Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

RESEARCH

RESTORATION

EDUCATION

HOOD CANAL SALMON CENTER

SALMON ENHANCEMENT GROUP

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Hood Canal Watershed is an amazing and unique place. The snow-capped Olympics Mountains to our West feed cool, snow-melted water into our rivers and hold recreation opportunities like no other place on earth. Our working and wilderness forestlands provide clean air and jobs for people living in our rural communities. The Canal's healthy shorelines provide habitat for shellfish, shorebirds and juvenile salmon.

We are passionate about making sure that these healthy habitats remain intact for future generations to enjoy. As I look back on 2019, I am so proud to see the work that we have accomplished from land acquisition to culvert replacements to the expansion of our environmental education programs.

In October, HCSEG and our partner Forterra worked together to permanently protect 249 acres of wetlands estuary and riparian habitat on Lower Big Beef Creek on the Kitsap Peninsula. Kitsap County has seen tremendous growth over the past two years. Permanently protecting this valuable habitat will guarantee that these wetlands, estuary and riparian forest remain intact for the return of spawning salmon every year into the future. This land acquisition would not have been possible without help from our project partner Forterra, as well as all of the funding sources who contributed to this project.

During the summer, HCSEG worked to remove a fish passage barrier on a small tributary to the Union River. These tiny waterways are incredibly important to the juvenile species of salmon who reside in freshwater for multiple years after hatching. In the Union River, this includes Coho and steelhead.

Throughout this past year, our education staff have grown our environmental education programming to include multiple summer camps, field trips to the Salmon Center and new schools participating in the Salmon in the Classroom program. We truly believe that these free and low cost educational programs help us teach the kids who are our future leaders to be good stewards of our amazing Hood Canal Watershed.

Whether large or small, each of these projects and programs help us ensure that the Hood Canal remains a healthy place for salmon, birds and humans alike. Thank you for all that you do to help us make the way of life we have here on Hood Canal possible for all of us.

Mendy A. Harlow

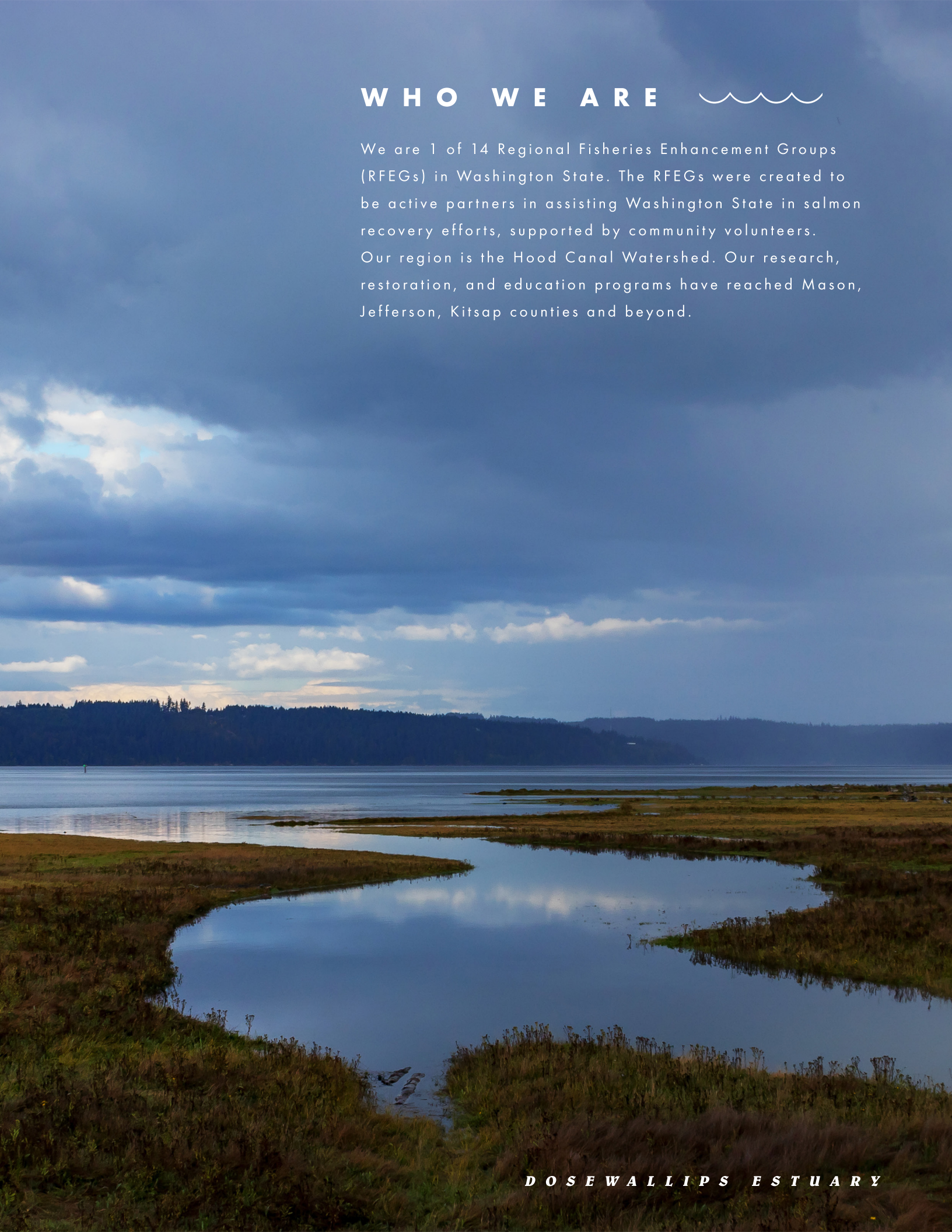
3 WAYS YOU CAN HELP SAVE PACIFIC NORTHWEST SALMON

VISIT PNWSALMONCENTER.COM

1 DONATE 2 VOLUNTEER 3 BECOME A MEMBER

WHO WE ARE

We are 1 of 14 Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEGs) in Washington State. The RFEGs were created to be active partners in assisting Washington State in salmon recovery efforts, supported by community volunteers. Our region is the Hood Canal Watershed. Our research, restoration, and education programs have reached Mason, Jefferson, Kitsap counties and beyond.



DOSEWALLIPS ESTUARY

WHERE WE WORK

MISSION

To deepen the connection between land, people, and salmon through research, restoration and education. Our mission is to ensure that wild salmon are once again abundant in the Pacific Northwest.

Hood Canal is considered a fjord, and one of the four main basins of the Puget Sound in Washington State. To the west is the Olympic Peninsula, and to the east is Kitsap Peninsula.

THE HOOD CANAL WATERSHED

APPROACH

HCSEG is a grassroots organization with a holistic approach for salmon recovery. Using research, restoration, and education programs, we come up with environmental solutions that create real change as well as empower our local communities.

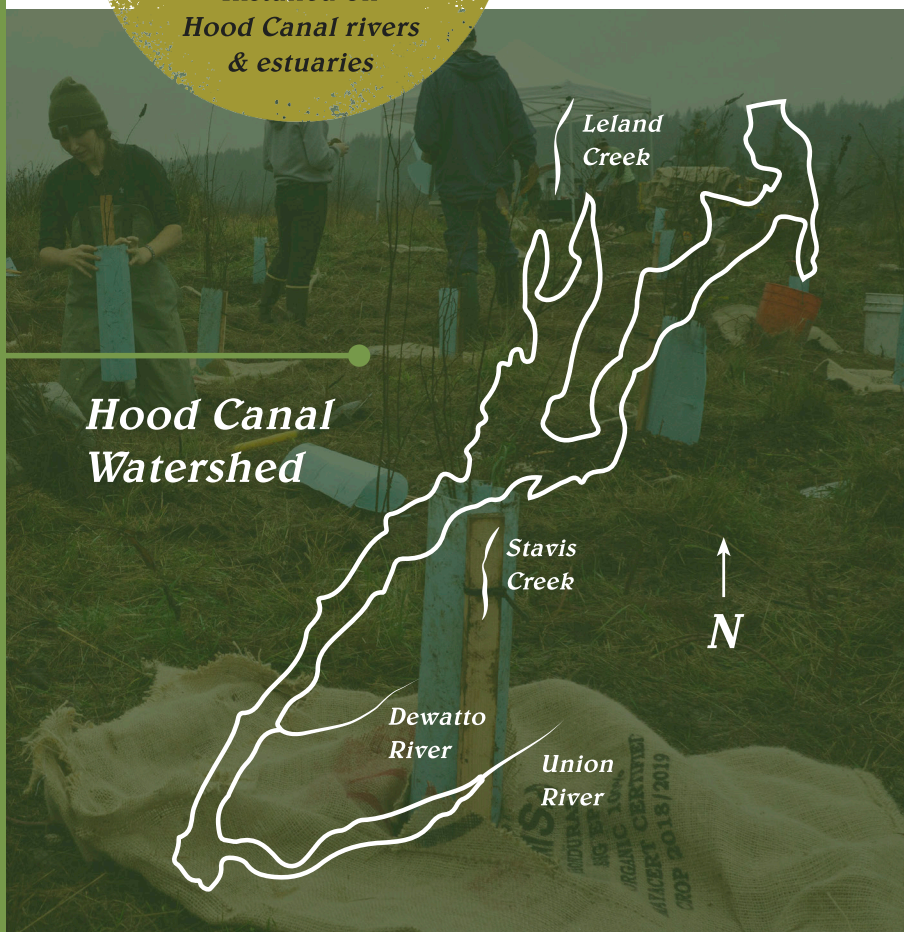
RESTORATION

In 2019, HCSEG secured funding for restoration efforts that will restore critical salmon habitat, improve the overall ecosystem, and reduce flooding on the Duckabush river and estuary. A component of this project was an 18 month citizen science project in which local residents collected data about the water quality and wildlife in the Duckabush estuary. While this is a large project still in its early stages, we are hopeful to make big steps forward in 2020.

We are continuing our fish passage barrier identification to find and replace harmful culverts on the Kitsap peninsula - a region where this work is greatly needed.

Last year we conducted native planting efforts on the Dewatto River, Stavis Creek, Leland Creek, and the Union River. This work was largely made possible by our ambitious Washington Conservation Corps Crew, who brave the elements every year to complete this critical restoration work. We hope to increase our native plant installations every year to create strong local ecosystems for healthy fish habitat as well as future climate changes.

4,463
NATIVE PLANTS
Installed on Hood Canal rivers & estuaries

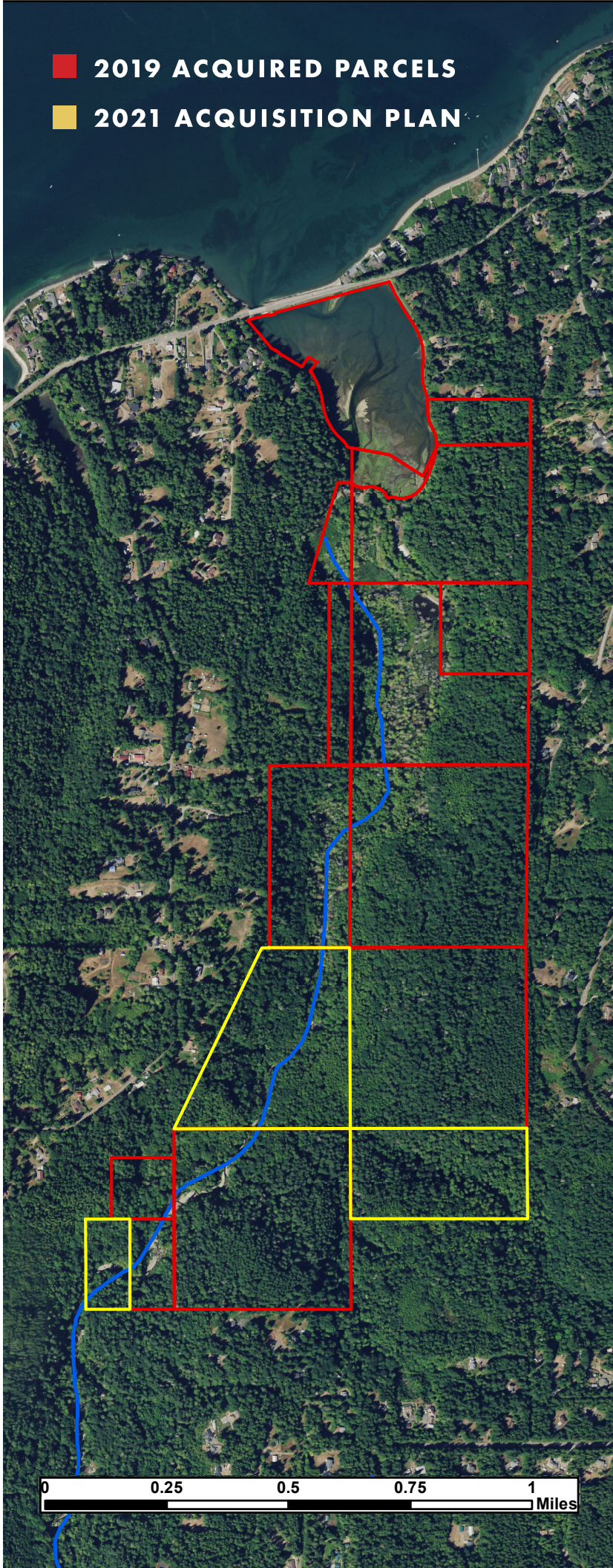


BIG BEEF ESTUARY ACQUISITION PROJECT

The goal of the Big Beef Estuary Acquisition project is to protect 303 acres of estuary, freshwater wetland and riparian habitat critical to coho salmon, ESA listed Hood Canal Summer Chum Salmon and ESA listed Puget Sound steelhead.

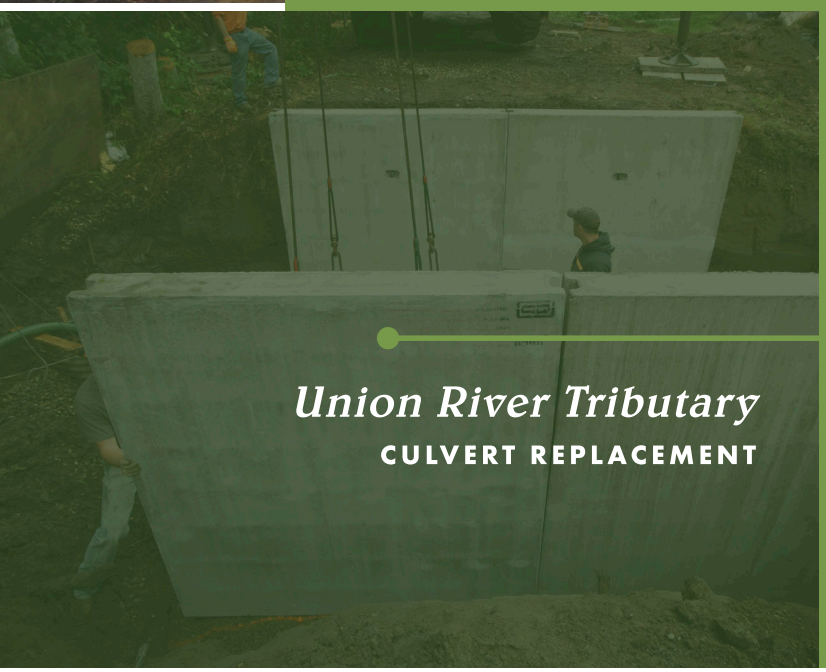
This project will permanently protect critical habitat for six species of Pacific salmon. Summer and fall chum and pink salmon spawn in the lower 1.5 miles of acquired creek. Juvenile coho, steelhead, and cutthroat rear in the wetland and floodplains of the project area. Non-natal outmigrating juvenile Chinook salmon utilize the estuary as foraging habitat on their way to the ocean.

In 2019 we protected 249 acres, and in 2021 we will add 54 more acres to this project.



BEFORE

AFTER



Union River Tributary

CULVERT REPLACEMENT

Culverts can be harmful fish passage barriers and detrimental for a salmon's survival. This is a culvert replacement on a Union River tributary. Before installation, we discovered this small stream is home to incredible Coho habitat. In fact, 250 juvenile Coho were counted in a small pool just below the replaced culvert. Which goes to show, even the small streams shouldn't be overlooked when it comes to productive salmon habitat.

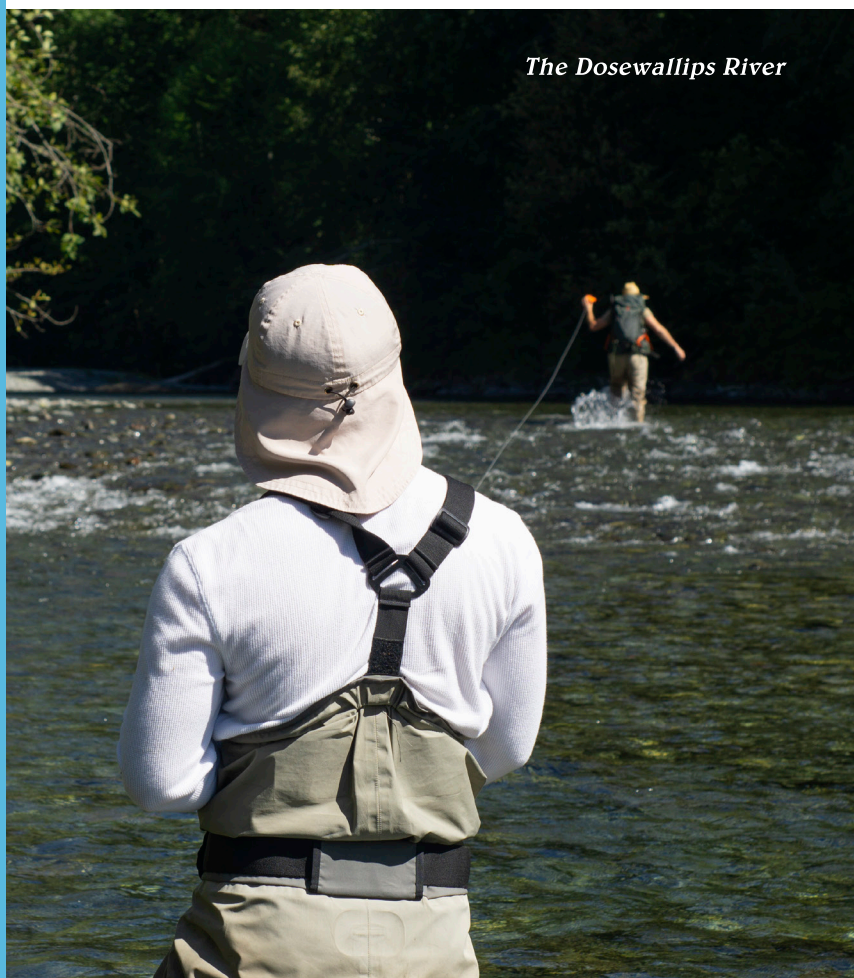
RESEARCH

HCSEG had another productive year with our dedicated StreamTeam interns, who spent months monitoring several rivers and collecting data to support our salmon habitat restoration projects. Approximately 4 river miles were monitored intensively. StreamTeam interns are all students from the Hood Canal region pursuing a career in a Natural Resources related field. Every year HCSEG provides scholarships and relevant outdoor field experience for these students.

2019 wasn't the highest year for returning adult Summer Chum on the Union River, but with 1,887 being the final count, it still ranks as a strong one. We also had over 1,000 members from our community stop by the trap (we love sharing this project with visitors - make sure to come by next summer!). *This summer will be this project's 20 year mark!* In January - May we conduct our Chum Outmigration project, which in 2019 counted 82,432 juvenile chum leaving the Union River.

HCSEG is now in the post-supplementation phase of The Hood Canal Steelhead Project. From now until 2022, we will collect data and monitor how effective hatchery supplementation is as a conservation strategy for steelhead. We are eager to observe how these steelhead runs respond to this method, as well as evaluate our discoveries over the last 16 years in the hopes of restoring this threatened Puget Sound species.

STEELHEAD SAMPLING
The Dewatto River



The Dosewallips River

The Dosewallips River

1,887

SUMMER CHUM

Adults returned to the Union River in 2019

ADULT SUMMER CHUM PROJECT

The Union River

SPECIES RECOVERY IN THE HOOD CANAL WATERSHED

Summer chum salmon in Hood Canal and the Strait of Juan de Fuca were listed as threatened under the US Endangered Species Act in 1999. Our organization began working with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to supplement the Union River Summer Chum run in 2000 as part of the Summer Chum Salmon Conservation Initiative, prepared by the WDFW and the Point No Point Treaty Tribes.

In 2003, supplementation ended as the Union River summer chum run was healthy enough that it became a donor stock to reintroduce summer chum to the nearby Tahuya River, where summer chum had been classified as "recently extinct." Supplementation efforts concluded with the final fry release in the Tahuya River in early 2015.

EDUCATION

In 2019, HCSEG officially implemented our Salmon in the Classroom (SITC) curriculum in every elementary school in Mason County, as well as installed a salmon tank at our headquarters, the Salmon Center. Bringing a tank to our facilities allows homeschoolers and visitors to also witness the fascinating salmon life-cycle.

HCSEG updated our youth camp and club offerings. Our summer camp Explore the Fjord, for grades 6-12, has grown from one to two days a week in order to host a chapter of the Boys and Girls Club.

The Salmon Center Farm Stewards is a program for younger kiddos, ages 6-11. And it's not just for summer anymore! Farm Stewards has been expanded as a year long club, with both a summer program and an after-school session. The program also includes Family & Community days once a month, where people gather at the Salmon Center for a potluck and garden activity, such as planting seeds or learning to winterize your garden.

Every year we are getting more groups of all ages and backgrounds visiting the Salmon Center and Union River Preserve, where HCSEG staff provides outdoor learning experiences and guided tours. It's easy to plan your trip by visiting our website pnwsamoncenter.org!

10
SCHOOLS
Teaching HCSEG SITC Curriculum

THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS

Providing accessible learning experiences that take place *outside* is fundamental to our organization's success. If today's youth fails to develop a relationship with the natural world, who will carry on the work we have started?

Since 1990, HCSEG has developed accessible and engaging camps, clubs and programs for students of all ages that put them out in nature, encourage them to ask questions, and foster a life-long love for the environment.

Farm at Water's Edge

SUSTAINABLE + ORGANIC

HCSEG operates a small, WSDA-Certified Organic demonstration farm, the Farm at Water's Edge, located at our Salmon Center headquarters. We aim to improve food access while educating our community about nutrition and the ways in which sustainable farming practices decrease negative human impacts on salmon.

Ultimately, the Farm at Water's Edge strives to promote education, health, and sustainability. It is composed of animals, a U-Pick Garden, a Community Garden, and soon - *a beehive!*

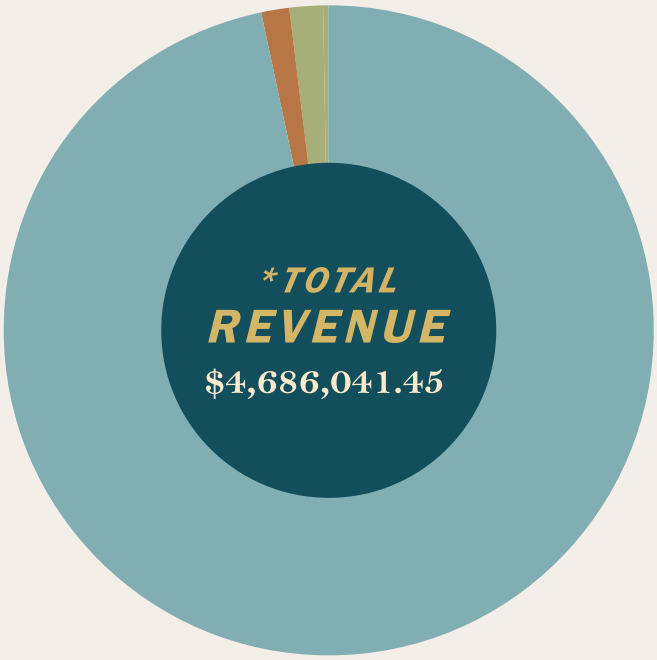
Our U-Pick gardens are a resource for our community to have access to fresh, organic produce. The gardens are supported solely on donations and offer a diverse array of certified organic vegetables and eggs on a seasonal basis.

ACCESSIBLE GARDEN BEDS

Last summer we added raised, accessible beds to our U-Pick gardens. This was a grant funded project completed by our AmeriCorps Sustainability Coordinators, Heather Hamilton and Emma Welty. You can find the new beds located in the U-Pick garden at the front of the main Salmon Center office building.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

HCSEG IS A 501(C)3 NONPROFIT FUNDED BY GRANTS, DONATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS.



GRANTS
$4,532,124.21

DONATIONS
$74,466.21

PROGRAMS
79,451.03

HABITAT RESTORATION
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ECOSYSTEM RESEARCH
$185,269.17

EDUCATION & OUTREACH
$111,532.36

OPERATING EXPENSES
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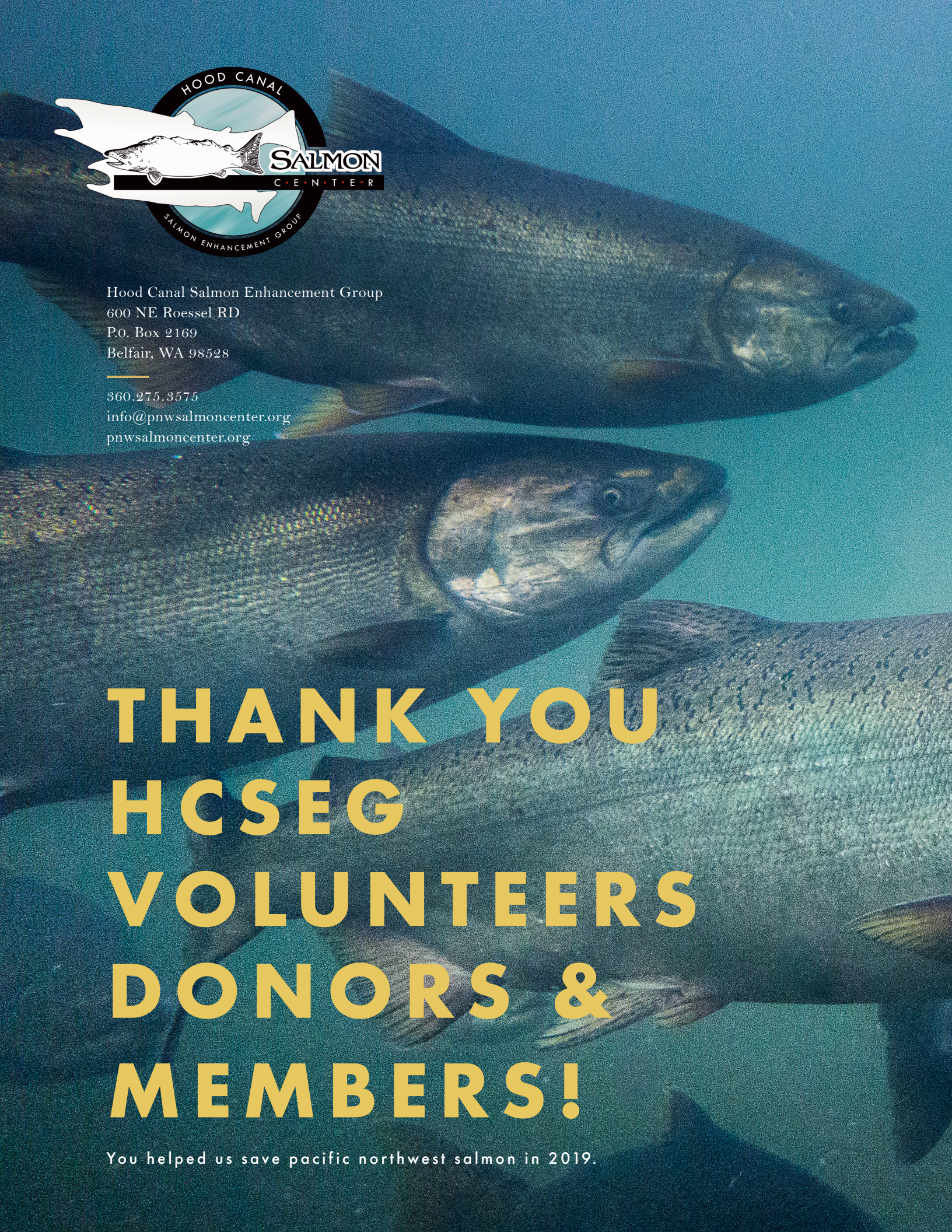
FARM
$23,942.98

**FIGURES NOT AUDITED*



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THANK YOU HCSEG VOLUNTEERS DONORS & MEMBERS!

You helped us save pacific northwest salmon in 2019.