

The Flyway

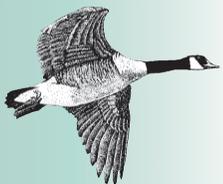
Fall 2008



Quarterly newsletter of Nisqually and Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuges

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Friends
of
Nisqually
National
Wildlife
Refuge
Celebrate
Ten
Years!

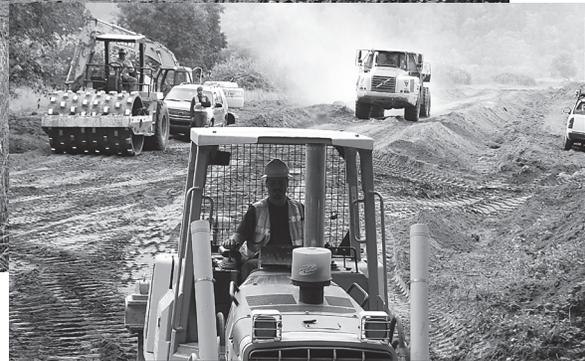
The Future of the Nisqually Delta

Beginning in July, Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge initiated its 762-acre estuary restoration project. This project will restore almost an entire estuary by removing dikes and reopening the area to tidal influence. Thirty-seven acres of riparian surge plain forest and 246 acres of freshwater wetlands will also be restored. As the largest estuary restoration project in the Pacific Northwest, this has been identified as an important step in the recovery of Puget Sound. So little of this critical habitat remains in south Puget Sound, salt marsh will increase by 50 percent with

completion of this project, providing many regional benefits. It has been identified as the top priority to recover Chinook salmon in the Nisqually watershed. Many other fish, migratory birds, and other wildlife that depend on estuaries will also benefit.

Prior to the late 1800s, the Nisqually estuary was intact, but by the early 1900s more than 1,000 acres had been diked for farming, cutting off much of the estuary's salt marsh. Since the 1970s, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has managed the area as freshwater wetlands, but much

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Hydromulching new dike, above; Dike construction, right.

Construction & Trail Closure Updates

Construction related to the estuary restoration project is expected to continue through the end of October, although the completion date is subject to change, depending on weather conditions. The contractor, Nutter Corporation, is scheduled to work Monday through Saturday during daylight hours. The new dike has been hydro seeded, and Nutter is currently working on installing water control structures.

With construction winding down for the year, the trail system is in typical winter status. The outer portion of the Brown Farm Dike trail is closed through the end of waterfowl hunting season on January 25. The rest of the trail network is currently open. However, there may be some temporary closures needed along the cross dike and Nisqually River trails for construction work. Feel free to call the Refuge at (360)753-9467 or check our website at www.fws.gov.

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Phone: 360.753.9467
Fax: 360.534.9302
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Editor: Jackie LaRue

Editorial Advisor:
Sheila McCartan

Graphic design:
Lee Miller

Save trees, think green

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[gov/nisqually/management/restoration_updates.html](http://www.fws.gov/nisqually/management/restoration_updates.html) for the most up-to-date information on trail closures and construction.

Construction of the new Education Center is also winding down. Triton Marine Construc-

tion is working to have the building complete by mid-November, so that school groups will be able to utilize it this spring. Work on the new Nature Explore Outdoor classroom adjacent to the Ed Center is expected to start some time this winter. ✎

Future of the Delta

From previous page

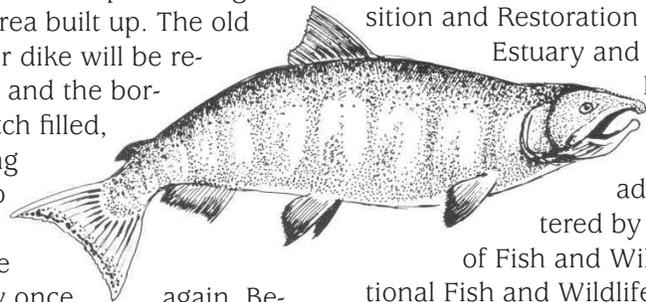
of it has become degraded by invasive species and difficult to manage. By reconnecting these wetlands with the Nisqually River, McAllister Creek and the tides of Puget Sound, more than 21 miles of tidal sloughs and channels will be restored.

Project construction will occur over 3 to 4 years. Work begun in 2008 includes the construction of a new exterior dike and the enlargement of freshwater wetlands within the new dike. Next year, water control structures and levees will be removed, new interior levees built, and the riparian surge plain area built up. The old exterior dike will be removed and the borrow ditch filled, allowing tides to flow into the estuary once again. Because removal of the dike is necessary for successful restoration, this will also remove the Brown Farm Dike Trail, so a new boardwalk trail will be constructed in 2010, providing a unique opportunity for visitors to experience a restoring estuary.

This restoration project is becoming a reality through the

help of many partners, including the technical expertise and support of Ducks Unlimited and the Nisqually Indian Tribe. Combined with estuary restoration projects already completed by the Tribe on the east side of the Nisqually River, 900 acres of the Nisqually estuary will be restored.

In addition to funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited, more than \$4.5 million in grants have been received from all five South Sound watersheds including the Nisqually River Council (Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration funds);



Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program administered by WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife; National Fish and Wildlife Foundation; and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Although additional funds are needed, partners contributed enough to allow construction to begin. For a map of the site and current information on the progress of the estuary restoration project, visit the Refuge website at www.fws.gov/nisqually/eventnews.html. ✎

Partners Fund Two AmeriCorps positions: Welcome Megan and Willa!

Two new AmeriCorps members have joined the Nisqually NWRC staff as education coordinators for the 2008–09 school year. These positions were funded by Friends of Nisqually NWR, Grays Harbor Audubon Society, and the Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival.

Megan Johnson is the new education coordinator for Grays Harbor. Megan is close to attaining her degree in Natural Sciences from the Evergreen State College, although she is originally from the Mojave Desert area of California. She is hoping to



gain experience with Environmental Education curriculum and the Pacific Northwest environment from her time at the Refuge Complex. While

Megan is unsure about her future career plans, she is leaning towards something in conservation and education.

Willa

Ahlschwede is the new education coordinator for Nisqually. Willa graduated from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota where she majored in religious studies and minored in dance. Willa grew up in Nebraska

but has always loved visiting the Pacific Northwest. She is excited to live here and learn about the plants, animals, and habitats in the region and be able to share that with students of all ages. While Willa is unsure about her future career plans, she gained some interesting work experience last year, which she spent working on organic farms in Hawaii.

Megan and Willa started in their positions in September and will work through July 2009. ✂

Friends of Nisqually NWRC

is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 1998 to promote conservation of the natural and cultural resources and fund education and outreach programs at Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

Join Friends Of Nisqually NWRC!

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- Please send information on making Friends of Nisqually NWRC a beneficiary of my estate.
- Check here to receive an electronic version of *The Flyway* newsletter by email.

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- \$250 Business Sponsor
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- \$1000 Sustaining Business
- \$2500 Corporate Patron
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Please make checks payable to: Friends of Nisqually NWRC, 100 Brown Farm Rd, Olympia, WA 98516

Your tax deductible contribution will help preserve the unique habitats, fish, and wildlife of the Nisqually Delta and the Grays Harbor Tidelands.

Nisqually & Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuges

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"...conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people..."

Enter the Washington Junior Duck Stamp Competition!

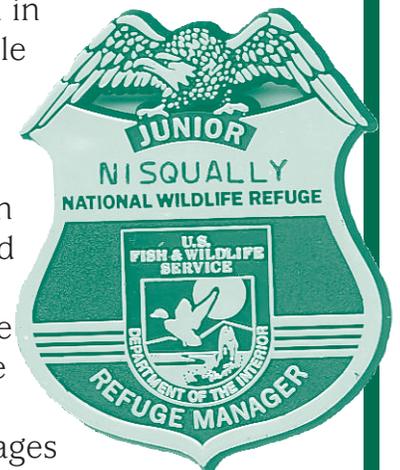
Submit your entry today!

All children grades K-12 in public, private and home schools are invited to participate in the 2008-09 waterfowl art competition. Within each of the four different age categories, 3-1st place, 3-2nd place, 3-3rd place, and 16 Honorable Mentions are selected. All winning artwork receives ribbons, and all 1st place winners receive special awards. A Best of Show, selected out of all the 1st place winners, competes in the National Competition for the chance to become the 2009 Federal Junior Duck Stamp. Interested teachers and children can get more information at www.fws.gov/juniorduck or by calling (360)753-9467. ✎



WANTED!

Kids interested in having fun while exploring the great outdoors. Come visit the Refuge with your family and take the challenge—Become a Junior Refuge Manager! Plus, it is **free!** For ages 3 & up.



All kids receive a badge and certificate when they finish the activity booklet.

Program paid for by the Friends of Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. ✎