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# THE PORT SUSAN RESTORATION PROJECT

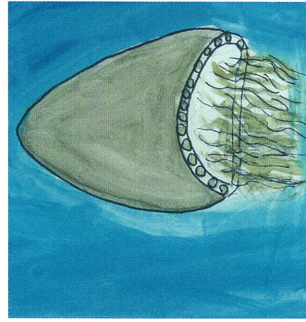
SUPPORTING FARMERS AND FISH FOR THE FUTURE



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THE WORLD IS OUR CLASSROOM . . .

After a three-month study of the Port Susan estuary, how dikes impact the system, and local restoration efforts, Summit students (Grades 3-6) researched and wrote this postcard to inform their community about this important project.



**WHY HERE, WHY NOW?**

Estuaries are places where fresh and salt water mix, making diverse habitats that support amazing amounts of marine life. Our local Port Susan estuary provides habitat and feeding grounds for migrating birds, fish and other marine life. But the Port Susan estuary is in danger. An old sea dike changed the Stillaguamish river water flow by disrupting the freshwater circulation. As a result, the northern region became too salty, changing the estuarine habitat and endangering marine life.

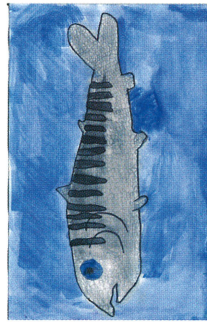
**SALT MARSH HABITAT**

The estuary's location between the Stillaguamish and Skagit rivers makes prime salt marsh habitat. Salt marshes depend on brackish water, the mix of fresh and salt water, to support marsh plants and create cool deep channels that are shelter for fish, invertebrates and other marine life. By interrupting the fresh water flow, the salt marsh shrank to one-third its original size. Loss of habitat impacts the amount of marine life the estuary can support.



**REVITALIZING CHINOOK SALMON**

Traveling down the river, juvenile Chinook (smolt) stop in the estuary while growing and transitioning into adults. Smolt hide in the salt marshes from predators like eagles and heron. Deep cool channels draining the marsh are like highways for salmon to find food and shelter. The dikes affect the salmon by changing the location of these channels and the mixing of salt and fresh water, reducing habitat and making the salmon's journey more challenging.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT, GO TO [NATURE.ORG/WASHINGTON](http://NATURE.ORG/WASHINGTON)

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**THANK YOU FROM THE SUMMIT THUNDERWOLVES!**

We would like to thank The Nature Conservancy for leading this effort to restore our estuary. This fall, TNC and its many partners breached the old dike to help restore the estuary and salt marshes near Juniper Beach and constructed a floodgate to protect nearby farmlands. The restoration project helps our community by restoring our estuary's natural habitat, encouraging diverse marine life, and protecting farmlands.

*Thank you to the Stillaguamish Tribe, Padilla Bay Reserve, TNC, and to the extraordinary individual whose gift made this authentic work possible. Our students are engaging with, understanding, and seeing the world differently because of all of you.*