-770-3177. Proposals must be received by SFEG no later than 5 PM (PST) on March 11, 2026.

SFEG will evaluate each proposal, based on the technical evaluation criteria provided below.

The Proposal should describe how the Firm intends to accomplish the work, not what the work is, and the descriptions should be in sufficient detail that the proposal review team will be able to evaluate the merits of your technical approach.

EVALUATION CRITERIA & CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS

Proposals will be evaluated by a selection committee consisting of SFEG's Restoration Ecologist and at least two SFEG staff members or stakeholders. Evaluations of each proposal will be based upon the Firm's qualifications and responsiveness to this RFP. SFEG reserves the option to invite the top-rated respondents to provide additional information on their proposed approach and qualifications at an interview. The following elements will be the primary considerations in evaluating all submitted proposals and in the selection of an Engineering Firm:

POINTS SUMMARY:

	Criteria	Points
A.	Technical Approach	35
B.	Demonstrated Qualifications and Availability of Personnel (Total 20 pts) 1. Project Leader/Manager 2. Technical staff/subcontractors	 10 10
C.	Related Experience (performing similar projects)	25
D.	Innovation/Efficiencies	20
Total		100

A. Technical Approach – ***35 Points Total***
The technical approach detailed in the Proposal will be evaluated for completeness of the Proposal, understanding of the RFP objectives and identified tasks, consideration of Project benefit to fish and wildlife, and consideration of potential problems and contingencies for resolution. Demonstration of the technical approach leading to workable restoration outcomes.

B. Demonstrated Qualifications and Availability of Personnel - ***20 Points Total***
1. Proposed Project Leader/Manager ***(10 Points)*** - Availability and demonstrated

qualifications (experience, education, and expertise) for successfully **managing projects** of similar size and management scope, and in handling organizational requirements such as communications, budgeting, cost monitoring, resource allocations, technical and financial reporting, and subcontracts management. Also include demonstrated qualifications (experience, education, and expertise) of the proposed Project Leader/Manager to manage the tasks covered by the RFP.

2. Technical Staff/Subcontractors ***(10 Points)*** - Demonstrated qualifications of the technical staff or subcontractors as related to the tasks identified in the RFP (i.e. coastal wetland systems, data collection). Knowledge and experience of the proposed staff or subcontractors with regard to Project elements, hydrology and river/wetland/floodplain habitats.

C. Related Experience - ***25 Points Total***
Factors for consideration include demonstrated experience in regard to:
River Restoration
Wetlands
Floodplain habitats

D. Innovation/Efficiencies ***– 20 Points Total***
Firm is uniquely poised to excel at this Project. Firm demonstrates special capabilities to handle this Project.

References

ESA 2024. East Fork Nookachamps Creek Watershed Assessment & Management Plan. Prepared for the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe and Skagit County Public Works. Available on the Skagit County website: LINK
Skagit Watershed Council documents: LINK
Recreation & Conservation Office PRISM database, PRISM #22-1462
Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan was referenced