RESTORATION NEWS SPRING 2010

Puget Sound Restoration Fund

OUR MISSION

To achieve on-the-ground restoration of habitat, native species and water quality in Puget Sound by focusing on action not politics.

OUR GOAL

To mobilize funding and support from diverse sources to complete priority projects.

Washington's first restoration-scale outplant of abalone

We did it! After several years spent developing meticulous spawning protocols and carefully rearing 7 genetically distinct families of abalone, the Washington State abalone recovery team successfully conducted the State's first restoration outplant of abalone. The team from PSRF, University of Washington, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Shannon Point Marine Center (WWU), Baywater Inc and the Suquamish Tribe transported more than a thousand abalone from their nursery facility at Port Gamble to 4 different outplant sites near Anacortes.

Nearly half of the outplanted abalone were tagged so that we can conduct follow-up surveys to monitor the success of this project and optimize future outplant activities. This outplant represents the first of many future outplants that will be required to restore populations of pinto abalone - Washington's only abalone species - to self-sustaining levels.

Several weeks after this initial outplant, the recovery team outplanted nearly 1,000 more abalone in an experiment that will be carefully monitored to help us improve not only our outplanting techniques, but the methods by which the abalone are grown in the hatchery.

Check out photos and video of the outplants at:
www.restorationfund.org/movies.php and at www.pintoabalone.org

Collective efforts pay off in Henderson Inlet with shellfish upgrade

On January 27, 2010 the Washington Department of Health upgraded a portion of the Henderson Inlet shellfish growing area to Approved. Thanks to the work of many, the Henderson Inlet Community Shellfish Farm (HICSF) is now located on fully approved ground.

This is a huge community triumph that reflects a concerted and community-driven effort to improve water quality in Henderson Inlet!

We – Puget Sound Restoration Fund, Elliott's, Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association, our band of volunteer farmers and many other partners – have been invested in the HICSF since 2002. At the outset, we wanted to join hands with others in the watershed to restore clean water in an historic shellfish growing area - And good things have happened as a result of this collaborative undertaking. In the face of increased development, and contrary to predicted trends, water quality has improved.

The residents of Henderson Inlet, Thurston County Commissioners and staff, the Thurston Conservation District, Pacific Shellfish Institute and the community at large deserve a rousing thanks for their efforts to address pollution sources in the watershed.

Washington State University, The Russell Family Foundation, Thurston County, Thurston Conservation District, the Shellfish Protection Committee, Elliott's Oyster House and Olympia Seafood Co. have provided generous support for the HICSF over the years.

Growers from throughout the region have supported this effort by donating seed, serving their oysters at Oyster New Year and maintaining a spotlight on efforts to improve water quality and restore shellfish harvesting opportunities in Henderson Inlet.

And revelers, by the hundreds, have attended Oyster New Year at Elliott's each year, slurped oysters by the thousands, and supported an event that has benefited this project since 2002.

Our thanks to each and every one of you!

Photo: Robert Kangas - www.digitalsingularity.com

Participants in Elliott's Oyster Lover's Excursion slurp the delights of the Henderson Inlet Community Shellfish Farm (above and below).

Photo: Robert Kangas - www.digitalsingularity.com

PSRF and Elliott's Oyster House hosted a big harvest at the Henderson Inlet Community Shellfish Farm October 17, 2009. Elliott's bused 53 people from Seattle and served a lavish lunch; We shucked lots of oysters and people waxed poetic about how they tasted. The consensus is that our "Henderson Inlets" are full-bodied, crisp and tending toward briny. Certainly a taste worth working for.

To celebrate the upgrade and stay vigilant elsewhere, Elliott's is donating $1 for every dozen oysters ordered to PSRF's Drayton Harbor project through the month of March.

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Port Madison Community Shellfish Farm

Make way - Bainbridge Island's first community shellfish farm is fully permitted and ready to roll. The Port Madison Community Shellfish Farm (PMCSF) will be harvesting and selling its signature oysters - "Port Madison Petites" - beginning in 2010. The Bloedel Reserve, one of the world's premier gardens, has leased their tidelands to PSRF for a small-scale, community-based venture that will make locally-grown oysters and clams available to the community, create tasty incentives for keeping the water clean and help re-connect people to one of the Island's great resources.

As you can imagine, water quality plays a key role in operating a community shellfish farm. The way we see it, if you're slurping oysters that depend on clean water, you'll do what it takes to keep the water clean and support local programs that provide effective pollution control.

There are several ways to get your hands on "Port Madison Petites." You can purchase a PMCSF membership that provides oysters throughout the year (similar to a vegetable CSA), you can look for them at the Bainbridge Island Farmer's Market, or you can order them at local restaurants.

The proceeds from the sale of shellfish will support ongoing community involvement and help fund new water quality improvement projects in the area. First on the agenda is the return of a mobile pump-out vessel to Port Madison June - August 2010 to make it easy for visiting and resident boaters to get their holding tanks pumped. Second is an education campaign on the importance of cleaning up pet waste. The magnitude of bacterial contamination from pet waste is actually staggering. It's an easy thing to fix, so let's get started.

PSRF is pleased and honored to be working with the community to hold on to healthy and productive marine systems that the residents of Bainbridge Island can enjoy and have access to. Our generous partners and funders include: The Bloedel Reserve, Sustainable Bainbridge, Bainbridge Watershed Council, Kitsap Health District, City of Bainbridge Island, Plauche & Stock, Cherry Creek Environmental, Cultural Resource Consultants, The Safeway Foundation, Puget Sound Energy Foundation, the Bonnell Cove Foundation, Bainbridge Community Foundation and the Pacific Coast Congress of Harbormasters and Port Managers.

NFWF Native Oyster Project

PSRF is pleased to announce a $198, 300 grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to expand native oyster enhancement in Puget Sound. This grant is matched, dollar for dollar, by contributions and in-kind support from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, USDA, Suquamish Tribe, Squaxin Island Tribe, U.S. Navy, Seattle Shellfish, Olympia Oyster Company, Calm Cove Oyster Company, Taylor Shellfish and PSRF.

Over the past year, myriad partners have been working with NFWF and PSRF to develop a 10-year business plan for enhancing native oyster habitat and re-establishing viable populations in areas that supported core populations historically. With roughly 4% of historic core populations remaining there is no time like the present to ramp up efforts to rebuild populations of one of Puget Sound's keystone species.

Volunteers (below) participate in a community shellfish farm harvest event in October 2009. Such events are a great way to experience these community resources firsthand.

Photo: Robert Kangas - www.digitalsingularity.com

Film maker Shelly Solomon swings into action as PSRF's Brian Allen spreads oyster shell to create native oyster habitat in Dogfish Bay.

PSRF October 1st Event

Puget Sound Restoration Fund celebrated the beginning of the Oyster Season by hosting a private party at Elliott's Oyster House. Guests enjoyed fresh, local oysters with "Oyster Award" winning wines selected by Jon Rowley, the King of oyster-wine pairings and the force behind "Copper River Salmon." Elliott's served a lavish, sit-down dinner and author Rowan Jacobsen read from his new book, The Living Shore (inspired by PSRF's 2008 expedition to Vancouver Island). It was a wonderful evening for all.

A special thanks to our Sponsors for the evening: ESA Adolfson, Brown and Caldwell, the Puget Sound Pilots Association and Elliott's Oyster House.

Elliott's Oyster New Year

On November 7, 2009, Elliott's Oyster House hosted their 17th Annual Oyster New Year Bash. Net proceeds from this sold out event were donated to PSRF Henderson Inlet Community Shellfish Farm. The event included more than 30 varieties of local oysters, more than 50 wines from Washington wineries, an oyster luge and great raffle prizes.

Elliott's Oyster New Year Bash is part of Elliott's Oyster House's annual Ocean Harvest Festival, during which time, they donate a portion of the proceeds from every dozen oysters they sell to PSRF's Henderson Inlet Community Shellfish Farm.

Special thanks to all of our raffle sponsors: Snowwater Heli-Skiing and Valhalla Powdercats, Fish Brewing Company, Xinh's Clam and Oyster House, Elliott's Oyster House

Documentary films on PSRF projects

In 2009, PSRF teamed up with film maker Shelly Solomon and Leaping Frog Films to produce documentaries that showcase three of our projects. The 15- to 30-minute films chronicle the stories of our native oyster restoration work, abalone recovery efforts and the Henderson Inlet Community Shellfish Farm. All three of these films can be viewed from the PSRF website at: www.restorationfund.org/movies.php.

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The living shore: Rediscovering a lost world

"What too many of us simply regard as the oyster, Rowan Jacobsen reveals as living gold - as currency of coastal cultures, engineer of ecosystems, the champagne toast of societies through the ages."
- Will Stolzenburg, Where the Wild things Were

Rowan Jacobsen's new book, chronicling PSRF's expedition to Vancouver Island and the role of coastal resources in human development, was published in September 2009.

The Living Shore weaves the scientific and anthropological story of the Olympia oyster in the Pacific Northwest with musings on how the discovery of this particular oyster bed may help to inform restoration efforts in Puget Sound.

It's a great read - even if you don't consider yourself an Olympia oyster groupie. Join Jacobsen and company in this Steinbeck-esque exploration of wild oyster habitat and its implications for the world's oceans. The Living Shore is now available in hardcover.

Learn more at www.rowanjacobsen.com.

Photo: Robert Kangas - www.digitalsingularity.com

Ocean acidification

PSRF received a $150,000 grant from the Puget Sound Partnership to monitor the potential effects of ocean acidification on shellfish communities in Puget Sound. Our partners include Pacific Shellfish Institute, NOAA Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory (PMEL), University of Washington (Applied Physics Lab and School of Oceanography) and Taylor Shellfish.

The project commenced in July 2009 with the following activities:

- PSRF, PSI and Taylor Shellfish established index stations in Totten Inlet and Dabob Bay and began collecting weekly samples of planktonic larvae, oyster spat, and seawater during the settlement season (mid-July – September, 2009).
- NOAA and UW conducted enhanced sampling at both index stations in the fall to provide the oceanographic context for Totten Inlet and Dabob Bay sites, including carbon analysis.
- In spring 2010, UW Oceanography and the Applied Physics Laboratory will begin collecting real-time, high resolution data on water properties and pCO2 at the Dabob Bay station. Variable, low pH values in incoming seawater were reported at the Taylor Shellfish Farms hatchery in Dabob Bay. Effects of more corrosive seawater may be significantly and adversely affecting molluscan bivalve larvae reared in this facility. The pCO2 sensor purchased and deployed as part of this project will help determine whether chemical changes in seawater are affecting natural populations of shellfish in Dabob Bay (outside the hatchery environment).

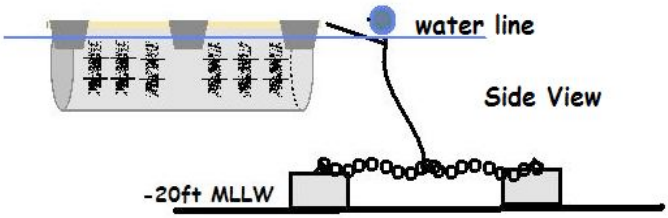
The ocean acidification monitoring project will continue through the oyster settlement season in 2010.

Andy Suhrbier, senior biologist for the Pacific Shellfish Institute, samples Totten Inlet waters as part of the ocean acidification monitoring effort.

Can mussels help mitigate nutrients in Quartermaster Harbor, on Vashon Island?

In 2010 PSRF plans to implement a demonstration project, funded in part by a King County WaterWorks grant. Modeled after successful demonstrations elsewhere in the world, we plan to install an experimental field station in Quartermaster Harbor, on Vashon Island, where we will culture native mussels. The idea is to develop a creative strategy for mitigating chronic nutrient loads in Quartermaster Harbor by using the ecosystem services of native mussels. As an added benefit, the project also engages residents in the recovery of healthy marine resources.

The station itself is a small raft, specially designed to allow for careful measurements during the trial. These measurements will include assessments of nutrient removal and ecosystem services of the cultured shellfish. With the timely removal of grown mussels, we will evaluate market-based mechanisms to redistribute the sequestered nutrients back into the watershed in the form of compost products.



Conceptual illustration of mussel raft to be deployed in Quartermaster Harbor

The PSRF staff prepares to outplant 700 yards of oyster shell in Dogfish Bay.

Upcoming Events

Bainbridge Island Shellfish Seed Sale -

On May 15th, PSRF will hold a seed sale for those interested in growing shellfish along their own shorelines. The sale will be held at the PSRF office on Bainbridge Island. Contact Wendy Welch with questions - wendy@restorationfund.org

Shellfish Lovers Ultimate Rejuvenation Party -

S.L.U.R.P. will be held on May 23, 2010 at the Fish Tale Brewhouse in Olympia from 5 - 8 pm. Sample local oysters, wines and brews while taking in live music, ice sculptures and more. Proceeds benefit PSRF's Henderson Inlet Community Shellfish Farm and Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association Habitat Rejuvenation Fund.

A satisfied dive team poses after successfully outplanting more than 1,000 juvenile abalone (left to right): Daniel Bergman (Shannon Point Marine Center), Brian Allen (PSRF), Jordan Watson (PSRF), Josh Bouma (WDFW), Bethany Stevick (UW).

Puget Sound
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