



## Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

### **New Year's Resolution: Volunteer for Wildlife**

*Volunteers stock cutthroat trout and plant salmon eggs in Long Island's famed Cedar Grove, one of several aquatic and riparian habitats being restored on Willapa National Wildlife Refuge*

Long Island, WA – December 26, 2003 – After lugging burlap sacks weighted with foul-smelling salmon carcasses up and down a slippery make-shift trail alongside Cedar Grove Creek on Long Island, volunteers assisting in fish restoration looked (and smelled) more like creatures from the Hobbit novels than Santa's jolly helpers. But a little smell and slime only heightened the spirits of ten volunteers last week as they assisted staff from the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge in stocking cutthroat trout and planting chum salmon eggs into one of America's most pristine old growth habitats, the famed Cedar Grove on Long Island. As part of an ongoing restoration program for Refuge streams, 65 live cutthroat trout and 50,000 chum salmon eggs donated from state hatcheries were placed in protected pools in the narrow stream winding through the island's old growth forest. Nearly 1000 pounds of salmon carcasses were also placed in the stream to provide food and nutrients for the young fish. "A tidegate placed at the mouth of this stream around 1920 blocked fish from returning here," noted Charlie Stenvall, Project Leader for Willapa Wildlife Refuge Complex. "But as you can see, this habitat is ideally suited for these fish. By restoring naturally spawning trout and salmon we encourage other species up and down the food chain, ranging from rare salamanders that thrive here to the birds, bobcats, cougars, otters, bears and other mammals that depend upon this link in their diets."

Five other streams on the Refuge will be studied for fish restoration in 2004. "Biological assessments of needed restoration activities will be conducted on tributaries to the Bear River and at Quarry Creek," noted Ron Craig, Vice-president of the Willapa Fisheries Enhancement Group, a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to salmon recovery. "We'll look at soil and rock substrates, need for woody debris placement, any blockages or barriers, and of course, water quality. Our strategy is to restore naturally-spawning fish runs on every stream in the Refuge."

And this is where volunteers contribute a vital role. "It takes confident and sure-footed hikers to negotiate a muddy streambank with an unwieldy load of salmon carcasses and fish eggs," laughed Bev Arnoldy, President of the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, a non-profit volunteer organization directly supporting the mission and activities of the Refuge. "Of course, most of our members support other, less physically-demanding volunteer programs in education, restoration, and wildlife monitoring. The Friends of Willapa invites everyone to join us in continued enhancement of this very special place."

This year's volunteer contributions towards habitat restoration commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the National Wildlife Refuge System, officially created on March 14, 1903 by then-president Theodore Roosevelt. The Willapa Refuge dates from 1937 and now encompasses nearly 16,000 acres with some the richest habitat and variety of wildlife found in any refuge in the country. "Hundreds of thousands of birds depend on this habitat for rest, nesting and forage, including the endangered Western Snowy Plover," commented Stenvall, "Our year-round residents include over half of all amphibians found in Washington State, including rare salamanders such as Dunn's, Van Dycke's and Torrent. And of course, large cats such as cougar and bobcat and raptors such as eagles and falcons share the land with our bear, elk, and deer."

Ready to add your name to the volunteers who support our Refuge? Check out the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge at <http://www.willapabay.org/~fwnwr/> or write to the Friends at P.O. Box 1130, Ocean Park, WA 98640. More information about the Willapa Bay Fisheries Enhancement Group is online at <http://www.wbfeg.com> or at P.O. Box 46, South Bend, WA 98586. Make an important resolution for 2004: volunteer for wildlife!

### **About the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge**

The Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to support of Willapa Refuge programs. The Willapa Friends is one of over 225 nationwide volunteer organizations who partner with local refuges. The Friends of Willapa focus on education programs, maintenance, and restoration activities under direction of Refuge staff.

### **About Willapa Bay Fisheries Enhancement Group**

The Willapa Bay Fisheries Enhancement Group is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to restoration of salmon in the Willapa Bay watershed. The group depends upon the involvement of local citizens and local land owners in the development of cost effective projects that are a benefit to salmon. The organization is one of fourteen Regional Enhancement Groups in Washington State created for community-based salmon recovery.

### **About Willapa National Wildlife Refuge**

Willapa Bay is the defining geography for the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, which comprises nearly 16,000 acres of upland forest, tidelands, beach dunes, freshwater marshes, diked grasslands, and other wetland and riparian habitat.

Aquatic habitats and grasslands on the Refuge support migratory populations of bird species including the black brant, trumpeter swans, Canada geese, scaup, canvasback, bufflehead, scoters, and American wigeon. The Refuge also hosts some of the largest concentrations of shorebirds on the Pacific Coast, including the endangered western snowy plover and marbled murrelet. Black bear, black-tailed deer, Roosevelt elk, bats, bobcats, and grouse can be found in the forests and upland habitats. The cool, wet climate of Willapa Bay makes the area a "hotspot" of amphibian and fish diversity, and Refuge habitats support at least twelve native amphibians that occur in the state and provide spawning grounds for chinook, coho, and chum salmon, steelhead, and cutthroat trout.

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