

"THE SALMON DANCE ON ITS FIRST ARRIVAL"

Yil-me-lhu

WINTER 2014/2015



THE NISQUALLY WATERSHED SALMON RECOVERY NEWSLETTER | WHAT'S INSIDE:

SALISH SEA SALMON SURVIVAL RESEARCH
Restoration of Ohop Creek Meanders Ahead
BUSY WILD FOREST ACQUISITION



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Cover photo: Landscape image of forestland in the Busy Wild Creek area of the Nisqually River watershed.
Photo: Ashley Von Essen

If you would like to learn more about the Nisqually watershed, visit the Nisqually River Council's website at nisquallyriver.org. The Nisqually River Council is implementing its Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan, which seeks to encourage sustainability efforts in the watershed while continuing the long legacy of working toward collaborative environmental management with watershed communities. Visit the website to find out more information about this and other stewardship efforts within the watershed. You can also become a Facebook friend of the Nisqually River Council to get updates on Nisqually watershed news and events.

 Printed with soy-based ink on recycled paper that is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.



Yil-me-hu

Yil-me-hu, Nisqually word that means "the salmon dance, on its first arrival."

The first fish ceremony — The first fish caught in the spring was prepared in an earth pit stove, shared and eaten by members of the village. The bones, left intact, were returned to the river, pointing upstream. This display was symbolic. It meant that the villagers were respectful to the fish spirits and wished that, because the ceremony had been done correctly, many more fish would come up the stream during that year. A dance followed the ceremony called the "yil-me-hu," a Nisqually word that means "the salmon dance, on its first arrival."*

* Carpenter, Cecilia Svinth, Fort Nisqually: A Documented History of Indian and British Interaction. A Tahoma Research Publication. 1986. p13.

Nisqually Indian Tribe



Natural Resources Department

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Yil-me-hu is published by the Nisqually Tribe Natural Resources Department to provide information about activities associated with the protection and restoration of salmon and their habitat in the Nisqually watershed. The newsletter is distributed to persons and entities who are interested in or engaged in salmon recovery efforts, and to the community at large.



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

David Troutt

U.S. is Not Spending Enough to Recover Salmon

Salmon recovery is much maligned these days by those who think that the United States is spending too much money to recover salmon and that more reliance should be put on science when choosing which animals to save. Those who hold that view are not familiar with recovery efforts in Washington.

In a recent guest column in the Seattle times, the author noted that Congress redirected funding to salmon and a handful of other animals while hundreds of others got almost nothing. The author then cited as an improvement an approach where experts plot out the actions needed to save each species, estimate their chances of success and put the estimates together in a numbers-based approach to find the most efficient possible ways to spend money.

Washington's salmon recovery efforts take that same science-based approach. Across our state, watershed groups, and hundreds of scientists, government officials, and citizens have plotted out the actions needed to save salmon based on the factors inhibiting them. Scientists have identified the specific problems in each river or water body and then painstakingly written plans to fix those problems and prioritized the projects. Then as the plans are being implemented, the state (through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board) monitors the results and makes adjustments as needed. Citizens can track progress through a web site (www.rco.wa.gov/salmon_recovery) and see the results by species and in many cases by river. To say that Washington's efforts should be based more on science is to not understand the three layers of scientific review that recovery projects go through, the prioritization of projects, and the tracking of success.

So do salmon get too much funding? If you add up the cost of all the projects that local watershed groups have in their three-year plans, current spending would fund less than a third. Much of the problem that put salmon on the endangered species list in the first place was how we developed the land as we grew as a state. Decades of armoring our shorelines, developing adjacent to rivers and creeks, unrestricted logging, untreated runoff from our streets, roofs and lawns has taken its toll. The treaty tribes in Western Washington recently released a report (www.nwifc.org/sow) revealing that development is still eating up more habitat than we are protecting and restoring. Our laws just don't do enough to protect habitat.

Should salmon receive priority over other species? Not all flowers, frogs, and fish are created equal. While the environmentalist in me would like to say we need to save everything, I'm practical enough to know that's not possible.

What we have to understand about salmon recovery is that it isn't only about salmon. What we are really saving is the essence of what it means to live in Washington.

We are saving salmon so our tribal fishermen can exercise their federally secured treaty rights and maintain their cultures, all of our fishing communities still can offer jobs to the next generation of fisher men and women, to fishing boat owners, fishing guides, marinas, mom-and-pop tackle shops, hotels, restaurants, outdoor outfitters, and to people that fish commercially or are employed in the recreational fishing industry. A state report notes that commercial and recreational fishing alone in Washington is estimated to support 16,000 jobs and \$540 million in personal income.

We are saving salmon so that we can save other animals, such as Orcas that depend on salmon. We are saving salmon because when we save the land, water, trees and air they need, we are restoring the natural function of our rivers and creeks so they may provide a sustainable source of salmon for the next several generations. We are saving salmon because when we restore rivers we let them function naturally in concert with communities, and landowners concerns including flooding, stream bank erosion, and road crossings can be addressed. We are saving salmon because it will also save us.

Recovering salmon isn't done overnight. What took generations to destroy will take generations to rebuild. Rather than criticize our Congressional delegation, we need to thank people like Patty Murray, Maria Cantwell, and Norm Dicks, for understanding that salmon recovery isn't just about the salmon. It's about being a Washingtonian and fighting for our way of life.

RESTORATION OF OHOP CREEK MEANDERS AHEAD

After decades in the planning stages, construction work to re-meander and restore the lower 1.5 mile segment (phase 3) of Ohop Creek to its historical forested condition began during July of this year as a group effort among the Nisqually Land Trust, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group. Upstream phases 1 and 2 of Ohop Creek restoration began in 2009, within a one mile section of the floodplain and creek purchased by the Nisqually Land Trust. Since restoration began, changes in wildlife presence and use have increased within the restored area, as documented by citizen scientists during Nature Mapping events.

Volunteers pose for a group photo after planting Ohop Phase 3



Photo: Don Perry



Photo: Don Perry

Personnel from the Nisqually Land Trust, Nisqually Indian Tribe, South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group, USFWS, WDFWS, Americorps, and Nisqually River Foundation participated in the two-day fish out of the abandoned section of Ohop Creek. Aquatic life captured and released into the newly created stream included coho salmon, lamprey, sculpin, crayfish and freshwater mussels.

The restored stream will feature a variety of in-stream habitats including engineered log jams and pools and eddies, which will provide rest stops and habitat for migrating and rearing fish. Re-vegetation of the lower floodplain areas with native trees and shrubs will be accomplished by groups of students, adult volunteers, and the Nisqually Indian Tribe's field restoration technicians. "These efforts to re-meander Ohop Creek will provide much better salmon habitat with the addition of thousands of native trees and shrubs and large wood in the stream bed," said David Troutt, natural resources director for the Nisqually Indian Tribe.

Ohop Creek is one of two major tributaries to the Nisqually River that can support Chinook salmon and steelhead—species that are both listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. Ohop Creek also supports coho and pink salmon and cutthroat trout. "Despite millions of dollars spent to restore and protect available salmon habitat, we are witnessing an alarming increase of its disappearance," Troutt said. "The Ohop Creek restoration effort will improve salmon productivity, while protecting valuable salmon habitat."

Aerial view of Ohop Valley shows the previous upstream phases 1 & 2, and the current phase 3 section of restoration to forest floodplain ecosystem. Construction will be completed in 2015. Floodplain planting will be completed in 2017.

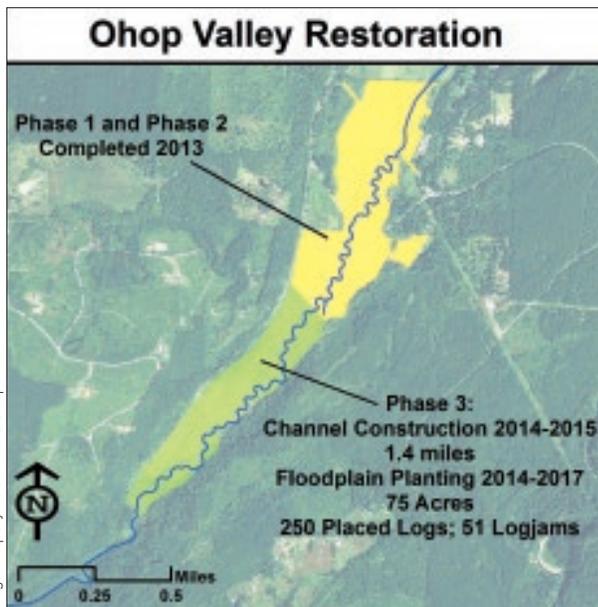


Image: Nisqually Indian Tribe GIS Department



Land Acquisition Holds Promise for Steelhead Recovery and Community Forest

Busy Wild Creek

Two eleventh-hour proposals to acquire critical habitat for threatened Nisqually steelhead trout have received the top rankings in their respective grant competitions and will be proposed to the state legislature for funding in the next biennium budget.

Jointly prepared by the Nisqually Land Trust and the Nisqually Indian Tribe, the proposals could bring \$7 million into the watershed for protection of almost two thousand acres of forestlands and nearly fifteen miles of salmon shoreline and feeder streams.

“This news could not have come at a better time,” said Chris Ellings, Salmon Recovery Program Manager for the Nisqually Tribe’s Natural Resources Department. “We’re down to average spawning runs of just 400 adult steelhead. We have a species on the verge of blinking out. Protecting this habitat is an absolute top priority to keep this species viable.”

A proposal for \$6 million is ranked first in the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Fund’s Large Capital Project category, and a complementary proposal for \$1.1 million is the top-ranked project in the Riparian category of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.

The properties are located along Busy Wild Creek, the headwaters of the Mashel River. The Mashel is the largest tributary to the Nisqually River and was once one of the Northwest’s premier steelhead streams, with annual spawning runs of up to 8,500 fish.

Last December the Nisqually Indian Tribe developed the state’s first Puget Sound steelhead recovery plan, which dramatically documented the fragile condition of the watershed’s steelhead population and called out the seven miles of Busy

Wild Creek as highest priority for protection and restoration of steelhead and Chinook salmon spawning habitat.

Shortly thereafter, the Land Trust learned that sensitive areas of the upper Busy Wild were scheduled for commercial timber harvest in the summer of 2014, which the Tribe’s fisheries biologists believed could have a devastating impact on the remaining steelhead population.

Alerted to the potential threat to steelhead viability, the landowner, Hancock Natural Resource Group, agreed to postpone harvest pending Land Trust acquisition of at least a portion of the property by the close of this year, with the remainder to be secured over the next two to three years.

“These acquisitions are a long way from a sure thing,” said Land Trust Executive Director Joe Kane. “They depend on many variables, including the legislature’s willingness to fund the grant programs and our ability to reach agreement with the landowner on fair-market value for the properties. And even in the best case, the funds won’t be available until next year.”

Based on the grant rankings, however, and a history of successful conservation projects with Hancock, the Land Trust will take the risk of borrowing money for the first purchase in advance of funding certainty. “There really is no question that we have to do it,” said Kane. “When weighing risks, the possibility of losing a species is the one we can’t afford to take.”

The Tribe and the Land Trust envision the potential acquisition as a cornerstone project for the new Nisqually Community Forest, which proposes to build a locally owned forest at landscape scale and manage it for the benefit of the Nisqually Watershed community, including jobs, forest products, clean water, and protected wildlife habitat.

Photo: Craig Smith



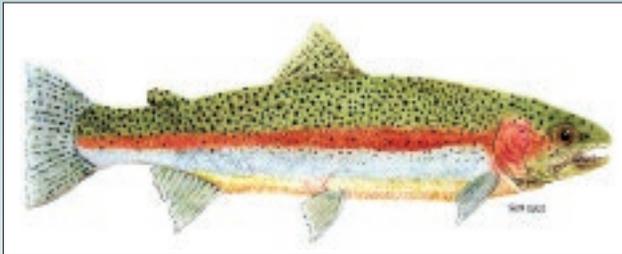
Nearshore Beach Seine sampling of Chinook and coho is conducted to measure growth and to sample diets.



A plankton sample

Plankton sampling in South Puget Sound is accomplished to monitor food availability and ecosystem structure. Food availability affects the survival of salmon as they migrate from the estuary ecosystem to the marine environment.

A reciprocal study among several watersheds is underway where young steelhead are trapped, acoustic tagged, then transplanted to those other watersheds. Survival rates are monitored as they migrate through Puget Sound to the marine environment.



Acoustic tagging (surgical insertion of mini signal transmitters) and tracking of salmon and steelhead is performed to measure survival. Receivers in Puget Sound record the whereabouts and survival of tagged fish.



Harbor Seal migration patterns are being tracked to assess their threat as major predators of salmon.

A specially designed net is deployed at different depths to collect plankton samples.



Nisqually Indian Tribe partnering on Salish Sea salmon survival research

The Nisqually Indian Tribe Salmon Recovery Program biologists and technicians joined over 150 researchers from over 40 groups in Canada and the U.S. to investigate salmon survival in the Salish Sea. Salmon and steelhead populations in Puget Sound have declined for the last 30 years, despite considerable efforts and funding for recovery. Over that time Chinook, coho, and steelhead survival in the Salish Sea has been very poor. The primary goal of the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project is to identify the causes of salmon mortality in the Salish Sea, including all of Puget Sound and the Georgia Basin, and prioritize recovery actions. Additionally, the project will establish a suite of ecosystem indicators for the Salish Sea that will substantially improve our ability to forecast salmon runs and track the health of the Salish Sea over time.

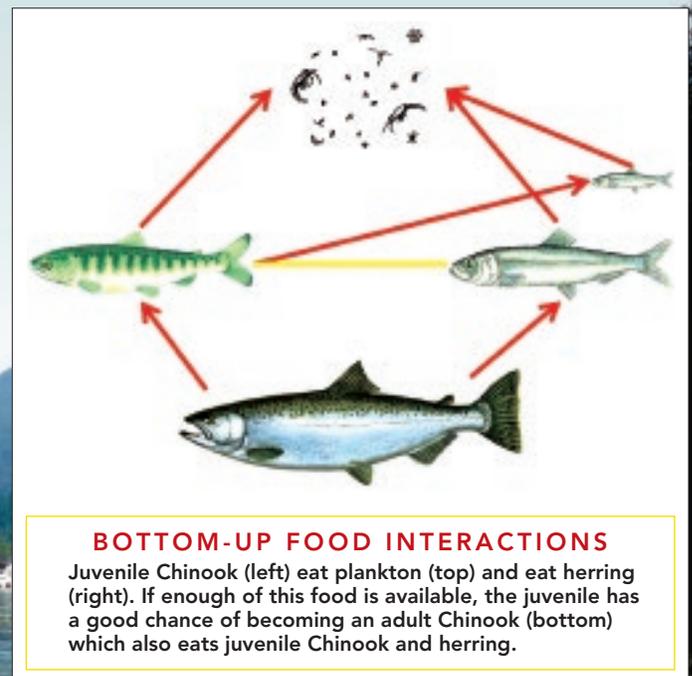
The Salish Sea Marine Survival research effort is particularly important for Nisqually salmon and steelhead because they migrate a greater distance through Puget Sound than almost any other stock. This greater migration distance makes Nisqually salmon and steelhead more susceptible than other stocks to factors in the Puget Sound that reduce their survival. In other words, problems in Puget Sound are likely to have the largest impact on Nisqually River salmon and steelhead stocks because they must swim through the entire length of Puget Sound before reaching the ocean.

Like all marine ecosystems the Puget Sound ecosystem is a complex web of interactions in which the survival of salmon and steelhead can be influenced by many factors. These factors are often divided into one of two categories: "Bottom Up"; and "Top Down." Bottom Up factors refer to the availability of food and habitat (see diagram), while Top Down factors refer to

impacts from predators. Nisqually Indian Tribe biologists and our partners are participating in research that will assess both the Bottom Up and Top Down factors. Some of these efforts include:

- Acoustic tagging and tracking of steelhead to measure survival;
- Nearshore Beach Seine sampling of Chinook and coho to sample diets and measure growth;
- Zooplankton sampling in South Puget Sound to monitor food availability and ecosystem structure;
- Reciprocal Transplant and Disease Evaluation of steelhead to evaluate causes of rapid mortality; and
- Harbor Seal migration patterns and potential as major predators on juvenile steelhead.

Despite hundreds of millions of dollars spent on recovering salmon and steelhead in Puget Sound including dramatic cuts in harvest, most populations continue to struggle. The common thread between all stocks is that they rely on the Salish Sea as juveniles migrating to the ocean and as adults returning to their rivers of origin. It is imperative to work with all partners from Olympia, WA to Nanaimo, B.C. in order to better understand why salmon and steelhead are dying in the Salish Sea. Recovery depends on finding answers and taking bold actions.



NEW FACES



Ashley Von Essen and friend

Ashley Von Essen

was welcomed to the Nisqually Indian Tribe's Natural Resources Department this past March as the Salmon Recovery Restoration Coordinator. Since then, she has worked to represent the Nisqually Lead Entity, promoting the development of locally supported, science-based salmon recovery projects. She works with project sponsors to facilitate grant funding processes, and also maintains databases that allow lead entities, such as the Nisqually Tribe, to track and share habitat protection and restoration projects. Ashley also coordinates the watershed's technical advisory group, the Nisqually Salmon Habitat Work group. Lastly, she takes the lead in planning local festivals that celebrate the history, culture and environment of the watershed.

Originally from Loves Park, Illinois, Ashley moved to Olympia five years ago to pursue a Bachelors of Science at The Evergreen State College. During her senior year, Ashley gained experience as an intern with the Nisqually River Foundation (NRF), educating watershed students and participating in service-learning activities. After earning her degree, Ashley became a permanent employee of NRF as the coordinator of the Nisqually River Council. Her time in Nisqually has allowed her to gain valuable knowledge about the watershed while working with local residents and stakeholders. In her free time, Ashley enjoys being in the outdoors, hiking and camping, entomology, laughing as often as possible, and collecting and refinishing antiques.

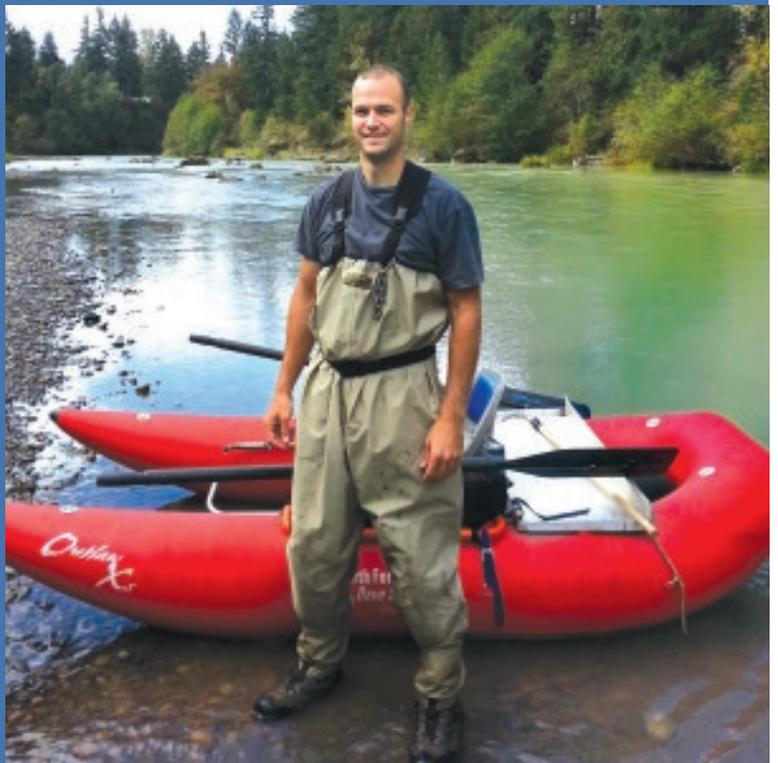
Jed Moore

Native Oregonian comes to the Nisqually Natural Resources Department with a background in aquatic research and collaborative research experience among fishermen and scientists. Jed earned a Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology at the University of Oregon, and a master's degree in Marine Resource Management at Oregon State University.

Salmon recovery is a big job and Jed's duties have included conducting spawning surveys for Chinook and steelhead, collecting and reporting on data from the Tribe's fish weir and on the status of Puget Sound food webs that are important to salmon survival.

Jed's previous salmon and marine science work includes working as a project coordinator for the non-profit organization Long Live the Kings, deck hand on an ocean research vessel for Oregon State University, and as a graduate researcher evaluating collaborative research efforts between fishermen and scientists. Jed enjoys spending time with his two young children, hiking, and recreating on and around the Puget Sound.

Jed Moore on the Nisqually River



NISQUALLY FIELD TECHNICIAN CREW SETS NEW RECORD

The Nisqually Field Technician Crew has set a new record in the numbers of native plants installed at restoration sites in the Nisqually River watershed. Since the 2007-2008 planting season, the crew has installed nearly 180,000 plants while racking up a total of 267 acres planted.

Installing native plants isn't everything that keeps them busy in their work. The field technicians also monitor and maintain all restoration planting sites, which includes calculating the survival rate of all plants installed at each site, monitoring and removal of invasive plants, and watering plants as needed to ensure their survival. "Our field technicians have restored areas in the Nisqually River watershed that are critical salmon habitat," said David Troutt, natural resources director for the Nisqually Indian Tribe. "These restoration efforts will improve salmon productivity as well as help protect that habitat from loss."

CREW STATISTICS :

ACRES PLANTED:	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
	25 Acres	33 Acres	47 Acres	49 Acres	48 Acres	35 Acres	30 Acres
TOTAL ACRES: 267 Acres		TOTAL NUMBER OF PLANTS INSTALLED FOR ALL YEARS: 179,130					

The Nisqually Field Technicians (l to r) Sam Stepetin, Ed Villegas, Robert McGee, Kyle Kautz.



Land Trust to Transfer Nisqually River Shoreline Property to Nisqually Indian Tribe

In September the Nisqually Land Trust and the Nisqually Indian Tribe announced that the Land Trust will transfer ownership of a property totaling 71 acres, including over a mile of Nisqually River shoreline, to the Tribe for incorporation into the new Nisqually-Mashel State Park near Eatonville.

In a history-making relationship, the Nisqually Tribe is partnering with Washington State Parks to cooperatively build and manage the new park. The property adjoins timberlands the Tribe recently acquired for the park and is located between the river's two largest tributaries, the Mashel River and Ohop Creek, an area with deep historical and cultural significance for the Tribe.

The Land Trust acquired the property in 2009 with funding from the Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board and donations from supporters and the landowner, Manke Timber. Threatened Chinook salmon and steelhead trout use the property's shoreline for spawning and rearing, and adult Chinook use it for holding while waiting to enter the Mashel River.

The property was threatened by development of the bluffs above the shoreline, which were ripe for subdivision into ten- and twenty-acre forested homesites.

"As the lead entity for salmon recovery in the Nisqually Watershed," said Land Trust President JW Foster, "the Tribe is well-positioned to protect and enhance this property's salmon-producing characteristics while also developing the site for public access to the Nisqually River shoreline, which is a rare and precious commodity. We're proud to be a partner in this effort."

The Tribe's park properties adjoin properties acquired by the state and are located across the river from a large block of permanently protected wildlife habitat owned by Tacoma Power.

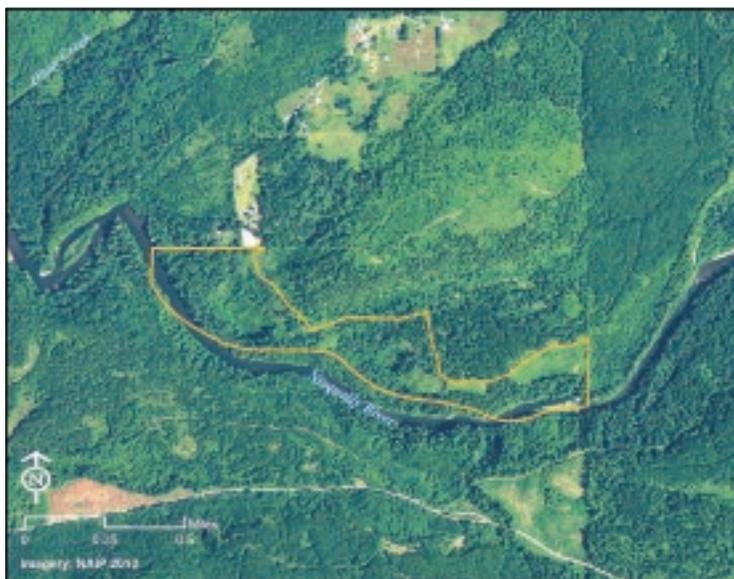


Image: Nisqually Indian Tribe GIS Department

The property to be transferred lies within the yellow border.

Celebrate the Return of the Kings!

2nd Annual Eatonville Salmon Fest

A FREE family event!

Saturday, October 18, 2014
10am - 3pm ➔ Mill Pond Park

See spawning salmon live on Salmon TV! ➔

➔ Bring a T-shirt to make your own salmon print!

Hands-on activities for children & adults! ➔

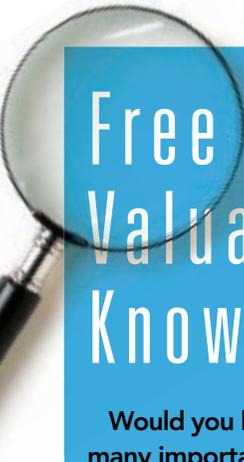
➔ Live music, great food, and much, much more!

nisquallyriver.org/eatonvillesalmonfest

Eatonville Salmon Fest

For the second year in a row, the Eatonville Salmon Fest was a successful event, blessed with excellent weather and a view of Mt. Rainier from Eatonville's Mill Pond Park. With participation from local and out of town residents, there was something for the entire family to enjoy. Delicious food options and entertainment was provided by members of the local community, with a number of educational displays, and hands-on activities.

Popular activities included exploring the Drain Dare, an interactive educational display that teaches how stormwater flows into streams and creeks and affects salmon; Fin the Migrating Salmon, in which children can climb inside and learn about the amazing salmon life cycle; face painting and henna tattoos; assembling a salmon life-cycle keychain; salmon print t-shirts and opportunities to search for treasures in a haystack.



Free Course Offers Valuable Skills and Knowledge

Would you like to acquire new skills and learn about many important natural resources topics and the Nisqually River Watershed? Then, a reserved seat awaits your phone call or email enrollment in the free Nisqually Stream Stewards training course.

Offered at no cost for 7-weeks each summer during the months of June and July, the Nisqually Stream Stewards course is packed with hands-on opportunities to learn new skills and experiences. "Meeting other people who are interested in natural resources and learning about geology, salmon, and the many other natural resources topics in the class will help me better understand other natural resources topics and issues for the rest of my life" said Grace Ann Byrd, graduate of the 2014 Stream Stewards course.

The 2014 Stream Stewards class learned how to analyze water samples and how to collect and identify benthic macro invertebrates while learning about the salmon and geology of the Nisqually River Watershed. Field tours included visiting several restoration sites, Nature Mapping at Braget Marsh, a section of the largest restoration site north of San Francisco Bay, visiting an old growth trail at Pack Forest, UW's Center for Sustainable Forestry, the Nisqually Indian Tribe's salmon hatchery and community garden, and a near pristine prairie habitat area.



(L to R) Stream Stewards Hanna Bridgham, Tamera Talley, Del Price, and Sandy Pecor collect benthic macro invertebrate (stream-bug) samples for analysis to determine how healthy the stream is for salmon.

In return for the skills and knowledge learned, students are asked to give 40 hours of volunteer time to help restore habitat areas, collect stream-bug or water samples for water quality analysis, staff the Stream Stewards display at community events, record salmon spawning data, or helping build rain gardens, to name just a few possibilities.

To enroll in the Stream Stewards course for 2015, contact Don Perry, Outreach & Education Coordinator, at (360) 438-8687 ext 2143, or perry.don@nisqually-nsn.gov. Early registration is recommended, as seating is limited to the first 20 applicants.

Face painting was a big hit at this year's Eatonville Salmon Fest.



Photo: Don Perry

The Eatonville Salmon Fest will return again to Mill Pond Park in Eatonville on Saturday, October 17, 2015. Mark your calendars, and join us for another fun day for the entire family!



Photo: Don Perry



Natural Resources Department

Nisqually Natural Resources
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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

This issue's volunteer focus is on Grace Ann Byrd, member of the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and graduate of the 7-week Nisqually Stream Stewards course. The first thing you notice about Grace Ann is her broad smile and positive attitude. The second thing one notices is her passion for living close to the earth. She works full time at the Nisqually Indian Tribe's community garden, is a master gardener, a Nisqually fisher and more recently, a graduate of the Nisqually Stream Stewards training course.

"All I ever wanted to do was work for the Nisqually Tribe," said Grace Ann. "I've worked in various positions for the Nisqually Health Department, the Nisqually Library and the Red Wind Casino. Now, I am happier than ever as I am living my dream of working close to the earth, nurturing life and growing nutritious food at our community garden." The Nisqually Tribe's Community Garden is in its 5th year of operation, growing vegetables and medicinal plants, promoting healthy lifestyles, offering classes and training and providing employment for the Nisqually Tribal Community.



Photo: Don Perry

Grace Ann Byrd harvesting vegetables at the Nisqually Indian Tribe's Community Garden.

Grace Ann is looking forward to becoming a Salmon Watcher on one of the Nisqually watershed's salmon streams, and planting native trees and shrubs at restoration sites. "The Stream Stewards course pulled me like a magnet when I saw the recruiting announcement. Meeting other people who are interested in natural resources and learning about geology, salmon, and the many other natural resources topics in the class will help me better understand other natural resources topics and issues for the rest of my life."

VOLUNTEER CALENDAR



JANUARY 31, 2015

Saturday ■ 9 am to 1 pm
Site Stewards Workshop
Contact: volunteer@nisquallylandtrust.org
(360) 489-3400

FEBRUARY 14, 2015

Saturday ■ 9 am to 12 noon
Nature Mapping, Ohop Creek
Contact: Rachael.mueller@nwtrek.org
(360) 832-7160

MARCH 28, 2015

Saturday ■ 9 am to 12 noon
Nature Mapping Powell Pasture
Contact: volunteer@nisquallylandtrust.org
(360) 489-3400

APRIL 18, 2015

Saturday ■ 9 am to 12 noon
Work Party, Ohop Valley
Contact: volunteer@nisquallylandtrust.org
(360) 489-3400

MAY 2, 2015

Saturday ■ 9 am to 12 noon
Nature Mapping, Wilcox Flats
Contact: Rachael.mueller@nwtrek.org
(360) 832-7160

JUNE 3 THRU JULY 18, 2015

Wednesday Evenings & Saturdays
Nisqually Stream Stewards Training Course
(free training)
Contact: Don Perry,
perry.don@nisqually-nsn.gov
(360) 439-8687 ext 2143