

# Where Salmon Gather: The Work of Estuarine Restoration

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## Abstract

Throughout the millennia, the Columbia River has significantly shaped the very geologic structures of the Columbia River estuary, even in ways we don't often consider. The great places of the estuary have provided amazing benefits – to environment, to community, to economy. And yet, in the last year we have seen some of the greatest conflicts in the estuary in my lifetime, concerning allocation of salmon, placement of energy facilities, and the sources and solutions to toxins found in the river.

In the face of these challenges, we have great hopes as we come together to review progress toward accomplishing our plans, to review results of our monitoring and research, to check on the status of our on-the-ground work, to examine the adequacy of our policies and to begin to create new plans, looking ahead. We each have our small part in this big movement of estuarine restoration.

That is the challenge before us – to restore the great estuary, but in so doing, to restore the relationships between us all, so that with newly-recreated estuarine bounty we won't be required to have armed guards at hearings that allocate our last fish or consider the latest controversial land use proposal. Our work, and this conference, is important because it is the healing of not only the places, places where salmon gather, but also because in coming together we can promote the healing between us all.