

CORPS NEWS

BRIDGE CLEANUP AT WALLACE FALLS STATE PARK

BY: JENNIFER BRIGGS, SNOHOMISH COUNTY DNR/REITER FOOTHILLS TRAIL CREW SUPERVISOR



Left to right: David Nguyen, Cassidy Brokofsky, Cheryl Kennedy, Assistant Supervisor Karlie King

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Snohomish County DNR/Reiter Foothills Trail Crew recently worked on a project with State Parks and Recreation at Wallace Falls State Park.

In 2014, the Department of Natural Resources collaborated with State Parks and Recreation to build a bridge across the Wallace River, above the upper falls at Wallace Falls State Park. The land east of Wallace River turns into DNR land. A future trail system will eventually connect to hiking trails off May Creek Road that previous Reiter Foothills Crews built in 2013 and 2014. Therefore, our DNR sponsor volunteered the 2015 Reiter Foothills Trail Crew to help with post-bridge-construction cleanup efforts. This meant driving about an hour up a tight and twisty gravel road, climbing with every switch back, up to the bridge site. The view was spectacular, stretching from Mount Index all the way to the Olympic Mountains across Puget Sound.

Once we arrived at the bridge site, it was clear we needed to remove the downed trees and debris strewn across the trail. The crew buckled down and began chain sawing right away. We bucked the logs into 15-inch sections and transported them to Wallace Falls State Park to be used as



firewood for campers. We had fun making races out of rolling the logs across the bridge to be loaded up into the truck. If you'd like to check out the impressive bridge recently built over Wallace River, hike up the "Woody Trail" at Wallace Falls State Park, and take a right at the end of the trail. The bridge is just a few hundred feet down the road. Note: The trail is not completed on the east side of the river, so hike at your own risk!

Photos courtesy of Jennifer Briggs



David Nguyen clearing the trail



Assistant Supervisor Karlie King and Crewmember Cheryl Kennedy practice log rolling

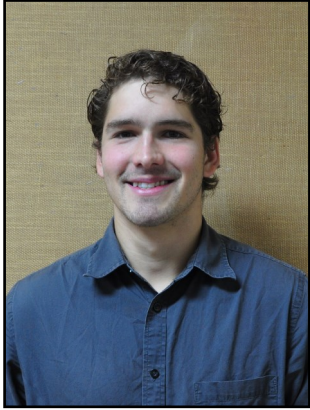
SNAPSHOTS OF JUNE ELECTIVE TRAINING



Participants enjoy the 11th Annual WCC Olympics: water balloon toss and pot stacking competition

IP SPOTLIGHT: ALEXEI DESMARAIS, SOUND SALMON SOLUTIONS IP

BY: ALEXEI DESMARAIS, SSS INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT



As an Individual Placement at Sound Salmon Solutions, there is no standard fare. There is no normal. In the course of one week this spring, I was called on to mow Reed Canary Grass and plant native shrubs at one of our riparian restoration sites, to teach 100 5th graders about salmon ecology, to represent SSS at a community function, and to lead a volunteer planting event; all while managing the organization's social media presence and our blog.

At its worst, "no normal" means being pulled into projects or called on to complete tasks no one else has time or money to work on. Some days I feel I'm being tugged in 15 directions at once. You may be tempted to ask why I would almost unequivocally recommend the WCC IP experience; I hope to offer a glimpse.

Most days with SSS—the Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group for the Snohomish and Stillaguamish, Island County watersheds—are infused with purpose, new experiences and exciting chances to learn. On the best days, I am rewarded with smiling young faces, captivated by the wonders of the natural world.

Education is my passion. I have loved getting a deeper understanding of on-the-ground restoration practices, which is wonderful and meaningful work. Salmon deserve better. They deserve clean, cool, clear, connected, complex streams. They deserve to be able to live in their historic waters. Our mission—to ensure healthy future salmon runs—is laudable. And the restoration work itself—largely riparian planting and invasive control—is vital toward achieving this goal. But what really gives me energy and where I find I add the most value is in teaching: in showing youth that science can be exciting, that the natural world is full of wonders, and that the world is so much larger than us.

Needless to say, I was thrilled this spring to spend several weeks almost exclusively committed to our education programs. SSS' largest program involves every 5th grade student in the Marysville School District. We take these students out to Jones Creek—a City of Marysville site—to explore the connections between the health of local waterways and local salmon runs. There, we perform water quality tests—specifically looking at and discussing the importance of Dissolved Oxygen levels, Phosphates, Turbidity and temperature. And we get to explore the alien world of stream bugs (benthic macroinvertebrates) and their importance to salmon. We often also conduct classroom visits during which we model erosion and discuss its impacts on salmon-bearing streams.

SSS, cont'd. p. 4

*"But in every
walk with Nature
one receives far
more than he
seeks."*

-John Muir

Other education programs are more opportunity-based. For example, some Granite Falls 5th grade classes helped us plant trees at one of our active restoration sites, in the rain. I don't know if I've seen a group of muddier, happier students. Part of the joy of being an outdoor educator is in knowing that I don't have to wash the students' clothing. More recently, I taught stream ecology to a group of Seattle students at Camp River Ranch near Carnation. The 2nd and 3rd graders and I tromped around the campus and along the Tolt River, marveling at the river's power and the life contained just beneath the surface.



Spawning Sockeye salmon

I have also been afforded some tremendous professional development opportunities as an IP. Most recently, I attended the Salmon Recovery Conference in Vancouver, WA. By volunteering during breakout sessions, I was able to experience this eye-opening event essentially for free. The countless speeches on topics ranging from beavers and hatchery management to large woody debris and advanced analytical tools gave me a glimpse into the broader world of the salmon recovery effort. It also gave me a glimpse into the world beyond Sound Salmon Solution's geographic and programmatic focus. Though I was exhausted by the end of it, my head overflowing with information and with questions about the future of salmon conservation, the whole experience was invigorating. It was a terrific learning and networking opportunity, and a chance for me to gain perspective on my current and potentially future place in the world of salmon restoration. The mood of the event was caught between concern—that we don't yet fully understand the science behind restoration, that funding sources may be drying up, that the scale of our current work is microscopic when compared with the scope of the problem and the ecological systems themselves, that the effects of climate change may exacerbate these and other environmental issues—and an infectious optimism. I walked away not bogged down but rather energized by the enormity of the task ahead, ever more convinced that this grand restorative journey we have embarked upon is meaningful and vital to our region's health. As one of the presenters put it (echoing Wes Jackson): "If your life's work can be accomplished in your lifetime, you're not thinking big enough." These are words I hope to take back to my own work and beyond my term with the WCC.

"On the best days, I am rewarded with smiling young faces, captivated by the wonders of the natural world"
-Alexei Desmararis

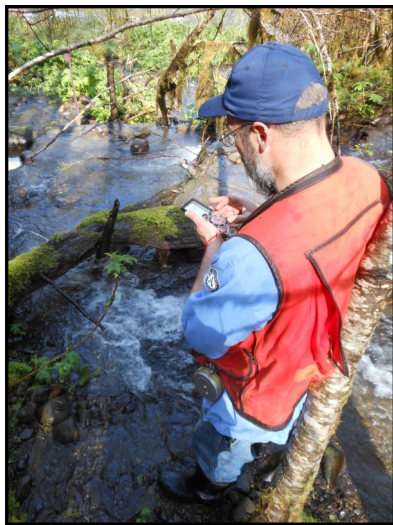
A FORESTRY QUEST TO LOCATE STREAM MARKERS

BY: BREA SMITH, PORT ANGELES/DNR TRAIL CREW ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Our crew recently worked on a forestry project for Richard Bigley, a research scientist working for DNR out of Olympia. We contributed to a long-term research project studying the impact of logging activities on fish-bearing streams in West Olympic drainages. We visited remote locations accessed by trails only open to people involved with the project in order to locate stream markers placed years ago. We then marked them with coordinates using written directions, maps, GPS, and compasses to navigate to the sites. Hikes into test plot locations involved miles of beautiful rainforest. Once we found the stream markers, we determined the bearing of the stream current (which direction the water is running). We would then lay out the test plots set off 90 degrees uphill. Next, we mapped and flagged out the plot. GPS was not a reliable option due to the thick forest canopy. Instead, we learned to use traditional orienteering methods to measure and mark the 30 x 60 meter test plots. Four points are marked inline from the original stream marker, and then we flagged right and left flanks for every center post. We used logger's tapes to measure the distance between each marker, and a compass to keep the layout in the correct direction. Once we mapped the plot, we measured and tagged all the trees contained in the plot by nailing a numbered tag into the tree and measuring its DBH (diameter breast height). The top three largest trees we measured were: Douglas Fir: 283.8 cm DBH (over 9 feet wide!), Western Red Cedar: 218.5 cm DBH, and Hemlock: 167.2 cm DBH. A highlight of the project was sharpening our tree identification skills and gaining valuable orienteering skills.



Assistant Supervisor Brea Smith, measuring the DBH



Supervisor Pete Allen, checking the compass

*"A little nonsense now and then, is cherished by the wisest men."
-Roald Dahl*

ALUMNI: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

BY: DANIELLE PEREZ, KING COUNTY DNRP CREW MEMBER 2013-2014



Danielle Perez (front) and crew members plant in Enumclaw

“Working for the WCC was absolutely the most physically demanding job I’ve ever had, but it was also one of the most personally rewarding.”

-Danielle Perez

Experience as a WCC Member:

During my time with the WCC, I worked on the King County DNRP crew in Renton. My crew role was production assistant on Peter Nevin’s crew. I also got to work with (former supervisors) Kris Buitrago, Andy Quast, Liz Esikoff, and (current supervisors) Rachael Mensching, and Ashley Gould. I loved being a part of a large crew and we often doubled up and mixed up the different groups and supervisors. Working for the WCC was absolutely the most physically demanding job I have ever had, but it was also one of the most personally rewarding. Going out into the field every day gave me a sense of accomplishment, and I made so many friends during my year with King County DNRP.

What She’s Doing Now:

I currently work for NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), though I am technically employed through a contracting company called Ocean Associates. I work at the Mukilteo field station and we recently finished up a round of experiments on Dungeness Crab larvae. Earlier this year we collected adult female Dungeness Crabs with egg masses. When they hatched, we took a few hundred of the larvae and set them up on MOATS (Mobile Ocean Acidification Treatment System). We exposed the crabs to varying levels of pH and temperature to see how long they would survive. Since Dungeness Crab is such an important commodity and ocean acidification a huge problem, it is important to see how they deal with changing waters. I have a lot of fun at my job! I am learning a lot working in a lab, and I love being able to have some real hands-on experiments that could shed some light in this field.

Advice to Current Members:

My best advice is do not be afraid to volunteer! I know that after 40 grueling hours of working outside, the last thing you want to do during your three day weekends is free labor -- but it is how I got my job. I started using my Fridays to volunteer in the lab where I currently work and when an opportunity opened up, I was there to take it. Even if volunteering does not turn into anything else, you will likely learn a new skill and make some new friends!

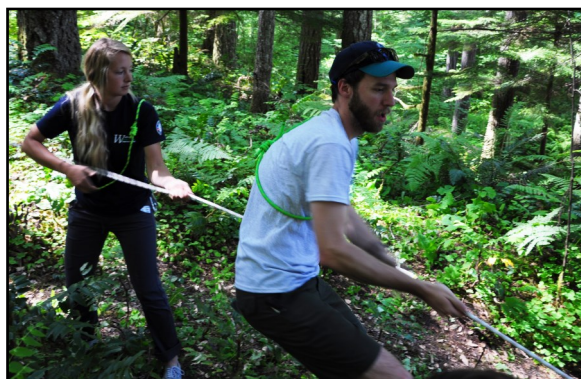
June Training Snapshots, cont'd.

Right: Emily Barry practices techniques during the S-212 course.

Middle: Ecology Director Maia Belton and Puyallup Crew Members, Jazz English, Zoe Loutos, Shayne Noble, Supervisor Alicia Kellogg, Shawn Cowley, and Kira Peck.

Below, left: Sara Price and Tyler Willey use a pulley system in a Search and Rescue class.

Below, right: Completed mushroom kit.



*“All my life I have tried to pluck a thistle and plant a flower wherever the flower would grow in thought and mind.”
-Abraham Lincoln*



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June Training Snapshots, cont'd.



Assistant supervisors prepare to take on the supervisors in the WCC Olympics Tug-of-War



Supervisor Brian Frankowski tosses rescue rope in a Swiftwater Rescue scenario



Mycology class participants (left to right), Angela Cyr, Alden Davis and Chris Shank assemble oyster mushroom kits

Plant ID Answers:

- A) *Rubus spectabilis* B) *Malus fusca* C) *Trillium ovatum* D) *Lupinus polyphyllus*

ABOUT THE WCC

The Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) was established in 1983 as a service program for young adults between the ages of 18-25. The WCC is offered through the Washington Department of Ecology and continues the legacy started by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The WCC has been an AmeriCorps program since 1994. Today, the WCC has around 300 members working on projects in every part of the state. Our partners include Federal, State, Local, and Tribal organizations. For more information please visit our website: www.ecy.wa.gov/wcc.