

Bridge Over Stillwaters

LOCAL STORY

Carpenter Creek Estuary Restoration

Located at a critical crossroads for migrating salmon from river basins throughout Puget Sound, Carpenter Creek estuary near Kingston, Washington, is the last significant functioning estuary before leaving Puget Sound. This important salmon nursery provides young fish a place where they can eat, grow, and prepare for the long journey to the Pacific Ocean, including Chinook and coho salmon as well as steelhead and cutthroat trout.

For decades, an undersized culvert on South Kingston Road created a barrier for migrating fish that trapped juvenile salmonids at low tide, where they become easy prey. The culvert also prevented adequate water flow between the salt marsh and estuary. As a result, significant portions of the marsh were filling in with sediment, and fresh-water wetland species were encroaching into the upper saltmarsh.

In 2010, the Washington State legislature provided \$2.7 million through a state capital budget appropriation to

restore Carpenter Creek estuary because it provided critical habitat for endangered fish. Kitsap County used the funds to replace the culvert with a 90-foot single span bridge that restored natural tidal flow to estuary and saltmarsh habitat and allowed fish to move into and out of the 30-acre forested estuary habitat. Tide pools behind the culvert were also eliminated, making fish less vulnerable to predators.

Completed in February, 2012 the new South Kingston Road bridge was officially named the Stillwaters Fish Passage in honor of the advocacy work of Stillwaters Environmental Education Center.



Carpenter Creek Estuary



The new 90' span allows a more gentle flow for fish passage