

# NEWS RELEASE

*WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE*

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## **Grants awarded for Puget Sound shoreline restoration projects**

Local efforts to restore Puget Sound estuaries and preserve natural shoreline to benefit salmon have been given a boost with \$2.5 million in state funding.

The state funding was awarded under the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program, established by the Legislature earlier this year as part of Gov. Chris Gregoire's Puget Sound Initiative. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is the funding agency.

The funds will match other local, state and federal funding to implement nine estuary and shoreline conservation and restoration projects with a total value of more than \$20 million from Bellingham to Olympia.

The grants were announced recently by the Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership's executive committee. The partnership is co-chaired by WDFW and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Members include seven federal agencies, tribes, local governments, state agencies and non-governmental organizations.

"Each of these projects represents not just a step towards restoring Puget Sound, but also an opportunity to advance our knowledge of the Sound through strong monitoring plans that track project performance and will inform future decisions," said Jeff Koenings, WDFW director. "This work by local governments, tribes, citizens and NGO's is an example of the public/private partnership the Governor has identified as essential to restore Puget Sound."

Funded projects include:

### **Qwuloolt Marsh Restoration, \$385,140**

Marysville (Snohomish County)

Funds will be used for stream restoration and site-preparation activities, including interior levee construction and dike removal, as part of the Qwuloolt Estuary Restoration Project. The overall project is an interagency and community effort to restore tidal processes and a functioning intertidal marsh system to more than 360 acres of floodplain within the lower Snohomish River estuary. That project will open 16 miles of upstream spawning and rearing habitat to salmon and restore two natural stream

channels by removing tide gate barriers and up to 4,000 feet of levee. **Sponsor:** Tulalip Tribes of Washington.

**Local contact:** Kurt Nelson, (360) 651-4485

**Wiley Slough Restoration, \$241,589**

Skagit Wildlife Area, near Conway (Skagit County)

Funds will be used for 2007 construction season activities including levee and tidegate work to protect adjacent agricultural fields in connection with the Wiley Slough restoration project. The overall project will remove dikes on 175 acres of land to restore estuary habitat for a variety of fish, wildlife, including chinook salmon protected under the Endangered Species Act, and wintering waterfowl. **Sponsor:** Skagit River System Cooperative.

**Local contact:** Steve Hinton, (360) 466-7243

**South Smith Island– Union Slough Dike Breach, \$200,000**

Everett (Snohomish County)

Funding will pay for breaching an existing dike and constructing bridges for a dike-top pedestrian access trail, as part of an effort to restore natural river and tidal functions to 93 acres of the lower Snohomish River estuary. The project will provide habitat for chinook, coho and chum salmon that historically existed in Union Slough. A 4,600-foot section of Union Slough dike, no longer required for flood control, will be operated as a pedestrian trail with native riparian vegetation. Work is scheduled to begin this summer in the northern project area and be completed in 2007. **Sponsor:** City of Everett Public Works.

**Local contact:** Heather Griffin, (425) 257-7206

**Olympic Sculpture – Myrtle Edwards Park, \$96,250**

Seattle (King County)

Funds will pay for development of an outreach program highlighting nearshore restoration efforts, and evaluation of project benefits for juvenile salmon. The Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park will create a 1.5 acres of salmon habitat in Elliott Bay on the southern end of Myrtle Edwards Park, by removing fill and creating a shallow water bench and kelp forest along 990 feet of waterfront. The shoreline habitat created by the park will benefit species including juvenile chinook and chum salmon emerging from the Green/Duwamish river system. **Sponsor:** Seattle Art Museum.

**Local contact:** Chris Rogers, (206) 654-3221.

**Belfair State Park Estuary Restoration, \$200,000**

Belfair (Mason County)

Funds will pay for removal of some 30,000 cubic yards of fill and rip-rap and restoration of natural channels of Big and Little Mission creeks, as part of a project to restore 10 acres of inter-tidal wetlands at Belfair State Park. The habitat restoration will improve water quality, habitat and estuary functions to benefit juvenile summer chum and chinook salmon, bull trout, steelhead, cutthroat trout, and a unique run of late summer/early fall chum salmon which spawn within the project site. The work includes flood-mitigation measures to protect park infrastructure and neighboring properties, construction of a new beach and landscaping. **Sponsor:** Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group.

**Local Contact:** Neil Werner, (360) 275-0373

**Smuggler’s Slough Restoration Design, \$66,000**

Nooksack River Estuary, near Bellingham (Whatcom County)

Funding will pay for design work, including five models showing the impacts of various levels of habitat restoration on adjacent agricultural lands, as part of an effort to improve fish passage through six to seven miles of tidal slough and floodplain wetlands that are blocked by tide gates, levees and impassable culverts. The work is part of the Smuggler’s Slough Restoration project, aimed at improving fish passage through the Nooksack River estuary by re-establishing an estuary environment on more than 1,000 acres of delta wetlands between Lummi Bay and the Nooksack River. **Sponsor:** Lummi Indian Business Council.

**Local contact:** Jim Hansen, (360) 384-2340

**Leque Island Feasibility, \$76,500**

Stillaguamish River estuary, near Stanwood (Snohomish County)

Funding will pay for development of a hydrodynamic model of the Port Susan Bay to Skagit Bay area to assess sediment transport from the proposed Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project. The overall estuary project would restore approximately 115 acres of intertidal wetlands on the Leque Island Wildlife Area, at the mouths of the west and south forks of the Stillaguamish River. The restoration calls for removing a perimeter dike that prevents fish access to estuary habitat to create a self-sustaining estuarine marsh. The area would provide shelter for juvenile salmon, including eight stocks of protected chinook salmon from the Skagit and Stillaguamish rivers as well as coho, chum, sockeye and pink salmon. **Sponsor:** Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

**Local Contact:** Daniel Golner, (360) 885-2011, ext. 17

**Skokomish West Bank dike removal, \$990,296**

Skokomish River estuary (Mason County)

The funding will pay for removal of approximately 3,650 feet of dike on the west side of Nalley Slough, removal of an elevated road network inside the project area and construction of an elevated boardwalk. The work is part of an effort to restore 108 acres of intertidal wetlands on the former Nalley Farm property, on the Skokomish Indian Reservation near mouth of the Skokomish River. **Sponsor:** Skokomish Indian Tribe.

**Local Contact:** Keith Dublanica, (360) 877-2110 ext. 457

**Normandy Park acquisition, \$65,000**

Normandy Park, (King County)

Funding will provide required matching money for a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Community Salmon Funds grant for a conservation easement sought by the Cascade Land Conservancy. The easement would conserve approximately three acres of forested bluff and 300 feet of natural Puget Sound shoreline to protect nearshore habitat for juvenile salmon from the Green-Duwamish and Central Puget Sound watersheds. **Sponsor:** Cascade Land Conservancy

**Local Contact:** Chip Nevins, (206) 292-5907 x109

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