

Mason Conservation District

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Board Chair: David Mackey



State Legislative District #35
Congressional District #6, 10

2015 Feature Accomplishment: Riparian restoration initiative

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Over the past century, riparian (streamside) habitat has been severely degraded by human-induced impacts. These habitats are the foundation and fundamental building blocks for protecting aquatic ecosystems and the species that depend on them. Riparian vegetated buffers provide a multitude of benefits including filtration of contaminants and excess nutrients, stabilization of stream banks and shorelines, shade to regulate water temperatures, a foundation for the aquatic food web, and a supply of wood.



Knotweed infestation
Photo: Evan Bauder



Treated and restored riparian planting.
Photo: Evan Bauder

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Invasive vegetation rapidly displaces native vegetation and takes over riparian habitats. Effective control begins at the upstream extent. Native plant establishment promotes naturally functioning riparian plant communities. Mason Conservation District is leading a riparian restoration initiative and received grant funding in 2009, 2013, and 2014. The district used computer based assessment of conditions to prioritize responses.

Infestation in one watershed is now considered under control. Considerable progress has been made by treating approximately 50 percent of the Skokomish watershed, and planting well over 400 acres of habitat. Leveraging multiple funding sources achieved considerable progress, but continued funding is needed.

KEY PARTNERS: Hood Canal Coordinating Council; Mason County Noxious Weed Control Board; Recreation and Conservation Office; Washington Department of Ecology; Skokomish Indian Tribe; Squaxin Island Indian Tribe; Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group; Forterra; Laird Norton Family Foundation

Other Accomplishments



The district implemented the fifth phase of over 600 acres of restoration activities at the Skokomish River estuary in Hood Canal.

Photo: Rich Geiger



Continued collaboration with the Mason County Public Utility District 3 to install large wood log jams in John's Creek, a salmon bearing stream.

Photo: Gavin Glore

More Work to Do!

The district continues to lead efforts to create a diversified economy, while protecting the natural resource heritage of the community. Population growth continues to pressure natural resources and wildlife. Water quality in wetlands, rivers, lakes, and marine waters continue to be impacted by increasing pollution in stormwater. Agricultural lands are being converted to other uses, threatening the availability of food.