



Skagit

# CONSERVATION NEWS

Volume 27, Number 2

SOIL • WATER • WOODLAND

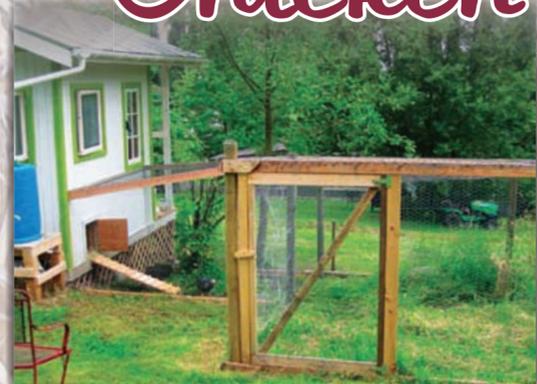
SUMMER 2011



Summer 2011



## BACKYARD Chicken Ranching



**So, you're thinking of raising chickens in your backyard?**

Raising your own chickens can be a rewarding and satisfying hobby for the entire family. Some of the benefits of having your own flock include eggs that are super fresh, fertilizer for your compost pile/garden, chemical free bug and weed control, and a way to teach your children about where their food comes from.

Before you buy those fluffy little chicks, it's best to determine if you can legally own and raise backyard chickens. Check the ordinances in your city. For example: the City of Burlington allows the raising of chickens, but BANS roosters. Burlington also has ordinances on the books regarding nuisance smells and noise. Once you clear that hurdle, do a little research on the species of chicken you want to raise. Each breed has its own points and drawbacks. Stop by your local feed store that sells chicks in the spring. They often have a variety of chicks and they can help you choose what birds will best suit your needs.

### Caring for Your Chicks - First 60 Days:

- Young chick brooder - Can be as simple as a sturdy cardboard box or a small animal cage like one you'd use for rabbits.
- Flooring - Pine shavings work best.
- Temperature - 90 to 100 deg. for the first week, decrease 5 deg. per week. A 100 watt bulb pointing in one corner (not the whole brooder) works well.
- Food & water - chick crumbles/starter & a chick waterer.
- Gently handle your chicks when young to get them accustomed to being around people.
- Outside time - Section off an area in your yard where the chicks can explore, scratch, etc. Be sure you can catch them when it's time to come in. They move fast!!

### Chicken Care After First 60 Days, General Chicken Care:

- Chicken coops - Once feathered out you'll want to move your chickens into a chicken coop! Rule of thumb is about 2-3 square feet per chicken inside the henhouse and 4-5 sq/ft per chicken in an outside run. Keep local predators in mind and make a safe home for your flock! Don't forget those eagles and hawks! Research on the web will give you abundance of coop plans...every size imaginable and from inexpensive to over the moon in cost.
- Flooring - Pine shavings work well, or you can use the deep litter method. This method allows the litter to accumulate more on the bottom of the coop and can be of help during the winter months in keeping the coop warm as the chicken waste composts.
- Food & water - Most people go with chicken layer feed/pellets, vegetables, bread, chicken scratch (cracked corn, milo, wheat). Feed stores will have gravity feeders and waterers.
- Chickens like to roost, so install a horizontal perch for them.

### Chicken Trivia

- Most hens will start to lay around 4-6 months of age.
- As a rule of thumb, you can tell what color the egg will be by the earlobes of the hen. A white lobed hen will lay white eggs, red lobed-brown eggs. There are a few exceptions to this rule in the more exotic breeds. Check with your feed store.
- If you want your hens to produce a dozen eggs a day, you will need to raise 18 hens, give or take. Statistically speaking, a hen will produce 0.7 eggs a day.
- Hens will produce for years, some up into their teens, but may slow down in their production as they age. And that brings us to the downy side of raising chickens. It's mighty hard for the kids to enjoy that home-made chicken noodle soup when the stock has been made from Miss Chickie.

For more information, contact the Conservation District or go to [www.backyardchickens.com](http://www.backyardchickens.com)



## Is Your Farm Ready for Fall and Winter?

The summer and early fall months are the optimal times to begin work to ensure that pasture fields and livestock confinement areas are ready for the winter months. Now is the time to plan for implementation of these practices on your farm.

### Pasture Management Practices

Proper pasture management in the fall and early winter months will ensure healthy, vigorous pastures for the spring and summer months. When the cool, wet weather arrives in the fall, established pastures will require some specific care to remain productive in the future.

Typically, the arrival of fall rains results in a renewed life. "fall flush" in pasture fields and some landowners are tempted to allow grazing animals to overgraze the pastures during those months, which leads to several detrimental factors that can lead to decreased forage production for the next growing season and possible water quality issues.

The "fall flush" is the time when the grass plants prepare for winter. There will be some green-up and top growth, enabling the plant to store energy and nutrients in its lower (2" - 4") portion and roots. They will also form the meristemes or growth buds needed for next year's top growth. Damage can occur to the grass plants during this time if the plants are overgrazed or trampling occurs when soils become wet.

Possible water quality issues may occur from runoff from overgrazed and or trampled areas in the fall and early winter months. Maintaining a vigorous stand of grass may decrease runoff into waterways by trapping sediment-bound contaminants, such as fecal coliform bacteria.

### Summary of recommendations for fall and early winter pastures:

- Do not allow livestock to graze grass shorter than 3 inches.
- Use a harrow to spread manure evenly throughout the pasture field(s).
- Clip (mow) pasture fields to remove old seed heads.
- Remove livestock from pasture fields **before** soils become saturated.
- Overseed areas that are either void of vegetation or are in need of additional grass populations with an appropriate grass seed mix.
- Apply a fall fertilizer mix, such as 10-20-20 and lime to provide needed nutrients for strong root development.
- Install fencing to exclude livestock from critical areas or areas that may lead to runoff into waterways.

### Livestock Confinement Areas

Livestock will need suitable confinement areas when it is not appropriate for them to have access to the pasture fields during the fall and winter months. Unsuitable confinement areas may lead to the development of mud, increased health risks to livestock, decreased production, loss of income and the potential for water quality impairment.

Mud can make chore time unpleasant and can create an unsightly and unhealthy environment for livestock. In addition to creating a breeding ground for insects, such as flies and mosquitoes, mud creates slick, unsafe footing, increasing the risk of injury for both livestock and humans. Along with mud comes damp stalls, hoof disease, wet feed, hay and bedding, and exercise areas which go unused in the winter because of poor drainage. Mud can also increase the potential for contaminated runoff to drain into surface waterways, such as drainage ditches, streams, lakes and wetland areas.



This barn has newly installed gutters that divert rainwater away from the livestock confinement area.

### Recommendations for livestock confinement areas:

- Divert roof water from confinement areas by installing gutters, downspouts and outlet lines to convey the roof water away from confinement areas.
- Construct a "sacrifice area."
  - o Collect manure on a daily basis.
- Construct a manure storage structure.
  - o Manure should be stored on an impervious surface and covered with either a roof or tarp to divert rainwater from the manure.
- Install drainage around confinement areas.
  - o Use "Curtain drains" or "French drains."
- Provide forage and other feedstuffs in bins or mangers, instead of feeding on the ground.
  - o This will decrease waste feed, which will decrease feed costs.



A sacrifice area designed to confine horses during times when they should not have access to the pasture.

## Livestock in the stream?

Do you own livestock? Do you have streams and/or waterways that need protection? We can help!

You may be eligible for:

- Fencing to exclude livestock from eligible streams and/or waterways with off channel watering.
- Establishment of vegetated buffers along eligible waterways.
- Annual rental payments and signing bonus for land dedicated to buffers.

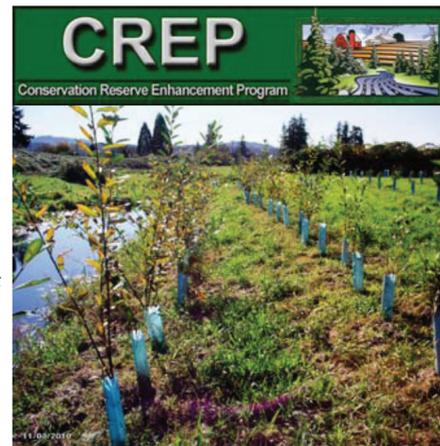
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) pays landowners to establish vegetated buffers along eligible creeks and waterways. Vegetated buffers can consist of native trees or a combination of a shrub hedgerow and filter strip. Native plant buffers improve fish and wildlife habitat, increase stream bank stability, and contribute to improved water quality. CREP is a national voluntary program that in Washington improves habitat and water quality in salmon streams. Land enrolled in 10-15 year CREP contracts is removed from agricultural production and grazing. In return, producers receive annual rental payments (rental payments can range from \$218 per acre to \$662 per acre depending on soil type), contract signing incentives and financial incentives of nearly 100 percent reimbursement for creating new wildlife habitat. Approved conservation practices can include livestock fencing and water quality improvements.

Wooded buffers are planted with native trees and shrubs suitable to the terrain and soil types. Hedgerows consist of native shrubs. Non-native plants such as Himalayan blackberries and reed canary grass are controlled in the buffer.

The boundary of the vegetated buffer is flexible along the stream segment and can be moved toward or away from the stream at different locations to meet landowner needs, as long as the width is at least 35 feet. Larger rivers may require a buffer greater than 35 feet. Landowners can enroll all or a portion of eligible streams on their property.

All CREP practices must be established according to USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) technical standards and specifications. NRCS and local conservation districts provide technical assistance on the design and installation of the practices.

Skagit County landowners may sign up for CREP with the Skagit Conservation District or FSA at any time. For more information about CREP, contact the USDA Service Center or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/wa](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa).



# AGRICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

(CONTINUED)

## Farmers Markets

### SKAGIT COUNTY

#### Anacortes Farmers Market

Opens May 17, 2008  
Sat -9 am to 2 pm - May to October  
7th Street & R Avenue (Depot Arts Center)  
Keri Knapp 360-293-7922  
info@anacortesfarmersmarket.org  
www.anacortesfarmersmarket.org

#### Bow Little Market

1-7 pm every other Thursday  
July 29 - October 28  
On the green in front of Belfast Feed Store at the east end of Bow Hill Road on Old Hwy 99  
Holiday Festival, 10 am - 4 pm, November 13 (Sat.) at Beau Lodge, Wood Rd., Bow  
Contacts: www.bowlittlemarket.com;  
bowlittlemarket@yahoo.com; 360-724-3333

#### Burlington Public Market

10 am - 4 pm Through October Next to Fred Meyer  
Contacts: burlington.market@yahoo.com; 360 941-1193

#### Concrete Sat Market

Sat -9 am to 4 pm - June to Labor Day  
Senior Center - 45821 Railroad Street  
Marty Smith - 360-853-8505

#### Island Hospital Farmers Market

**Thoroughly Fresh Thursday**  
Run from June 2 through Sept 8 noon - 2 pm on Thursday  
Several farms delivering produce, fresh baked bread, and wellness products vendors We also give cooking demos w/samples, recipes, etc along with the wellness info.  
1211 24th St Anacortes, WA 98221  
sdupuis@islandhospital.org

#### Mount Vernon Farmers Market

Opens May 31, 2008  
Saturday - 9 am to 1 pm - May to October  
The Revetment (on the river at Gates & Main)  
Wednesday - 3 pm to 5 pm - June to September  
Skagit Valley Hospital at 1415 Kincaid  
Ron Farrell - 360-292-2648  
mvfarmer1@hotmail.com  
www.mountvernonfarmersmarket.org

#### Rexville Farmers Market

Sunday - 10 am to 6 pm  
Next to Rexville Grocery  
19271 Best Road, Mount Vernon  
360-466-5522  
TalkToUs@rexvillegrocery.com

#### Sedro Woolley Farmers Market

Wednesday - 3 pm to 7 pm - May to October  
Hammer Heritage Square (Ferry and Metcalf)  
Gilda Gorr 360-422-3835  
swfarmersmarket@fidalgo.net

#### Skagit Valley Farmers Market

3-7 Fridays through September  
19193 Highway 534, Conway, East of I-5  
Produce Stand open daily Free space for vendors  
Tory Fidler 360-422-5142  
skagitvalleyfarmersmarket@yahoo.com

### WHIDBEY ISLAND

#### Bayview Farmers Market

Sat & Sun -10 am to 2 pm - April to October  
Highway 525 at Bayview Road  
Michael Yocco -360-321-4302  
www.bayviewfarmersmarket.com  
info@islandnaturalmeats.com

#### Coupeville Farmers Market

Saturday - 10 am to 2 pm, April to October  
Alexander Street, behind the Library  
(at the south end of 8th Street)  
Peg Tennant - 360-678-4288  
coupevillemarket@aol.com

#### Greenbank Farm Sun Market

Sunday - 10 am to 3 pm - April to October  
Highway 525 & Wonn Road  
360-678-7710  
www.greenbankfarm.com (calendar of events)

#### Oak Harbor Public Market

Thursday - 4 pm to 7 pm - June to September  
Highway 20 next to Visitor Center  
Peg Tennant - 360-678-4288  
oakharbormarket@yahoo.com



#### South Whidbey Tilt Farmers Market

Saturday - 10 am to 3 pm - May to October  
Wednesday - 4 pm to 7 pm - July & August  
Highway 525 at Thompson Road, Langley  
Anza Muenchow - 360-579-2892  
www.southwhidbeytilth.org

#### Oak Harbor Public Market

Thurs - 4 pm to 7 pm - June to September  
Highway 20 next to Visitor Center  
Peg Tennant - 360-678-4288  
oakharbormarket@yahoo.com

#### South Whidbey Tilt Farmers Market

Sat - 10 am to 3 pm - May to October  
Wednesday - 4 pm to 7 pm - July & August  
Highway 525 at Thompson Road, Langley  
Anza Muenchow - 360-579-2892  
www.southwhidbeytilth.org

### NORTH SNOHOMISH AND CAMANO ISLAND

#### Arlington Farmers Market

Saturdays from 9 to 3 during the season.  
Legion Park in downtown Arlington  
Mark Lovejoy - 360-435-9272  
www.arlingtonfarmersmarket.org

#### Uncommon Market

Saturdays from 10 to 4 during the season.  
In the commons at the center of the buildings  
at Terry's Corner, off SR 532, Camano Island  
Bonnie Brindle at Brindle's Market - 360-722-7480

### WHATCOM COUNTY

#### Bellingham Farmers Market

Saturday - 10 am to 3 pm - April to December  
Railroad & Chestnut  
Wednesday - 3 pm to 7 pm - June to September  
Fairhaven Village Green Robin Crowder - 360-647-2060  
www.bellinghamfarmers.org

To locate Farmers Markets in other regions go to: **Washington State Farmers Market Association** [www.wafarmersmarkets.com](http://www.wafarmersmarkets.com)

**FESTIVAL of FAMILY FARMS**  
acres of fun for everyone

13<sup>th</sup> Annual Skagit Valley  
**Festival of Family Farms!**  
Saturday, October 1st, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Sunday, October 2nd, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Visit [www.festivaloffamilyfarms.com](http://www.festivaloffamilyfarms.com) for more details.

**"BACK HOME AT THE SKAGIT FAIR"**

The Skagit County Fair is August 10 – 13, and the Skagit Conservation District will be seeking volunteers to help with cow milking contests. This year we will be located in the Kid's Zone, so we are sure to be a popular exhibit. Volunteers will receive free entrance into the fair for each three-hour shift. If you would like to volunteer, please call Cindy Pierce at (360) 428-4313.

# FIRE & FORESTRY

## EQIP and Your Forest

If you are a private forest landowner who would like to address natural resource management concerns by implementing additional conservation practices on your land and if you would like to improve or maintain existing stewardship practices, the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) maybe right for you.



Forests provide abundant natural resource benefits: fish and wildlife, clean water, clean air, forest products, recreation and beauty. The Conservation District and the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service can help forest landowners better understand the benefits of a managed forest and improving the health of forest stands. There are several ways we can assist you to maintain, protect, and enhance your forest productivity through EQIP. EQIP practices can also make your home

in the woods (wildland urban interface) more fire safe. As a forest landowner, you decide what type and level of conservation assistance is appropriate in meeting your forest management needs. By developing a conservation plan, you may be eligible for financial assistance to implement conservation practices.

EQIP provides an incentive to reestablish forest stands and treat related natural resource concerns such as: forest health, wildfire mitigation, water quality, wildlife habitat. A forest conservation plan will address issues such as: forest stand improvement and forest health, site preparation, reforestation with site specific species, soil protection, erosion and sediment concerns, slash treatment, pruning, wildlife habitat and pest management.

### August 12th is the sign-up deadline to apply for EQIP funding.

Contact NRCS for the application process: **Kathy Kilcoyne (360) 428-7758**

Contact the Conservation District for Technical Assistance: **Al Crane (360) 428-4313**

As concerns about global warming and climate change increase, scientific research shows that the role of forests and wildfires have important impacts on these changes:

1. Our forests are critically important in carbon cycling and balancing the atmosphere's carbon dioxide and oxygen.
2. Trees are the most powerful concentrators of carbon on earth. Through photosynthesis, trees absorb CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and store it as wood.
3. Forests can be net sinks or net sources of carbon, depending on forest health and occurrence of wildfire and how the forest is managed.
4. Forest management and use of wood products add to the capacity of forests to mitigate the effects of climate.
5. Greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced through the substitution of forest biomass for fossil fuels to produce heat, electricity and transportation fuels.
6. Avoiding forest conversion aids in sequestering carbon.
7. Sustainable forest management practices enable forest landowners to enhance carbon sequestration and modify wildfire behavior. Healthy forests are more resistant to catastrophic wildfires, which release stored carbon during the wildfire event and continue to release carbon as the forest decays after a wildfire.



### From the 2011 Executive Summary Firewise Communities/USA® Project Report:

In 2010, the Firewise Communities/USA® Program reached its 9th year. The Firewise staff at the National Fire Protection Association put together a project report with some impressive statistics.

- During the 2010 calendar year participation in the program grew by 26%.
- At the end of the 2010 calendar year there were 675 Firewise Communities/USA® across the nation. This number continues to increase rapidly.
- Washington State has 75 of those Firewise Communities/USA®, second only to Arkansas.
- Skagit County has 6 (and more in progress) of the Firewise Communities/USA® in Washington State, second only to San Juan Island County.
- \$77 million dollars have been invested by communities in wildfire mitigation projects since 2003, throughout the 40 participating states.
- Washington State is one of nine other states that have been involved in the program since it started. The River Bluff Ranch Community has been a Firewise Community for 9 years. The Chuckanut Ridge Community (in Skagit County) has been a Firewise Community for 8 years!

Wood is the most renewable and sustainable of the major building materials. Comparing the environmental effects of common building materials, wood has the least impact on total energy use, greenhouse gases, air and wood pollution, and solid waste. For every billion board feet of wood we use instead of other building materials like steel and concrete, we save 720 million tons of carbon dioxide from entering our atmosphere.

From "Forest, A Legacy to Our Children" 2002





# KIDS FOR CONSERVATION



## 2011 NW Regional Envirothon

The Skagit Conservation District hosted the 2011 Northwest Regional Envirothon this past March. The competition was held at the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, which was the perfect venue and over 70 high students competed in this year's event.



Regional competitions are hosted across the state, with top county winners moving on to the State Envirothon Competition. This year's competition was hosted in May at Warm Beach Camp in Snohomish, Washington.

Stanwood High School was the overall winning team, as well as the winning team for Snohomish County. Sky Valley, also in Snohomish County, placed second overall. Mercer Slough took top honors for King County, placing third overall. Sehome High School placed first for Whatcom County and Mount Vernon High School took top honors for Skagit County this year!

The District would like to give a huge thank you to the generous and knowledgeable staff of the Padilla Bay Reserve, the resource professionals who hosted stations, and the countless volunteers who assisted to make this a successful competition.



A team of students take a measurement at the soils station.



Students work together as a team on their wildlife test.



Stanwood collaborates on their aquatics test.

## 2011 POSTER CONTEST

### "Forests for People - More Than You Can Imagine"



ABOVE: Overall poster contest winner, Claryssa Thomas, poses with Blossom™.

LEFT: Skagit County Commissioners pose with poster contest winners at the Annual Soil and Water Stewardship Proclamation.

## Annual 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation Tour

Over 800 students from 30 Skagit County classrooms took part in the 2011 Sixth Grade Conservation Tour. The event was held once again at Pomona Grange Park on Friday Creek May 10th and 11th. The students participated in hands-on educational activities at a rotation of seven 15-minute stations, which included topics on forest protection, the salmon life cycle, composting and recycling, soils, "Leave No Trace" camping practices, macroinvertebrates, and forest regeneration. The students enjoyed a fun way of learning, while enjoying the outdoors on the trails of the park.

We want to thank the many experienced natural resource professionals from the Department of Natural Resources, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, Skagit County Master Composter/Recyclers Program, Natural Resources Conservation Service, North Cascades National Park Complex, and the US Forest Service, who dedicate their time to assist with this event. We also wish to thank the dedicated volunteers who gave their valuable time to make this a successful event.



LEFT: Cindy Bjorklund, Park Ranger with the North Cascades National Park Complex, confronts an untidy camper at the "Wilderness - Leave No Trace" station.



ABOVE: Callie Martin, Master Composter/Recyclers Coordinator with Skagit County, shows the students how to compost using worms.



LEFT: Phil Roberts, Soil Scientist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service describes soil properties to a group of students.

### Tree Search

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r s s m u i o p p d x t r c b
h i b t t s o h e d s d a b r
r s u o o v l c s t o m a t a
d e d i x o i d n o b r a c n
c h s t e d r v n i k h e e c
e t a m u p r p u w x l g n h
l n o o s s a m o i b y w o e
l y u t m s o x t a x o l c a
s s g n i r h t w o r g r e n
d o o w t r a e h c o n r e m
o t r u n k n e e r g r e v e
c h l o r o p h y l t c d p a y
c h l o r o p h y l t c d p a o
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n g h c t r p o s x o e s t r

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- |           |              |                |
|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| bark      | biomass      | branch         |
| buds      | cambium      | carbon dioxide |
| cells     | chlorophyll  | cone           |
| conifer   | crown        | deciduous      |
| evergreen | growth rings | heartwood      |
| leaves    | needles      | oxygen         |
| paper     | phloem       | photosynthesis |
| renewable | roots        | sapwood        |
| stomata   | taproot      | trunk          |
| xylem     |              |                |

## Stanwood High School Takes Top Spot at State Envirothon

(Information courtesy of Snohomish CD)



Stanwood High School's Envirothon team members include, left to right: Jacob Flake, Aaron Olson, Brandon Nickels, Leif Small, Thor Pearson and advisor Todd Jacobsen.

Stanwood High School's Envirothon team, led by advisor Todd Jacobsen, won first place in the Washington State Envirothon held at Warm Beach Camp and Conference Center on May 18 and 19. The second place team was Garfield/Palouse High School and third place was Union High School from Camas. Snohomish Conservation District hosted the state event.

Envirothon is North America's largest high school environmental education competition. High school youth compete on their knowledge of five areas: soils/land use, forestry, aquatic ecology, wildlife and a current environmental issue which is 'Freshwater and Saltwater Estuaries' for 2011.

The Stanwood team flew to New Brunswick, Canada in July to compete against teams from all over the U.S. and Canada. Funding for their trip was provided by the Washington Association of Conservation Districts. This is the third year that the Stanwood High School Envirothon team has represented Washington State at the North American event. The five-day event is sponsored by Canon and each member of the top ten teams is eligible to win a Canon scholarship ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 to be used for college expenses.



# COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP



## MARINE BIOTOXIN VOLUNTEERS...

### Making a Valuable Contribution to The Health and Safety of Our Community

The Skagit Conservation District and the Skagit County Health Department would like to thank and commend the 2011 Marine Biotoxin Volunteers for their involvement in protecting the health and safety of our community.

During each low tide, from May through September, these dedicated community stewards have been collecting and tracking shellfish samples from 13 local recreational shellfish harvesting beaches for concentrations of Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) so beaches can be closed in a timely manner if shellfish are unsafe to eat. Initiated in 1999, the volunteer program is a partnership of the Skagit Conservation District, the Skagit County Health Department, the State Department of Health, and local citizens designed to protect recreational shellfish harvesters who rely on accurate and timely PSP information.

Shellfish are gathered at low tide every other week by our PSP volunteers and then taken to the County Health Department where they are shipped off to the State Department of Health's lab in Seattle to be tested. The State Department of Health tests the shellfish then immediately gets any necessary warnings on the Marine Biotoxin Hotline to keep the public informed.



Pictured, Marine Biotoxin volunteers, Glenda Alm and Dick Kent, enjoy teamwork, sunshine, and spending time at the beach.



### 2011 Marine Biotoxin Volunteers:

- Glenda Alm, Mount Vernon
- Chet Bradley, Sedro-Woolley
- Nihla Bradley, Sedro-Woolley
- Kurt Buchanan, Mount Vernon
- Jim Crone, Anacortes
- Kathy Crone, Anacortes
- Chuck Davis, Bow
- Stephen Farmer, Sedro-Woolley
- Bud Freeman, Mount Vernon
- Cherie Freeman, Mount Vernon
- Jim Fukuyama, Mount Vernon
- Donna Helgeson, Sedro-Woolley
- Dick Kent, Mount Vernon
- Robert Knowles, Anacortes
- Elaine Lease, Mount Vernon
- Richard Lease, Mount Vernon
- Jack Mercer, Sinclair Island
- Jack Middleton, Mount Vernon
- Henry Nyland, Mount Vernon
- Shirley Nyland, Mount Vernon
- Jessie Sauer, Sedro-Woolley
- Jon Stables, Anacortes



Collecting shellfish on Skagit County beaches can be a fun family activity. Pictured, Jon Stables and his son collect shellfish samples for the Marine Biotoxin program.

#### What is PSP?

Paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) is a serious illness caused by eating shellfish contaminated with algae that contains a toxin harmful to humans. When this algae increases to high numbers in marine waters, the condition is sometimes (and somewhat erroneously) referred to as a "red tide."

#### What causes unsafe levels of PSP?

The amount of toxin increases when water conditions are favorable. However, the exact combination of conditions that cause "blooms" of poison-producing plankton is not known. We do not yet understand the interaction of the water conditions. Unlike bacterial contaminants like vibrio, warm water does not necessarily increase the level.

#### If the water looks dirty or red, does that mean that shellfish are contaminated?

Not necessarily. Paralytic shellfish poison is rarely associated with a red tinge to the water. Reddish coloration of the water is more commonly associated with other, non-toxic organisms.

#### If the water is not red, does that mean that shellfish are not contaminated?

Not necessarily. PSP can be present in large amounts even if the water looks clear. Also, the toxin can remain in shellfish long after the algae bloom is over.

#### Can I tell if it's safe to gather shellfish by how they look?

No, shellfish containing toxic levels of PSP don't look or taste any different from non-toxic shellfish.

#### How can I protect my family from paralytic shellfish poisoning?

DOH regularly checks shellfish for PSP toxin and closes areas that have unsafe levels. Before harvesting any kind of shellfish, check the marine Biotoxin Bulletin or call the Marine Biotoxin Hotline at 1-800-562-5632 to find out what recreational areas are closed due to PSP. Do not expect beaches to be marked with a sign.

#### Does cooking the shellfish make it safe to eat?

No. The poison is not destroyed by cooking or freezing.

We are lucky here in Skagit County to have a healthy population of shellfish, so next time the tide is low, grab a shovel and head to the beach...just remember, before you go, call the **HOT LINE** at **1-800-562-5632** or visit the web page at:

[www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm)

For information about the volunteer Marine Biotoxin Monitoring program, contact Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District at 428-4313 or email [kristi@skagitcd.org](mailto:kristi@skagitcd.org).

## Thank you, SKAGIT STREAM TEAM, for another year of dedication!

On Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, seventy-three Skagit Stream Team volunteers were recognized at a special celebration hosted by the Skagit Conservation District and the Padilla Bay Research Reserve for their participation in the 2010/11 Stream Team program. The event included a variety of great food, great company, and a great time! Special guests included Skagit County Commissioners Ron Wesen and Sharon Dillon. Special thanks to Paul Blau, Blau Oyster Company and Nicole Hopper, Taylor Shellfish Farms for cooking up some delicious local clams and oysters and to all attendees for the outstanding potluck dishes! The entertainment was (once again) superb, thanks to the rousing performances provided by Kulshan Creek Stream Teamers, Terri Dix, Gena DiLabio and Desiree Webster (filling in for Maria Magaña) (a.k.a the "Salmon Sisters") and Glen Alexander of Padilla Bay Research Reserve.

Volunteers were all individually recognized in an award service. Special recognition was also given to George Viverette for ten-years of volunteer service; and to this year's "Shining Stars," including Scott Adams, Gena DiLabio, Terri Dix, Sarah Huntington, and Maria Magaña, who were recognized for 5 years of service.

Kurt Buchanan, Stephen Farmer, Lin Folsom, Pete Haase, Patrick Hurley, Jack Middleton, Patrick O'Hearn and Jack Sekora, were honored for their involvement as the "Skagit Storm Team" volunteers - this group has been on special assignment conducting storm event monitoring in the No Name Slough and Bay View drainages this year. Their ongoing commitment has been a key factor in protecting public health and identifying priority stream reaches in the watershed.



Skagit Stream Team Celebration included quite the plentiful feast!



The Salmon Sisters, with Desiree Webster filling in for Maria Magaña, performed a new catchy tune written by Terri Dix to the audience's pleasure, called "Water is Good for Everything."



Skagit Stream Team is a partnership of local citizens, Skagit Conservation District, Padilla Bay Research Reserve, City of Burlington, City of Sedro-Woolley, and Skagit County.



Shining Star Sarah Huntington



Shining Star Scott Adams



Shining Stars Gina, Terri and Maria

Shining Stars

### Join the Stream Team!

Are you interested in joining this great group of volunteers? Training for new Stream Team volunteers will be held the evenings of September 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and on Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Please call Kristi Carpenter at 360-428-4313 or email [kristi@skagitcd.org](mailto:kristi@skagitcd.org) by September 2<sup>nd</sup> to register.

### George Viverette Recognized for 10 Years of Service with the Skagit Stream Team



George Viverette of Anacortes was recognized at the Annual Stream Team celebration for his outstanding service to the Skagit Stream Team for 10 years!

Aside from his dedication to the Stream Team, George is an expert organic gardener, with perfect compost piles and a worm bin. (His Master Composter training is evident.) George is especially fond of his horseradish, garlic, and herbs. His yard is a certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat, and he enjoys building bird houses. He's also a dedicated

recycler - an all-around conservationist. When he's not gardening or taking samples for Stream Team, George likes to hike, and makes almost daily treks around Anacortes' Washington Park. He also enjoys cooking and shopping -- garage sale shopping, that is. He's on the lookout for additions to his collections of fishing rods, hammers, and Indian artifacts.

On behalf of the Padilla Bay Research Reserve and the Skagit Conservation District we would like to thank George for his service.

"We're so fortunate to have George on Stream Team. He's been a steady, punctual, enthusiastic volunteer for 10 years, and we're hoping he'll continue for 10 more!"

- Susan Wood, Stream Team Coach, Padilla Bay Research Reserve

### 2010/11 Skagit Stream Team Volunteers

**BAY VIEW DRAINAGE**  
Brittany Collins  
Charlie Huddleston  
Monte Richardson

**BRICKYARD CREEK**  
Bill Bowen  
Jerry Corrion  
Kyle Deerkop  
Jim Johnson  
Jack Middleton  
Richard Oickle

**FISHER CREEK**  
Scott Doman  
Shirley Doman  
Peter Dowden  
Luanne Goodrich  
Larry Labo  
Henry Nyland  
Carol Schwartz  
Dean Schwartz

**GAGES SLOUGH**  
Emilia Blake  
Robyn Blankenship  
Donna Helgeson

**JOE LEARY SLOUGH**  
Scott Adams  
Donald Brassington  
Doug Edwards  
Luanne Goodrich  
Laura Paise  
Nate Schuh

**KULSHAN CREEK**  
Gena DiLabio  
Terri Dix  
Maria Magaña  
Alec McDougall  
Sandy McDougall

**NOOKACHAMPS CREEK**  
George Bullock  
Sean Den Adel  
Nicole Espe  
Stephen Farmer  
James Fukuyama  
Hal Lee  
Hella Lee  
Sarah Huntington  
Patrick Hurley  
John Patton  
Sally Saxton  
Joyce Siniscal  
James Stavig

**NO NAME SLOUGH**  
Hamilton Hayes  
Michelle McPhee  
George Miller  
Patrick O'Hearn  
Bertis Rasco  
George Viverette

**SAMISH BAY**  
Mariepaule Braule  
Deryl Hart  
Stephen Farmer  
Steve Goodrich  
Dick Lease  
Elaine Lease  
Marcie Maulden  
Sue Mitchell  
Vivian Mizuta  
Joyce Moon  
Dick Redmond  
Jeanette Redmond  
Tom Schmidt

**SKAGIT STORM TEAM**  
Kurt Buchanan  
Stephen Farmer  
Lin Folsom  
Pete Haase  
Patrick Hurley  
Jack Middleton  
Patrick O'Hearn  
Jack Sekora

**TRUMPETER BASIN**  
Sheila Berry  
Rhonda Jennings  
Rod Miller  
Michele Morse  
Frank Repplier  
Jack Sekora

(CONTINUED)

## Explore the Wonders of our Local Watersheds!

**We are now taking registrations for the Fall 2011 Watershed Masters Program!**

Are you interested in meeting new friends, learning from local experts about the wonders of the Skagit watershed and participating in meaningful community projects? The Skagit Conservation District is pleased to announce that we are now taking applications for the **Fall 2011 Watershed Masters Volunteer Training Program**. The program is intended for community residents (age 17 and up) who are aspiring to increase their knowledge about their watershed, water quality and stream ecology.



Watershed Masters receive a comprehensive reference notebook and 40 hours of FREE training, which covers an introduction to local geology, historical and treasured places, stream ecology, salmon, soils and wetlands, forest practices, water quality, backyard conservation, and much, much more! Each session is taught by local experts. After completing the training, volunteers return 40 hours participating in



Participants attend 8 FUN and INFORMATIVE EVENING sessions, which will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on TUESDAY evenings beginning September 27<sup>th</sup> through November 15<sup>th</sup> and participate in three Saturday watershed field adventures (final dates to be determined).

meaningful community projects of their choice. The program is being sponsored by the Skagit Conservation District in partnership with the City of Mount Vernon, City of Sedro-Woolley, City of Burlington, and Skagit County.

**Pre-register by SEPTEMBER 23rd**  
(Class fills up rapidly and is limited to 25 – first come basis).  
**For more information or for an application packet, contact Kristi Carpenter**  
**@ (360) 428-4313 or email: [kristi@skagitcd.org](mailto:kristi@skagitcd.org)**

## Thank You Plant Sale Volunteers!

We are extending a big thank you to the many volunteers that helped at our plant sale this year. We simply can't do events such as these without the help of our faithful volunteers. Also, a big thanks to all of you that came out to support our plant sale by purchasing native plants!

*Our heartfelt thanks to the following volunteers:*

Taylor Barker  
Ann Buzaitis  
Caleb Dobey  
Stephen Farmer  
Mark Fessler  
James Fukuyama  
Ken Gard  
Pete Haase  
Cleveland Hall  
Bill Hall  
Nancy Hall  
Judie Hart  
Ruth Heft  
Donna Helgeson  
Denise Hollister  
Sarah Huntington  
Barbara Kolar  
Maria Magaña  
Deanna McCoy  
Aaron Mimney  
Sue Mitchell  
Dena Petersen  
Corrinne Sande  
Loren Sande  
Donna Schram  
Jack Sekora  
Inge Siller  
Joyce Siniscal  
Randy Stevens  
Becky Stinson  
Ria Stroosma  
Maxine Swanagan  
Sheila Tuff  
Josh Underdahl  
Pete Zitka



Volunteers Loren Sande, Josh Underdahl, and Donna Helgeson, and SCD employee Jennifer Hinderman wrap trees and shrubs for a customer's order.

## In Memory of Pat Hurley

*"The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit."*

– Nelson Henderson

It is with great sadness that we say good bye to our dear friend and volunteer extraordinaire, Pat Hurley, who passed away peacefully on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Over the last few years, Pat actively participated in numerous volunteer activities, including the Watershed Masters, Marine Biotoxin, Skagit Stream Team, and Storm Team programs. He helped at all our work parties for the Kulshan Neighborhood Bird and Butterfly Garden and helped plant the Skagit County Rain Garden – he took great pride in these projects. It is estimated that Pat planted one-thousand trees at stream enhancement projects hosted by the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group and the Skagit Land Trust. In addition, Pat graciously helped out at many public meetings and workshops, coming early to help set up and staying late to help clean up after key events and loved volunteering at the Shellfish Seed Sale and the Samish Bay Bivalve Bash and Mud Run. It is no wonder that he was awarded the Conservation District's "Inspiration Award" in 2010. Pat's legacy will live on in our hearts and in our community – thank you, Pat, for being such a good friend, volunteer, and community steward and for the opportunity to know you. We miss you, Pat!



## Hillier Solar Pump & Fence Project



Pictured are the solar pump and the drinking water trough.

Chad Hillier operates a small livestock operation on property that is divided by Friday Creek. One half of the property is used as the main livestock rearing area and the other half of the property is used as pastureland for his small herd of beef cattle. During the spring and summer months, the cattle are moved to the pastureland, but had access to Friday Creek to obtain drinking water. Chad recognized that allowing the cattle to have access to the creek was not in the best interest for water quality and stability of the streambank, so he contacted the Skagit Conservation District to come up with alternatives to his current situation.

The simplest solution to the problem was to construct a fence to exclude cattle from the stream crossing area; however, the cattle still needed a safe and reliable supply of drinking water. The decision was made to install a solar powered water pump system to convey water from the creek to a water trough.

The solar powered water pump system consists of a solar panel, floating water pump, 12-volt battery, electronic float switch and water trough. The battery provides the power to operate the water pump and the electronic float switch, and the solar panel keeps the battery charged.

Chad installed the solar panel, battery and water trough about 160 feet away from Friday Creek to maximize the distance between the watering area and the creek. The floating pump was installed in the creek, where it pumps water through an underground water line to the water trough. The electronic float switch shuts off the pump once the water trough is full.

Once the solar powered water pump system was installed and working properly, Chad constructed a 40-foot fence with gates to exclude cattle from the creek while they graze in the pasture field. Now cattle do not have access to the creek except when they are let through to cross to the other pasture.



This pump in Friday Creek sends water through an underground line to the water trough.



Looking from the west to the east side of Friday Creek down the cattle access route with the pump in the background.

**If you would like more information about solar powered water pump systems or any other best management practices, call John Schuh at (360) 428-4313.**

## SCOOP THE POOP, BAG IT, AND PUT IT IN THE TRASH!



**Did you know that an average-sized dog dropping produces three billion fecal coliform bacteria?**

Roundworms, E. coli, and Giardia are just a few of the many harmful microorganisms that can be transmitted from pet waste to humans. Some can last in your yard for as long as four years if not cleaned up. Children who play outside and adults who garden are at greatest risk of infection.

Pet waste is one of the leading causes of bacterial contamination of streams in urban areas. When it rains, the bacteria is carried from our backyards, neighborhoods, parks, and trails, into our storm drains, creeks, lakes, and marine waters. Pet waste also causes the same nitrogen related problems as fertilizer and livestock manure.

### What are the solutions?

The best solution is safe and easy. 1) Scoop the poop, 2) put it in a plastic bag, 3) place it in the trash, and 4) wash your hands. This is the preferred disposal method. From a surface water perspective it removes the pollution source from human and surface water contact and contains it in a landfill situation where discharges are monitored and containment levels are known. Landfills are designed to safely handle substances such as dog waste, cat litter, and dirty diapers.

**Note:** Residents using onsite septic systems for sewage disposal (the majority of rural Skagit County), should not flush pet waste, which can potentially exceed the design capacity of the septic system. High volumes of hair and ash, not normally found in human waste, can interfere with septic system functions and clog drain fields.

Left: Several of the pet waste stations made by Shuksan Middle School 8th graders have been placed on Samish Island for the convenience of local dog walkers.





# AFTER THE STORM



## Stormwater Classroom Presentations

This past spring, the Skagit Conservation District visited 20 Skagit County classrooms educating 537 students about stormwater pollution within their watersheds. Students learned that a watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes to the same place.

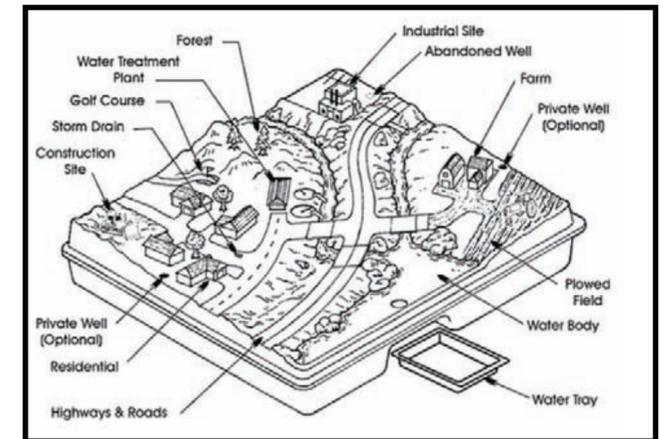
importance of the relationship they share with their local water bodies and the impact that human actions have on them. The model itself gives a visual example of what a watershed may look like and the accompanying demonstration shows how various land uses and their associated non-point source pollution can affect water quality.

Using the EnviroScape® model, which is a scaled-down, tabletop version of the "Skagit" watershed, the students learned about the



Students use a squirt bottle to make it "rain" on the watershed model leaving an evident dark swath of polluted stormwater runoff.

These presentations provide a unique, interactive learning experience, enabling students to make the connection between the way we live and use our lands and the health of our local waterways. They get to see how the combined affects of non-point source pollution from many small sources can have a large impact on the quality of our shared water resources. Students have an opportunity to discuss how they can protect the environment by taking small, local actions. The students come away with knowledge about stormwater runoff, water pollution, water quality, watersheds, and stewardship.



AT RIGHT: Watershed Model Diagram

## Planning a Fundraising Car Wash? READ THIS FIRST!



To see a video, go to the link on our website: [http://www.skagitcd.org/car\\_wash\\_kits](http://www.skagitcd.org/car_wash_kits)



StreamGuard™ Sudsafe™ Car Wash Kit

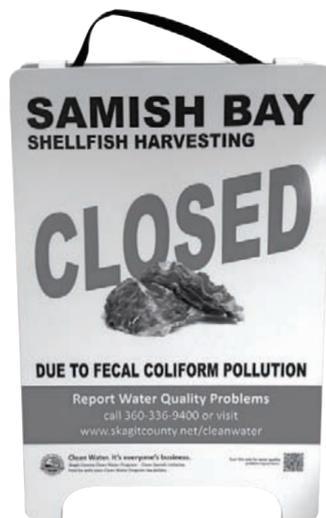
Storm drains convey water through the public storm water system to the nearest stream or lake without treatment. It is important to keep vehicle wash water from entering storm drains because detergents, oils, and heavy metals can be toxic to aquatic life. The SudSafe™ car wash kit captures wash water before it enters the storm drain and pumps it to either a grassy area or sanitary sewer. Using this kit helps to protect the quality of water in streams, lakes and Puget Sound.

### Where to borrow a car wash kit:

- City of Anacortes .....293-1920
- City of Mount Vernon .....336-6204
- City of Sedro-Woolley..... 855-0771
- Skagit County Public Works.....336-9400, ext. 3174
- Skagit Conservation District.....428-4313

## New Samish Shellfish Closure Advisory Signs

Skagit County, with support from Samish volunteers, will be placing signs throughout the watershed to advise the public when shellfish beds are closed due to fecal coliform pollution. Samish shoreline residents should also refrain from eating shellfish from their private beach when the signs are posted.



Attention recreational shellfish harvesters! Always call the State Health Department hotline before harvesting shellfish from any beach. In addition to fecal coliform pollution, other toxins may be present at various times of year which can cause serious illness or even death. Know before you dig!

**HOT LINE: 1-800-562-5632 or visit the web page at: [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm)**



### DID YOU KNOW....?

- Shellfish do not need clean water to grow, BUT shellfish **must have** clean water to be eaten safely. That is because shellfish are not choosy. They filter out all particles – including any chemicals, biotoxins, bacteria and viruses. If the water contains human sewage, animal waste, disease-producing organisms, or chemicals, then these contaminants concentrate in shellfish tissue as well.
- Filter-feeding shellfish improve water quality! Shellfish feed by filtering microscopic plants from the water column. This removes problematic sediments and phytoplankton and their associated nutrients. A single adult oyster clears over 15 gallons a day and the combined efforts of millions of shellfish can have a dramatic impact!
- Commercial shellfish growing areas, like Samish Bay, are classified by the State Dept. of Health and routinely monitored to determine how clean the water is – and it must be very clean! This helps ensure that shellfish reaching seafood markets, restaurants, and our kitchens are safe to eat!
- We can all help protect Skagit County's valuable shellfish resources by keeping on-site septic systems in good working order, keeping livestock and domestic pet waste out of streams and drainage ditches, and using port-a-potties or other restroom facilities when recreating.

### Clean Water



### 10 Things You Can Do to Prevent Stormwater Runoff Pollution

- ▲ Use fertilizers sparingly and sweep up driveways, sidewalks, and gutters
- ▲ Never dump anything down storm drains or in streams
- ▲ Vegetate bare spots in your yard
- ▲ Compost your yard waste
- ▲ Use least toxic pesticides, follow labels, and learn how to prevent pest problems
- ▲ Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces; consider a rain garden to capture runoff
- ▲ Take your car to the car wash instead of washing it in the driveway
- ▲ Check your car for leaks and recycle your motor oil
- ▲ Pick up after your pet
- ▲ Have your septic tank pumped and system inspected regularly

Everybody's Business

**EPA** United States Environmental Protection Agency  
For more information, visit [www.epa.gov/nps](http://www.epa.gov/nps) or [www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater)

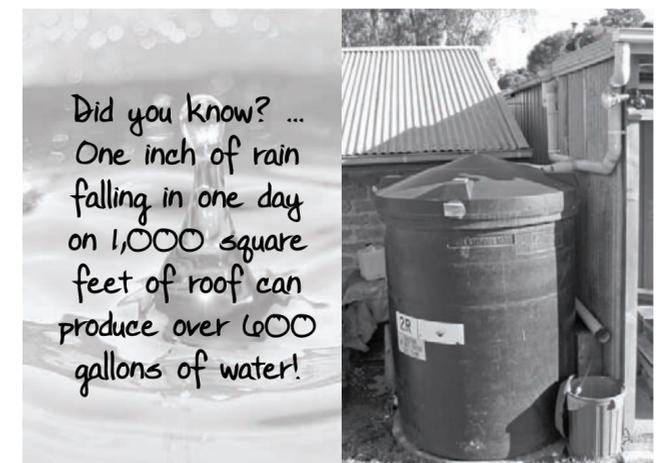


### Only Rain Down The Drain!

### BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Individuals who do not live next to a stream, river, or other waterbody may find it difficult to understand how their actions can impact water quality. No matter how distant you are from a waterway, through drainage ditches, storm drains, creeks, rivers, and underground aquifers we are all connected because we **"All Live Downstream."**

When you get involved in protecting local water quality you can take pride in knowing your efforts will extend beyond the boundaries of your backyard and help improve the quality of life in your neighborhood and neighborhoods located further downstream.





# IN YOUR BACKYARD



Rain, rain, go away...but not until we see the rain garden! The 2011 Backyard Conservation Stewardship class participants had an opportunity to see the Skagit County demonstration rain garden in action during an evening field tour.

## 2011 BACKYARD CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP SHORT COURSE....

MAKING OUR COMMUNITY A BETTER PLACE...ONE YARD AT A TIME

The Skagit Conservation District would like to extend special thanks to the participants of the 2011 Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course! We commend this enthusiastic class of 40 community residents for completing the program and for their personal commitments to make changes in their own backyards that will benefit the environment now and in the future by providing habitat for wildlife and improving air, water, and soil quality. Thank you for your commitment and for your involvement in making our world a better place to live!

### BACKYARD CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP SHORT COURSE GRADUATES:

- |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Glee Blank, Anacortes</b>        | <b>Danna Kellison, Burlington</b>   |
| <b>Ann Brooking, Bow</b>            | <b>Sarah Kiesser, Burlington</b>    |
| <b>Merry Byrum, Mount Vernon</b>    | <b>Barb Kline, Bow</b>              |
| <b>Tamiko Coleman, Mount Vernon</b> | <b>Laurie Kruse, Mount Vernon</b>   |
| <b>Don Coleman, Mount Vernon</b>    | <b>Pat Kuchling, Sedro-Woolley</b>  |
| <b>Charlie Cowie, Mount Vernon</b>  | <b>Rebecca Love, Mount Vernon</b>   |
| <b>Laurence Cowie, Mount Vernon</b> | <b>Esther Myers, Burlington</b>     |
| <b>Jole Delany, Sedro-Woolley</b>   | <b>Jean Oakley, Anacortes</b>       |
| <b>Nathan Durham, Mount Vernon</b>  | <b>Steve Oakley, Anacortes</b>      |
| <b>Jonna Durham, Mount Vernon</b>   | <b>Kathy Orlich, Bellingham</b>     |
| <b>Betty Ericson, Mount Vernon</b>  | <b>Salvador Ramirez, Burlington</b> |
| <b>Darrin Gassler, Burlington</b>   | <b>Rich Rohweder, Burlington</b>    |
| <b>Jim Hadman, Bow</b>              | <b>Julie Rohweder, Burlington</b>   |
| <b>Karen Hadman, Bow</b>            | <b>Jon Stables, Anacortes</b>       |
| <b>Gary Hartnett, Mount Vernon</b>  | <b>Vicky Stables, Anacortes</b>     |
| <b>Henry Hash, Mount Vernon</b>     | <b>Dennis Taylor, Mount Vernon</b>  |
| <b>Carrie Hinds, Mount Vernon</b>   | <b>Melissa Thompson, Bellingham</b> |
| <b>Larry Holmes, Sedro-Woolley</b>  | <b>Bud Weber, Burlington</b>        |
| <b>Sharon Holmes, Sedro-Woolley</b> | <b>Sylvia Weber, Burlington</b>     |
| <b>Bobie Johnson, Sedro-Woolley</b> | <b>Gertrude Wolf, Sedro-Woolley</b> |
| <b>Sharon Jones, Burlington</b>     |                                     |

The Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short-course is a free service of the Skagit Conservation District, with funding provided through a WA Dept. of Ecology Stormwater Education grant. For more information contact Kristi Carpenter (360) 428-4313 or email: [kristi@skagitcd.org](mailto:kristi@skagitcd.org)

This hearty group of backyard enthusiasts endured the rain, cold, and winds to participate in two evening and one Saturday field excursion, which were held in addition to 6 evening seminars. The program featured expert speakers who provided valuable backyard conservation tips, including native plant landscaping, landscaping for birds and wildlife, identifying and controlling noxious weeds, introduction to soils, environmentally friendly gardening practices, plant care, composting, storm water and low impact development, water conservation tips, on-site septic system maintenance, and much more! Graduates of the program were recognized by Skagit County Commissioners Ron Wesen and Sharon Dillon at a special ceremony held on May 25<sup>th</sup>.



Callie Martin, Skagit County Master Composter/Recycler Program Coordinator, demonstrates composting techniques during a class session held at the WSU Extension Discovery Garden.



Backyard Conservation Stewardship participants stroll through the gardens at the home of George and Sue Mehler during a class field day hosted by participants of the Fidalgo Backyard Wildlife Habitat Group.



## Friday Creek Habitat Stewards

"Enhancing wildlife habitat in the upper Samish watershed...one yard at a time"



Friday Creek Habitat Stewards: Ward Krkoska, Sue Mitchell, Donna Schram, Kathy Orlich, Sylvia Weber, Bud Weber. Missing from photo: Melissa Thompson and Brigid Stockton

Over the last several months, a group of dedicated Friday Creek watershed neighbors and volunteers have been working together to kick off a grassroots effort that will provide an opportunity to achieve national designation through the National Wildlife Federation's "Community Wildlife Habitat" program. The basic idea of the program is that by becoming healthier for wildlife, communities become healthier for people. Residents benefit from landscapes designed to keep water and air resources clean, require little use of pesticides and fertilizers, and pack a powerful aesthetic punch. And, the community wildlife habitat distinction promotes pride in neighborhoods.

Over the last few years, Fidalgo Island and the greater Mount Vernon area (including Mount Vernon, Conway, LaConner, Lake McMurray area, and Bow/Blanchard) have each earned national designation as a "Community Wildlife Habitat," through the National Wildlife Federation with over 900 residents participating! The Friday Creek area will be the third community in Skagit County to achieve this honor – a process that takes two to three years.

### Samish River Family Festival and Friday Creek Backyard Wildlife Habitat Project Kickoff

Join us on Saturday, October 8, from 11 am to 3 pm at Donovan County Park in Alger for a family-friendly, fun-filled event to celebrate the natural and cultural resources of the Samish River. A kick off celebration for the Friday Creek Backyard Wildlife Habitat project will also be celebrated at this FREE event! The festival will feature fun educational activities for kids all ages related to water quality, salmon, shellfish, and the river ecosystem. Participants will enjoy music, demonstrations, and presentations by natural resource professionals, an appearance by Sammy Salmon and more. Food will be available for purchase.



For more information: 360-336-0172 or [ldgrace@skagitfisheries.org](mailto:ldgrace@skagitfisheries.org) Join Sammy Salmon at the Samish River Family Festival.

In order to become a certified "Community Wildlife Habitat," a community must register with the National Wildlife Federation, and then work its way through a rigorous set of projects and requirements, earning points along the way for each achievement. The Friday Creek Habitat Stewards have been busy compiling their work plan to meet the requirements, which includes hosting educational workshops/field tours, conducting a wildlife habitat enhancement project, hosting educational displays at local events, providing support and inspiring neighbors, schools, churches, and businesses to certify their own backyards, providing support to their neighbors, and more. The group hosted an educational workshop at the Alger Hall on March 31<sup>st</sup> to promote the program with over 50 neighbors attending.

**How to get involved:** Certifying your yard as a backyard wildlife habitat or sanctuary is easy and it's fun! This program is an informal volunteer activity - no one comes to inspect your yard and it does not limit homeowner rights or your ability to develop your property. You simply provide the elements needed for wildlife: Food, Water, Shelter, Nesting Places to Raise Young, and employ sustainable gardening practices. Then, complete an application form and submit, along with a small fee, to the National Wildlife Federation. One of the Friday Creek Habitat Steward volunteers will be happy to answer questions, provide information or assist you with your application. For an application packet, email the Friday Creek Habitat Stewards at [fridaycreekstewards@gmail.com](mailto:fridaycreekstewards@gmail.com) or call Sue Mitchell at 724-0397 or Sylvia Weber at 724-3762. If you would like to attend a Friday Creek Habitat Stewards meeting, contact Kristi Carpenter @ 428-4313 or email: [Kristi@skagitcd.org](mailto:Kristi@skagitcd.org).

To learn how to make your home a certified backyard wildlife habitat or sanctuary, visit [www.nwf.org/wildlifehabitat](http://www.nwf.org/wildlifehabitat) or <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/backyard/>.

**Thank you to our conservation newsletter sponsors!**

Skagit Conservation News sponsorships cost \$50 a year for business names or \$100 for business cards and are seen by over 4,000 readers twice a year.

To become a conservation newsletter sponsor, please contact Cora at 360-428-4313.

The Skagit Conservation District salutes the following businesses as Skagit Conservation News sponsors.

- ▲ Concrete Nor'West
- ▲ NW Farm Credit Services
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We wish to thank the businesses and individuals who help to sponsor this publication of the Skagit Conservation District News.

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SKAGIT CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

**Skagit Conservation District Board 2011 Election and Appointment Results**

Congratulations to Skagit Conservation District Board Supervisor Paul Blau, who was elected in a public election in March, and to newly appointed Board Supervisor Wendy Pare, who was appointed by the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC). The election and appointment were both confirmed at the May meeting of the WSCC Board.

The Skagit Conservation District Board of Supervisors would like to thank outgoing Supervisor Ryan Sakuma, who has served on the Board since September 2007. Thank you, Ryan, for being part of our team!

Paul Blau has served as an elected Board Supervisor since 1996 and serves as the Vice Chair of the Board. Paul is a shellfish grower. His knowledge about that industry and water quality issues is crucial to the Board.



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**Wendy Pare, our newly appointed supervisor, has had a long connection with Skagit County.**

Her grandmother vacationed with her family at Pike's Resort on Samish Island as a young girl and fell in love with the area. She and her husband had a cabin on Samish Island for a while, then sold it when they moved from Bellingham to Issaquah. They retired in the 1960's to Samish Island, and purchased one of the concrete block houses on the property where Pike's Resort had once stood. As a child, Wendy spent many summers at her grandparents' home on Samish Island, where she learned to appreciate seafood, fresh fruits and vegetables, and fishing. Her grandparents were avid fishermen and raised their own beef, chickens, and vegetables.



Wendy Pare

As the daughter of a Navy career man, Wendy lived in many places, but the family returned to its roots in Washington State when Wendy's father took his last assignment at Bangor, Washington. Wendy attended North Kitsap High School then went on to study recreation and park management with a minor in math at the University of Oregon, where she met her husband Robert, who is an architect. After graduating, Wendy and Robert moved to Seattle. During her professional career, Wendy worked in accounting, including 17 years at Nuprecon, a national demolition company, where she helped the company grow and was the Chief Financial Officer.

Wendy and Robert enjoy hiking, cross-country skiing, and traveling. They love to learn about new places, so they alternate vacations in the U.S. and in foreign countries each year. After having lived in and visited many places, Wendy and Robert decided they wanted to retire to Skagit County because of its abundance of natural resources and its four seasons. In 1992, they found a house in Edison built in 1895, then spent 13 years renovating the house on weekends before moving in permanently in 2005. Robert did 90% of the renovation work, and Wendy worked on the garden, as she is an avid gardener. They also enjoy buying food fresh from the farm, including beef from Northwest Home Grown Ranch Meats, a co-op of local cattle ranchers.

Wendy's interest in serving on the Skagit Conservation District Board comes from her appreciation of our natural resources, which provide shelter, clean water, soil for farming, and nutritious food, such as fish, fruits and grains. It is very important to her that these natural resources be sustained in order to provide a healthy, viable community in the Skagit Valley and because the Skagit Valley has one of the highest quality natural resource environments in the world. She hopes that her accounting and organizational skills will be an asset to the Skagit Conservation District Board in its mission to provide voluntary, incentive based options that support working landscapes while protecting and enhancing our natural resource land base.



SCD Board Meetings are held at 2021 E. College Way on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 a.m. and are open to the public. Please call (360) 428-4313 to verify meeting dates.