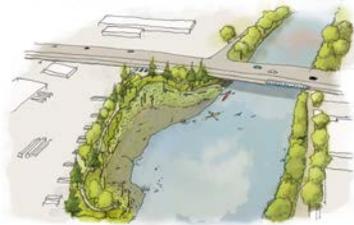




Duwamish Gardens Design is Underway



Duwamish Gardens will create salmon habitat in the Transition Zone, giving juvenile Chinook more resting and feeding area as they adapt to saltwater.

The City of Tukwila has begun design of the Duwamish Gardens habitat replacement project. The project site is 2.1 acres, with 250 feet of Duwamish River frontage. Duwamish Gardens is located along the west side of East Marginal Way South. The project goal is to create approximately 1.25 acres of shallow water mudflat and marsh habitat and 0.8 acres of uplands planted with native vegetation. The project will also include a pedestrian path, interpretive signs, and an overlook. The final site layout and features for Duwamish Gardens will be further defined during the design process that will involve consultation with tribal interests, permitting, funding agencies, WRIA 9 Habitat Recovery Team, and interested citizens.



Pautzke Levee Removed



The former site of the Pautzke levee, with large wood at the toe of the slope.

The Green River is once again migrating across its floodplain near the former Pautzke levee; part of a restored natural area between Auburn and Highway 18. Once King County removed hundreds of feet of rock from the bank in 2009, the river quickly started re-establishing a sweeping meander bend. As the river adjusts, new logjams, pools, and backwaters are forming. These features provide valuable cover and rearing habitat for juvenile Chinook. During floods, salmon can now seek shelter in reconnected floodplain channels, or in the calm backwaters forming on the right bank. The Pautzke project exemplifies 'process-based' design, which aims to re-establish normative rates of channel migration, wood recruitment, and flooding to produce a dynamic habitat mosaic.



Message from the Coordinator

As you will read throughout this newsletter, implementation of the WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan is in full swing and we are chipping away at Making Our Watershed Fit for a King.

Hot off the press is the ["Implementation Progress Report: 2005-2011,"](#) which tells a more detailed account of progress so far.

The Implementation Progress Report provides a snapshot of the accomplishments we have made over the past 6 years to implement the WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan. Considering the ever present funding challenges and other barriers we have faced over the years in getting habitat projects and programs on the ground, the Implementation Progress Report demonstrates positive and significant steps forward, and the strength and importance of partnerships.

The Watershed Ecosystem Forum has secured over **\$36,500,000** in WRIA 9-directed funding since Salmon Habitat Plan adoption in 2005. The funding went toward the most important projects and programs in the most important locations of the watershed to recover the Green River Chinook salmon population.

While the Implementation Progress Report shows progress made and reason to celebrate, it also reinvigorates a call to action. The number of natural origin Chinook spawners in 2009 was only **207 fish**, the lowest count since 1981. This unprecedented low number of salmon is a sign that not all is well and more needs to be done.

We need to keep our partnerships strong, and remain focused and steadfastly determined.

- Doug Osterman



WRIA 9 Small Grants Program Expanded and 2011 Awards

The WRIA 9 small grants program was expanded in 2011 due to two new partnerships: King County's Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) contributed \$125,000, and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) contributed \$25,000 to the fund. The new funds focused on improving water quality in the lower Duwamish basin. 2011 small grant awards included:

- **Lower Soos Creek Revegetation** (\$25,000) for King County to plant native plants along the creek on publicly owned land;
- **Middle Green River Restoration** (\$25,000) to restore native vegetation in three riparian/floodplain areas, including planting, removing invasives, and watering;
- **Urban forest restoration** (\$25,000) to the Nature Consortium to restore and maintain native vegetation in the West Duwamish Greenbelt, Seattle's largest remaining contiguous forest;

Grant awards through the WTD and SPU, each for \$25,000, were:

- **Marine Lumber Services, Inc.** to reduce a source of arsenic by installing canopies to protect treated lumber stacks from rainwater;
- **Toth Enterprises** (from SPU) to create green infrastructure to filter runoff from surrounding buildings and parking areas;
- **Puget Creek Watershed Alliance/Garden Cycles** to remove invasive plants near the Sanislo School wetland area and replace them with native trees to better intercept stormwater runoff during heavy winter rains. The project will involve area students;
- **People for Puget Sound** to build public awareness around the benefits of Low Impact Development techniques, such as rain barrels and rain gardens;
- **Environmental Coalition of South Seattle** to provide workshops, outreach, education, onsite technical assistance and incentives to educate small businesses in Lower Duwamish communities about compliance with city and state stormwater codes to protect the current and future health of the river.
- **South Park Area Redevelopment Association** to increase the ability and effectiveness of community-based design ideas to remove polluted stormwater from streets along the Duwamish River. They will provide hands-on workshops and increase awareness of how green stormwater infrastructure can reduce polluted runoff.



Upper Springbrook Creek Project a Success!



Chinook were spawning in Springbrook Creek after the channel was moved out of a roadside ditch and culvert replaced.

November 2011 saw completion of construction of the Upper Springbrook Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project in the City of Renton. A 900-foot reach of stream that ran through a roadside ditch was restored, and a new channel was constructed that maximizes the habitat and spawning potential for this section of stream. A new box culvert was also built under South 55th Street to aid in fish passage, and extensive invasive vegetation was removed and replaced with native plants. The biggest surprise was in seeing Chinook salmon making their way up the creek immediately after the stream channel was opened; Chinook were not previously believed to have used this reach of the stream. This Ecosystem Restoration Project was completed in partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers.



SRFB and PSAR Grants for Habitat Projects

On December 8, 2011, the state announced the award of Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) grants. Awards totaled \$884,672, and went to the following four projects to restore and protect habitat in WRIA 9:

- Preserving the Point Heyer Drift Cell - \$300,000 from SRFB (King County);
- Restoring Big Spring Creek - \$131,091 from SRFB and PSAR (King County);
- Designing the Removal of the Porter Levee - \$200,000 from PSAR (King County); and
- Designing Downey Farmstead Restoration - \$253,581 from PSAR (Kent).

SRFB grants are a combination of state and federal funds and are matched by local dollars. PSAR funds are administered by SRFB, but are allocated separately by the state legislature due to efforts by the Puget Sound Recovery Council, Puget Sound Partnership, and others.



The Environmental Science Center's New Digs



The Environmental Science Center's new building at Seahurst Park in Burien holds many free community events.

The Environmental Science Center held a grand opening for its new learning center at Seahurst Park in Burien on October 23rd, 2011. The new center is the headquarters for the naturalists who serve hundreds of in-school and after-school programs to local schools and organizations. It is also used as a classroom setting for lessons on riparian and marine ecosystems. Look for information on free community events held at the center throughout the year:

www.EnvScienceCenter.org.



Corps Levee Vegetation Policy Proposal & Response



Willows were cleared along the Tukwila 205 levee in 2010 to comply with the Corps levee vegetation management policy.

The Puget Sound Partnership held an all-day workshop in Tacoma on April 4, 2012 to facilitate a conversation about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) latest proposals for how to manage vegetation growing on levees. Levees protect our communities from floods, and it is important that they function well. Native vegetation on levees can improve habitat for threatened salmon. Many local jurisdictions incorporate native vegetation into levees to increase levee stability. National policies at the Corps strongly discourage vegetation on levees. Furthermore, if local jurisdictions want financial assistance from the Corps, they must remove all vegetation from levees. Millions of dollars for levee construction and repair could be at risk if a local jurisdiction does not comply. The WRIA 9 Forum wrote a comment letter to the Corps regarding various aspects of its levee vegetation program. Visit

http://www.psp.wa.gov/LV_comments.php to see a copy of the letter, and those of others in the region.



Duwamish Alive! Event on Earth Day



Volunteers at North Wind's Weir helped plant marsh plants, weed, spread mulch, and install fences to protect plants from geese.

[Duwamish Alive!](#) is a partnership of community, non-profits, tribes, municipalities, and businesses dedicated to preserving and enhancing the Duwamish to restore Puget Sound. On April 21, over 1,100 volunteers descended on eleven sites along the Duwamish Waterway. They cleared 3.5 acres of invasive plants, planted over 700 native plants, spread mulch, and picked up trash at restoration sites. Sites included:

- Brandon Street
- Duwamish Hill Preserve
- Duwamish Waterway Park
- Gateway Park / 8th Ave.
- Hamm Creek
- Herring's House
- North Wind's Weir
- Roxhill Bog
- Seacrest Park
- T-107
- West Duwamish Greenbelt



Flood Control District to Fund WRIA Efforts in 2012

The King Conservation District (KCD) competitive grant program, which has been an important source of local funding for habitat projects in WRIA 9, will not occur in 2012 due to a court ruling over a similar program in Mason County. Efforts are underway to re-establish a KCD grant program in 2013. To continue the grant program for salmon habitat in 2012, a new source of funds was [recently approved by the King County Flood Control District \(FCD\) Board of Supervisors](#). The WRIA 9 Watershed Ecosystem Forum voted to support this action by the FCD Board as a stop-gap measure to keep habitat project implementation on course. The Forum also approved a list of projects and programs to be funded via the new grant program administered by the FCD in 2012. WRIA 9 will continue to advocate for sustainable, dedicated funding for salmon habitat restoration implementation. WRIA 9 is participating on a subcommittee of the Puget Sound Partnership's Ecosystem Coordination Board to develop a funding framework for implementing the Puget Sound Action Agenda. Recommendations to the Ecosystem Coordination Board are expected in June.



New Basin Steward in Highline



The new Miller-Walker Basin Steward, working with volunteers to count salmon in Miller Creek in October, 2011.

Elissa Ostergaard was hired in July 2011 to be the new steward for the Miller/Walker Creek basin in Burien, Normandy Park, and SeaTac. She replaces Dennis Clark, who was the basin steward from 2007 until April 2011. Elissa worked with 26 volunteers to determine the rate of salmon pre-spawn mortality in the fall of 2011, and is continuing previous efforts to improve the creeks. This stewardship program is jointly funded by the three cities, King County, and the Port of Seattle.



Point Heyer Grant Awarded to Acquire 15 acres



Natural beach and bluff habitat, such as this bluff north of Point Heyer, provide sediment for beaches and critical nearshore salmon rearing habitat.

King County Water & Land Resources was awarded a grant of \$513,333 from the Salmon Program from funds administered by NOAA fisheries. King County will use this grant to buy nearly 15 acres of shoreline on east Vashon Island to preserve the Point Heyer drift cell, which is the equivalent of a slow moving river of sand and gravel along the Puget Sound shoreline. This is part of a larger effort to preserve the entire drift cell, which begins at the feeder bluffs at Vashon Landing and ends 2.2 miles to the south at the Point Heyer barrier lagoon. Purchase of this land adds 5 acres of forest, nearly 5 acres of forested bluff and 484 feet of shoreline to the Point Heyer Natural Area.



Salmon Education with the Environmental Science Center



Students get hands-on education about salmon next to Walker Creek, working with naturalists from the Environmental Science Center.

Environmental Science Center had another successful season of Salmon and You programming during the fall of 2011. Over 2,200 students participated in programs lasting four hours; three hours were spent learning about salmon life cycles, habitat, and anatomy on site at The Cove in Normandy Park. Students especially enjoyed seeing spawning salmon returning to Miller and Walker Creeks during hikes along the creeks. These and other education programs continue with support from WRIA 9.



Things to Look for in 2012

- Changes to the King Conservation District Assessment
- [Riverview Park celebration and groundbreaking event](#) – June 6, 1:30 pm at Riverview Park in Kent, to RSVP call (253) 856-5504
- Yellow Bus Tour 2012 in August, with an opportunity to visit salmon habitat restoration sites in the watershed, with information from project sponsors
- [Duwamish Alive!](#) volunteer event on October 20, 2012, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at eleven sites along the Duwamish

Contact the WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Team

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[Website: www.govlink.org/watersheds](http://www.govlink.org/watersheds)