

PRESS RELEASE

December 21, 2004

**MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
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(350) 427-9670 EXT. 747**

TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, THE SUN

RE: County to Remove Fish Blockages

Mason County Public Works and salmon both came out winners at the most recent meeting of Washington's Salmon Recovery Funding Board. During its annual grant award meeting on December 2nd and 3rd, the SRFB awarded grants totaling \$700,000 for salmon barrier removal projects in Mason County. The funds are a combination of federal and state salmon recovery dollars.

The money will be used to replace three culverts on County roads, which are severe barriers to migrating salmon. The first grant for \$440,000 was awarded to the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group. They are a non-profit organization that has partnered with the County on several similar projects in the past. The latest grant will fund the replacement of a culvert on Hiawata Creek where it passes under Island View Road. Combined with \$78,000 in matching funds from the County, the project will remove a deteriorated culvert and rehabilitate the downstream channel to improve fish passage. Two other projects, which received SRFB grants totaling \$260,000, will be carried out directly by Mason County. Both of these projects are in western Mason County on streams that flow into the East Fork of the Satsop River. The County is contributing \$65,000 toward the projects. In addition to improving fish access, the funding is a significant contribution toward the County's road maintenance program. The projects will be carried out over the next two years.

Mason County has become increasingly involved in salmon recovery projects over the last few years. Early in 2004, the County received \$180,000 in grant funding from the U. S. Department of Fish and Wildlife for the replacement of three culverts on County roads. The first of these projects, on the Satsop-Cloquallum Road, was completed this summer. The other two will be replaced during the summer of 2005.

The Public Works Department appreciates public input and encourages any questions be addressed by calling the Public Works Department office at (360) 427-9670, ext. 450 or from Belfair at (360) 275-4467 Ext. 450.

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