
LOWER COLUMBIA FISH ENHANCEMENT GROUP

2023 Year In Review

PROMOTING THE RECOVERY OF SELF SUSTAINING,
NATURALLY SPAWNING SALMONID POPULATIONS IN
SW WASHINGTON

WHERE WE ARE NOW

LOWER COLUMBIA FISH ENHANCEMENT GROUP (LCFEG)
*Restoring & enhancing critical salmon habitat, educating the community,
and encouraging stewardship.*

STAFF

Shauna Hanisch-Kirkbrice, Managing
Director
Brice Crayne, Restoration Program
Manager
Matt Gamel, Project Manager
Jesse Bar, Restoration Coordinator
Mat Pedersen, Restoration Technician
Emily Kitali, Outreach and Education
Coordinator

BOARD

Brian Davern, President
Scott Donaldson, Vice President
Jim Byrne, Secretary
Scott Jones, Treasurer
Hal Mahnke, Ed McMillan, Rick
Yahrmarkt, Jeff Wittler, Josh Jones

The Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit salmon recovery organization founded in 1991.

Working within watersheds throughout the Lower Columbia region, our main goal is the long term recovery of native salmonid populations and healthy aquatic ecosystems.

With only 6 staff, we rely on partnerships and collaboration within the community to be successful in all areas of our work. **2023 was a solid year for LCFEG**, with many goals accomplished. However, it is with a heavy heart, we are saying goodbye to our Managing Director, Shauna. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors, and thank her for all she has done for LCFEG!

SOME PARTING WORDS FROM SHAUNA HANISCH-KIRKBRIDE,

"When I think of what to say as I close out 5 years as LCFEG's director I'm less inclined to look back and more eager to look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead for LCFEG. I'm confident its future will include continued excellence in developing thoughtful and effective restoration projects, from big and bold to low tech and smaller scale. It will include continued collaboration with new and existing partners. Our signature education program, Seeds to Salmon, will continue to grow and build on opportunities to put curriculum in the hands of more educators, and thus more students. I'm so thankful for a talented staff that truly cares about making a difference and continues to develop innovative ideas and solutions to benefit salmon and rivers. I'm grateful for a loyal board, many of whom have been with LCFEG for years, and know that in time new board members will be recruited to carry the torch in the years to come. I learned so much these past 5 years about salmon, restoration, leadership, and nonprofit management. I'm truly a better person and professional for having had this opportunity."

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

52 VOLUNTEERS RECRUITED

OVER 400 STUDENTS REACHED



10,000 PLANTS IN THE GROUND

20,000 PLANTS POTTED

5 ACRES OF INVASIVES REMOVED



10,000 CARCASSES DISTRIBUTED

30 STRUCTURES INSTALLED

2 FISH BARRIERS REMOVED



IN THE COMMUNITY



Last summer, we conducted our 1st week-long “**Hope for Salmon Day Camp**” hosted at Baz Park in Camas, WA. We spent the week learning about water quality and salmon habitat with a group of 8 teenage students from the Camas School District! We plan to hold this event again in 2024.

Outdoor educational events at Camp Hope and with Rock Solid Teen Center are still ongoing as capacity allows.

For the second year, we hosted an Earth Day restoration event with 100 students from CASEE. We spent the day learning about the connection between native plants, healthy watersheds, and salmon along the Little Washougal River.

Our Nutrient Enhancement Program continues to engage volunteers to distribute salmon carcasses to the East Fork Lewis, Kalama, Toutle, and Washougal river basins.



SEEDS TO SALMON

Seeds to Salmon is an outdoor learning opportunity for highschoolers that teaches about the interdependency of salmon and healthy watersheds. We focus on engaging students in hands-on plant propagation techniques in nursery spaces on-campus, while offering exposure to technical skills and careers in conservation.

This year we were able to expand the program to students at CASEE (Center for Agriculture, Science, and Environmental Education) for the first time, while continuing our work with Fort Vancouver and Hudson's Bay High School. In total, we worked with 6 different high school classes! The hard work of these students yielded over 1,200 seedlings/cuttings that will be planted along salmon streams or donated to native plant sales held by the schools (increasing the presence of native plants throughout the community).

Photo: CASEE Freshman collecting Douglas fir cones during a Seeds to Salmon lesson

ON THE GROUND

This year, LCFEG's on-the-ground restoration work was an amalgamation of many different grant-funded projects, partnerships, and collaborations. From installing native plants along the South Fork Toutle River, placing boulders and rootwads into salmon streams, or demolishing fish barriers, we want to thank our funders and each and every community supporter who has allowed LCFEG to continue its mission!



PARTNERS

Clark Conservation District,
Weyerhaeuser, CASEE, Fort
Vancouver High School,
Hudson's Bay High School,
Toutle Lake High School,
City of Vancouver
Volunteers Department

CONSULTANTS & CONTRACTORS

Columbia Helicopter, Cascade Tree,
Greenbanks, Mike Watters Excavation,
Inter-Fluve, Natural Recovery, Horsely
Timber and Construction, Smith Root,
Smayda Environmental Associates, Parr
Excellence, Waterways Consulting, Wolf
Water Resources

FUNDERS

WA Department of Ecology,
Salmon Recovery Funding
Board, WA Recreation and
Conservation Office, WA
Department of Fish and
Wildlife, WA State
Conservation Commission,
City of Camas

Photo: LCFEG staff (Jesse and Mat) unloading native plants for installation along SF Toutle



Photo: Baird Creek splash dam being prepared for demolition



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FISH PASSAGE

It was a barrier-improvement-kind of year for LCFEG!

Delameter Barrier Improvement

Working with Horsley Timber and Construction, we removed a barrier culvert and installed a 14'x34' steel bridge over the summer. This new bridge restores access to over a mile of quality habitat and allows for natural stream function. In addition to the bridge, we installed 20 root wads to assist with fish passage into the small tributary. We also planted thousands of willow live stakes and 50 western red cedar trees. We want to give a big shout-out to Patrick Cooney with Smith Root for volunteering his electrofishing services for the pre-construction fish salvage.

Baird Creek Helicopter Wood Loading and Splash Dam Demolition

Baird Creek was splash dammed from about 1902 to the 1930s. Decades of flushing washed out the sediment reserves that formed there over centuries. The resulting bedrock pools are prevalent and the fish have used them to persist for the last century. To start rebuilding Baird Creek, LCFEG developed and implemented a plan with Inter-Fluve and Parr Excellence to deconstruct the remnants of the splash dam and re-establish fish passage. This effort will also release several thousand cubic yards of precious sediment that is currently trapped upstream of the dam. LCFEG coordinated with Columbia Helicopter, IF, Parr, and Waterways Consulting this summer—prior to the dam removal—to place about 850 pieces of wood to the stream that will help sort and store sediments released from the dam removal creating spawning and rearing habitat for coho salmon, steelhead, cutthroat, and lamprey.

IN STREAM WORK

Wood is Good!

Washougal-Timber Instream Wood Placement

This reach was degraded due to past splash damming. In Timber Creek, the stream incised down to bedrock and has become a passage barrier for summer steelhead for decades. LCFEG has been working with Inter-Fluve, Inc. (IF) since 2021 designing, permitting, and acquiring materials for our Washougal-Timber Creek project. We worked with Mike Watters Excavation (MWE) to complete construction on this project. LCFEG, MWE, and IF **installed logs and boulders into complex structures in the Washougal River and Timber Creek** that will cover the bedrock reaches in gravel. This gravel accumulation will create spawning habitat and a series of pools in a “ladder” of cascades steelhead will use to access previously cut off habitats.

South Fork Toutle Johnson Instream and Floodplain Wood Placement

For the in-water habitat construction at SFT Johnson, we worked with Mike Watters Excavation to complete construction. In just a single week, we were able to **install over 200 pieces of wood**, including logs, stumps, root wads, and boulders. These materials were used to construct or refresh 25 large habitat structures. We also installed numerous mini-structures, consisting of strategically placed boulders and woody debris to encourage pool formation and fish resting spots. In addition, over 10,000 native plants were installed at the beginning of the year.



Photo: In-stream log placement along the South Fork Toutle

RIPARIAN RESTORATION

Native plants protect streams from erosion, increase shade cover, and help filter pollutants from stormwater runoff.

Baz Riverside Park Camas (Lacamas Creek Riparian Restoration)

Working with Greenbank's LLC, we removed approximately 4 acres of invasives and planted over 2000 willows and wetland shrubs. 2500 camas lilies and other native bulbs were also installed. The plan is to install an additional 4000 wetland plants in the spring (2024).

Each Year, LCFEG devotes a significant effort to installing native plants near salmon streams. This year, through partnerships forged by our Seeds to Salmon Program and by working with Clark Conservation District, we were able to triple the size of our native plant nursery space by building an entirely new hoop house at Fort Vancouver High School and expanding our space at Toutle Lake School District! LCFEG now manages 3 native plant nursery sites, and has the capability to host over 60,000 plants across all spaces.



Photo: Conducting riparian restoration work at Baz Park

LCFEG THANKS YOU!

(AND SO DO THE SALMON)



Photo: Building beaver dam analogs on a rainy day w/ Cascade Tree

Many thanks to each and every community partner, volunteer, student and consultant who has worked with us over the last year! All of this amazing work would not be possible without you.

Interested in Joining
our Team?

We are looking for a
new Executive
Director. Head to our
website to learn more!

CLICK HERE



Photo: Ivy-pull at Beaver Marsh Natural Area