



Wild Fish Conservancy
NORTHWEST

SCIENCE EDUCATION ADVOCACY

DEER LAGOON ESTUARY RESTORATION PROJECT

Project Fact Sheet

Project Description

Imagine this — 75% of the salmon in Puget Sound pass by Whidbey Island on their way out to the Pacific Ocean. Along the way they need to feed and rear in shallow estuaries. A new opportunity to restore 450 acres of this important habitat is now being explored by the Wild Fish Conservancy.

Over the years, the salt marsh habitat in the western lobe of Deer Lagoon has been destroyed. What looks like a freshwater “lake” behind the two parallel dikes in the lagoon is really a brackish environment with very low oxygen levels that kills fish. The Wild Fish Conservancy is evaluating the potential to restore this marsh to its more natural state, and at the same time, make sure the Lagoon can also support the recreational and aesthetic values treasured by those who live in the area. This can be a win-win — restoring the estuary for fish, and keeping it a great place for humans, as well.



Alternatives Under Consideration

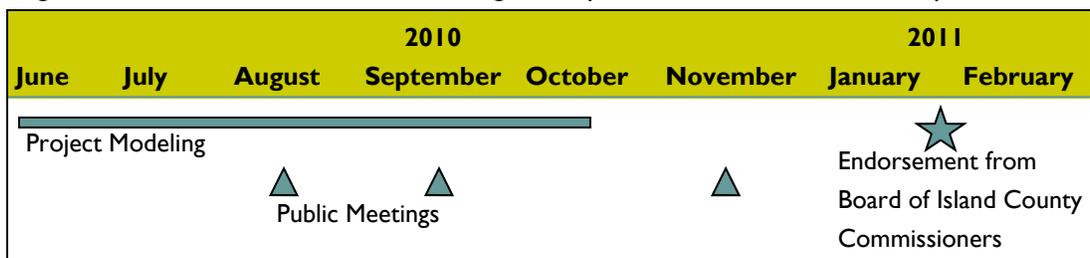
The Wild Fish Conservancy, along with its consulting team from Anchor QEA, is evaluating a number of alternatives to restore this valuable marsh habitat. These alternatives range from a simple self-regulating tidegate, to holes or breaches in each of the dikes, to a complete removal of the dikes. To preserve recreational assets, any dike breaches would be bridged over to maintain the trails in the area, and new trails would be built if the dikes are removed. Flood protection is also an important concern, and new setback levees would be constructed to ensure that homes in the area are fully protected from any flooding. Estuary restoration is also likely to result in better perc for local septic tanks.

Working in Partnership with the Community

The Wild Fish Conservancy recognizes that any changes at Deer Lagoon cannot take place without broad public support. We invite you to get involved with us — come discuss the possibilities, learn what the models have to say, and help us make the best decisions to move forward. Deer Lagoon is owned by Island County, and salt marsh restoration can occur only in collaboration with the County’s residents and elected officials.

How To Be Involved

Three public meetings about the project will be held between August-November 2010. At these meetings, you’ll be able to ask questions, get more information, and take a first-hand look at the modeling results. Three-dimensional video images will provide a close and accurate picture of how



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natural, tidally-influenced saltwater will flow into and out of the Lagoon under different scenarios.

In early 2011, the Conservancy will go to the Board of Island County Commissioners with a proposal to move forward with estuary rehabilitation. If state grant funds can be obtained, project construction could start as early as 2012.

We look forward to your active participation in this very exciting habitat restoration effort.

For More Information

Contact project manager **Micah Wait** at the Wild Fish Conservancy at:

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Contact **Margaret Norton-Arnold**, manager of the public involvement program at:

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About the Wild Fish Conservancy

A nonprofit conservation organization headquartered in Duvall Washington, Wild Fish Conservancy is dedicated to the recovery and conservation of the region's wild-fish ecosystems. Through science, education, and advocacy, WFC promotes technically and socially responsible habitat, hatchery and harvest management to better sustain the region's wild-fish heritage. To learn more: www.wildfishconservancy.org



Wild Fish Conservancy
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