Snohomish County
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County, partners receive $5.7 million for salmon recovery

Snohomish County salmon recovery projects have received more than $5.7 million from the state Salmon Recovery Funding Board to improve Chinook salmon habit.

Multiple partners will apply the money to 13 habitat improvement projects along the Snohomish River and Stillaguamish River basins and one project in the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Basin.

“We have a responsibility to protect our region’s ecology and cultural heritage, and we can only do that by working together,” said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon. “These projects strike a balance between the need to protect salmon and a desire to maintain a high quality of life for our residents.”

The projects are sponsored by Snohomish and King counties, the Stillaguamish Tribe, the Tulalip Tribes, Seattle City Light, the Stilly-Snohomish Fisheries Enhancement Task Force, the Nature Conservancy and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Each project proposal was subjected to a rigorous review by local panels of scientific and community members. The prioritized projects were then forwarded by Snohomish County to the state Salmon Recovery Funding Board for further evaluation before being selected.

The project recommendations are part of comprehensive efforts in the Stillaguamish and Snohomish River basins to implement long-term salmon habitat conservation measures. Salmon conservation plans for both river basins were completed in 2005 as part of the regional recovery planning effort focused on Chinook salmon, which is listed as a threatened species in the Puget Sound under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Project sponsors are expected to match the state grants with additional funds from other sources. The total value of the projects is more than $8 million. The funding for Snohomish County projects is part of a larger distribution of $42.8 million for salmon habitat projects statewide.

For more information on Snohomish County projects, contact Tim Walls at 425.388.3781 or tim.walls@snoco.org. A full listing of projects statewide is available on the Salmon Recovery Funding Board Web site at www.iac.wa.gov.

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Snohomish County Project List

Stillaguamish Basin

- **Designing the Restoration of Jim Creek**
  Stilly-Snohomish Fisheries Enhancement Task Force, $123,675
  The Stilly-Snohomish Fisheries Enhancement Task Force will use this grant to partially design and apply for permits for projects to restore a 1-mile reach of lower Jim Creek. The creek is home to south fork Chinook salmon, which are at the threshold of extinction. Habitat conditions within and adjacent to Jim Creek are sub-optimal for Chinook and other salmon species. The task force will conduct field investigations on habitat conditions within the reach. Potential project elements include protection and enhancement of an existing logjam, adding logjams and installing fences and plants along the creek's banks.

- **Designing a Project to Treat the Gold Basin Landslide**
  Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians, $125,000
  The Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians will use this grant to develop a suite of alternatives for reducing the fine sediment deposited in the south fork of the Stillaguamish River from the Gold Basin landslide. This glacial deposit has been characterized as the largest, single source of sediment input to the river for several decades, much of which is deposited in the primary Chinook spawning reaches. One of the biggest hurdles to treating the landslide is its proximity to a popular U.S. Forest Service campground. Because the Chinook population is critically depressed, it is essential that major habitat improvements be implemented as soon as possible to prevent this stock from going extinct. Working with the U.S. Forest Service, the tribe will develop alternatives and develop a final design for the preferred alternative. The tribe will contribute $25,000.

- **Fixing Canyon Creek Roads**
  Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians, $522,366
  The Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians, working with the U.S. Forest Service, will use this grant to replace culverts and fix roads to minimize erosion and sediment deposition in Canyon Creek and the south fork of the Stillaguamish River. Canyon Creek has 26 miles of fish habitat. Sediment from the tributaries of Canyon Creek has damaged the water quality of the creek itself and the south fork of the Stillaguamish River since the mid 1980s. Canyon Creek is listed as an impaired water body because of warm temperatures, which are exacerbated by sediments. Crews will replace culverts, stabilize fill and fix 12 miles of mainline and spur roads in the watershed of the south fork of Canyon Creek, covering the upper 60 percent of the watershed. The tribe will contribute $92,250 in donated materials.

- **Protecting and Restoring Klein Farm**
  Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians, $900,000
  The Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians will use this grant to buy 60 acres of floodplain, remove 300 feet of bank armoring and enhance 28 acres of riverbank on the south fork of the Stillaguamish River. Protecting and enhancing the riverbanks will reduce water temperatures and increase habitat. Removing bank armoring will allow the river to migrate and restore habitat forming processes in the floodplain. Restoring floodplain functions in the Stillaguamish also has been identified as a cultural priority for the tribe. The tribe will contribute $160,000 in donations of labor, materials and cash.

- **Reconnecting the Blue Slough Side Channel**
  Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians, $200,000
  The Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians will use this grant to reestablish a nearly half-mile side channel that was cut off by the railroad in the 1930s. In the past 80 years, the river channel has filled with organic debris and fine sediment from nearby logging and livestock grazing. Crews in earlier projects removed enough muck and river bed material to put the channel at the same elevation as the river. With this grant, crews will install culverts to connect the slough to the river at both ends, allowing water to flow through the channel and provide winter and summer rearing areas for Chinook salmon. In addition, the tribe will place a logjam near the upstream culvert to provide backwater resting areas for young salmon entering the side channel. Crews also will plant the river banks with a mix of trees. The tribe will contribute $38,000 in donations of labor and materials.

- **Restoring Port Susan Bay Estuary**
  The Nature Conservancy, $750,000
  The Nature Conservancy will use this grant to remove nearly 1.4 miles of dike at its Port Susan Bay Preserve and build or augment nearly 1 mile of new dike to protect neighboring farmland. When complete, this project will fully restore riverine and tidal processes to 150 acres of former marsh and increase the quantity and quality of habitats for salmon, shorebirds and other estuarine-dependent species. The project also will enhance the flow of water, wood and sediment to areas outside the project area whose functions have been impaired. This project is an integral component of a larger effort to restore ecological functions to the Stillaguamish estuary, which has been modified by historical, large-scale, physical alterations that have reduced the capacity of the system to support estuary-dependent species. The Nature Conservancy will contribute $1.25 million from a federal grant.

Snohomish Basin

- **Assessing Restoration Projects for the Snoqualmie-Fall City Reach**
  King County, $184,300
  The King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks will use this grant to identify, quantify and prioritize habitat restoration projects on the Snoqualmie River, between the confluence of Raging River and Patterson Creek. The area is one of the two core Chinook spawning areas in the Snoqualmie River. Historically, fish had access to off-channel areas but levees, revetments and past land uses have reduced the river's ability to access these critical rearing areas. King County has identified nine potential projects as a starting point and will evaluate revetments, levees, roads and other structures in this reach in an effort to set back or remove levees and revetment, restore natural processes and increase productivity of salmon species, including Chinook salmon and steelhead. The assessment would characterize reach conditions, identify potential projects, explore opportunities and constraints, compare and contrast ecological benefits and create a sequence for undertaking the projects. In addition, conceptual designs will be developed for a minimum of five projects and a partial design will be developed for one project. King County will contribute $20,000.

- **Restoring Tolt River Riparian Area**
  Seattle City Light, $40,000
  Seattle City Light, in partnership with the Stilly Snohomish Fisheries Enhancement Task Force, will use this grant to control Himalayan blackberry and other non-native species on 3 acres along the Tolt River. Crews will treat the area annually for 3 years

and then replant the area with native trees and shrubs. The project site is on the lower Tolt River in the San Souci area where King County is trying to protect salmon habitat and restore river processes. Seattle City Light will contribute $33,751 in equipment, labor and materials.

- **Assessing Restoration Projects for the Middle Pilchuck River Reach**
  Snohomish County, $268,950
  Snohomish County will use this grant to develop projects to restore habitat in the Pilchuck River. The river, historically a major Chinook salmon producer, now supports only about 100 natural origin spawners a year. County staff will assess habitat forming processes along an 8-mile reach of the river and provide guidance on project site selection, project design and coordination among entities working in the basin. Snohomish County also will complete designs on three high-priority projects. Snohomish County will contribute $47,475 in donated labor.

- **Restoring Smith Island Marsh**
  Snohomish County, $1.5 million
  Snohomish County will use this grant to build a set-back levee, reconnect remnant tidal channels and place large woody materials in a 400-acre marsh on Smith Island in Union Slough to increase habitat for Chinook salmon. The work will include sculpting the land to create slopes and islands, suppressing invasive plants and planting native vegetation. Crews also will fill a drainage ditch system and till the land to speed up natural channel formation. This project is part of a larger Smith Island restoration project to restore the 400-acre marsh. A future phase of the project will remove thousands of feet of existing levee. Snohomish County will contribute $265,000 from a state grant.

- **Studying Nearshore Sediment Nourishment Feasibility**
  Snohomish County, $142,280
  Snohomish County will use this grant to identify beach restoration projects along the railroad impounded shoreline, from Pigeon Creek to a stream west of Japanese Gulch in Mukilteo. County staff will identify the most suitable locations for beach habitat restoration using physical, biological and socio-economic criteria, and prepare a preliminary project design for one project. Snohomish County will contribute $25,200 from a federal grant.

- **Removing a Levee for the Qwuloolt Estuary Restoration**
  Tulalip Tribes, $500,000
  The Tulalip Tribes will use this grant to breach a levee along Ebey Slough and build a setback levee to protect properties in the floodplain. The project is part of a larger, $7.8 million project to restore the Qwuloolt estuary and reconnect it to 350 acres of isolated floodplain. The project also will restore two stream systems and provide unrestricted fish access to 16 miles of spawning and rearing habitat. The Tulalip Tribes will contribute $90,000 from a federal grant.

- **Studying How to Restore Ebey Island**
  Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, $200,000
  The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will use this grant to study how ecological functions can best be restored on 1,237 acres owned by the department south of State Route 2 on Ebey Island. Presently, the island is fully diked, separating vast areas of former tidal wetlands from the estuary. There are a number of ways this land could be used, and a variety of people are interested in restoring habitat, creating more recreational opportunities, maintaining agriculture, maintaining or improving

the integrity of the dike, protecting other landowners and protecting pipelines and roads. This grant will fund studies of the hydrology and other geophysical characteristics of the site, protection of infrastructure and neighbors and social interests. The study will identify preferred options for restoration of the area, and satisfaction of the other interests, for several alternatives. The department will contribute $136,000 from a grant and donated labor.

Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Basin

- **Restoring North Creek**
  Snohomish County, $315,360
  The Snohomish County Public Works Department will use this grant to improve spawning and rearing habitat for Chinook salmon, which are threatened with extinction, and coho and sockeye salmon. Along a quarter mile of North Creek, crews will remove riprap and a footbridge; stabilize eroding stream banks; place large, woody materials in the creek; plant trees and shrubs along the creek banks; remove invasive species and fill material; and engage residents and students in the restoration project and in ongoing project stewardship. The land is privately owned in the middle reach of North Creek between 208th Street Southeast and the city of Mill Creek. The creek banks were damaged by the loss of trees and shrubs, erosion, lawn cultivation, invasive plants and retaining walls. Snohomish County will contribute $126,415 in cash, federal grants and donations of labor and materials.

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