Granstrom Stewardship Plan

SRFB Project Agreement # 07-1783

Seattle City Light
Project Contact: Denise Krownbell

Background: Seattle City Light (SCL) purchased the Granstrom property in 2010 in furtherance of the City of Seattle's Endangered Species Act Early Action Program (ESA Lands Program), authorized under Resolution 29905. As part of that Resolution, the ESA Lands Program protects through acquisition salmonid habitat and restores that land as necessary in an effort to enhance salmonid habitat (spawning or rearing) and aid in the recovery of threatened salmonid stocks. SCL's purchase abuts two other conservation purchases by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). With this purchase by SCL, the entire lower 2.5 miles of the left-bank Sauk River are in conservation protection.

Current Conditions:

Overall Area: The property had previously been a homesite and includes an old house, outbuildings and large area of fenced pasture located within floodplain. One section of the property is dominated by stands of mature red alders.

Riparian Area**:** The riparian area had previously been pasture so the area has thin vegetation in the riparian area, most of which is invasive plants (see below). The gravel bar is invested with Scotch broom. This section of the Sauk does not contain any bank hardening and the river moves freely in this area. Replanting of the riparian area will greatly benefit salmonids.

Invasive Plants**:** There are a number of invasive plants on the property, including knotweed, Himalayan blackberry, Scotch broom and wisteria. Knotweed on the property is being controlled through Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) Upper Skagit Knotweed Program, which is partially funded by a 2011 Ecotrust WWRI grant. Blackberries and wisteria are concentrated around the old house site and field margins. Gravel bars within the Sauk River floodplain are currently infested with Scotch broom.

Upland Fish Access Area: The property has portions of two streams on it. The streams are known to support ESA listed steelhead trout, and would also provide habitat for ESA-listed Chinook salmon and bull trout, as well coho, pink and chum salmon and resident cutthroat trout. Adjacent to the property is a Skagit County Road with one culvert blocking fish access further upstream; the culvert is owned by Skagit County Public Works Department.

Desired Conditions:

Removal of House, Structures and Fences: SCL has SRFB funds to remove the house and associated structures from the property. Trash spread throughout the site will be collected and disposed. Barb-wire fencing that currently surrounds the pasture area will be removed, facilitating access by wildlife.

Riparian Area**:** SFEG has applied for grant funding for riparian planting. Under that project, a diversity of conifers, deciduous trees and native shrubs will be planted in the 14 acre meadow. Protectors will be installed around all plants installed within the field to prevent vole damage. We will also interplant conifers on four or more acres that are currently dominated by mature red alder stands on the SCL property.

Invasive Plants**:** Invasive plant control conducted in support of the proposed project will focus on blackberries, Scotch broom and wisteria. Blackberries and wisteria are concentrated around the old house site and field margins and will be addressed during site prep, prior to planting. Blackberries will be cut in July or early August of 2011, and then sprayed approximately 1 month later. Gravel bars within the Sauk River floodplain are currently infested with Scotch broom. Scotch broom will be pulled in spring and summer and large plants will be treated as needed. SFEG has applied for grant funding for some of the invasive plant treatment. Some will also be funded by SCL dollars, irrespective of grant funding.

Upland Fish Access: The grant SFEG has applied for includes funding for removal of 4 fish passage barriers, one of which is adjacent to the SCL property (mentioned in related section in current conditions) and all owned by Skagit County Public Works Department. Fish passage barriers have been identified on four small streams that cross the three conservation properties that represent the proposed project area of the grant. Tributary and floodplain habitat in this section of the river is especially important for salmonid spawning and rearing as they provide stable gravels and refugia for fish residing in the mainstem Sauk during floods. The proposed project would correct the four barriers, re-establishing connectivity to over 1.5 miles of habitat.

Maintenance and Monitoring:

This property is part of the overall SCL ESA Lands Management Plan, which includes maintenance and monitoring. In summary, SCL purchased the properties in this plan for their salmonid habitat attributes and it is the intention of SCL to maintain the current habitat and secure grant funding for restoration work. SCL has in place with the SFEG a stewardship Memorandum of Agreement where SFEG visits this property a minimum of 4 times a year, documenting conditions (riparian, trespass, etc.) at each visit and recommending management actions as needed in response to the site visits. See further details of proposed actions in "Desired Conditions". Monitoring specific to certain actions is outlined below.

Riparian Area Monitoring: Ongoing site maintenance is required to ensure successful establishment of riparian plantings. The pasture area will be mowed at least once each summer. Weedeating will occur to control vegetation around individual plants.

Invasive Plant Monitoring: Blackberry treatment will be repeated in 2012 after the site is planted. Blackberry area will continue to be treated under SCL's management plan (currently work is performed by SFEG). Gravel bars treated for Scotch broom infestation will also be treated under SCL's management plan.

Upland Fish Access: If the SFEG project is funded with a grant, spawner surveys will be conducted in each of the four streams where culverts are being replaced. Pre-project monitoring will be initiated in the fall of 2011 to document fish use prior to culvert removal. Surveys will continue annually thereafter through 2022. Spawner surveys are conducted by walking the stream once every 7-10 days throughout the season when anadromous salmon are present (October 1 through mid-January). Because projects streams are also known to be used by steelhead trout downstream of the culverts we will also conduct surveys during the spring when steelhead are spawning (March 15 through June). Spawner surveys will follow WDFW's protocol. Spawner surveys will confirm that culvert replacement/removal is effective and that fish are able to access and use habitat upstream of the crossing site. Information collected as part of the spawning survey program are also submitted to WDFW for entry into their database, and are available to help guide the assessment of future development activities to ensure that native fish are adequately protected. If SFEG is not successful in obtaining grant funding for culvert replacement, SFEG will monitor fish presence in conjunction with SCL's stewardship funding, realizing that will another culvert barrier downstream fish use of the streams will be limited.

Adaptive Management Plan:

This property is part of the overall SCL ESA Lands Management Plan, which includes adaptive management. In summary, adaptive management plans are designed to incorporate the results of monitoring of management activities back into the ongoing management planning process. These plans create a feedback loop in which the original goals of the management actions are compared with the monitoring results to determine if those goals are being met.

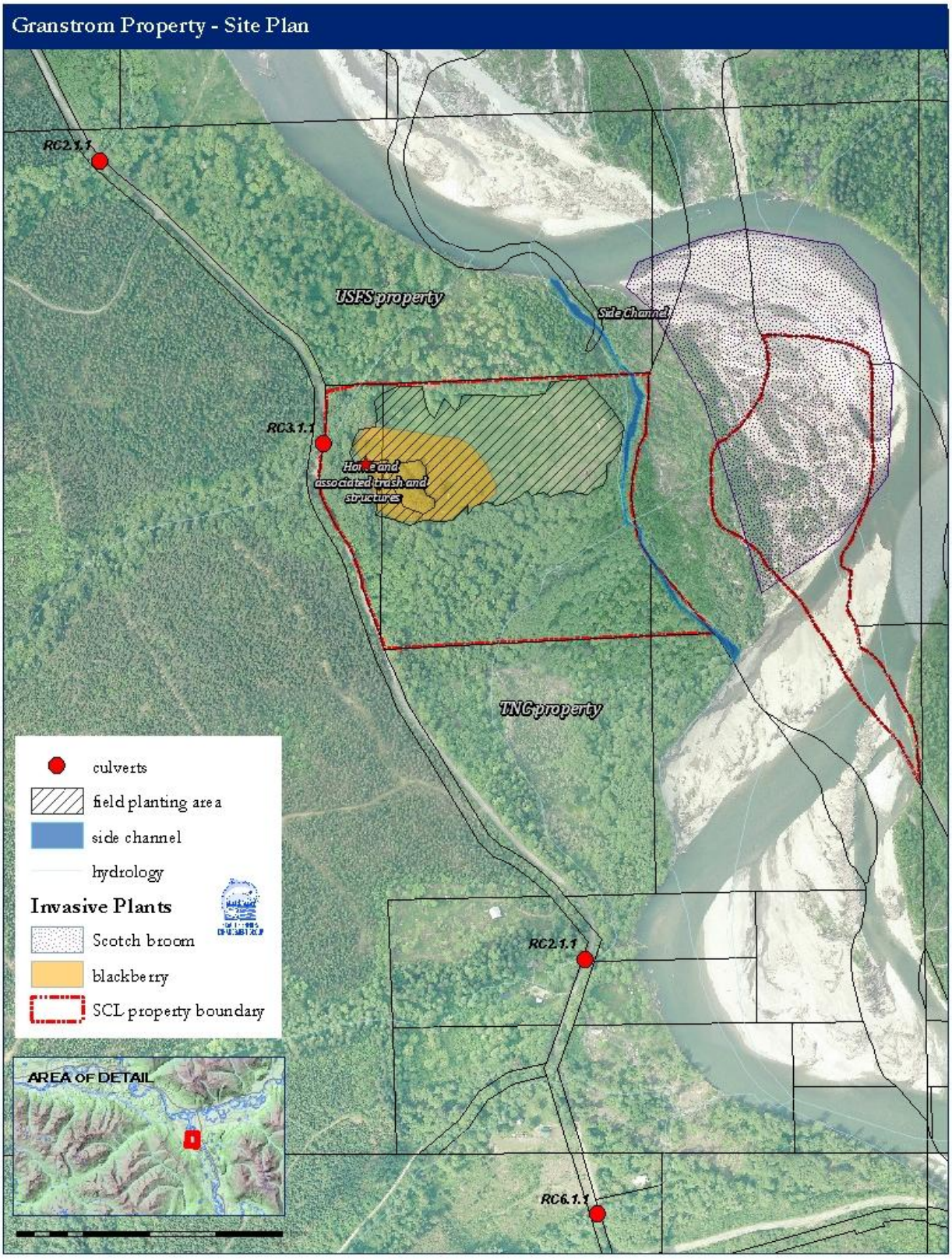
Adaptive management will be evaluated and implemented in a parcel-specific manner.
SCL will evaluate monitoring results to determine whether programmatic shifts need to occur. The evaluation will determine if the goals are appropriate; if projects are being implemented as planned; and if these projects are effectively meeting the goals.

Funding:

This property is part of the SCL ESA Lands Program, and has been funded by SCL since 2000 with increasing funds over this period to purchase, restore, and steward those lands. Despite the current economic climate it is anticipated that this program will maintain current funding. Additionally, SCL actively seeks grants for both acquisition and restoration projects, often in conjunction with partners, to further the reach of matching funds. SFEG has applied for grant funds for some of the work mentioned in this plan.

Attachments: Granstrom vicinity ma, site map, and proposed restoration area map (this final map was prepared by SFEG)

Acknowledgements: SCL would like to acknowledge the use of SFEG's grant application in developing the Granstrom property stewardship plan.


Granstrom Property - Site Plan
RC2.1.1
USFS property
Side channel
RC3.1.1
Horse and associated trash and structures
TNC property
RC2.1.1
RC6.1.1
culverts
field planting area
side channel
hydrology
Invasive Plants
Scotch broom
blackberry
SCL property boundary
AREA OF DETAIL