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2219 Skagit, Island counties get grants for salmon recovery

Skagit Valley Herald staff

Skagit and Island counties have received a total of \$1.19 million in grants for salmon recovery efforts in each county.

The grants are part of \$16.6 million distributed by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board for 51 projects in 27 counties, according to Gov. Chris Gregoire's office. Skagit Watershed Council received \$1.01 million; Island County

Public Works, \$179,200; and San Juan County, \$212,000. Grant recipients statewide contributed \$16.6 million in matching funds to bringing the total investment in salmon recovery to \$33.2 million.

Scientists say they consider the Skagit River a key to salmon recovery because all species of salmon, as well as three spring run chinooks, spawn in the river's watershed.

"We asked local groups to set the priorities within their communities and

develop projects," William Ruckelshaus, Salmon Recovery Funding Board chairman, said on Saturday in a prepared statement. "Then we asked them to go a step further and develop recovery plans and strategic plans that will be a road map for them and for us."

The grants will pay for a variety of work aimed at restoring or protecting salmon habitat, including planting trees along streams, helping regulate water temperature, replacing crushed culverts

that prevent salmon from migrating, or changing stream channels to create better places for salmon to spawn and grow, according to the governor's office.

The recovery board voted Dec. 6. Snohomish and Whatcom counties received \$369,435 and \$682,000, respectively.

The Salmon Recovery Funding Board was established in July 1999 by the state Legislature to help oversee the investment of state and federal funds for salmon recovery.