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THE REDD

Dedicated to Restoring Salmon for Future Generations

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SKAGIT FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUP

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It's about protecting salmon, the environment and our homes

Carpenter Creek – Sustainable Fish Passage in Action

In the Skagit River Watershed, we are lucky to share our home with so many beautiful creeks, along with the fish, birds, vegetation, and other wildlife that depend on them. One creek we have been restoring for many years by removing fish passage barriers is Carpenter Creek. Although it is a smaller tributary, it is an essential part of the system, serving as an amazing spawning ground for coho salmon and the threatened steelhead trout.

Like many creeks, Carpenter Creek flows through a mix of private, public, city-owned, and county-owned land, so working on a project that spans the entire creek requires collaboration. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group has worked closely with private landowners, Skagit County, the City of Mount Vernon, and Tribes on the Carpenter Creek Full Passage Restoration Project. This project focuses on removing fish passage barriers and replacing them with sustainable fish passages.

A small or failing culvert doesn't just affect whether fish can return upstream to spawn. It affects us, too.

Along Carpenter Creek, the fish passage barriers we are working to remove or replace are culverts. Broadly speaking, a culvert is a pipe that runs under a road, driveway, or other

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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.

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From the Director

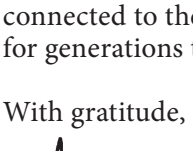
Fall is a wonderful time in the Skagit Valley, with bountiful farm fields, colorful forests, and salmon returning to local creeks. It invites us to step outside and explore our watershed. Skagit Fisheries offers all kinds of opportunities to get out and explore new places all autumn long. We have events occurring almost every weekend from October into December. All of which invite you to head outdoors and enjoy the fall foliage along local creeks, watch salmon splashing in the water, or even release a young salmon into a stream at our community salmon release, in the hope that you may see it return home to spawn in a future fall.

Salmon spawning season also brings an inspiring wave of energy as new volunteers, and many well-seasoned veterans, come to our spawner survey training and get psyched to start seeing salmon swimming and splashing upstream. Over 70 volunteers signed up to learn about salmon spawning and how to count and identify species and redds. These hearty volunteers will walk streams weekly, documenting the salmon returning to Skagit Fisheries restoration sites and helping us understand the impact of those projects. These observations are shared with state and tribal partners, which contribute to broader planning efforts. You can help support this important monitoring work and look pretty cool while you are out exploring wearing brand new Skagit Fisheries gear! There are lots of items, something for everyone, from hats and hoodies to tote bags and mugs. These would make great holiday gifts that you can feel good about. You can learn more about this on page 6!

Fall is also when our outdoor education programs begin, taking students beyond the classroom to experience nature and apply textbook lessons in the real world. These programs help students learn about salmon, build excitement about science, connect with the incredible Skagit Valley, and feel inspired to care for it in the years ahead. We are thrilled to offer Salmon in the Schools to 16 Skagit County elementary schools this year. Students will learn about the salmon life cycle and healthy habitat as they prepare classroom aquariums for the arrival of 200 salmon eggs this winter. We are also beginning the second year of a three-year pilot program, Recorrido por el Río, or River Journey. Through immersive outdoor programs led by dual-language instructors, 50 English language learners will explore the Skagit watershed from the mountains to the sound. After a tremendously successful first year, this fall began with a rafting trip on the Skagit River and the unforgettable sight of spawning salmon. We are grateful to the volunteers, educators, partners, families, and supporters who make all of this possible.

I hope you will join us at an event, volunteer along a stream, support our programs, or simply spend time enjoying the watershed we all share. Together, we can help ensure that salmon and our communities connected to them continue to thrive for generations to come.

With gratitude,



Alison,
Executive Director



Carpenter Creek – cont'd from page 1

infrastructure, giving people a place to cross while keeping creeks flowing through our complex urban environment. Nearly all roads in the PNW have culverts! Often, though, they are too small, outdated, or failing. An undersized culvert can force water through like a firehose, sit perched above the creek where fish struggle to climb it, and erode the surrounding soil, sending more sediment into local creeks and damaging vital riparian areas. Simply put, none of this allows for successful fish passage.

A small or failing culvert doesn't just affect whether fish can return upstream to spawn. It affects us, too. During floods, a properly sized culvert can protect homes, businesses, and vital infrastructure like roads. That's why our goal is to replace each undersized or failing culvert with a properly sized one or a bridge, or to abandon the crossing entirely.

When this project began in 2019, eight culverts needed to be replaced with sustainable fish passages. We are proud to say that, as of this summer, five of those projects are complete! All five were collaborations between Skagit Fisheries and multiple private landowners.

In the summer of 2026, Skagit Fisheries began construction on the last privately owned fish passage barriers on Carpenter Creek. The project is located where English Creek, a small tributary, meets Carpenter Creek. Two culverts were removed: one at the bottom of English Creek and one at the confluence of the two creeks.

The Carpenter Creek culvert was severely degraded and completely rusted out at the bottom. Its outlet had a big drop, so salmon had to jump 3 feet up into the broken steel culvert and swim through it to reach upstream habitat. The landowner called these culverts "the Herculeans."

Removing the Carpenter Creek culvert and replacing it with a 30-foot bridge opened 5.58 miles of habitat on the mainstem. The English Creek culvert was removed entirely (also called abandoning the culvert), opening another 0.5 miles. In total, this summer's project makes 6.08 miles of upstream habitat accessible.

Five culverts have been removed, but three more remain before the Carpenter Creek Fish Passage Restoration project is complete. All three are downstream of Little Mountain Park.

What is truly exciting about these projects is the partnership and collaboration across many organizations and the community. The final three already have design funds in hand and are moving toward construction in the near future.

Once all eight fish passage barriers are gone, SFEG and our partners will have opened 8.67 miles of habitat for salmon to spawn and rear.

Thank you to our partners: Skagit County, the City of Mount Vernon, the Skagit River System Cooperative, and the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe.

Thank you to our funding partners: NOAA, USFWS, RCO's Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board, and the Family Forest Fish Passage Program.



Culvert on Carpenter Creek before replacement.



New bridge on Carpenter Creek opens 2.5 miles of habitat for salmon.



Bridging Science and Engineering
My Restoration Construction Internship

By Anthony Stock, Construction Intern

Hi, my name is Anthony Stock, and I'm a construction intern with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG). I'm finishing my Bachelor's in Environmental Engineering at the University of Washington, and I also bring nearly a decade of environmental work experience. I've volunteered with Green Everett and the Washington Trails Association, and worked for Sound Salmon Solutions, the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, and the Washington Conservation Corps. Time and again, I saw a disconnect among environmental scientists, contractors, and engineers when it came to restoration design and implementation. That is what drove me back to school: bridging the gap between science and engineering.

I have always been naturally drawn to rivers and salmon, as I grew up in a rural area along the Stillaguamish River. Every fall, I would spend hours at the river fishing, watching the salmon runs, and taking in the beautiful ecosystem around me. This river was my home, and working in the environmental field gives me a chance to protect it.

I applied for an internship with SFEG as an opportunity to get hands-on experience in the design and coordination of large-scale salmon habitat restoration projects. I was particularly interested in SFEG because the Skagit River watershed is one of the most important waterways in our state. I was able to gain experience in understanding engineering plans, preparing permit applications, and getting a glimpse of what it takes to run a project.

It is hard to describe a single day as a construction intern with SFEG. Some days, I would be sitting in the garage sewing fish nets that we would use to hold back fish during fish passage projects. Other days, I would be standing ankle-deep in a newly graded creek bed, helping lower a 30-foot bridge to replace a driveway that was once a culvert fish barrier. In between projects, I would organize and prepare files for future projects.

During my internship, I especially enjoyed the fish barrier removal project at the junction of Carpenter and English Creek. Under a private landowner's driveway sat an undersized culvert. The culvert was almost entirely eroded out on the bottom, and the downstream side sat about 2 feet above the creek level, which had been scoured out by years of high-velocity flow shooting out from this undersized culvert. Due to the severity of this unnatural flow, we not only had to remove the culvert, but we also had to completely renovate the slope of the creek to meet the original topography.

This internship was an incredible learning experience where I got to understand more than just the physics of river hydrology, but also all of the steps that it takes to make a fish barrier removal possible. Working with contractors was extremely insightful, giving me a clear view of what is possible and how projects like these should be approached from a boots-on-the-ground perspective. I also met engineers and learned what they do in the field and in the office, as well as the permitting rules and standards that guide design. Finally, I gained valuable insight from working with the SFEG team as project managers.





Intern Anthony at Carpenter Creek.



Protecting Our Rivers from Invasive Knotweed

Since 2010, the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group has led control efforts against invasive knotweed across the Upper Skagit Watershed. Working at the watershed scale through the Skagit Cooperative Weed Management Area, a coalition of 18 federal, state, local, tribal, and nonprofit partners, we scour thousands of floodplain acres each year for infestations of this highly invasive plant, which can wreak havoc on local riparian areas.

Knotweed is a Class B noxious weed in Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties. Left unchecked, it crowds out the native vegetation that salmon, birds, and other wildlife depend on. Knotweed is hard to control not only because it grows quickly, but because it spreads so easily: a single fragment less than a half inch in size carried by floodwater, a tire, or equipment can root and start a new infestation along a river. Once established, knotweed forms dense stands that shade out everything beneath them. Each summer, we survey the Upper Skagit Watershed for this plant in order to ensure it doesn't take over our watershed.

This year, our knotweed crew surveyed 4,587 acres of the floodplain areas and 32 miles of waterways. Overall, we treated 231 knotweed patches, which, if we combined them into one location, would be 0.17 acres of knotweed treated!

One of the highlights of this knotweed season was a four-day "spike" on the upper Sauk floodplain, when our Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crew teamed up with the knotweed team. A spike is a short, multi-day field assignment, typically four to eight days, in which a crew travels away from its home base to work on restoration, trail maintenance, or disaster response projects. On this trip, the crew spent their days floating the river, surveying knotweed patches, and treating them along the way. While these photos may look like a leisurely float trip, this was hard work protecting our watershed!

Quote from Emily, a WCC crew member, about the trip: *"Getting the opportunity to spend my work week hiking through the brush, swimming in the river, and sleeping on warm gravel bars was unlike anything I've experienced before. Although the days were long and hot, it was ultimately rewarding knowing that our efforts were making a direct impact on the health of the watershed."*







Celebrate Spawner Season Skagit Fisheries Merch Sale

Show your love for Skagit salmon! This limited-time merch sale supports the spawner survey monitoring program that keeps our watershed's fish counted and protected. Grab some swag or make a donation to help keep the Spawner Survey Monitoring Program running.

The online store will be open until the middle of December, so purchase your SFEG spawner swag quickly!

Thank you to Gina Levantini, studio name Fern In the Forest, for designing this year's Spawner Survey Art!

About the Skagit Fisheries Merch Sale

This is an annual project by Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. Each year, we open applications for artists to submit a portfolio of their existing work. From there, SFEG staff choose an artist to design our Spawner Survey Swag.

This year, we chose to work with Gina Levantini's studio, Fern in the Forest — a Washington-based artist out on San Juan Island.

What is the Spawner Survey Program and why is it important to SFEG?

Our Spawner Survey Program is a monitoring program where dedicated volunteers monitor local streams for salmon and other fish during spawning season.

Many of our stream reaches have been surveyed for years (some 20+!) and give us valuable information about the status of salmon in these streams. New reaches are added each year in places where we are actively completing restoration projects, and this gives us up-to-date information about salmon species and distribution. Having "eyes on the ground" weekly during spawning season also allows us to better understand stream dynamics and condition.

Healthy Salmon and Clean Watersheds for Future Generations

GIVINGTUESDAY

Together with donors, members, and volunteers, Skagit Fisheries has contributed to significant accomplishments for salmon and our community over the last 30 years. However, our work is not done yet. We always have new work planned, like new fish passage improvement projects, planting native trees, and engaging students in outdoor education projects.

This Giving Tuesday, your donation can ensure this important work for salmon and our community continues. Please consider a gift to support our work in protecting and enhancing salmon populations throughout the Skagit River Watershed.



Giving Tuesday: Tuesday, December 1, 2026
www.skagitfisheries.org/ways-to-give

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
Give to Skagit Fisheries with a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD), a gift made directly from your retirement account.

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
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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UPCOMING EVENTS

SALMON SIGHTING	**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7** 11 AM - 2 PM Oyster Creek
PLANTING PARTY	**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14** 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Utopia Conservation Area
PLANTING PARTY	**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21** 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Utopia Conservation area
PLANTING PARTY	**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5** 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Highway 9 Bridge
COMMUNITY SALMON RELEASE	**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12** 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM Northern State Recreation Area

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