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Robert Colette  
Manager, Grants Committee  
Natural Washington Waters Agency  
921 Custer Avenue  
Olympia, WA 98502

Mr. Colette,

Please find enclosed a proposal from WildWaters Conservancy to study the feasibility of restoring Thompson Creek in Orcas County to its original watercourse and natural condition in order to promote spawning by salmonid species.

During the early part of the Twentieth Century, Thompson Creek was the primary spawning ground for thousands of fish within Orcas County. This helped to develop salmon and trout fishing into major industries within Washington State. However, changes to the watercourse and water quality have damaged the creek to the point that it is now a nearly sterile and stagnant body of water.

WildWaters Conservancy has expertise in the study and rehabilitation of streams, with a special emphasis on fish spawning habitats. We have an extensive track record of successfully creating and protecting natural stream habitats and restoring native fish populations.

We are requesting funding of \$44,800 for this study, which includes development of three alternative plans for restoring the creek. After approval of a specific plan, we will seek funding for the actual restoration of Thompson Creek.

Sincerely,

Justine Parker  
Research Coordinator  
WildWaters Conservancy  
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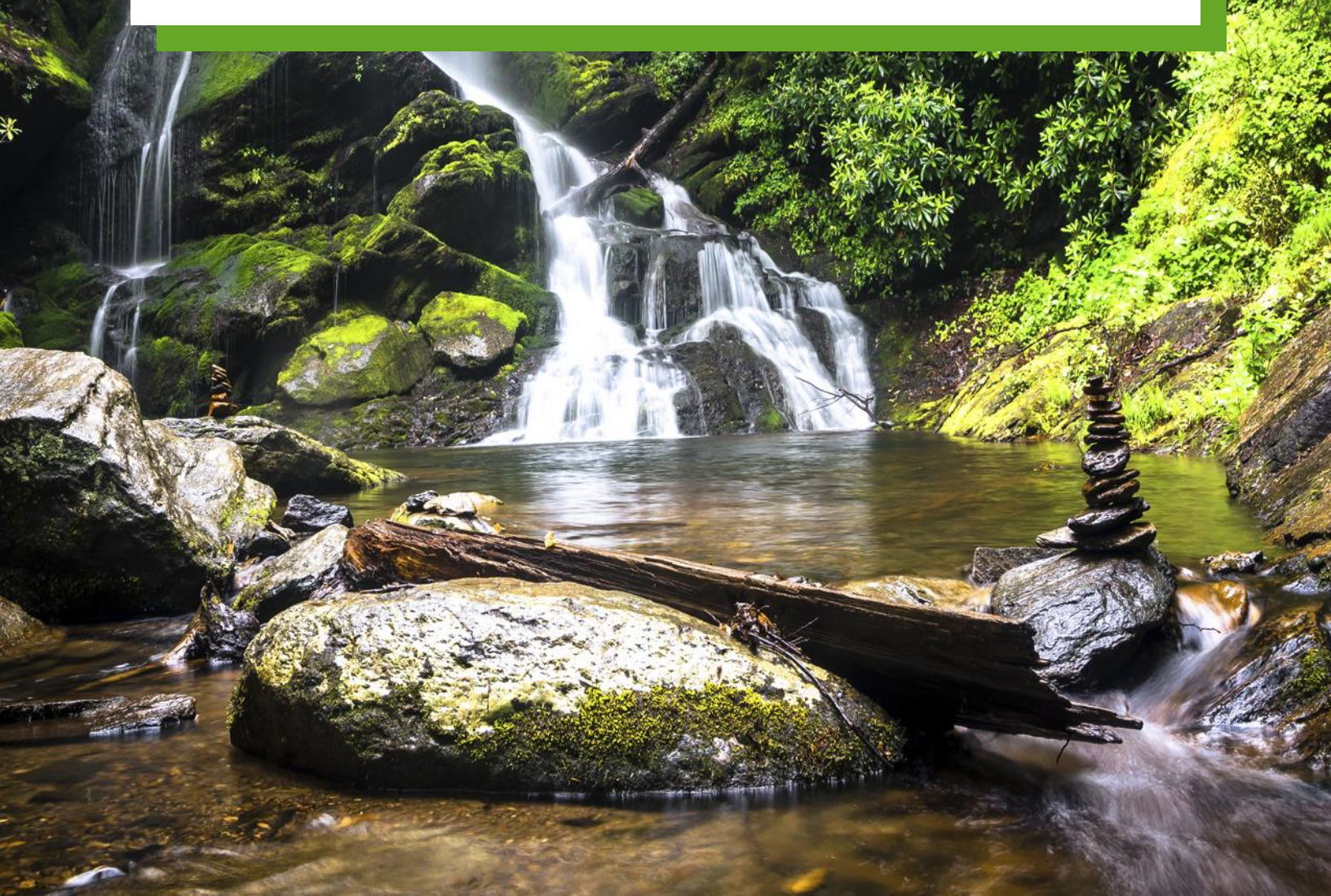


# PROJECT

## THOMPSON CREEK STREAM RESTORATION

Prepared for: Robert Colette  
Manager, Grants Committee

Prepared by: Justine Parker  
Research Coordinator





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# ABSTRACT

## THE OBJECTIVE...

To provide three alternative plans for restoring mainstem Thompson Creek from its present restricted, channeled state to its original natural state as a salmon-spawning waterway.

- ✿ Need #1: To determine through historical records and physical evidence the original course of Thompson Creek and the fish population (especially salmonids) originally supported.
- ✿ Need #2: To document the current state of the creek, with special attention to water quality and barriers that prevent good water flow and fish passage.
- ✿ Need #3: To provide recommendations for returning Thompson Creek to its original natural state.

## THE OPPORTUNITY...

Funds are currently available from local and federal government programs for restoration projects that promote water quality and wildlife habitat.

- ✿ Goal #1: To document the original state of Thompson Creek before it was rerouted through manmade channels and culverts.
- ✿ Goal #2: To map the current course of Thompson Creek, as well as document all barriers to natural water flow and fish passage, and to analyze and document the current quality of creek water and wildlife habitat.
- ✿ Goal #3: To develop three alternative plans, including costs and schedules, for restoring Thompson Creek to its original state.

## THE SOLUTION...

This study is the first step toward restoring Thompson Creek. After this study is complete, alternatives will be presented to landowners and authorities with the intent of gaining further funding and permits to restore the creek.

- ✿ Recommendation #1: WildWaters Conservancy personnel will research historical records and photographs to document the original course and condition of the creek.
- ✿ Recommendation #2: Hydrology Northwest personnel, subcontractors to WildWaters Conservancy and specialists in natural water flows, will document the current state of the creek.
- ✿ Recommendation #3: Hydrology Northwest, WildWaters Conservancy, and other engineering consultants as needed will develop three alternative plans for restoring the creek.





# PROBLEM STATEMENT

We have identified the following issue to be investigated:

## CAN THOMPSON CREEK BE RETURNED TO ITS ORIGINAL NATURAL CHANNEL AND HEALTHY STATE FOR USE AS A FISH-SPAWNING STREAM?

In 1932, Thompson Creek was a healthy, natural watercourse in which thousands of salmon and sea-going trout spawned each year. Since that time, Thompson Creek has been redirected from its natural course through culverts and concrete-lined ditches. In places, the creek's natural flow has been diverted for crop irrigation or dammed to create ponds for livestock. The surrounding landscape has been modified in ways that have not benefited the creek, water quality has deteriorated, and many impediments to fish passage now exist, preventing spawning fish from returning. For the health of the creek, the community, and the environment in general, we want to determine what must be done to return the creek to its natural state and create three alternative plans toward achieving that goal.

At this moment, government grants are available for projects to restore fish-spawning streams to natural conditions, so timely completion of this study is crucial as a first step toward rehabilitation of the creek.





# HYPOTHESIS

For purposes of this study, our working hypothesis is:

**IT IS DESIRABLE AND POSSIBLE TO RESTORE THOMPSON CREEK TO ITS ORIGINAL NATURAL COURSE AND CONDITION TO PROMOTE WATER QUALITY AND HEALTHY HABITAT FOR FISH AND OTHER WILDLIFE.**

Many changes have been made to the creek over the years, including confining its waters to manmade channels, funneling it through culverts, damming it and diverting it for various uses. Our goal is to present alternatives for restoring it to its original natural condition, or as close to that as is practical.

The study described within this proposal is the first part of the restoration project—developing a plan for restoration. Part II would be the actual restoration.





# MODELING

The WildWaters Conservancy team and consultants Hydrology Northwest will use accepted scientific models to perform their analyses.

The Thompson Creek watershed will be divided into basins, with boundaries delineated by a topographic map with 1-foot contour intervals developed from LIDAR data and field-verified by Conservancy personnel or consultants. Data for each basin will be input to the Western Washington Hydrologic Model (WWHM4 Pro Version), which is a continuous hydrologic model that develops runoff time series for a 50-year period of rainfall record. This model generates statistical reports for several hydrologic parameters, including peak flow rates for estimated return periods, flow durations, low flow periods, annual runoff volumes and other data useful in evaluating and designing the proposed channel and related channel improvements. The model will be used to explore potential strategies to promote healthy water flows within the creek.

The channel hydraulics of Thompson Creek will be evaluated using the Corps of Engineers HEC-RAS model (Version 4.0) (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2002; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2008). The geometry for the existing channel will be based on the LIDAR topography. The geometry for the proposed modifications to the stream channel will be based on the LIDAR topography and grading plans for the restored sections of creek. Model inputs for existing culverts will be based on field measurements obtained by WildWaters Conservancy.

The HEC-RAS model will be used to compute 100-year water surface elevations in the existing creek, and to design representative cross sections of the proposed channel under steady state flow conditions. Hydrology Northwest consultants will also use this model to calculate flow velocities and depths for peak flow rates of various return periods.





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