

Carpenter Creek Estuary Restoration Highpoint

Whether people have been around since the beginning, or they are just recently learning about the estuary restoration, it seems everyone agrees—the culmination of this project that has spanned the last 18 years is a meaningful occasion! So we are declaring “Estuary Liberation Day”!

With the completion of the West Kingston Bridge this month—the second phase of the project—we have been doing a lot of reflection on the past. Like most good things in life, some of it was joyous and some of it was just plain hard work and frustrating. But we had a vision of what the result could be, and it’s looking like we were right.



Undersized culverts under both the South and West Kingston Roads prevented adequate flows between Puget Sound, the estuary, and the salt marsh. South Kingston Road was built in 1891, and W. Kingston

PHASE 1: In 2012—The 10’ Box Culvert is gone! The new 90’ span allows a more gentle flow for fish passage.

Road was established as a county road in 1894. This pocket estuary and salt marsh have had over 120 years of restricted and compressed tidal flow!

Back in 2000, the county was getting ready to widen W. Kingston Road, including making an even longer culvert and putting more fill in the mudflats along the roadway. That alerted our fledgling Cutthroats of Carpenter Creek, a community program of Stillwaters that partnered with the county’s Carpenter Lake Stewardship Committee. We brought every agency we could think of to stand on the road over the W. Kingston culvert and check out the estuary and marsh. I can see them now—the Army Corps of Engineers, County Natural Resources staff of DCD, WA Fish and Wildlife, EPA, Washington DOE, the Suquamish Tribe Natural Resources (it’s traditionally Suquamish land), Puget Sound Partnership, Washington SeaGrant, and probably others I’ve forgotten.

The best we could do with all that input, at that time, was to make sure the road and culvert were not extended any further into the estuary when the road was widened. BUT, we got the attention of many folks about the great promise of a restoration project on the last significant functioning estuary before



PHASE 2: In 2017-18 the 5’ culvert under S. Kingston is replaced with a new 150’ span, removing the roadway ‘dike’ in the estuary and opening the marsh.

leaving Puget Sound. This estuary represents 30 acres of crucial high quality habitat for migrating salmonids in western Puget Sound—habitat that is now improved, restored, and protected because of some very hard work over the last 18 years. The “History of the Project” (below) gives you a flavor of the nearly ceaseless activity.

The County staff working with us have been just as tireless and determined as we have been over the last 18 years. There is absolutely no way we would be at this point of celebration of an amazing accomplishment without the support of Commissioners Endresen, Bauer, and Gelder. And the real mainstays on the front lines — Patty Charnas, Monica Daniels, Kathy Peters, Jon Brand, and Dick Dadisman — kept us on track while working through the environmental science involved, the systems of government to be navigated, and finally the financial and construction negotiations.

In the state and federal governments, we were frequently at the table with U.S. Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray; our representatives, Jay Inslee and Derek Kilmer; and state legislators Sherry Appleton, Phil Rockefeller, and Christine Rolfes. We will never forget Christine’s encouragement and guidance when we lobbied in Olympia to get the funding for the

History of the project in a nutshell:

2000: With advocacy from Stillwaters’ Cutthroats group, Carpenter Creek is identified as a priority project for salmon restoration; two fish-blocking culverts identified for removal - West Kingston and South Kingston Roads.

2001: Kitsap County, along with Suquamish Tribe, Stillwaters, and Washington Dept Fish and Wildlife, is approved for federal assistance through the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Estuary Restoration Program. Funding must be re-authorized each year for the next 8 years, requiring many letters of advocacy and many meetings. Our funding is often diverted to other needs, such as hurricane relief in New Orleans or flooding in Centralia.

2002: Kitsap County awarded \$618,905 through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)—to expire in 2009.

2005-2006: ACOE publishes first feasibility study and environmental assessment on Carpenter Creek Estuary, with focus on South Kingston culvert.

2007: Kitsap County receives \$637,000 in Washington Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) funds. Stillwaters places 99 large logs in the marsh and stream to improve the habitat.

2008: Puget Sound Partnership identifies Carpenter Creek Restoration project as high priority in the Puget Sound Action Agenda to restore and protect Puget Sound.

2009: ACOE finally receives authority to proceed with Carpenter Creek bridge construction design. Kitsap County uses some SRFB funds for final project design. Balance of SRFB funds and the ESRP funds expire & cannot be used.

2010: With support of the Puget Sound Partnership, Governor Gregoire includes Carpenter Creek in 10 Puget Sound projects in the capital budget. It is also included in the final Capital

budget and, again with much advocacy work by many local citizens and our elected representatives, it is the only Puget Sound capital project actually funded in the capital budget.

2011-2012: Estuary monitoring program is expanded significantly in anticipation of Phase 1 construction on South Kingston Road. Field work Interns from U.W. and WWU-Huxley expand the education and research program of Stillwaters. The bridge construction is begun in June, 2011 & completed in February, 2012. The county officially names the bridge the “Stillwaters Fish Passage”.

2013-2014: Lengthy negotiations completed between Kitsap County, Suquamish Tribe, WDFW, and U.S. Navy, for funding Phase 2, using mitigation funds required from the Navy for a project at Keyport. Meanwhile, post-construction monitoring for S. Kingston, and pre-construction monitoring for W. Kingston bridge is expanding the monitoring and science program at Stillwaters.

2017-18: Construction of Phase 2 culvert replacement at W. Kingston Road is completed! On February 13, 2018, the estuary and marsh are finally freed! And another 10 years of post-construction monitoring and research begins.





first bridge; she also secured some funding for design work in one of the first bills she sponsored. The staff of each of these legislators, both federal and state, spent many hours helping us, supporting us, and lobbying on our behalf.

So now we pause to celebrate! We celebrate the completion and success of a huge group project that greatly benefits this corner of Earth. The estuary project has re-established a 'historic', natural tidal flow, restoring a natural connection of this critical system to Puget Sound. It increases intertidal salt marsh habitat, which greatly improves the life of resident and migrating salmonids, as well as all the other members of the wildlife food web. And it preserves this land for all of us to enjoy.

We hope you can join us for **"Estuary Liberation Day"** on June 9th, in person or in spirit! There is a flyer-invitation enclosed for you and for you to post or share with others.

Please continue to join us in our inspiration and vision

for a healthy Puget Sound and an enlightened and peaceful world where every human loves and treasures our very essential mother Earth.

Stillwaters' Research & Monitoring Program

Stillwaters advances scientific research, education, & restoration on Puget Sound lowland streams & estuaries.

Scale of Effort by Stillwaters' Citizen-Science Volunteers since 2011 (when estuary monitoring expanded):

- ◆ Up to 60 volunteers in any given year
- ◆ Total of 6,300 hours in 6 years
- ◆ Staff hours in an average year: 2,750
- ◆ University Interns' hours to date: 4,050

Annual Cash Expenditures: \$57,850

Annual Volunteer time: App. \$ 25,000

Sources of funds: Stillwaters' General Funds, primarily supported by Community Donors, and grants from the Rose Foundation, Kingston-NK Rotary, Norcross Foundation, The Suquamish Tribe, Pt. Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Kitsap Community Foundation, and others.



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