

Skagit River and Delta



KETH LAZELLE

The mighty Skagit River, teeming with eagles and salmon, runs from high in the Cascade Mountains to Puget Sound. The river and the 2 million acres of forests that protect it provide clean drinking water to local communities. The river's floodplain is one of the richest agricultural areas in the world. Tidelands, estuaries and farm fields draw tens of thousands of Wrangel Island snow geese each winter, as well as trumpeter swans and countless shorebirds on their great migrations. Generations of people have enjoyed the bounty of this river, farming, fishing, logging and playing. Here, The Nature Conservancy has developed one of the most robust and comprehensive conservation projects in the state. Its work is rooted in sound science as well as respect for the people who live, work and play here.



Conservation Actions

» In 1976, the Conservancy and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife created the Skagit River Bald Eagle Natural Area. In winter, bald eagles now gather by the hundreds to feed on returning salmon. This project includes another six landowning partners and has preserved more than 9,000 acres of eagle habitat, including more than 10 miles of river and thousands of acres of forests. About 1,300 acres are owned and managed by the Conservancy.

» In the Delta, the Conservancy is leading an innovative effort to restore highly productive tidal marshes—critical habitat for threatened salmon—while enhancing flood control and farmland preservation.

» In the pioneering Farming for Wildlife program, the Conservancy is partnering with Skagit Delta farmers to incorporate flooding into their crop rotations to create important wetland habitat for shorebirds as well as maintain family farms.

» The Conservancy has helped catalyze local conservation initiatives: it is a co-founder of the Skagit River Bald Eagle Natural Area, Skagit Watershed Council and the Skagit Cooperative Weed Management Area, lends technical expertise to partners such as the Skagit Land Trust, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group and government agencies, and has helped secure millions of dollars in state and federal funds for habitat acquisition and restoration.

Future Conservancy Goals

» Continue to develop a river conservation partnership that builds on past successes, protects quality river habitat, identifies floodplain areas where the river's natural path is blocked, and establishes priority areas for acquisition and restoration.

» Continue to restore the river's natural flow, control invasive weeds that degrade river health, and restore riparian forests and wetlands.

» Develop innovative conservation strategies on working landscapes that benefit farmers, the community and the ecosystem, and develop new ways of working that can be replicated in communities around the world.

Partners

Dike District 3

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Natural Resource Conservation Service

North Cascades National Park

Pacific Joint Venture Fund

Puget Sound Marine Fund

Puget Sound Partnership

Salmon Recovery Board

Sauk-Suiattle Tribe

Seattle City Light

Skagit Conservation District

Skagit Cooperative Weed Management

Area Working Group

Skagit County

Skagit Farmers

Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group



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Species of the Skagit

Fish

Chinook salmon

Chum salmon

Coho salmon

Pink salmon

Sockeye salmon

Bull trout

Cutthroat trout

Steelhead trout

Pacific lamprey

Salish sucker

White sturgeon

Marbled murrelet

Northern harrier

Northern pintail

Northern spotted owl

Olive-sided flycatcher

Osprey

Pacific slope flycatcher

Peregrine falcon

Rufous hummingbird

Snow goose

Townsend's warbler

Trumpeter swan

Western sandpiper

Western wood peewee

Willow flycatcher

Birds

Bald eagle

Band-tailed pigeon

Black-bellied plover

Blue grouse

Brant

Chestnut-backed

chickadee

Dunlin

Greater yellowlegs

Hermit warbler

Least sandpiper

Long-billed dowitcher

Mammals

Fisher

Gray wolf

Grizzly bear

Marten

Wolverine

Roosevelt elk

Western toad

Eelgrass

Skagit Land Trust

Skagit Watershed Council

Swinomish Tribe

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Washington Salmon Recovery Board

Washington Department of Fish and

Wildlife

Washington Department of Natural Resources

Washington State Parks

The Nature
Conservancy 

Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

For more information on the Skagit River and Delta, call The Nature Conservancy's Mount Vernon office at (360) 419-3140, or find us on the Web at nature.org/washington.

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