

Image by John Gussman

SERENITY LANE

Riparian Restoration Project

IMPROVING RIVER HEALTH THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Dungeness River is one of the most important and iconic salmon bearing rivers on the Olympic Peninsula. Great diversity is supported along the 32 miles that this dynamic river flows. This steep river travels from snowfields and remnant glaciers in the Olympic Mountains through the flat and dry prairies of Sequim into the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Nine different salmonid and trout species call the mighty Dungeness home.

The riparian forests along the Dungeness River have seen better days. Over 20% of its riparian vegetation has been removed in that period, leaving lots of space for invasive species to take hold. Ornamental plants escaped from gardens, including butterfly bush and Itadori (Japanese) knotweed, began to outcompete native tree species such as black cottonwood, willow, and western red cedar.

The Dungeness River has been a priority watershed for invasive removal since 2004 when the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe began efforts to control the knotweed. NOSC joined the Dungeness

Riparian Recovery Project in 2014 as a new project partner and coordinator with the ultimate goal of reducing the number of invasive weeds that have become established along the lower Dungeness River corridor and replacing them with native plants to support healthy and diverse floodplains.

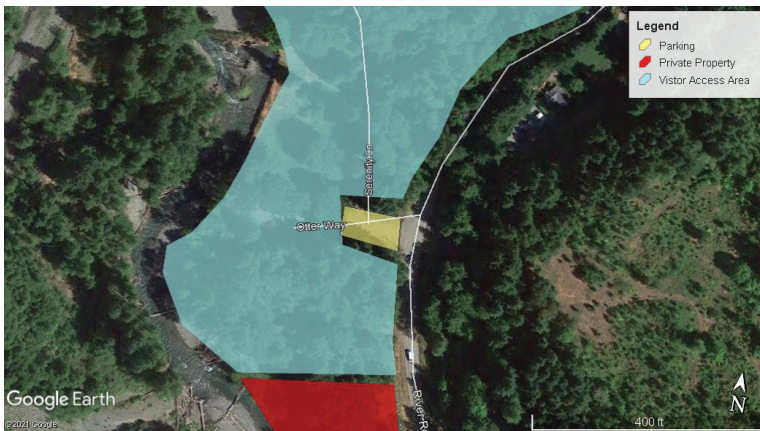
With most of the riverbed privately owned, it has been critical to foster relationships between the landowners, community, and the river they call home. These relationships encourage long-term stewardship and river protection. Since the project began, restoration crews and volunteers have planted over 35 acres of floodplain, and we’ve seen over 50% of river landowners supporting and participating in our efforts to date and the banning of the invasive butterfly bush from sale in Washington State nurseries.

Strong salmon runs are important to our landscape, wildlife, heritage and our future. The Dungeness River Riparian Recovery Project is an innovative and collaborative approach to salmon recovery that has resulted in successful engagement of a community around the restoration of Dungeness River salmon habitat.



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Visiting the Site



ACCESS

In Google Maps, use 'Otter Way, Sequim, WA' for driving directions to the Serenity Lane site. Visitors can park in front of the concrete barriers once you turn onto Otter Way. If you are a fan of outdoor recreation, this site connects with the multi-use Dungeness Trails system.

Open: All year from dawn to dusk
Limited Parking

VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

Flora: In late May and early June, you may catch spectacular blooms of riverbank lupine seeded by Washington Conservation Corps members. Red-flowering currant, another showy spring pollinator, was planted on the site by volunteers.

Fauna: In the fall and winter, keep an eye out for Bald Eagles that like to feed on salmon carcasses. Many smaller birds such as killdeer, American dipper, and kingfishers frequent this area. This riparian area also provides great habitat for amphibians. The lucky few may see a beaver, river otter, or some elk!



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Image by Nate Roberts

BY THE NUMBERS as of May 2021

Landowners Engaged: 53
Acres of Invasive Species Controlled: 70
Acres Planted or Seeded with Natives: 35
Project Area: Lower 11 miles of the Dungeness River

Images L & R: Washington Conservation Corps Crew members remove invasive butterfly bush from along the Dungeness River.



Image by Nate Roberts

PARTNERS: Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, USFWS, WA State Department of Agriculture, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, North Olympic Peninsula Lead Entity, Private Landowners, & Washington Conservation Corps