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Mason fish funding at \$3,751,933

Governor Chris Gregoire today announced that more than \$60 million in grants to protect and restore salmon populations and their habitats has been awarded to communities across Washington.

Mason County projects will be funded to the tune of \$3,751,933, her office announced Wednesday. The grants include \$35.5 million from the governor's initiative to address the short-term needs of Puget Sound waters.

"The health of salmon popu-
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Salmon will get a gift from governor

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lations is an indication of the health of our environment," Gregoire said. "Protecting and restoring our land and water is key to the quality of life in Washington and essential to the strength of our economy."

The grants from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board ranged from \$12,000 to more than \$2 million. They were awarded to organizations in 28 counties for work ranging from planting trees along streams to cool the water for salmon and replacing culverts that prevent salmon from migrating to spawning habitat to restoring entire floodplains.

"These projects are developed and supported by local watershed groups and reviewed by a panel of scientific experts to ensure that the projects funded will be the most effective in bringing salmon populations back from the brink of extinction," said Steve Tharinger of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. "This strategic approach, linking local priorities with scientific review, has made Washington a national model."

Several populations of salmon were put on the federal list of endangered species in 1991. By then, the number of salmon

had fallen to only 40 percent of historic levels in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and California. By 1999, almost three-fourths of Washington's watersheds were affected by Endangered Species Act listings of salmon and bull trout.

Those listings set off a series of activities including the formation of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board to oversee the investment of state and federal funds for salmon recovery.

Since 2000, the board has awarded more than \$233 million in grants, funded by federal and state dollars, for 889 projects. Grantees have contributed about \$100 million in matching resources, bringing the total investment to more than \$333 million.

The Salmon Recovery Funding Board's citizen members are appointed by the governor and they are: Steve Tharinger, Clallam County; David Troutt, DuPont; Donald Hover, Okanogan County; Joe Ryan, Seattle, and Bob Nichols, Olympia. Five state agency directors also serve as members representing the Conservation Commission, the Department of Ecology, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Transportation.