The Family Forest Fish Passage Program is a well-managed government program which uses public tax dollars prudently for the benefit of the public resource and small forest landowners.

**SAM COMSTOCK**
WASHINGTON FARM FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

**Road to Recovery**
The Family Forest Fish Passage Program is implemented by three state agencies: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, and the Recreation and Conservation Office. Each agency brings its expertise to oversee the program’s operations, outreach and project selection processes. An oversight steering committee approves annual projects and keeps procedures current. The Washington Farm Forestry Association joins the agencies on a steering committee as a landowner organization. The Family Forest Fish Passage program recognizes the critical role small family forest landowners’ play in salmon populations and is committed to assisting with their economic viability. The Family Forest Fish Passage Program benefits are seen through:

- Creating jobs and economic opportunities in rural communities.
- Honoring and implementing Indian treaty fishing rights.
- Sustaining our forest industry and encourage renewable green products.
- Improving water quality in forested watersheds by reducing sediment delivery to streams and spawning areas.
- Minimizing flooding and the downstream harm to habitat and property.
- Helping the recovery of Puget Sound.

**Local Groups are the Cornerstone to the Program**
Local groups (sponsors) experienced in fish passage corrections complete most of the projects. Sponsors manage the project design, construction oversight, permitting, billing, and grant management. A sponsor may be a Conservation District, Regional fisheries enhancement group, Local fish-related non-profit organization, Tribe, or other interested organization.

**Project Sponsors**

**REGIONAL FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUPS**
- Chehalis Basin Fishes Task Force
- Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group
- Mid-Sound Salmon Enhancement Group
- Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association
- Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group
- South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group
- Still-Snohomish Task Force
- Tri-State Steelhead
- Willapa Bay Fisheries Enhancement Group

**PRIVATE SPONSORS**
- Fisheries Consultants
- Frame, LLC
- LW Consulting
- PB Lumber
- Pacific Coast Salmon Coalition
- Pacific Forest Management
- Stewardship Partners
- Wild Fish Conservancy

**CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**
- Casadilla Conservation District
- Giaam Conservation District
- Clark Conservation District
- Cowitz Conservation District
- Ferry Conservation District
- Grays Harbor Conservation District
- Jefferson County Conservation District
- Kitsap Conservation District
- Kittitas County Conservation District
- Lewis County Conservation District
- Mason Conservation District
- Okanogan Conservation District
- Pacific Conservation District
- Pend Oreille Conservation District
- Spokane County Conservation District
- Stevens County Conservation District
- Thurston Conservation District
- Union Conservation District
- Wahkiakum Conservation District

**Tribes**
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Kalispel Tribe of Indians
- Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe
- Nooksack Indian Tribe
- Spokane Tribe of Indians
- Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians
- Tulalip Tribes

**How Do I Get More Information?**
Visit our website: www.dnr.wa.gov/flfo

**Program Partners**

**PROGRAM OUTREACH**
Department of Natural Resources
Small Forest Landowner Office
Natural Resources Building
1111 Washington Street
MS 47012
Olympia, WA 98504-7012
(360) 902-1400
TTY: (360) 902-1125
TRS: 411
www.dnr.wa.gov

**PROJECT EVALUATION AND RANKING**
Department of Fish and Wildlife
Habitat Management Program
600 Capitol Way
Olympia, WA 98501-1091
(360) 902-2352
TTY: (360) 902-2207
www.wdfw.wa.gov

**PROGRAM FUNDING**
Recreation Conservation Office
Natural Resources Building
MS 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917
(360) 902-3000
TDD: (360) 902-1996
www.rcw.wa.gov

**LANDOWNER ORGANIZATION**
Washington Farm Forestry Association
PO Box 1015
Chehalis, WA 98523
Contact: Sam Comstock (360) 736-5750
http://www.wafarmforestry.com/

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**Family Forest Fish Passage Program**
2010 Implementation Report

**A Cost-Share Program for Small Forest Landowners to Improve Fish Passage**

**Bridge at Seitz Creek, Grays Harbor County, replaces culvert allowing fish to pass freely.**
Investment in Removal of Fish Barriers Pays Many Dividends

With the passage of the 1999 Forest and Fish rules, new regulations were established that required all forest landowners to replace fish barriers on streams associated with their forest road crossings. To a small landowner this cost ($50,000 to $150,000) can be substantial and raise the risk that they might sell their lands to developers. Recognizing these potential impacts, the 2003 Washington State Legislature created the Family Forest Fish Passage Program to help reduce the regulatory and monetary burdens on small family forest landowners and reconnect critical fish habitat.

A legislative investment of $17 million during the last seven years has paid dividends: 500 miles of fish habitat are reconnected and 232 fish barriers corrected. The job is not done however. Currently, there is a backlog of more than 400 landowners who have applied to the program to have barriers corrected and fish habitat reconnected.

It is estimated that for every $100,000 invested in fish passage projects, 1.57 local jobs are created during the construction season. This estimate does not include the additional indirect jobs like culvert and bridge manufacturing.

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**WISKAHK PROJECT**

Grays Harbor Conservation District and local contractors completed the Wishkah barrier correction (landowners at left). The new bridge will help reduce erosion and allow for fish passage.

**Funded and Unfunded Family Forest Fish Passage Projects**

Fish Program Aids Small Forest Landowners

3.2 million acres* of forestland in Washington are owned by small forest landowners. Ten thousand miles of fish-bearing streams flow through these mid- and low-elevation forest lands and provide high value, prime fish habitat. Small family forest landowners have long periods of time between harvests and significant financial burdens to implement fish barrier corrections and road maintenance projects. The state Family Forest Fish Passage Program provides financial assistance to small family forest landowners and is one of the critical links in a comprehensive approach to forest road management.

Investigation in Removal of Fish Barriers Pays Many Dividends

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A legislative investment of $17 million during the last seven years has paid dividends: 500 miles of fish habitat are reconnected and 232 fish barriers corrected. The job is not done however. Currently, there is a backlog of more than 400 landowners who have applied to the program to have barriers corrected and fish habitat reconnected.

The average cost to correct a fish barrier was $88,000. Current funding allows for about 30 projects a year, which creates about 50 jobs during the construction season.

The Wishkah project featured in this report was completed in 2010 for Herb and Dolores Welch. The United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) shared funding via a restoration grant.

Herb and Dolores Welch, Small Forest Landowners (Wishkah Project)

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The Welch family has managed its tree farm since the late 1930s. Herb remembers scores of salmon returning to the creek each fall until the culvert became a barrier. “They were so thick you could pitch-fork them from the bank,” he said.

Now, with the help of the sponsor (Grays Harbor Conservation District) and the Family Forest Fish Passage Program, those teams of fish are expected to return to the stream any day.

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  - Contact: Sam Comstock (360) 736-5750
  - http://www.wafarmforestry.com/
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