



YESTUARY

Spring 2015

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DESCHUTES ESTUARY RESTORATION TEAM (DERT)

What is an estuary steward?

Estuary Steward Program kicks off

DERT has an active volunteer program devoted to educating the community about dam removal and estuary restoration. Both are vital steps toward watershed health. Our volunteers are Estuary Stewards and their mission is to foster broad participation in estuary restoration by a community who understands and appreciates the beauty and value of the environment.

Estuary Stewards build awareness and help DERT build a program that informs people about watershed history, the Clean Water Act, community rights to public access, the economic values of a clean environment, and the legacy we leave for future generations.

Deschutes Estuary Stewards are the public face of DERT. They are well-informed and want you to know all about South Puget Sound, the



Eighteen new estuary stewards joined DERT for volunteer training at the Harbor House on the Olympia waterfront in January. What a great turnout!

Deschutes River and how important a restored estuary is to fish and wildlife.

You will find them tabling at community events, you will hear their voices come through this newsletter and on social media like our Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team Facebook page. They will be available to do special educational presentations for your organization, school, church or event.

Estuary Stewards use their creative abilities to come up with new projects and programs to

further educate toward a healthy Deschutes watershed! Please join us!

Do you want to be an Estuary Steward?

Estuary Steward orientation sessions are held several times a year.

The next session will be this summer. Please drop us a line at olydert@gmail.com and leave your contact information if you are interested.

The Deschutes Watershed Guide

A healthy watershed makes a healthy estuary. The Deschutes River forms one of the most important watersheds in the South Sound, but little about it is known by its residents.

With grants from Thurston County and the Squaxin Island Tribe, DERT volunteers have set out to create a Deschutes Watershed Guide to acquaint the community with the place they call home.

The guide will feature a map with access points and cultural and ecological points of interest, which no glove box or backpack should be without. It will connect users to a website with information about the watershed, its history and its challenges.

The Deschutes Watershed is hard to get to know. Much of its upper reaches are inaccessible. Roads do not follow the river to allow people a seamless connection to the watershed and its systems: land, water, air and wildlife. The Guide will help.

We especially want to promote successful restoration and good conservation practices. If you know of businesses, groups or individuals who are working to make the watershed a healthy home for all its inhabitants, please let us know.

Imagine the Estuary, Where the River Meets the Sea

Facts about Salmon and Capitol Lake

Restoration of Deschutes River Estuary would benefit salmon from across Puget Sound

Healthy estuarine habitat is critical to the survival of juvenile salmon in Puget Sound. Salmon from as far away as Seattle depend on South Puget Sound to survive.

Years of research by the Squaxin Island Tribe has shown that many of the juvenile salmon that live in the deep waterways of South Puget Sound – including summer residents of Budd Inlet – don’t come from nearby rivers.

Only ten percent of the salmon sampled in Budd Inlet come from the Deschutes or Nisqually rivers. Forty percent of the fish found came from the Puyallup watershed, including ESA listed White River spring Chinook. Another third came from the Green River near Seattle.

The tribe conducted regular beach seine surveys across deep South Sound for five years. They regularly tracked salmon at over

20 locations, including five in Budd Inlet. Tribal researchers also tracked the ratio of hatchery to wild salmon captured in the surveys.

Chinook salmon caught by tribal researchers started showing up by mid-June and then left the area by the end of August. This early life history stage, when salmon smolts migrate into marine waters, uses the critical and limited estuaries of the Salish Sea to survive.

We have lost 70 percent of estuarine habitat in Puget Sound, limiting the recovery of salmon populations.

Tumwater Falls Chinook salmon hatchery program is the least productive in Puget Sound

Compared to other state hatcheries that produce fall Chinook, the Tumwater Falls hatchery, located just upstream of Capitol Lake, has the lowest smolt-to-adult survival.

Many factors obviously contribute to the low return of Tumwater Falls hatchery Chinook. But, the impact of the lake and the lack of estuarine

habitat is unique among the hatchery programs compared.

Wild salmon stocks returning to the Deschutes River are not healthy

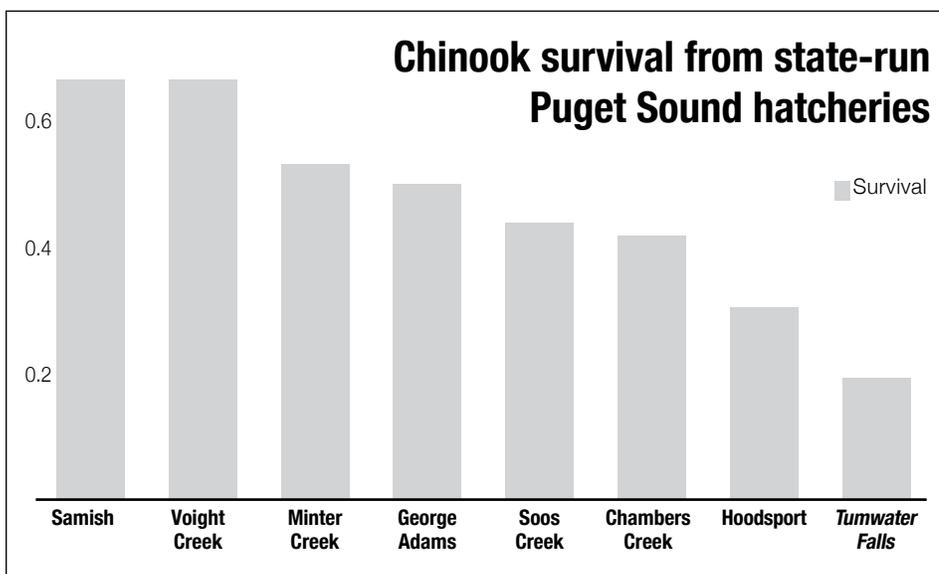
As recently as the 1980s, the Deschutes River was the largest producer of coho south of the Tacoma Narrows. But coho have been returning in low numbers for over 20 years since a landslide sent tons of sediment into the river. The landslide wiped out coho in their main stronghold on Huckleberry and Thurston Creeks. Since then coho haven’t been able to re-establish their prior production levels.

While sediment is a major issue facing Deschutes coho, marine and estuary survival is another major obstacle. During a multi-year acoustic tracking study only 3 percent of coho that originated in southern Puget Sound made it past the Tacoma Narrows. Typically around 2 percent of any given salmon run return as adults.

Estuaries are critical transition zones as salmon move between fresh and salt water. South Sound coho, including those originating in the Deschutes, are practically seeing a lifetime’s worth of mortality in only a few miles.

“Our way of life, our culture and economy have always been based around natural resources,” said Andy Whitener, natural resources director for the Squaxin Island Tribe. “Protecting and restoring salmon habitat is the most important thing we can do to restore salmon in the Deschutes and protect our treaty right to fish.”

– Courtesy of the Squaxin Island Tribe



2014: The Year of the YESTuary!

A hard-working year

By Sue Patnude, *Executive Director*

2014 was a hard-working year for the Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team.

Our education and outreach efforts expanded as Estuary Stewards formed the "YESTUARY" team and factual information about dam removal and estuary restoration began to travel from person to person.

Here is a short report on DERT's efforts.

Talking the Science Facts

DERT's core mission is to promote and implement science, education and outreach to restore and protect the health of the Deschutes river watershed and estuary, South Puget Sound and the Salish Sea.

We fulfil our mission using a team of Estuary Stewards – volunteers who work tirelessly to spread the facts about the Deschutes and help the community create a sense of place within this beautiful and important watershed.

DERT believes and participates in solid, independently-reviewed science and creates programs and materials to help people understand what the science means to their quality of life.

During 2014, we worked with our volunteer Technical Team to review sediment management ideas to implement once the dam is removed and we became a Fiscal Agent for the Olympia Coalition for Ecosystem Preservation to receive grant money used to help restore a local heron rookery in the Deschutes watershed.

DERT's goal for the Deschutes Watershed Guide is to create a "sense of place" and common identity for people and visitors.

Cleaning up the Watershed

DERT's "clean" campaign is fostering an important way of thinking about the benefits of a restored estuary in our urban corridor, a small portion of the Deschutes watershed.

DERT's ongoing efforts to clean up Budd Inlet and the Deschutes River by removing the 5th Avenue dam also includes a look at the whole Deschutes watershed.

Clean water, clean economy, and clean fun – are not just buzz words. Clean represents the future – the legacy we leave to healthy future generations.

Deschutes Watershed Guide

What is the Deschutes watershed? How big is it? What is its history and environmental culture? Who lives and works there? How can we get to know it better? These questions and more will be answered in the upcoming Deschutes Watershed Guide funded with grants from the Thurston County Heritage Fund and the Squaxin Island Tribe.

The Deschutes Watershed Guide will help create a "sense of place" and common identity for people and visitors. Think about taking a road trip – by car or bike or maybe

go on a hike or take a swim in an area where the Deschutes River flows. The Guide will create a map of areas that you will want to explore. For more information see the story, *Deschutes Watershed Guide*, on Page 1.

Estuary Stewards, our Volunteers

DERT created a team of volunteers called Estuary Stewards.

They have been educating and informing the public by tabling at special community events, chatting with people as they watch the salmon come home at the 5th Avenue dam, and talking to folks who walk around the dammed estuary also known as Capitol Lake.

In 2015, we are expanding the numbers and training more Estuary Stewards. See story on Page 1 for more information.

Thank you to our funders!

DERT would like to thank our funders for a productive 2014. We raised over \$25,000 to pay for our education and outreach efforts and maintain our office. Funding came from the Rose Foundation, the Squaxin Island Tribe, Thurston County Heritage Fund, the Community Sustaining Fund and the Olympia Food Co-op. We also gained more members and funding through our crowdsourcing Indiegogo Campaign and created a great video with the help of our talented local cartoonist Michael De Marzo.

2015 is already shaping up to be better than ever! Join us now and help us Restore the Deschutes Watershed!!!

IN MEMORIAM



Patricia Pyle

Patricia Pyle left this earth on February 21, 2015. Patricia was a DERT member, an amazing and vital activist for the regional environmental community and a trusted adviser. Her death has left a huge hole in ecosystem preservation knowledge and activity in this fragile environment we strive to restore and protect. Good-bye Patricia - we will see you another time!

DERT sends all of our collective love and sympathy to Patricia's family. We are here if you need anything at all.

WHY: Rose Foundation grant awarded to DERT for youth education

DERT is developing a new project called Watershed Health and Youth, or WHY! We just received notice from the Rose Foundation that \$10,000 is on the way!

WHY is an on the ground field touring opportunity for youth from middle school through high school. Volunteer scientists will be leading these young adults on educational tours throughout our amazing Deschutes watershed.

Students will learn about habitat for fish and wildlife, restoration projects, watershed history, conservation ethics, and start to realize a "sense of place" within the Deschutes watershed. And most important - they will learn the benefits of a restored estuary and its vital role in this most important watershed.

What kind of legacy will we leave for future generations?

If you want to help or have ideas - please contact Sue Patnude at DERT - olydert@gmail.com. Stay tuned!

Thank you to our generous funders!

- **Rose Foundation:** Puget Sound Grassroots Fund
Community Sustaining Fund
- **Olympia Food Co-op**
- **Squaxin Island Tribe**
- Our wonderful new and returning **Members**
- **Special Donations** through our Indiegogo Campaign



Support Your Local Estuary



Become a DERT Member Today

As a DERT member you will receive regular newsletters and a Yestuary bumper sticker!



I say YES to the Deschutes Estuary!

Enclosed are my membership dues \$ _____

Additional Donation \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Annual Membership Dues

Student/Low Income	\$10
Individual	\$25
Family	\$75
Business	\$100

Join online, or mail this form to: DERT Membership, PO Box 11093, Olympia, WA 98508

www.deschutesestuary.org

DERT

The Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible.

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