



FOSTER CREEK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

# WATERSHED HEALTH IN DOUGLAS COUNTY



## VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP WORKS TO ENHANCE CRITICAL AREAS IN DOUGLAS COUNTY

Douglas County adopted the **Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)** as an alternative to traditional regulations under Washington State's Growth Management Act. VSP offers a collaborative, locally-driven approach to protecting and monitoring critical areas—like *wetlands, frequently flooded areas, and aquifer recharge zones*—while keeping our local agriculture productive and viable.

Through quality technical assistance and landscape-based planning for tailored conservation practices, VSP helps landowners maintain healthy ecosystems that support water quality, habitat for local wildlife (like salmon), improve soil health and so much more to contribute to building a healthier watershed.

### Get Involved – Schedule a Free Site Visit!

Meet with the VSP Coordinator to create an Individual Stewardship Plan tailored to your property. During the visit, the coordinator will:

- Listen to your resource concerns
- Identify conservation opportunities that fit your goals
- Help connect you with technical support and VSP cost-share funding

Whether you're looking to improve water management, restore streambanks, or implement best management practices, VSP is here to help you protect your land and our shared natural resources. Contact the VSP Coordinator today to schedule a visit and learn how your land can be part of a healthier watershed and a stronger agricultural future.

Contact our Program Coordinator: [sbalderston@FosterCreekCD.org](mailto:sbalderston@FosterCreekCD.org)

## Want to Get Involved at the Local Level?

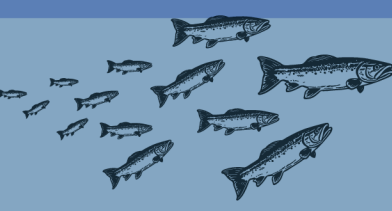
Everyone can play a role in supporting salmon recovery! Whether it's volunteering for habitat restoration projects, joining local workshops, or helping with stream cleanups, there are plenty of ways to make a difference.

Foster Creek CD will be hosting a restoration planting day October 25, 2025. Help make a difference in our streams and plant for a healthier watershed! Check out [fostercreekcd.org](http://fostercreekcd.org) for more information.



## DID YOU KNOW?

**SALMON** CAN MIGRATE OVER 1,000 MILES TO GET TO THEIR SPAWNING GROUND.



## LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

FOSTER CREEK IS **545 RIVER MILES** FROM THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER & IS THE LAST SALMON ACCESSIBLE STREAM BEFORE CHIEF JOESPH DAM.

### SPOT THE STEELHEAD?



### WANT TO SEE THE SALMON RUN IN REAL TIME?



CHECK OUT THE **UPPER COLUMBIA SALMON RECOVERY BOARD** FISH TRACKER!



## ROCK ISLAND WORK HELPS RESTORE CREEK AND MEMORIES



This summer, a project 7 years in the making is kicking into overdrive. Since 2018, Trout Unlimited (TU), the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service have led efforts to restore stream health and function to Rock Island Creek. Initiated by local conservation minded

landowners who remember beaver ponds storing water on their land, this project aims to return beavers and the benefits they provide, back to the watershed. Beaver dam analogues (BDAs), mimic natural beaver dams. BDAs are built by hand using natural materials to slow and pond water, rehydrate side channels, and engage the stream with its historic floodplain just as a true beaver would. The increased water availability and habitat complexity created by these structures is critical for the native rainbow trout that call Rock Island Creek home. Improved riparian conditions mean better conditions for greater sage grouse as well as improved forage quality for livestock.

**165 BDAs** have been installed over three phases since 2021 in Rock Island Creek, with several hundred planned for installation over the next few years. In addition, TU has reintroduced beavers to the creek in hopes that they will take over management of the structures. This project demonstrates how diverse organizations working together with producers can restore critical areas for fish, wildlife, and agriculture.

## TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK ON FOSTER CREEK

The anadromous zone of Foster Creek, which extends from the mouth of the creek up to a natural fish passage barrier, is a key area for salmon and steelhead in the Upper Columbia River Basin. This section of the stream provides the last spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead returning from the ocean in the Columbia River before dam obstruction occurs, our streams also provide support for several other types of wildlife who utilize riparian areas, like beaver, bobcat, moose, and more.

In recent years, FCCD and other partners have focused collaborative conservation efforts that improve water availability and flows, water quality, riparian habitat, and the overall watershed health of WRIA 50-Foster Watershed. Implementation of several restoration techniques like building **534 beaver dam analogues (BDAs)** to encourage water ponding and planting over **9,000 native plants** throughout 9 stream miles of Foster Creek and its tributary channels over the last 5 years, have had a great impact on the local ecosystem with a lot of local wildlife showcasing the approval by moving into many of these newly restored areas, as well as 25 spawning steelhead that returned this past year.

# WRIA 50- Foster Watershed Plan Completed

Foster Creek Conservation District (FCCD) is excited to share that the Watershed Plan for WRIA 50 – Foster Creek – was completed in June 2025. This plan highlights the unique water resources and challenges within the watershed, identifying strategies to support healthy streams, sustainable land use, and fish and wildlife habitat. FCCD worked closely with local landowners, tribes, and agency partners to develop a community-driven plan that focuses on practical solutions for watershed health in Douglas County.

## Live in WRIA 50 and want to be involved in future updates to the watershed plan?

Reach out to Foster Creek Conservation District to be added to the email list and get notified about upcoming meetings and events.



Learn more about the Watershed Plan here!



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# Special Edition Salmon Conservation Newsletter August 2025

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## Salmon in the Classroom

Salmon in the Classroom gives students the opportunity to raise salmon eggs and learn about their life cycle firsthand. Partnerships with the Colville Confederated Tribes allowed FCCD to broaden curriculum giving insight into the importance of salmon as a first food for many tribes in our area.

The 5th and 6th grade classes at Mansfield Middle School and 7th grade class at Lake Roosevelt Middle school each received 250 chinook salmon eggs in January to rear to fry stage. Of the 500 fish eggs distributed to the classes, 495 survived maturity and were released. Of those 495 salmon released, the classes expect 2-5 may return in 3-5 years!



## Salmon in the Shrub Steppe

Kids at **Camp Sagebrush**, a locally held summer camp that brings middle schoolers out into the shrub steppe to explore and learn, had the chance to get an up-close salmon experience through dissection to learn the anatomy of the fish and about its' life cycle.

A fish printing activity allowed the campers to create art inspired by salmon, combining science with creativity. These activities helped spark curiosity and a deeper appreciation for salmon and their role in local ecosystems. *Thanks to our partners for providing these hands-on experiences for our campers, making lasting memories!*

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- Shannon Curran – *Natural Resource Technician*
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