



## NORTH OLYMPIC SALMON COALITION

*Restoring wild salmon habitat on the North Olympic Peninsula*

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Dear 3 Crabs Restoration Project Team and Supporters, Funders, Neighbors and Observers,

Grab a cup of tea or coffee, we have some celebrating to do, and I think you'll find it's worth the read!

It is with much excitement that we share with you this news: The 3 Crabs Restoration Project is complete! Kevin and the Interwest Construction crew from Carlsborg wrapped things up the Friday before Christmas, and what a gift it was to finish the last day of a 6 month construction in time for the holidays.

As you may know, it's been a long road; no pun intended. The North Olympic Salmon Coalition (NOSC) took the baton on this project in 2012. Significant previous assessment and scoping work was started by the Clallam Conservation District in 1999, then continued by Ducks Unlimited, and the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. What began as a creek project evolved into an estuary project with a road relocation component, as priorities were assessed and opportunities explored.

New partnerships and relationships were formed.

NOSC forged a new relationship with Matt Heins at Dungeness Habitat LLC, a key landowner on the project. Matt was the liaison with the Dungeness Habitat board whose forward thinking and careful risk assessment enabled the 25 acre project to happen. Matt provided historical data, community connections, ideas, guidance, critical thinking, and incredibly, a field office for the better part of the year! Without Matt and Dungeness Habitat, this project would never have happened.

NOSC and the North Olympic Land Trust (NOLT) partnered on a project for the first time. Significant effort by NOLT was required to assure the project could take place without causing issues with the conservation easement recorded on the Dungeness Habitat LLC property.

Clallam County partnered with NOSC for the first time. No stranger to restoration projects, Ross Tyler and his engineering team, along with the County real estate department, all stepped in and mentored NOSC on our first Clallam County road project. Habitat is our expertise, roads and real estate are theirs and they provided the guidance and work necessary to ensure we succeeded in constructing a new road and bridge that the Commissioners could accept, so that the old road could be abandoned to create nearshore habitat and restore tidal connection to the Meadowbrook tidal marsh. The Clallam County Commissioners were generous with their time in work sessions with Ross, ensuring they understood the project and were prepared to make important decisions.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), a landowner on part of the site, took a new role in this project, and used it as a pilot for their newly created *Restoration Pathways* process. The process is designed to ensure the various departments and experts at WDFW are appropriately informed and engaged in restoration projects taking place on their land. After a presentation to the regional management team, we worked closely with permit staff, real estate staff, lands staff and engineers at WDFW throughout the project design and implementation. WDFW will now steward the beach public access site for recreational use.

NOSC worked with a large community of private landowners who were to be affected by the project. Through offering community open houses, fielding emails, calls and one on one meetings, we heard concerns, ideas, complaints and praise. We incorporated input where we could, and felt the disappointment when we could not provide all that was desired. Compliments and encouragement from area neighbors lifted us up and restored spirits when they were at their lowest.

All of this work requires funding, and given that this was the highest ranked project for salmon recovery in the region, there were several funders involved. Working through the North Olympic Peninsula Lead Entity for Salmon to make an application in the first round of a newly created program called Floodplains by Design, the project was awarded a large portion of the funding needed from one source, with no matching requirements. This is an unbelievable accomplishment. It costs substantial staff time and dollars to pursue grant funding and takes a lot of time to secure matching grants. The time and money saved by having one major funder who didn't require match, allowed this project to get off the ground far faster than it would have otherwise. Additional funds were provided by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service through a grant to WDFW, the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program and Salmon Recovery Funding Board.

Cardno worked on the restoration and road design and hired Contech to do the bridge and foundation design. Their professionals worked closely with our local Technical Advisory Group and County engineers to ensure a design that met all highway and bridge design requirements, took into account required sea level rise considerations and incorporated safety features for the community. Additional consultants were involved in the survey work, hydrology, geotech, and geomorphology. Northwest Territories Inc. of Port Angeles provided road construction inspection, ensuring designs were followed and the road was built to project specifications.

We were sad to lose a neighbor to the project, Mike McClesky, before he was able to realize his desire to contribute his parcels to WDFW for protection and restoration. He was a champion of the restoration, and I know he'd be so proud to see the work completed.

The Dungeness Lighthouse had a special role in the project because we had to relocate the connection point of their undersea power cable to land. It was a difficult undertaking for all and we're grateful that a mutually agreeable solution was found in time to keep the project moving and the lights on at the lighthouse!

Many a folk have visited the site before and during construction. We've hosted volunteer plantings, vegetation monitoring events, tours for members and donors, tours for funders, and have used the site as an educational tool for high school and college students. The local Audubon chapter has been doing regular bird surveys, collecting valuable data. Streamkeepers keeps up their stream monitoring at the site which required them to move their staff gauge and water quality measurement station from the old, now removed, bridge to the new bridge. We expect positive changes to bird and fish habitat, marsh diversity, water quality and shellfish habitat resulting from the project. Permanent shoreline access has been maintained with dedicated parking, a level path to the beach, and a wide paved shoulder for overflow parking. While most of the project area is private, WDFW owns the beach portion of the project and the public is welcome to visit. Interpretive signs will orient visitors to the site and WDFW will maintain a kiosk for public information.

The Jamestown S'klallam Tribe provided technical expertise during project design. During construction they provided valuable help in protecting the fish resource present. Field crews spent hours of hacking away cattails in order to capture fish that would have been in harm's way by construction activities.

No project happens without leadership. And as the project itself transitioned from one entity to another over the years, management of the project within NOSC also transitioned. The first champion was Jamie Michel, who wrote technically superior grant applications, provided impassioned presentations and fought for what he believed: that this high priority project should be funded and built no matter the challenges. He brought together the technical team, hired the design team, and began partner development and community engagement. I took up the reigns on the project after Jamie, working with NOLT, WDFW and the County on real estate issues, memorandums of agreement, project critical paths, more community meetings and ensuring the habitat assessment was done. And finally, Kevin Long, NOSC's Senior Project manager, took the project over for the pre-construction and construction phase. After getting the final funding and all permits in place, he ran the bid and award process. He has worked at the site nearly every day for six months alongside the construction crew, ensuring restoration designs are implemented as intended, making calls about changes in the field, interfacing with the community and media, hosting tours, being a liaison between contractors and the County, and watching the transformation of this important area from restaurant and road, impacted creek and beach, into the beautiful nearshore and estuary is now.

We know this project will be of value to wildlife as intended. We expect this spectacular bird watching site to get nothing but better with the expanded diversity of habitat created. The catalyst for the project were fish. Salmon to be exact. Endangered salmon to be precise. We have already seen fish arriving into the newly created habitat. Frogs and salamanders are settling into their new wetland. Wading birds have occupied new tidal areas almost the minute they were constructed, and raptors took their rightful place in the skies above the construction equipment and kept on the

hunt. Power lines known to cause mortality of migrating swans have been removed and placed underground, freeing up the skies for majestic winter visitors. People, Fish, Birds, Visitors, Residents... we look forward to the evolution of the site, we welcome your sightings, insights, musings and hope you come to appreciate all we have accomplished together in the months and years to come. Thank you, each of you, for all you did to make this possible, for supporting, tolerating, challenging, working diligently, and for your guidance, wisdom, support and unique perspectives and expertise. All of this is to say, we couldn't have done it without you!

In reflection and with gratitude,



Rebecca Benjamin  
Executive Director  
North Olympic Salmon Coalition

