NSEA educates, inspires, and engages the community to take action to keep wild salmon here for future generations.
I believe that if the salmon could talk they would say thank you.

I imagine they would say, “Thank you for not giving up on us. Despite our dwindling numbers, and in spite of the unprecedented challenges facing us. Those of us that return each year are more tenacious than ever, and we are so grateful to return to sections of streams that are slowly but surely improving as a result of habitat restoration. This gives us hope for the survival of our offspring, and for future generations of salmon.”

The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association was founded with a singular goal in mind: restoring sustainable wild salmon runs in Whatcom County. For nearly 30 years, NSEA has worked side by side with community members to restore salmon runs in the Nooksack Basin. This investment is making a difference. We see this each time the number of salmon that utilize restored habitat increases.

NSEA strives to instill the importance of environmental stewardship in present and future generations. NSEA’s education programs reach students throughout Whatcom County, teaching them about salmon, and the importance of good water quality and healthy riparian ecosystems. Community work parties give people an opportunity to actively participate in restoration and see their positive impact on local riparian ecosystems.

The dedication of our community and volunteers gives me hope that we can find a way to sustain salmon in the landscape around us. This past January, over 500 community volunteers attended a community work party to plant trees and groundcover along Whatcom Creek. While planting a tree gives me hope, being witness to so many people showing up to help do something to make a difference is what really fills me with optimism for our future. This demonstration of dedication and perseverance gives me faith that we can find a balance that includes healthy watersheds, abundant salmon, diverse wildlife, and an environment that we can thrive in.

This is our shared investment for a healthy future. I think if salmon could talk they would say, “Thank you”, but they would also say, “Please keep up the good work, and please do more. We need your help, now, more than ever.”

Thank you for being part of this tremendous effort,

Rachel Vasak,
Executive Director
THE PEOPLE OF NSEA

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BACKGROUND PHOTOS BY BRETT BAUNTON
2019 HIGHLIGHTS

FISH ACCESS
9.4
miles of habitat improving access from 19 instream projects

RIPARIAN ENHANCEMENT
13,406
native vegetation installed
14,755 stream feet improved

RIPARIAN MAINTENANCE
17,600
stream feet maintained
12,286 pounds invasive vegetation removed from 31 previous projects

STUDENTS REACHED
1,737
from 31 schools
in 81 classrooms

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
4,543
individuals participated
in 90 outreach events

VOLUNTEER ACTION
1,962
dedicated individuals gave
11,474 hours toward restoration, education and stewardship initiatives

Fourth grade students from Birchwood Elementary are excited to plant trees in Squalicum Creek Park.
NSEA uses every dollar to create a better future

INCOME
CONTRIBUTIONS: $297,292
IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS: $12,369
GOVERNMENT GRANTS: $855,972
PRIVATE FUNDING: $278,859

$1,444,492

NWSRF ENDOWMENT INCOME
CONTRIBUTIONS: $103,050
DIVIDENDS: $114,615
UNREALIZED GAINS & LOSSES: $252,005

$469,690

NET INCOME
$369,385

EXPENSES
PROGRAM & PROJECTS: $1,374,484
OPERATIONS & FUNDRAISING: $162,280

$1,536,764

NWSRF ENDOWMENT EXPENSES
FEES: $8,013

$8,013

To see NSEA's audited Financial Statements and 990 please go to www.n-sea.org/publications.
Starting in the late 1990’s, NSEA worked with the Whatcom Conservation District (WCD), Tenmile Stream Steward Dorie Belisle and multiple landowners to restore instream and riparian habitat in the Tenmile Creek Watershed. One of the larger projects accomplished was relocating the stream channel into a more historic alignment between Noon Rd and Tenmile Rd. During the mid-1900’s, approximately two miles of this reach was straightened and ditched for agricultural purposes. Largely through Dorie’s efforts, three landowners upstream of Hemmi Rd signed on to the project and it was completed in 2005. However, the landowner downstream of Hemmi Rd was not interested in participating at that time. Fast forward to 2017, when the property changed hands and the new landowners decided to enroll a majority of the lower wet pasture into the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Over 14 acres were planted and fenced to exclude livestock. Prior to the CREP installation, NSEA worked with the new landowners to relocate 1800 feet of the channel to its historic alignment prior to straightening and installed large woody debris for fish cover while the new plantings get established. NSEA held their fall Make a Difference Day planting party at the site where volunteers of all ages took part. NSEA will work with WCD and the landowners to monitor the site over the next several years.

NEW CONIFER INTRODUCTION AND MONITORING

During riparian monitoring, plant survival and health is recorded as well as the presence of invasive exotic...
Visitors use polarized glasses to increase visibility of fish underwater without disturbing them in Chuckanut Creek.

Savannah McGhee planting a western red cedar at a work party along Terrell Creek.

Volunteer prepares to plant a tree along Terrell Creek in Blaine.

NSEA hosted three public salmon sighting events during 2019, attracting over 450 community members eager to view salmon spawning in local creeks. The intention behind the events is to connect people to fish, and to view the resource as a vital indicator of the health of our community, seeking to conserve critical habitat and water resources. We believe that Whatcom County provides a unique and special opportunity for residents to view a most remarkable annual event [spawning salmon] up close and in person. Trained naturalists assist viewers and elevate this wondrous experience, creating champions for salmon. Attendees leave inspired by the journey of Pacific salmon and feel motivated to help ensure these fish continue to thrive in Whatcom County for future generations.

NSEA is currently working on a proposal to introduce coastal redwood and incense cedar to sites experiencing high western red cedar mortality. We have selected sites and developed an experimental design with assistance from Western Washington University staff. Coastal redwood and incense cedar will be installed at selected sites spring 2020 and monitored twice annually for 10 years or more. Our plan is to complete a statistical analysis of the data collected and share the results with other riparian restoration practitioners.

During 2019, a total of 1,571 volunteers donated 4,701 hours to restoring vital salmon habitat in Whatcom County. More than 20 public events were hosted along streams on Saturday mornings where volunteers of all ages planted 5,938 native trees and shrubs, improving over 9 acres of riparian habitat. Through many partnerships with other organizations, landowners, and local businesses, NSEA continues to provide community members with opportunities to take action to improve their watersheds and foster continued hope for the preservation of salmon in Whatcom County.
EDUCATION

STUDENTS FOR SALMON PROGRAM

The Students for Salmon Program is offered at no cost to fourth grade students at all seven public school districts, tribal and several private schools. During 2019, NSEA served 1,737 students, or 97% of Whatcom County fourth graders. Resonating throughout this outdoor science program is the concept that the actions fourth graders take make a real difference. Students learn about threats facing salmon through hands-on interactive lessons and apply that knowledge when they participate in a restoration project during their field trip. Working together, fourth graders planted over 300 trees and removed over 5,000 pounds of invasive vegetation from local stream banks. These actions provide students with hope, and spark continued stewardship in order to protect salmon in their everyday lives.

As Claire, a local fourth grader explained, “It’s very fun to pull blackberry and plant trees, and I am going to help salmon and the environment for as long as I’m living.”

CLIMETIME TEACHER TRAINING PROJECT

During 2019, NSEA was awarded another year of funding from the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to lead a 4-part workshop series for local educators. The series focused on the 2013 Washington State Science Learning Standards (WSSLS), also known as the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which include standards around climate science. Together with five other community-based organizations (North Cascades Institute, RE Sources for Sustainable Communities, Wild Whatcom, Common Threads, Garden of the Salish Sea Curriculum) 43 teachers throughout Whatcom and Skagit counties completed the series. Workshop results showed educators were able to enhance their understanding of NGSS and climate science in relation to local environmental issues, while gaining ideas for stewardship projects to offer students action opportunities to increase hope and decrease eco-anxiety in students. Among other incentives, educators gained the resources and confidence to implement the lessons and skills developed from the series with their students outdoors. All materials and resources were based on local phenomena, and highlighted connections to local organizations like NSEA to involve students in solution-based projects to combat our changing climate.

FUTURE LEADERS OF WHATCOM WATERS (FLOW) PROGRAM

The Future Leaders of Whatcom Waters (FLOW) interns continue to play a critical role in facilitating NSEA’s programs while gaining valuable field experience in environmental education, outreach and stewardship. This unique learning opportunity allows contracted interns to explore a variety of environmental career paths, network with local professionals, develop transferable skills and receive feedback to become more marketable in their job search. Intern cohorts quickly
build camaraderie and “graduate” from NSEA’s FLOW Program filled with hope and initiative in pursuit of environmental conservation. During 2019, 32 interns were positioned to implement NSEA programs, tallying over 5,398 hours serving Whatcom County communities.

**NOOKSACK RIVER STEWARDS PROGRAM**

The North Fork of the Nooksack River provides a shining example of healthy salmon habitat, hosting all five species of Pacific salmon. The Nooksack River Stewards Program, in partnership with the Mt. Baker—Snoqualmie National Forest provides residents and visitors opportunities to take action to ensure this special area remains ideal habitat for salmon. The primary goal of the program is to foster enthusiasm for salmon while respectfully recreating in the North Fork Nooksack River area, to decrease negative impacts. During 2019, a total of 3,628 people were reached by hosting 8 community events, and 36 public presentations. For example, guided river walks introduced people to the quality of habitat that salmon require, while celebrating salmon stories at campfire events introduced families to the salmon life-cycle and the importance of their cultural position in the Northwest. All program initiatives aim to restore hope for residents and showcase for visitors how collective action can result in progressive salmon recovery goals long after leaving the National Forest.

*ABOVE: Children learn about the importance of macroinvertebrates to the salmon living in the Nooksack River. BACKGROUND PHOTO: Fourth grader from Birchwood Elementary getting ready to plant a native tree.*
IN GRATITUDE

Airoldi, Joan & Michael
Alcoa Foundation
Alcoa Foundation and American Forests Global ReLeaf Partnership for Trees
Allen, Luther
Allied Arts
Amazon Smile
Amiran, Edoh & Veronica Wisniewski
American Forests
Ammirati, Anthony
Anderson, Angela & Ryan
Anderson, Heidi & Brian
Anderson, Angela & Ryan
Anderson, Jerry
Anderson, Robert S. & Kathy Mezai
Andersen, Fred & Carol
Andersen, Jean
Andeavor Corporation
Anonymous (15)
Arntzen, Ronald
Arrigoni, Diane
Arrowsmith, Adele in memory of
Aslan Brewing Company LLC
Baker, Laura
Bader, April
Baker, Karen
Barlean’s Fisheries, Inc
Baumgart, Jim & Tanya
Bay to Baker Trading Company
Bayes, Donald & Wilma
Beatty, Dana
Beatty, David
Becez, Garry
Belisle, Dorie & John in honor (3)
Belisle, Michael
Bell, Christy & John
Belwood Acres
Bellingham Bayside
Bellingham Central Lions Club
Bellingham Millworks
Bellingham Puget Sound Anglers
Bellingham Tennis & Training Club
Benefit Causes
Bergsma, Jody
Bertrand Watershed Improvement District
Birch Bay Watershed and Aquatic Resources Management District
Bierlink, Evonne & Henry
Birr, Kate & John Lawler
Black, Kara
Blais, Joelle
Blue Eyed Charlotte Inc.
Blum, John
Boeing Employee Match Fund
Bogle, Andrew in honor of
Borsa, Pamela
Boundary Bay Brewing Company
Bouscarren, Marie-Lise
Bowers, Stephanie & Richard
Boyd, Megan
British Petroleum Cherry Point Refinery
Brausiek, Barbara
Brenner, Barbara
Broadlick, Kelly
Brooks Applied Labs
Brown, Christopher
Brown, Deanna
Brown, Jeremy
Brownfield, Berry in memory of
Brownfield, Virginia
Bryan, Bruce & Linda
Buchanan, Marvin & Fran
Buehler, Donna & Allan
Burns, Linda
Burns, Analise & Duncan
Byers, Michael
Byers, Donald
Calhoun, Judith
Callens, Patrick
Carne - The Butcher Shop
Casa Que Pasa
Cascade Cuts
Casquillo, Christopher
Chapman, Jedell & Berrell Walz
Chesbrough, John & Amy
McKenny
Ciao Thyme
Ciel Foundation
Clark, Joseph & Sheila
Clark, Patricia
Clement, Taylor
Collins, Eamon
Community Food Coop
Constanza, Alison
Coombs, Dan
Corman, Jane
Costanza, Alison
Courtemanche, Wendy
Crystal Creek Logistics
Cummings, Claire
Cunningham, Martha & Jack
Dahlgren, Victoria
Daughters, Terry & Joene
Davies, Kate
Davis, Judy & Scott
De Waard, Richard
Dempsey, Deb & Mary Durbrow
Deryckx, Becky
Deshmane, Atul
DeSoer, Steve & Barbara
DeWitt, Dennis
DeWitt, Eli & Heather
Dexter, Roderick & Catherine
Dickerson, Christine & Ronald
Dickerson, Shirley & Gary
Dierx, Peter
Douglas, Joanne
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DryFT
Dwyer, Kurt
Duffy, Brenna Beach
Dunn, Charles
Dunn, Tom, Jana, & Nikki
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Ellison, Stewart
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Enfield, Marvin & Linda
Englesberg, Paul & Lucy Morse
Enschede, Ingrid
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Fairhaven Poke
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Frey, John & Debra Anderson-Frey
Frolander, Jonathan
Furseth-McNabb, Gretchen
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Gangle, Chris & Holly
Gardner, Trina & Wade
Gato Verde
Gauthier, Kelli in honor of
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Gell, David
George & Audrey Rasmussen Family Foundation
Gildner, Jennifer
Gilgespie, Gordon
Gillett, Bruce & Sylvia
Gillett, Josie
Gillham, Martha
Gilmam, Kathryne
Givler, Lynn & Keith Carpenter
Goodman, Sadie in honor of
Goodrich, Lynda
Grace, Lise
Graham, Phyllis
Granger, Deb & Pete
Grant, Linda & Dave
Grassi-Carbone, Brendan
Gray, Darrall W. & Renee Lacroix
Greacen, Betsy
Green Frog Nursery
Grey, Paul & Mary
Guide Nursery
Gurol, Kamuron
Haggen
Halwe, D. T.
Hamalainen, Asko
Hand, Marta
Hankinson, Amy
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Helfield, James & Crispin
Stutzman
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Herdman, Elizabeth & Harry
Hewins, Jesse in memory of
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Hopkins, Julie
Hughes, Staples & Tamsie
Humphries, Phil & Cynthia St. Clair
Hundred North
Hunger, Don & Ginny Broadhurst
Hyatt, Art
Hymas, Jeanette
Hymas, John & Susan
Ince, Lynne & Steve
Insera, Victor & Beth
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Island Investments, Inc
J. Ritter Dirt & Asphalt LLC
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Jacobson, Abram & Carole
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Kauffman, Hillary
Keeley, Morgan
Keenan, Don & Joy
Kelly, Asa & Hutto, Ashley
Keyes, Craig & Julianne
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Kleinheinrich, Ronald & Sharon
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PHOTO BY BRETT BAUNTON