

Duckabush Estuary Restoration Project Newsletter

Spring 2023

Vol. 7

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is working in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (HCSEG) to restore habitat at the mouth of the Duckabush River. The project would reconnect the Duckabush River to adjacent wetlands by modifying local roads and elevating Highway 101 onto a bridge. The bridge would span the entire valley where the Duckabush River meets the Hood Canal, and rare estuarine habitat important to native fish and wildlife will be restored.

More project information can be found at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/duckabush>

Schedule and Budget

Design of the project is over halfway complete and partial construction funding is secured. The state capital budget released last month directs \$14M to the project. This is in addition to funding received last legislative session and grant funding. Our Federal partners are also working to secure over \$80M in Federal Army Corps funding. Construction could begin within two years, but is subject to change based on funding.

Project Design

Have you ever wondered why design phase takes so long? It may seem like nothing is happening, but engineers are busy evaluating many complex aspects of the project. Some examples are:

- The team is coordinating with the Mason PUD #1 to ensure that utility service along US 101 and up the Duckabush valley can be temporarily located outside the work zones and then shifted into a permanent location upon project completion – all while ensuring uninterrupted service. It's expected that the final utility design locates utility lines underground and through the new bridge.
- The team is coordinating with the Department of Ecology to ensure runoff collected from the new highway meets requirements for discharging into the environment. WSDOT has been leading work to problem-solve ways to fit stormwater filtration and other features into a limited space.
- An important aspect of the project is developing a construction sequence that allows traffic to move through the area with minimal disruption and identifying where and how to safely accommodate vehicles during each phase of construction.

Public Open House

The design team plans to hold an open house later this year to share updated project designs and information with the community. Stay tuned!

Valuing the Duckabush Estuary

Understanding the full value of habitat restoration is complicated because aspects of the environment are hard to quantify into relatable units like dollars. But ecosystem services (the benefits that nature provides to human well-being) underlie our entire economy. A recent publication by Earth Economics uses science and data to understand how the Duckabush ecosystem will provide value to people, including clean air and water, habitat for fish and wildlife, flood risk, and recreational value. The report suggests \$250 million in benefits over the 100-year life of the new bridge and over 400 jobs supported annually during construction. The full report—"The Economic Impact of Restoring the Duckabush Estuary"—commissioned by HCSEG, is available on their [website](#).

HIGHLIGHTED ECOSYSTEM SERVICES PROVIDED OVER THE BRIDGE'S LIFESPAN

ADDITIONAL VALUE

 FLOOD RISK REDUCTION
+\$29K to \$90K

 AVOIDED ROAD FLOODING
+\$8K to \$54K

 CHUM SALMON VALUE in Puget Sound
+\$30M to \$109M

 AESTHETIC BENEFITS for residents
+\$27M to \$84M

 WATER QUALITY improvement from bioswales
+\$125K to \$386K

 VALUE OF VOLUNTEER TIME
+\$54K to \$60K

PROTECTED VALUE

 RECREATION VALUE
\$5M to \$15M

 HABITAT FOR WILDLIFE
\$7M to \$21M

 WATER QUALITY improvement from wetlands
\$4M to \$14M

 CARBON SEQUESTRATION
\$577K to \$2M

Volunteer Opportunity: Duckabush Wildlife

Area Cleanup on May 20th

Join Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (HCSEG) for a volunteer event to remove invasive species and garbage at the Duckabush River estuary! Thanks to wonderful volunteers like you, past clean up events have removed thousands of pounds of tires, plastic, and garbage from the wildlife area. This year we are cleaning up trash and removing invasive weeds such as Scotch broom. Removing invasive species now will help limit the seed source and reduce the risk of invasives establishing after the restoration project is constructed. We need volunteers (you!) to sign up to help out on May 20th. Come out to meet your neighbors and learn more about the Duckabush Restoration Project! Trash bags and some weed-removal tools will be provided for volunteer use.

Who: Open to the public and all ages are welcome! (Please register in advance!)

When: May 20th from 10:00AM – 2:00PM

Where: Public lands in the Duckabush Estuary (Duckabush Unit of the North Olympic Wildlife Area)

What to bring: Work gloves, sturdy closed-toed shoes or boots, sun protection, water, and snacks.

How: Pre-registration is required. Online at: <https://www.pnwsalmoncenter.org/get-involved/volunteer/>

Contact: Adrian (adrian@pnwsalmoncenter.org) or Jill (jill@pnwsalmoncenter.org) or call the Salmon Center at (360) 275-3575.

Directions: Public parking is available at the Duckabush River Access lot on the south side of the river, just west of Hwy 101.



Scotch broom in the Duckabush estuary



Young volunteers

Have questions and want more information?

If you have questions, comments, or ideas about the project you can reach out to the project contacts listed below.

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