



Nearshore Habitat Restoration

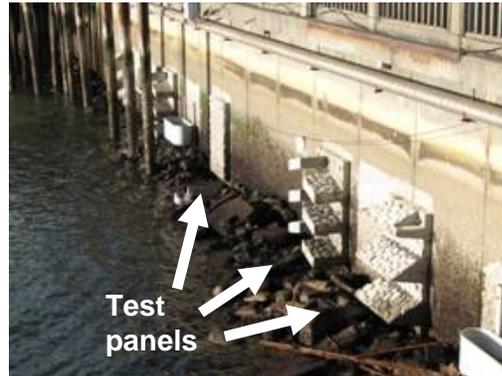


*Ellis Creek estuary looking toward the Dockton Road culvert.
Photo courtesy of King County.*

Restoration of the Ellis Creek Salt Marsh on Vashon Island will be completed this spring with the planting of native salt marsh plants. Construction in August 2007 reconnected a lobe of the salt marsh at the mouth of Ellis Creek by removing a dirt road that prevented tidal influence to the entire marsh. Juvenile Chinook salmon are expected to use the expanded area for rearing. King County is constructing this SRFB-funded project, which is Salmon Habitat Plan Project NS-10.



Nearshore Habitat Restoration



*One of three locations where Seattle is testing seawall treatments to improve nearshore habitat.
Photo courtesy of City of Seattle.*

How do you keep your seawall and salmon too? That's the question the City of Seattle is seeking answers to through a test of alternative seawall treatments. Three shapes, each with two different textures, are being studied at three locations to investigate their habitat value for plants and animals. Insights will allow future rebuilding of the seawall to improve its ecological function. This University of Washington study also is funded by NOAA Sea Grant and the King Conservation District in partnership with the WRIA 9 Forum.



Cross-Watershed Coordination



Over 80 persons from WRIAs 7, 8, 9, and 10 met December 12, 2007 at the Cedar River Watershed Education Center to discuss common issues. Participants agreed that priority topics for future cross-WRIA coordination are:

- Joint legislative agenda
- Public outreach and education
- Low impact development promotion



Lower Green River Restoration



*Wood being placed at the Briscoe levee in Kent.
Photo courtesy of King County Flood Control Zone District.*

During the summer of 2007, the Green River Flood Control Zone District reconstructed the Briscoe levee in Kent to repair damage from 2006 flooding. As with most modern levee projects, wood is used to protect the levee toe from erosion while improving habitat for fish. The 2007 approval of a county-wide flood levy ensures the construction of more salmon-friendly flood improvement projects in the Lower Green.



New Stewardship in Nearshore



Sue and Miranda plant trees along Miller Creek with assistance from the new basin steward Dennis Clark.

The fall of 2007 saw the kick-off of a new basin stewardship program in the Miller/Walker Creek basin in Burien, Normandy Park, and SeaTac (Nearshore Subwatershed). 125 persons worked to restore a segment of Miller Creek over two days in October 2007. Dennis Clark is the new, half-time basin steward. This stewardship program is jointly funded by the three cities, King County, and the Port of Seattle. This program helps implement Salmon Habitat Plan Program WW-10 recommending expanded stewardship.



King Conservation District Grants

The King Conservation District/WRIA 9 Forum partnership continues to improve the health of the watershed and conserve natural resources. Recent grants by KCD address key recommendations of the Salmon Habitat Plan:

- Nearshore restoration: \$150,000 for design and permitting of Phase II seawall removal at Seahurst Park in Burien
- On-the-ground restoration through citizen stewardship: \$50,000 for projects along the Middle Green River, Vashon Island, and Miller/Walker Creeks
- Education: \$17,000 for the popular Beach Naturalist Program by the Seattle Aquarium
- Regulatory improvements: \$36,700 for workshop for nearshore city staff to better understand beach/bluff ecology and applicable regulations



Nearshore Creek Restoration



A team of 5th graders from Gatewood Elementary samples for macro-invertebrates in the rebuilt channel near the mouth of Fautleroy Creek. Photo courtesy of Judy Pickens, Fautleroy Watershed Council.

The lower reach and mouth of Fautleroy Creek, situated on private property adjacent to Puget Sound, was restored in the latter half of 2007. The creek channel was widened and the banks planted with native vegetation. The new stream channel prevented flooding in the December 3 storm. This project was brought about in part through the long-time work of the Fautleroy Watershed Council with funding support from the Department of Ecology, City of Seattle, King County, and King Conservation District.



Salmon Habitat Plan Updated

In the fall of 2007, the WRIA 9 Steering Committee and Forum approved the first amendments to the Salmon Habitat Plan since its completion in August 2005. The amendments included seven new habitat protection/restoration projects on the Green/Duwamish and mainland nearshore. Also included was a refined and expanded list of nearshore projects on Vashon/Maury Island. These amendments were based on analysis completed and opportunities identified since 2005. [The amendments are available at the website.](#)

Also, the first progress report on implementation of the Salmon Habitat Plan is available at the [website](#). The report covers accomplishments by watershed partners from August 2005 to December 2007.

Contact the Salmon Habitat Team

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

[Doug Osterman](#), Watershed Coordinator, 206-296-8069

[Gordon Thomson](#), Habitat Plan Manager, 206-296-8013

[Dennis Clark](#), Stewardship, 206-296-1909

[Karen Bergeron](#), Funding, 206-296-8383

[Linda Grob](#), Administrative Support, 206-296-8016



Monitoring of Project Benefits



University of Washington researchers deploy a beach seine to capture juvenile salmonids and other fish at the Olympic Sculpture Park pocket beach.

Photo courtesy of Jason Toft, University of Washington.

The nearshore restoration at Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle is being monitored thanks in part to a grant from the King Conservation District. The University of Washington is surveying the physical beach profile, aquatic vegetation, invertebrates, and fish species in the area and comparing the improved sites with nearby unimproved shorelines. Monitoring occurred prior to construction and one year after construction. Monitoring is planned for years three and five as well.



Upcoming in 2008

- March 13 tour of low impact development (LID) sites
- Spring workshop for city planners/permit staff on beach/bluff ecology and applicable regulations
- Updates of Shoreline Master Programs by cities
- Puget Sound Partnership public awareness campaign
- Purchase of additional acreage around Bass/Beaver Lake in the Middle Green



Message from the Coordinator

Much is happening in WRIA 9. From the fresh water streams of the Cascades to the marine shores of Vashon/Maury Island, salmon habitat is being restored and protected. The Winter 2008 edition of "News Fit for a King" provides only a sketch of the work.

Behind the scenes, millions of dollars of habitat work is being teed up. This includes grant-writing to secure the funds necessary for projects. It also includes meetings with legislators on important legislation and funding needs to keep the rebirth of our watershed on track.

I am excited to be part of this rebirth. The collaborative approach to addressing the complex management issues within the watershed that affect salmon recovery is proving itself to be effective. And the future is bright. Look forward to new, innovative ways to "market" our shared task of salmon recovery. Anticipate more community support as we increase the ecological capital of the watershed. And, of course, look for more projects – like those described in this newsletter -- from the many watershed partners.

By informally working across agencies, WRIA 9 literally makes hundreds of informal interactions a month that are critically important to build the relationships, trust, commitments, and results necessary to restore and protect habitat. In each edition of this newsletter, we will bring you timely accomplishments and behind the scenes activities about how we are "Making Our Watershed Fit for a King."

- Doug