

Boeing Volunteers Restore Salmon Habitat on River



In recognition of Earth Day last month, over fifty volunteers from The Boeing Company helped to restore a half-mile section of river bank habitat at a Hmong flower farm near Carnation. On Saturday, April 16, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the volunteers worked to help the farm come closer to achieving "Salmon-Safe certification," a kind of "eco-label that is gaining national recognition and appears on a variety of products including wine, dairy, produce and fruit," according to the Stewardship Partners, the group that organized the effort.

"We had a wonderful event," said David Burger, executive director of the Stewardship Partners. "The energetic volunteers braved the elements and spent the day planting 1,100 native trees and shrubs along the Snoqualmie River that once was choked with non-native blackberries."

"This was the largest and most productive volunteer event we have had in the 10 years of restoration work in the watershed,"

he added. "Boeing's contribution to restoring the Snoqualmie is a terrific example of the public-private partnerships that are so vital to recovering wild salmon and local farms in the region."

Burger explained that, since 2001, Stewardship Partners has worked with farmers throughout the valley to restore nine miles of riverbank that provide critical habitat for wild salmon, wildlife and help protect farmland.

The group said that the decline of salmon populations in Washington state rivers and streams has become a pressing environmental concern in the Pacific Northwest region.

"Boeing is pleased to participate in Earth Day projects with great partners all around Puget Sound," said Liz Warman, director of Global Corporate Citizenship for Boeing. "This work is important to our region's overall efforts to protect Puget Sound and the watersheds that flow into it."

Burger said that the 15,000 acres of farmland in the valley "is an important local food resource

and vital to maintaining the open rural landscape which is part of our region's quality of life." The Snoqualmie River meanders more than 43 miles from Snoqualmie Falls to its confluence with the Skykomish River and is home to more wild salmon than any other river in King County. The watershed supports wild runs of Coho, Chinook, Pink, Chum and Steelhead, according to the group.

"The Snoqualmie River contains some of the healthiest salmon runs in Washington State," says the Partnership's website. "In the early 1980's, the river and its many tributaries produced more Coho salmon than the entire west coast of Oregon." But by 2001, the Snoqualmie was designated as one of America's "10 most endangered rivers" by American Rivers, a national conservation organization.

Other Stewardship accomplishments in the valley include restoring three miles of stream bank, opening one and a half miles of salmon habitat, restoring an acre of wetlands, enhancing connection to off-channel rearing habitat and

creating bank protection for eroding farmland.

The group developed the Snoqualmie Salmon-Safe Program to recognize and market farms that utilize best management practices for protecting water quality and fish and wildlife habitat. And the Stewardship has emphasized public education, providing information and conducting its Environmental Discovery Program (EDP), a hands on learning program for elementary school classes throughout the area.

Snoqualmie Watershed Facts (Source: www.stewardshippartners.org):

The Snoqualmie Watershed encompasses 677 square miles (433,000 acres). Land use in the Snoqualmie Watershed includes 17,000 acres of agriculture; 333,000 acres of forest; 69,000 acres of rural residential land; and 14,000 acres of urban area.

Tributaries to the Snoqualmie River produce as many adult Coho salmon as all Oregon Coast streams. Population of the four Snoqualmie Valley cities has grown by 66 percent over the past 10 years.