

LOWER COLUMBIA FISH ENHANCEMENT GROUP

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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



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ABOUT US

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The mission of the Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group is to promote recovery of self sustaining, naturally spawning salmonid populations and healthy aquatic ecosystems. We do this by restoring river and stream habitat, providing nutrients for juvenile fish growth, and engaging the community in hands-on salmon stewardship and education.



LCFEG Staff conducting fish salvage efforts on the SF Toutle.

STAFF

Morgan Morris, Executive Director
Brice Crayne, Restoration Program Manager
Matt Gamel, Project Manager
Jesse Barr, Project Manager
Emily Kitali, Education & Outreach Manager
Adam Haynes, Nursery Coordinator
Mat Pedersen, Stewardship Coordinator
Cheyenne Smith, Restoration Technician
Baxter Millsap, Restoration Technician

BOARD

Brian Davern, President
Scott Donaldson, Vice President
Jim Byrne, Secretary
Scott Jones, Treasurer
Hal Mahnke, Brendan Addis,
Rick Yahrmarkt, Lary Pipes,
Josh Jones

BOARD EMERITUS: Ed McMillan

***We are 1 of 14 nonprofit regional fisheries enhancement groups in Washington
focused on habitat restoration & community engagement***

SOME WORDS FROM OUR LEADERS

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Dear Friends,

At the Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group, we are driven by a deep belief in the possibility of a better future for salmon, for rivers, and for the communities that call this place home. Our work is grounded in hope: hope that by restoring our watersheds, we restore connections between people and nature; hope that through education and collaboration, we inspire the next generation of environmental leaders. As we look ahead to the next three years, we reaffirm our commitment to salmon recovery and healthy aquatic ecosystems, while also growing in new ways. Our strategic plan calls us to deepen our engagement with the communities we serve, strengthen our organizational foundations, and invest in the people both staff and partners who make this work possible.

We know that successful restoration depends not only on science and planning, but on trust, relationships, and shared stewardship. That's why we are committed to expanding outreach, improving access to environmental education, and ensuring our programs reflect the diverse values and needs of our region. Our Seeds to Salmon program and other community efforts are central to this vision connecting students, volunteers, and landowners with hands-on experiences that empower them to make a difference. We are also investing in the long-term health of our organization. By supporting our staff, evolving our internal systems, and diversifying our funding, we aim to build a resilient LCFEG that can meet the challenges ahead.

Through it all, our guiding purpose remains clear: to restore self-sustaining salmon populations and healthy rivers for future generations. I invite you to join us in this next chapter whether by volunteering, partnering, donating, or simply sharing our story. Together, we can ensure the Lower Columbia remains a place where salmon, people, and ecosystems can thrive.

In gratitude,

Morgan Morris

Executive Director

SOME WORDS FROM OUR LEADERS

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Dear LCFEG Community,

2025 closes as a most consequential year for LCFEG. It pleases me beyond description, to share this appreciation with our community. Busy? Yes, we have been. Growing? You bet we are. Impactful? Without doubt, in so many ways!

Our Executive Director, Morgan Morris, has inspired, mobilized and guided our impassioned team of habitat restoration professionals - salmon zealots, really - to great effect... in watersheds, classrooms, our community (that includes our presence face to face and on our website and social media) and in government. Not content to simply lead, she rolls up her sleeves to do the work that adds to our output, while constantly looking for new opportunities for our organization to engage in. All the while, she assesses our activity to assure we remain true to our mission. We have a steady hand leading us. Our board of directors are no less impassioned. We provide important oversight, receive opportunities to put our boots on the ground and come away gobsmacked at the extent of the beneficial changes to impoverished habitat we've been entrusted to recover. I must say, it feels good to know that our volunteer efforts are helping add critical habitat for salmon life to begin, then to nurture and protect juvenile growth and later to host the return of adults all across SW Washington.

I encourage everyone to join us in these important efforts... become another voice for salmon. If you're able to donate money that fuels our work, or know others that are able to - on behalf of salmon, we thank you. But even if not, we'll invite you to attend presentations, view our restoration work, add your volunteer hands to it, to contact us with ideas, concerns and add your eyes and ears to the monitoring of our many project sites. Did you know that almost all of the physical work we do in watersheds occurs in spring, summer and fall? We're very good, but the one thing we can't do requires a heavy lift from nature: We need it to add water - lots of it, to move the rocks, cobble and sediment to the places we've prepared. That's what all of that anchored wood you see is waiting for. What a thrill to watch a stream remake itself into ideal salmon habitat. Make it a point to visit a project after successive high water events ... you'll be amazed!

Sincerely,

Brian Davern

Board President

WHERE WE ARE NOW

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This year, LCFEG remained committed to restoring salmon and aquatic ecosystems in Southwest Washington through collaborative, science-based solutions. Our staff and board worked together to establish **three strategic priorities** that now guide all of our efforts:



Restoration & Habitat Recovery

We restore salmon habitat through

- Science-driven engineering.
- Low-tech methods like riparian planting and beaver dam analogs.
- Process-based actions such as logjams, rootwads, boulders, excavation, and culvert replacements.
- Nutrient enhancement using salmon carcass distribution to enrich stream ecosystems.

Community Engagement & Education

Through salmon education

- We connect students and community members with watershed stewardship.
- We provide hands-on lessons connecting healthy salmon to healthy riparian forests.

Organizational Sustainability

By aligning our projects with shared strategic priorities and deepening partnerships, LCFEG continues to strengthen its capacity, stability, and long-term impact across the region.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

26 Volunteers Recruited

200 Students Reached

8 Community Events

RESTORATION AND HABITAT RECOVERY

838 Structures Installed

5.21 Miles of Stream
Restored

1 Fish Barrier Removed

1 Bridge Installed

48,851 Plants installed

11,411 Carcasses Tossed

ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

1 strategic plan completed

3 positions hired

3 project tours led

1 fundraising campaign
completed



Students remove invasive Scotch broom during a restoration field trip.



LCFEG Staff securing structures on the SF Toutle.



LCFEG Supporters take a tour of SF Toutle Restoration work.

STHD “STEELHEAD” PROJECT

In the upper South Fork Toutle headwaters, we installed 556 large wood structures and repositioned a 600,000-pound boulder to support channel-spanning habitat features. These fixed jams, full-length trees, and large rootwads are designed to slow flows, capture spawning gravels, lift the channel bed, and rehydrate adjacent floodplains.

By restoring these natural processes, we’re improving long-term spawning and rearing conditions for Chinook, coho, and steelhead and increasing climate resiliency throughout this critical upper anadromous zone.



Restoration staff brainstorm in front of an excavator.



LCFEG Project Manager, Brice, poses on top of a giant boulder that was moved during instream construction.



LCFEG Project Manager, Matt, uses a chainsaw to cut BDA posts to the proper height.



The newly constructed Wilson Creek Bridge.



Nutrient Enhancement Volunteers pose with salmon carcasses.

Beyond the South Fork Toutle, our team advanced several key projects across the region. In **Mason Creek**, we built over 180 instream habitat structures (Beaver Dam Analogs and Post Assisted Log Structures) and installed 27,000 native plants to accelerate floodplain reconnection and habitat complexity. In Wahkiakum County, we improved fish passage on **Wilson Creek** by replacing a failing barrier culvert with a full bridge crossing.

Our **Nutrient Enhancement** program engaged 25+ volunteers this season and distributed more than 11,411 salmon carcasses to enrich streams across local watersheds. **Design work** also continued for upcoming restoration efforts in the Green River and Salmon Creek tributaries in Cowlitz and Lewis Counties, as well as Cedar Creek in Clark County, setting the stage for future on-the-ground improvements.

FUNDERS & MAJOR DONORS

CFC Wood Bank, City of Camas, FFFPP, Nippon Dynawave, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, WA Department of Ecology, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, WA DNR, WA Recreation and Conservation Office, WA State Conservation Commission, Weyerhaeuser

CONSULTANTS & CONTRACTORS

Anabranh, Archaeological Services, Ash Creek, Ayres and Associates, HFI Consultants, Horsely Timber and Construction, Inter-Fluve, Lichen Land & Water, MCR Enterprises, Mike Watters Excavation, Natural Recovery, NW Timber, NW Youth Corps, Parr Excellence, PSU, Stephenson Logging, Washington Conservation Corps, Waterfall Engineering, Wolf Water Resources, WSU

LANDOWNERS & PARTNERS

CASEE, Clark Conservation District, Fort Vancouver High School, Hudson's Bay High School, Pacific Education Institute, Rashford Tree Farm, Smith Family, Smith Root, Tall Corn Forestry, Toutle Lake High School, WDFW, Weyerhaeuser

SEEDS TO SALMON (S2S) CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

S2S lessons bring students out of the classroom and into greenhouse and outdoor learning spaces on campus, where they engage in propagating native plants for salmon habitat. We also provide a conservation career panel to introduce students to real career pathways, along with an end-of-year restoration field trip that deepens their connection to the concepts learned throughout the year. By teaching this place-based curriculum, we're helping shape the next generation of salmon stewards and encouraging students to care for their local watersheds and the wildlife that depend on them.



CASEE students engage in a S2S lesson.



Douglas fir seedlings grown by S2S students.

PROGRAM METRICS

74 classroom visits
8 community events
3 different highschools
500 seedlings and cuttings
propagated
1 intern hired
1 open resource curriculum
developed

[S2S Curriculum](#)



The Seeds to Salmon curriculum is a free, open-access resource for educators. Hosted in a shared Google Drive, it includes seasonal lessons, hands-on activities, and supporting materials for easy classroom use. This milestone was made possible through support from PEI, TEND Curriculum, and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY

2025 FIELD TRIPS

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CASEE students construct a BDA at Harry Gardner Park.

CASEE EARTH DAY

On Earth Day, we led a hands-on restoration day at the confluence of the North and South Fork Toutle Rivers with 115 students. Together, we explored the connection between native plants, watershed health, and salmon habitat, then put that learning into action. Students helped construct beaver-dam-analog (BDA) structures, installed approximately 500 Douglas-fir trees, and removed patches of invasive Scotch broom. Their hard work contributed directly to improving habitat resilience and restoring the ecological function of this important past LCFEG restoration site.

VANCOUVER SCHOOLS BAZ PARK

More than 35 students from Hudson's Bay and Fort Vancouver High Schools joined us at Baz Riverfront Park for a Seeds to Salmon restoration field trip, where they planted native trees and pollinator plants, removed invasive species, and learned how healthy wetlands support salmon and clean water. In collaboration with the Cowlitz Tribe, students also learned about Indigenous first foods and the cultural importance of healthy ecosystems. Supported by partners like the Pacific Education Institute, this hands-on experience connected classroom learning to real-world stewardship while contributing meaningful progress at this urban wetland restoration site.



Vancouver students install native plants at Baz Park.

BECOME A SALMON STEWARD



This year brought unprecedented financial challenges as **federal budget cuts eliminated nearly half of our base funding**: Resources that have long supported our project staff, nursery operations, and essential education programs. Additional cuts to state and regional grant pools reduced access to the funding that keeps our community outreach and student programs thriving. These shifts placed significant pressure on our ability to deliver the hands-on restoration and education work that defines LCFEG.



In response, we launched our first-ever fundraising campaign to help bridge the gap. **Thanks to the generosity of our community, the 2025 October campaign made an immediate difference by fully supporting the Fort Vancouver High School field trip to Mason Creek.** This success demonstrates the power of local support and how donor contributions directly sustain meaningful, place-based learning for youth. As funding uncertainties continue, your support is more important than ever.

If you're able, please consider making a gift to help strengthen our programs and ensure we can keep serving our communities and ecosystems.

[Donate to LCFEG!](#)



LCFEG THANKS YOU! AND THE SALMON DO TOO!

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Map of Lower Columbia Region



LCFEG Staff pose in front of the helicopter during wood transportation.

This work is only possible because of the steadfast support of our partners, donors, volunteers, students, and contractors who bring their passion and commitment to every project. Your dedication enriches our programs and helps us inspire the next generation of salmon stewards. Thank you for being an essential part of our mission!



LCFEG Staff help to install BDA posts into the ground at Mason Creek.