

PUGET SOUND

National Estuary Program

Balancing Fish, Farm, and Floods in King County's Snoqualmie Watershed – Riparian Buffer Task Force

This project will provide the foundation and guidance for a scientifically credible, context sensitive, locally derived priority buffer location decision tool.

What we're doing

Creating a plan for where and how wide to plant voluntary riparian buffers in a way that maximizes benefits to our salmon and is compatible with farming in the Snoqualmie Valley.



How we're doing it

- Undertaking a literature review of Best Available Science for riparian areas, focused on agricultural landscapes in similar floodplain settings.
- Creating an Agricultural Riparian Technical Memo describing the benefits and challenges of riparian plantings on working farms.
- Creating a decision tool for planting variable riparian buffers that can be implemented in the Snoqualmie River agricultural area. If proven to be an effective planning tool, this model can be exported to other agricultural valleys in the Puget Sound region.



WHY IS THIS ISSUE IMPORTANT

The planting of ecologically significant buffers is needed to help restore habitat for threatened Puget Sound Chinook and to improve water quality. Current guidelines for planting riparian buffers lack flexibility for site- and waterway-specific modifications and have resulted in lost opportunities. Exploring alternative buffer widths and related agricultural benefits or impacts may help open up pathways for locations and types of buffers that both improve salmon populations and have agricultural community support.

ABOUT KING COUNTY WATER AND LAND

The Water and Land Resources Division safeguards King County's water and land resources by providing services that protect public health and safety and yield significant environmental benefits. WLRD also provides economic and technical support for forestry and agriculture. WLRD staff are dedicated to protecting the health and integrity of King County's natural resources, so that they can be enjoyed today and for generations to come.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Beth leDoux, King County

beth.ledoux@kingcounty.gov, 206-477-4750

