

Skagit

CONSERVATION NEWS

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SOIL • WATER • WOODLAND

SUMMER 2012



Skagit
Conservation
District

70th

Anniversary
Issue

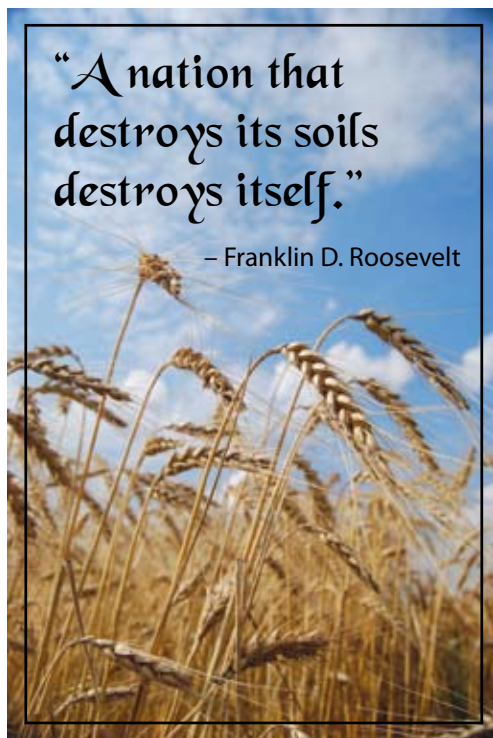


2012 marks the 70th Anniversary

To state the creation of Conservation Districts came about as a response to the environmental catastrophe known as “the Dust Bowl” in the 1930s, would be to over-simplify a complex series of events that started, quite benignly, a decade before. During and after World War I, the government urged farmers to plant more wheat. They did so with enthusiasm, plowing hundreds of acres of native prairie grasses and sowing seed, year after year without crop rotation or thought to soil tilth (physical health of the soil in relation to growing crops). Initially, the rains came and the rewards were many. Banks extended credit to buy more land and plant more wheat. Technology improved to where mules and horses were replaced with combustion engines. The land was torn up faster, despite dire warnings of the consequences by long time cattlemen and Native Americans, until it became “upside down;” the native grasses underneath and the soil on top. Geographically, this occurred from the Rocky Mountains eastward to the Great Plain states of Oklahoma, the Dakotas, eastern Kansas, and the Texas panhandle.

“A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself.”

– Franklin D. Roosevelt



The year 1929 brought the crash of the stock market and 1930 heralded the beginning of the Great Depression. In 1931 there was a record wheat harvest which depressed the price of wheat. In a valiant (if misguided) attempt to stave off creditors, more and more acreage went under the plow and more wheat was planted. Any thought to conservation practices was abandoned in the effort to make payments as the price for commodities fell. If that wasn't bad enough, a severe drought began across the mid-western and southern plains that would last nearly a decade. As wind blew across the parched landscape, crops died, dust clouds formed, and the “black blizzards” began.

As 1932 progressed, the dust storms increased. Fourteen were reported that year and thirty-eight the next. The time became known as the “Dirty 30s.”

WORST DROUGHT IN U.S. HISTORY

Out on the Great Plains, the worst drought in U.S history continued and the wind blew. Equipment and farmsteads were buried by drifting soil, the sky obliterated by dust. The areas hardest hit initially were where five states intersected; southeast Colorado, western Kansas, northeast New Mexico, northwest Oklahoma, and northern Texas. By 1934, the dust storms spread from there to encompass more than 75 percent of the country and would severely impact 27 states. On May 9, a major dust storm was on the move. Developing over the plains of Montana

and western Kansas, it gathered volume on its way east, dumping nearly 6,000 tons of dust that evening in Chicago. The destructive forces were not done there. The wind moved the cloud steadily eastward, blanketing the cities of Boston and New York. Streetlights came on at midday. The dust storm was 1800 miles wide, roughly the distance between Mount Vernon and Chicago. The Yearbook of Agriculture announced in December that 100 million acres had lost all or most of its topsoil, another 125 million acres were about to, and 35 million acres could not grow crops of any kind – the equivalent of the land mass of Texas.

The worst recorded storm began on April 14, 1935 and became known as “Black Sunday.” This is when the term “Dust Bowl” was coined. Thick black clouds of dust boiled across the plains, from Montana south through Colorado and Texas, relentlessly moving towards the eastern seaboard. On the 19th, Senators were gathered in Washington D.C. to discuss the crisis. Soil scientist, Hugh Hammond Bennett, an expert on soil erosion and a vocal advocate of soil conservation practices, was summoned to the White House to argue the case for legislation to set up the Soil Conservation Service as a permanent agency of the government. Bennett's argument was aided by the timely arrival of the thick dust storm that blocked out the sun and filled the air with grit. **The 74th Congress then passed without a dissenting vote Public Law 46, The Soil Conservation Act, the first soil conservation act in the history of this or any other nation. It was signed by President Roosevelt on April 27, 1935.**

SCS SUPPORTS LOCAL SOLUTIONS

With the passage of Public Law 46, the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) was established as a permanent agency in the USDA. The first Chief of the newly created Soil Conservation Service was none other than Hugh Hammond Bennett.

After a while, it became apparent that federal oversight of erosion control across the nation wasn't the best method of reaching farmers. Conversations leading up to the proposal of Senate Bill 343 touched on the idea that local solutions should be governed locally. In a documented interview with Philip Glick (a lawyer with the Department of Ag), he recounts a 1935 conversation with Milburn Lincoln Wilson (Assistant Secretary of Agriculture at the time) who was quoted as saying “We mustn't break up the SCS. We must never lose this central national corps of erosion control expertise that we've got. What we've got to do is to figure out some way in which local units, individual farmers, the counties and the states can come in and feel just as much responsible for the problems of erosion control as do the SCS technicians today.” He also stated his ideas about how a Conservation District should come into being and how they should operate. “Let no district come into existence unless the farmers want it and approve it

“Out of the long list of nature's gifts to man, none is perhaps so utterly essential to human life as soil.”

– Hugh Hammond Bennett,
Father of Soil Conservation

FACTS & FIGURES

- An estimated 850,000,000 tons of topsoil blew off the Southern Plains during the year of 1935
- The Soil Conservation Service was formed under Franklin D. Roosevelt
- There are approximately 3000 conservation districts across the nation
- The first Conservation District was in North Carolina
- The first official Skagit Conservation District Board meeting was held in January of 1943

BELOW: Dust storm approaching Stratford, Texas.
Source: Image ID: theb1365, Historic C&GS Collection,
Location: Stratford, Texas, Photo Date: April 18, 1935,
Credit: NOAA George E. Marsh Album)



of the Skagit Conservation District

in a formal referendum. Let the district be governed by supervisors whom the farmers themselves will elect. We'll have these districts functioning as local units of government, established by the people, governed by the people through their elected supervisors, and then these districts should be given the complete authority to plan, to develop erosion control plans that are district wide. And carry them out. The bill should then provide that SCS should cooperate with every single district in the country. SCS should lend engineering and technical assistance to every single district in the country. It should make agricultural equipment, terrace building equipment, etcetera, available to every district, at Federal expense. In this way we will have local initiative, local action, local responsibility, local planning, and local conservation guided and assisted by the states and by the Federal Government." (Source: The Preparation of the Standard State Soil Conservation Districts Law, An Interview with Philip M. Glick. USDA, February, 1990.)

Philip Glick and Milburn Lincoln Wilson worked together to develop the framework for the Federal Government (what was the SCS and is now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)) and the State to cooperate with Soil Conservation Districts. Congress recognized that only active, voluntary support from landowners would guarantee the success of conservation work on private land. Therefore, the State Soil and Water Conservation District Law (Senate Bill 343) was passed by the state legislature in 1939. In the House the bill was sponsored by floor leader Fred Martin of Skagit County. This allowed local citizens to organize and develop into Conservation Districts. **The Soil Conservation Service became one of the few Federal agencies represented by local citizens.**

SKAGIT COUNTY GETS ITS OWN CONSERVATION DISTRICT

On June 27th, 1942, the citizens of Skagit County voted and passed a referendum creating the Skagit Soil & Water Conservation District, the 28th of 78 Districts statewide as a governmental subdivision of the State of Washington. The first District in the state was the North Palouse created on January 30, 1940. Six more districts were formed that same year.

A District office was established in Sedro-Woolley and the Board of Supervisors included Fred Martin, Sig Omdal, G.C. Duvall, O.H. Buchanan, & Fred Russell. Many of the District's first projects included flood protection, erosion control, and farmland drainage.

"Natural action may be led and aided by government, but the soil must be conserved ultimately by those who till the land and live by its products."

—Hugh Hammond Bennett

Today, 70 years later, the Skagit Conservation District is more active than ever promoting voluntary incentive based approaches to land management and locally driven solutions to natural resource concerns. The Skagit CD currently employs 11 staff that provide natural resource technical assistance, cost-share and education to residents of Skagit County. See the back page for current information on Skagit CD Staff and the Skagit CD Board of Supervisors.

(Source: <http://history.knoji.com/facts-about-the-dust-bowl/>)



Our current, active programs at the District include:

- Livestock/Small Farm Planning
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Engineering
- Firewise
- Forestry
- Native Plant Sales
- Adult Education & Volunteer Programs
- Youth Education
- Stormwater Education

See our website for details on our programs,
www.skagitcd.org



Skagit Conservation District Supervisors – Past and Present:

O.H. Buchanan	1942-1946	David Youngquist	1979-1985
G.C. Duvall	1942-1946	Wendell Carlson	1980-1989
Fred Martin	1942-1946	Marvin Omdal	1980-1989
Fred Russell	1942-1946	Elizabeth Norton	1981-2007
Sig Omdal	1942-1947	Roger Knutzen	1985-1991
Pete Olsen	1945-1951, 1956-1972	Tyler Clark	1989-1992
James Ovenell	1945-1956	Jerry VanderVeen	1989-2007
Don Valle	1946-1948	Mark Hitchcock	1991-1997 2003-2006
P.C. Olson	1946-1951	Mike Fernie	1992-1994
Curtis Wiles	1946-1951	Brian Waltner	1993-1996
Jess Knutzen	1947-1964, 1974-1980	Janet McRae	1994-Current
J. Lee Lindamood	1948-1951	Paul Blau	1996-Current
Albert Gerriets	1951-1958	Randy Bartelt	1997-2003
W. James Wylie	1951-1963	Michael Naylor	2006-2009
W.E. Jennings	1958-1975	Ryan Sakuma	2007-2011
Floyd Nelson	1958-1975	Tony Hansen	2007-2010
James Solseth	1963-1974	Thijs Jacobson	2009-Current
Lyle Wesen	1964-1980	Dean Wesen	2010-Current
Robert J. Hulbert	1964-1993	Wendy Pare	2011-Current
C.T. Magin	1974-1981		

 Skagit
Conservation District

FAREWELL TO LONG TIME NRCS EMPLOYEE, STEVE NISSLEY

Over the past 29 years Skagit County has experienced much growth and change. Floods, crop markets, laws, urban boundaries, and people have come and gone. One thing that has been a constant is Steve Nissley with the NRCS. Steve has been working with producers and conservation agriculture in the Valley since 1983. Although the way NRCS assists producers has changed over the years, Steve's work has been consistently focused on projects that benefit natural resources and local agriculture in the Valley. After 29 years of commitment, he has decided to make a change of his own and retire. Steve leaves behind a legacy of conservation in Skagit Valley and he can be sure that it will be carried on by the next generation of NRCS employees. THANK YOU AND FAREWELL, STEVE!

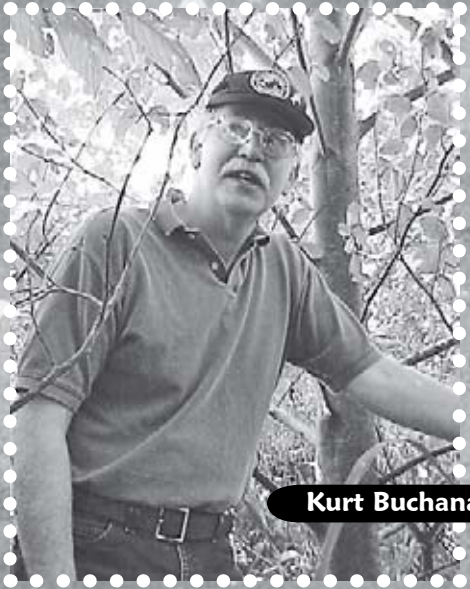
LEFT: Steve Nissley (shown on the left) reviews construction of a waste storage pond with a landowner in this photo from the '80s.





COMMUNITY

Shining Stars



Kurt Buchanan



Richard Redmond



Rhonda Jennings



Sandy McDougall



Jack Middleton

CONGRATULATIONS STREAM TEAM VOLUNTEERS: 14 Seasons and Going Strong!

On Saturday, June 2nd, over 60 Skagit Stream Team volunteers were honored at a special celebration hosted by the Skagit Conservation District and the Padilla Bay Research Reserve for their participation in the 2011/12 Stream Team program. The room was packed with volunteers ready to enjoy great food, great company, and great entertainment! 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 delicious potluck dishes! The entertainment was, as always, superb, thanks to the inspiring performances provided by Kulshan Creek Stream Teamers, **Terri Dix** and **Gena DiLabio** (the "Salmon Sisters"), and **Glen Alexander of Padilla Bay Research Reserve**.

Volunteers were presented with awards for their dedication and service. Special recognition was also given to **Mariepaule Braule, Peter Dowden, and Deryl Hart** for ten-years of volunteer service and to this year's "Shining Stars," including **Kurt Buchanan, Rhonda Jennings, Sandy McDougall, Jack Middleton, and Richard Redmond** who were recognized for 5 years of service.

Bill Bowen, Kurt Buchanan, Kyle Deerkop, Stephen Farmer, Lin Folsom, Jim Fukuyama, Pete Haase, Jack Middleton, Robert Pare, and Jack Sekora were recognized 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.



It was a packed house this year at the celebration.



Terri Dix and Gena DiLabio, aka the "Salmon Sisters" perform their original songs "Mucklucky Day; Home on the Sound; and Trees, You Got to Have Them" for a packed house.



Stream Team coach, Jenny Hinderman awards Bill Carey with a certificate of recognition and a Stream Team t-shirt for completing his first year of service.

Bay View Drainage
David Alger
Kyle Lorentz
Lachelle Lorentz
Ed Lawler
Jesus Perez-Linarea
Melissa Thompson

Clyde Creek
Bill Carey
Bertis Rasco
George Viverette
Kyle Lorentz
Lachelle Lorentz

Fisher Creek
Scott Doman
Shirley Doman
Peter Dowden
Carol Schwartz
Dean Schwartz
Larry Labo
Henry Nyland
Jim Roberts

Gages Slough
Robyn Blankinship
Donna Helgeson

Joe Leary Slough
Scott Adams
Donald Brassington
Doug Edwards
Laura Paise
Luanne Goodrich
Jim Johnson
Jack Middleton
Robert Pare

Kulshan Creek
Gena DiLabio
Terri Dix
Maria Magaña
Alec McDougall
Sandy McDougall

Nookachamps Creek
Stephen Farmer
Sarah Huntington
Joyce Siniscal
George Bullock
James Fukuyama
John Patton
Bill Bowen
Jerry Corrian
Luanne Goodrich
Richard Oickle
Hal Lee
Hella Lee
Sally Saxton

No Name Slough
Erin Langley
Ed Lawler
Melissa Thompson
Jesse Otti
Nate Schuh
James Stavig

Samish Bay
Mariepaule Braule
Richard Brown
Stephen Farmer
Steve Goodrich
Deryl Hart
Sue Mitchell
Jim Kunzmann
Dick Redmond
Jeanette Redmond
Dick Lease
Elaine Lease
Tom Schmidt

Trumpeter Basin
Frank Repplier
Jack Sekora
Rhonda Jennings
Rebecca Love

Special thanks to the PBNERR Americorps group who provided support to the Stream Team:
David Baer
Allison Cook
Stephanie Eckhard
Leah Hall

Skagit Storm Team
Bill Bowen
Kurt Buchanan
Kyle Deerkop
Stephen Farmer
Lin Folsom
Jim Fukuyama
Pete Haase
Jack Middleton
Robert Pare
Jack Sekora



Skagit Stream Team is a partnership of local citizens, Skagit Conservation District, Padilla Bay Research Reserve, City of Mount Vernon, City of Anacortes, City of Burlington, and Skagit County.

Thanks again to our 2011/12 Skagit Stream and Storm Team Volunteers!

Join the Stream Team

Are you interested in joining this outstanding group of volunteers? Training for new Stream Team volunteers will be held the evenings of September 5th and 6th from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and on Saturday, September 8th from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Please call Kristi Carpenter at 360-428-4313 or email Kristi@skagitcd.org by **August 30th** to register.

STEWARDSHIP



A BIG "THANK YOU" TO OUR 2012 PLANT SALE VOLUNTEERS!

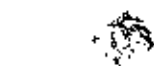
We are extending a BIG thank you to all the volunteers that helped at our plant sale this year. We simply can't have events such as these without the help of our faithful volunteers. Also, a big thanks to all of you that came out to support our plant sale by purchasing native plants!

Andrea Bachman
Richard Brown
Ann Buzaitis
Richard Cerie
Jim Fukuyama
Carla Glassman
Bill Hall
Nancy Hall
Judie Hart
Ruth Heft
Donna Helgeson
Alison Hitchcock
Keith Johnson

Steven Jordan
Maria Magaña
Sue Mitchell
Dena Petersen
Nate Schuh
Jack Sekora
Jon Stables
Vicky Stables
Ann Chase-Stapleton
Norm Stewart
Maxine Swanagan
Josh Underdahl
Terry Williams



Volunteers Donna Helgeson, Carla Glassman, and Rich Brown wrap tree seedlings for delivery to school classrooms in honor of Arbor Day.



Dedicated volunteers Maria Magaña and Maxine Swanagan enjoying getting their hands dirty!



2012 MARINE BIOTOXIN VOLUNTEERS MONITOR RECREATIONAL SHELLFISH HARVESTING BEACHES FOR PSP AND DSP TOXINS

The Skagit Conservation District, the Skagit County Health Department, and the Washington State Dept. of Health would like to thank and commend the 2012 Marine Biotoxin Volunteers for their dedicated involvement in protecting the health and safety of our community. Since 1999, Skagit Conservation District volunteers 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. New this year, the volunteers are also collecting additional samples during each monitoring event due to the presence of Diarrhetic Shellfish Poisoning (DSP) toxins recently detected in Washington waters. The algae that produce the DSP toxin has been detected in Washington's marine waters for some time, but has not produced toxin. That changed in June 2011 when the first confirmed DSP illnesses were reported (three people became ill after eating recreationally harvested mussels from Sequim Bay), and testing confirmed shellfish were contaminated with the toxin. Although DSP has been a problem in European countries for some time, this is an emerging health threat for Washington.

Local shellfish are gathered at low tide every other week by our local Marine Biotoxin 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.

2012 Marine Biotoxin Volunteers:

Glenda Alm, Mount Vernon
Chet Bradley, Sedro-Woolley
Kurt Buchanan, Mount Vernon
Jim Crone, Anacortes
Kathy Crone, Anacortes
Chuck Davis, Bow
Bud Freeman, Mount Vernon
Cherie Freeman, Mount Vernon
Jim Fukuyama, Mount Vernon
Donna Helgeson, Sedro-Woolley
Dick Kent, Mount Vernon
Robert Knowles, Anacortes
Jack Mercer, Sinclair Island
Jack Middleton, Mount Vernon
Henry Nyland, Mount Vernon
Shirley Nyland, Mount Vernon
Jim Roberts, Mount Vernon
Jessie Sauer, Sedro-Woolley
Jon Stables, Anacortes
Marcus Stables, Anacortes
Vicky Stables, Anacortes
Brittany Weiss, Mount Vernon



How do shellfish become contaminated with PSP or DSP?

Shellfish are filter feeders. They pump water through their systems, filtering out and eating algae and other food particles. When they eat biotoxin-producing algae, the toxin can accumulate in their tissue.

What types of shellfish can transmit PSP or DSP to humans?

All molluscan shellfish (those having a hinged shell) including clams, mussels, oysters, geoduck,

and scallops are capable of accumulating toxins. So can moon snails and other gastropods. Other marine species, such as sea cucumbers, might also be affected. Crab feed on other shellfish, so crab gut can contain unsafe levels of PSP, although the toxin is not known to accumulate in crab meat. To be safe, clean crab thoroughly, removing all butter (the white-yellow fat inside the back of the shell), and discard the gut.

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.

Does cooking the shellfish make it safe to eat?

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

How can I protect my family from paralytic shellfish poisoning?

DOH regularly checks shellfish for PSP and DSP 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.

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

For information about the volunteer Marine Biotoxin Monitoring program, contact Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District @ 428-4313 or email kristi@skagitcd.org

Explore the Wonders of our Local Watersheds!

We are now taking registrations for the Fall 2012 Watershed Masters Program!



The Watershed Masters Volunteer Training program provides an opportunity for local residents to learn about and explore local watersheds.

Are you interested in meeting new friends, learning from local experts about the wonders of our local watersheds and participating in meaningful community projects? The Skagit Conservation District is pleased to announce that we are now taking applications for the **Fall 2012 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.

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 25th through November 13th and participate in three Saturday watershed field adventures, tentatively scheduled for Sept. 29th, Oct. 13th and Oct. 20th.

Watershed Masters receive a comprehensive reference notebook and 40 hours of FREE training, which covers an introduction to local geology, 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 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 Anacortes, City of Sedro-Woolley, City of Burlington, and Skagit County.

Pre-register by SEPTEMBER 20th by contacting Kristi Carpenter @ (360) 428-4313 or email: kristi@skagitcd.org



ABOVE: Marine Biotoxin volunteer, Donna Helgeson, enjoys spending time at the beach and contributing her time to help benefit the health of our community.





“LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THE BIRDS AND THE BEES,
AND THE FLOWERS AND THE TREES....”

2012 Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course



Participants of the 2012 Backyard Conservation Stewardship class were led on a tour of the Discovery Garden and Native Plant Demonstration Garden by past class participant (and Master Gardener), Linda Zielinski. (pictured at far right). Linda is also on the steering committee for the Fidalgo Backyard Wildlife Habitat Group.

Hats off and special thanks

to the participants of the district's "2012 Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short-course!" The 6-week educational program, designed and facilitated by district staffer, Kristi Carpenter, is held each spring in partnership with Skagit County and the cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley. 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, integrated pest management, gardening with the help of pollinators, creating edible landscapes, an introduction to stormwater runoff and Low Impact Development, raingardens, environmentally friendly gardening practices, building healthy soils, plant care, composting, water conservation tips, and much more!

Designing a sustainable landscape and creating habitat for wildlife in our own backyard is one way that each of us, individually, can help offset the impacts of increased population and residential development.

Gardening with wildlife in mind is fun, helps conserve or restore habitat loss in our community, and benefits the environment by improving air, water and soil quality. The end result will provide a closely linked patchwork of habitats that sustains our natural resources for future generations and allows local wildlife to live in areas that would otherwise be inhospitable to them.

“The garden is not the end, it is the beginning, the place where you preserve the wild spirit that will save the world.”

— John Hanson Mitchell, from “The Wildest Place on Earth.”

Since completing the course, many of the class members have been busy in their backyards planting native trees and plants, creating compost bins, adding water sources, installing bird and bat houses for wildlife, eradicating noxious weeds, and designing landscape plans that will add beauty to their backyard while providing habitat for birds, bees, and other local wildlife. In support of our local community, several have already received Backyard Wildlife Habitat certification from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and/or the National Wildlife Federation and a few have joined our local Skagit Valley and Friday Creek Habitat Stewards program.

2012 Backyard Conservation Stewardship Program “Graduates”

Martha Banuelos, Mount Vernon
Vanessa Banuelos, Mount Vernon
Vivi Banuelos, Mount Vernon
Kurt Batdorf, Mount Vernon
Melissa Belisle, Burlington
Richard Brown, Anacortes
Gail Brown, Anacortes
Ken Cornett, Sedro-Woolley
Jeannie Cornett, Sedro-Woolley
Andrea Doll, Anacortes
Bob Doll, Anacortes
Lora Elsom, Bellingham
Robert Griffin, Mount Vernon
Bill Kring, Mount Vernon

Linda Moore Kurth, Mount Vernon
Harry Leong, Mount Vernon
Moi Leong, Mount Vernon
Lulu Miller, Bow
Sidney Oie, Mount Vernon
Barb Peterson, Mount Vernon
Doug Peterson, Mount Vernon
Linda Sanford, Anacortes
Simone Speiss, Anacortes
Larry Stradford, Mount Vernon
Pamela Stradford, Mount Vernon
Brenda Tate, Sedro-Woolley
Daan van Alderwerelt, Anacortes
Larry White, Mount Vernon



For information on this program or if you are interested in spearheading a backyard wildlife habitat project in your neighborhood, contact Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District at (360) 428-4313 or email Kristi@skagitcd.org. Additional information on Backyard Conservation is available on the web at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>

Support our community backyard wildlife habitat program!



Did you know that Fidalgo Island and the greater Mount Vernon area have been nationally designated as “Community Wildlife Habitats?” In an effort to do their part to help protect the Samish River, residents of the Friday Creek/Alger area have also recently registered with the National Wildlife Federation's (NWF) Community Wildlife Habitat program and are busy earning the required points to receive this designation as well. The objective of this program is to educate the community about the benefits, for both people and wildlife, of creating natural landscapes. The program is strictly voluntary, does not put any restrictions on your land, and is organized at the grassroots level by citizen volunteers.

Each of us, as property owners, has the opportunity to preserve, create or maintain a habitat in our own backyard that is beneficial to local wildlife and helps protect our air, water, and soils. Whether it's the planting of a tree for local bird nesting, the creation of a butterfly garden, reducing or eliminating chemical use, choosing plants that require less supplemental watering, or the choice to leave a small corner of native plants for wildlife instead of opting for 100% lawn, each small decision is a step in the right direction for preserving the beauty and integrity of Skagit County.

While restoring wildlife habitat in your own backyard, you will be doing your part to restore the ecology of the land on which you live. You will begin to see how you can have daily wildlife experiences by creating sustainable, wildlife friendly landscapes. Once you create your habitat, submit an application to become certified by the National Wildlife Federation and join the hundreds of other Skagit Valley neighbors who are supporting the health of our community by gardening for wildlife and certifying their backyard! Gardening for wildlife is fun, easy, and an opportunity to do your part to protect the resources of our community and leave a healthy and sustainable environment for our children and grandchildren!

To learn how to certify your own yard as a backyard wildlife habitat or sanctuary, and how you can make your own yard a haven for songbirds, butterflies, or other wildlife, visit: www.nwf.org or contact Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District, (360) 428-4313 or email: kristi@skagitcd.org

BEFORE: Here is a photo of Ivar and Phyllis Dolph's home in Anacortes when they purchased it. The traditional landscape and lawn provided very little habitat for insects, birds, butterflies, and other important wildlife.



AFTER: Here is a photo of the Dolph home after they re-landscaped with wildlife in mind. Their home now provides a sanctuary for the enjoyment of both wildlife and people and provides a sustainable landscape that reduces water use and protects air, water, and soils. The Dolphs' recently installed solar panels on their roof (pictured) – a great source of alternative energy.

BACK YARD

FAMILY NIGHT AT POMONA GRANGE PARK "Take a Walk on the Wild Side"

THURSDAY, AUGUST 16TH FROM 5:30 PM TO 7:30 PM



You are invited!

Bring your "budding naturalist" and "take a walk on the wild side!" **The Friday Creek Habitat Stewards, the Skagit Conservation District, Skagit Valley Backyard Wildlife Habitat Team, and partners** invite you to join us for Family Night at Pomona Grange Park (located at 5585 Old Highway 99 N., next to the Samish Fish Hatchery). This **free**, fun family event will feature a variety of outdoor activities and an opportunity to explore and discover the natural wonders of Friday Creek and the Samish watershed. Learn about salmon, watersheds, stream ecology, and native plants. Learn how you can certify your own backyard as a "Backyard Wildlife Habitat or Sanctuary!" Make a fairy house and a bagel bird feeder and discover the benefits of gardening for wildlife (and childlife)! The event will also feature a special appearance by "Blossom" the Treeture™ and an opportunity to meet your Friday Creek neighbors! Literature and resource information on backyard gardening, native plants, birds, butterflies, and more will also be available.



Family Night at Pomona Grange Park will provide an opportunity to explore the wonders of Friday Creek



Build a fairy house and learn about the habitat needs of wildlife!

Pre-registration is requested by August 13th so we know how many to plan for. To register, contact Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District at (360) 428-4313 or email: kristi@skagitcd.org

SAMISH WATERSHED GARDEN TOUR

Where local economy and conservation meet!

Save the Date! ... SUNDAY, AUGUST 12TH 11 AM to 3 PM

The Friday Creek Habitat Stewards, Chuckanut Transition, the Skagit Conservation District, and Samish Watershed residents are hosting an area garden tour highlighting gardens that are beautiful and bountiful while providing healthy habitat and economic opportunity. The event is **FREE (Rain or Shine!)** and will allow you to visit up to 6 amazing rural gardens and pick up tips on green thumb gardening techniques, growing food in challenging climates, using a greenhouse, edible perennials, permaculture, gardening for wildlife, raising chickens and much more! Meet the gardeners, ask questions, take in ideas, get inspired and enjoy the variety of sustainable gardens featured on the tour.

Pick up your self-guided Garden Tour map and garden descriptions at the Alger Community Hall, located at 17835 Parkview Lane, Burlington (Alger) on Sunday, August 12th, beginning at 10:30 a.m. Local volunteers will be distributing maps and directions to the featured local gardens, which can be toured between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

For more information, contact Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District @ 428-4313 or email: kristi@skagitcd.org



Samish watershed resident, Sarai Stevens (pictured), is one of 6 hosts that will welcome visitors to their small farms and gardens from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, August 12th.

70 Years of Conservation



Labor intensive farming: farm workers harvesting a broccoli crop; mostly by hand.
(Photo by A.F. Harms, 1953, Omdahl Brothers Farm).



Floyd Nelson operating an early self-propelled combine.
(Photo by A.F. Harms, 1962).



The practice of allowing livestock to have access to waterways (as shown here) is no longer allowed.

Seventy years ago, the majority of conservation practices were designed and implemented to deal with too much water. Now we are looking at basins with too little, especially when it comes to fish. Over time, the focus of conservation has changed from water quantity to water quality.

Agriculture and forestry in the Skagit Valley was a lot different than it is now. Farms were smaller, labor intensive, and crop production per acre was less than today. With forestry, clear cutting was a standard practice and there were many more mills in operation.

Over the last 70 years, the agriculture and forestry industries have changed due to world markets, increased technology and increased regulations. The Federal Clean Water Act and RCWs increased the need and awareness for water quality and wildlife habitat protection. The Forest Practices Act made huge changes in how the forest industry harvested their lands.

Now, there are fewer farmers operating larger farms, but there is also a trend in new landowners creating smaller niche markets that produce and support local foods, farmers markets, cheese and wine production, and other value added products. Also, development and ensuing urban sprawl are in direct competition for prime agriculture land.



Agricultural riparian buffers help filter runoff from fields, provide shade for fish, and habitat for wildlife.



A new waste storage pond will hold liquid manure until it can be used as fertilizer.



"I consider the soil conservation districts movement one of the most important developments in the whole history of agriculture."

– Hugh Hammond Bennett,
Father of Soil Conservation

in Skagit County



Livestock no longer have access to a waterway to obtain drinking water. Now a solar powered pump system provides drinking water.



In the past, the majority of conservation practices were implemented to increase drainage in crop fields, control flooding, and protect stream banks from eroding using rip rap.

Today, the majority of conservation practices are implemented to protect water quality and restore wildlife habitat. The livestock industry is required to follow strict water quality measures to ensure that wastewater and manure do not contaminate surface water resources. For example, livestock are no longer allowed to have direct access to waterways, such as streams, ponds and ditches.

The dairy industry is required to follow regulations set forth in the Dairy Nutrient Management Act (1998). Best Management Practices include installing waste storage ponds, controlling runoff, and meeting nutrient utilization standards.

Forest management, like farm management, shifted focus over the years from strictly use-related activities to a focus on protecting fish, water, wildlife and soil. This shift was brought on mainly by acts such as the Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts, and The Forests & Fish Law of 1999.

Today, significantly wider forest buffers are left along streams maintaining cool, clean water; and improved road construction and maintenance standards are in place.



Underground tile lines being installed to increase drainage in a crop field. (Photo by A.F. Harms, 1951, Birger Johnson Farm).



An oat field grown on land that was improved as a result of an early stream channel modification project on Nookachamps Creek. (Photo by A.F. Harms, 1949, J. Christofferson Farm).

The newly installed gutters and downspouts on this barn control roof runoff, directing it to an underground outlet.



A healthy forest helps keep this stream cool and clean.



“70 years ago, our Nation made an important commitment to private land conservation. That commitment must never fade, so the lines on our land will always be the signatures of stewardship, dedication and care – not the signatures of neglect and degradation.”



– Morgan Freeman

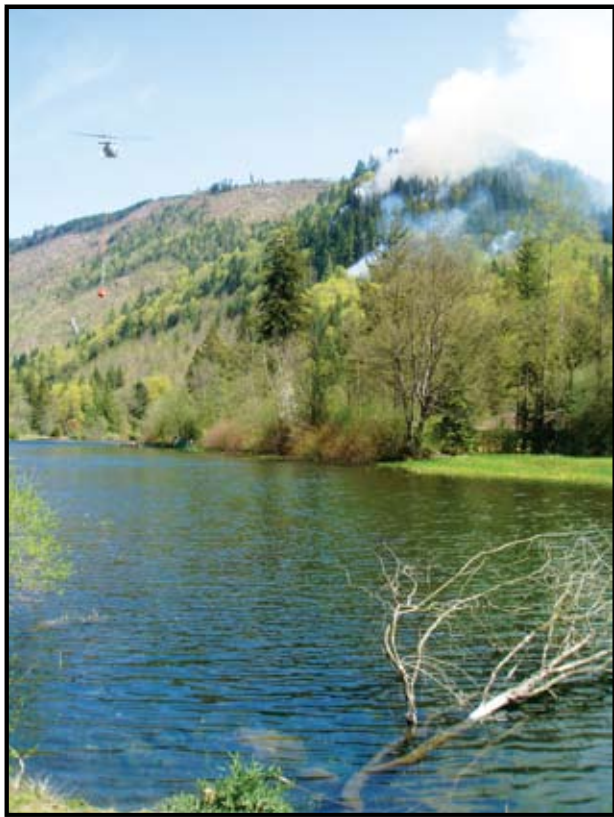


Local Perspective on Wildland Fire

(Article adapted from Puget Sound Forest Stewardship E-Newsletter. Focus on: Firewise. Kevin Zobrist, July 2012.)

The power of a wildfire is hard to grasp until you see one in person. The breadth and height of the flames, the speed of movement, and the smoke, the unbelievable smoke that churns until the sky is black for hundreds of miles and the sunlight turns a spooky orange color. A particularly sobering aspect of the fires that have impacted places like Colorado and Utah this year is that they were not limited to the hinterlands. The fires have burned suburban areas around Colorado Springs and south of Salt Lake City. Entire neighborhoods have vaporized, and the lives of residents and firefighters have been lost.

Could these scenarios happen here? In a word, yes. It's sort of like a major earthquake – it's not a question of if, but of when and exactly where. Wildfires burn in Western Washington every year, as fire agency staff around the area can attest to. The fires have not been of the magnitude that we are seeing in the inland west. However, given the right combination of conditions (which could happen in any year), we could see some major fires. Historically, catastrophic fires have been a major force that has shaped the forested landscape of Western Washington. Add in decades of fire suppression, climate change, a huge increase in rural residences, and the myriad of possible ignition sources, the potential for disaster certainly exists.



A recent wildfire burns along a slope in Whatcom County.

These observations are not meant to generate fear. Too many environmental stewardship messages these days leverage fear to manipulate a response. There is no reason to respond to fire risk with fear or to take drastic (and unwarranted) measures such as clear-cutting all the trees or denuding the understory of the forests around us. Engaging in careful, educated, and well-thought-out long-term planning and management around fire is entirely appropriate.

Too many people are lulled into a false sense of security by our recent wet springs and cool summers and think (incorrectly) that fire really is not an issue here in Western Washington and does not warrant planning or action. In reality, cool, wet

years are the ideal time to think, plan, and act on being "Firewise." Firewise planning is a lot like estate planning – it is never too early, but often too late. It's a safe assumption that the victims of this summer's wildfires never thought it would happen to them. "Not in my neighborhood, and not this year." By the time it becomes apparent that a perfect storm of conditions is developing, it may be too late to take meaningful action. Becoming Firewise is a long-term management process that takes years of small steps (taking advantage of cool, wet conditions).

There are some key areas to think about regarding Firewise:

- **Your family.** Do you have an escape plan and an emergency preparedness kit that you can quickly and easily grab and go? Does your plan account for pets and livestock?



WA Department of Natural Resources NW Region fire crews assemble for a briefing.

- **Your home and other structures.** What kind of materials are your roof and siding composed of? Are your roof and gutters clean or full of tinder-dry debris? Are attic and crawl space vents properly screened (1/4" or smaller) to keep out flying embers? Could a fire truck easily access your home and be able to turn around? Is your address clearly marked on the road?
- **Defensible space.** Is there at least 30 feet of ignition-resistant landscaping to provide a fire break around your home? Are there trees dangling branches over your house? Is firewood stacked up against the house? Note that defensible space does NOT mean a barren landscape – there are number of fire-resistant plants that provide a beautiful, vegetated landscape while also mitigating fire risk. It is all about picking the right vegetation. Have you incorporated fuel breaks such as water features, patios, and walkways? The "Fire Resistant Plants for Home Landscapes" is a great resource. (To request a copy of the "Fire-Resistant Plants for Home Landscapes" guide, contact Jenny Hinderman at the Skagit Conservation District; jenny@skagitcd.org or 360-428-4313).

Here are some resources for detailed information on the Firewise program and how you and your neighborhood can get involved:

Firewise Communities USA
www.firewise.org
 Skagit Conservation District
 Firewise Program
www.skagitcd.org/firewise_cvpp

- **Your forest.** Is it kept properly thinned? Are trees pruned up to minimize fuel ladders? Is there excess debris? Note that this does not mean eliminating all the snags, downed logs, and understory vegetation that are critical for wildlife habitat and ecosystem function. Are there fire breaks and/or fire control access roads/trails? A forest that is stressed will burn more readily than a healthy one, and fire will spread faster in a diseased or insect infested stand.

The impact of a Firewise landscape is extraordinary. The wild, voracious, and seemingly unstoppable fires that we've witnessed in the inland west these last few weeks will literally bow down to a Firewise landscape, creeping along the ground in submission to years of careful planning and good forest management. For Firewise communities that have actually experienced fire, the results have been outstanding and the photographic comparisons of untreated areas are incredible.

A large majority of the wildfires in Washington are the result of debris burning that got out of control. If you are planning to burn debris on your property, make sure you are extremely careful and consult with the proper authorities (Skagit county Fire Marshal's Office, Department of Natural Resources and/or local fire district) to make sure that it is a safe and legal burn and that you have the proper permits. If you think being the victim of a wildfire is bad, just imagine being the cause ...



This past spring, the Skagit Conservation District distributed 800 seedlings to Skagit County students in honor of Arbor Day!





AGRICULTURAL HAPPENINGS



NRCS SALMON RECOVERY PROGRAM UNDERWAY IN WASHINGTON

This past spring, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) introduced a new initiative aimed at improving conditions for salmon in Washington. The new initiative, called the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Program (PSSRP), focuses on improving water quality, removing fish passage barriers and creating salmon habitat. Eligible landowners or managers that work on agricultural land near salmon bearing streams were encouraged to apply to enter a contract with NRCS for conservation assistance. That application period is now closed and applicants will be ranked and selected to enter a contract in the weeks ahead. Conservation assistance will come in the form of technical advice and cost-share for completing conservation projects. Examples of projects include decommissioning manure storage ponds, replacing culverts with bridges, and planting riparian buffers.

PSSRP is an example of the work done through the popular Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).



In western Washington EQIP is the most widely used program for landowners and managers to get assistance addressing natural resource concerns on their property. Many variations of EQIP exist including the Organic Initiative, the Energy Initiative, the High Tunnel Initiative, and the Forestry Program. In addition to EQIP the NRCS offers property easements through the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, and the Wetland Reserves Program. For more information on applying to an NRCS program please contact us at 360-428-7684. You can also come to our office at 2021 E College Way in Mount Vernon, or visit our website at www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov



This maturing agricultural riparian buffer consists of native vegetation planted along a waterway that will improve habitat for salmon.



This bridge replaced an old culvert that got clogged with forest debris causing the seasonal stream to divert over the road which caused damage to the road. Installing the bridge allowed aquatic organisms to freely pass up or downstream, and made it possible to continue using the road.



14th Annual FESTIVAL of FAMILY FARMS



acres of fun for everyone

Saturday, October 6th, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Sunday, October 7th, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Visit www.festivaloffamilyfarms.com
for more details.



SKAGIT COUNTY FAMERS MARKETS

ANACORTES FARMERS MARKET

611 R Ave., Anacortes
(360) 391-0339
info@anacortesfarmersmarket.org
www.anacortesfarmersmarket.org

DIRECTIONS: Highway 20 west to Anacortes. Exit right on R Ave. for about one mile. Market is between 7th and R Streets, on the Depot Arts Center grounds. Just north of the historic stern-wheeler W. T. Preston at the Arts Center in the Historic Railroad Depot.

INFORMATION: Shop for Skagit County's freshest produce, the best in baked products and homemade crafts. Look for our Holiday Market November 17-18 at the Port Transit Center (100 Commercial Ave.)

Open Saturdays 9 a.m.-2 p.m., May 12-October 27. New this season, Wednesdays, 4-7 pm, June-September.

BOW LITTLE MARKET

Belfast Feed Store
6200 N. Green, Burlington
(360) 724-3333
bowlittlemarket@yahoo.com
www.bowlittlemarket.wordpress.com

INFORMATION: Bow Little Market, where the little guy is a big deal, is family friendly and geared toward supporting small, local farmers and entrepreneurs. Thursday and Harvest markets, located at Belfast Feed Store along Old Highway 99 at Bow Hill Road, feature produce, fiber goods, Bruce Bowen's honey, soap, ceramics, yard art, coffee, bread, and more. Children's program planned. Come by and meet your neighbors.

Thursdays: June 28-October 4, 1-6 p.m. Harvest Market: Saturday, Oct. 20, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Holiday Festival dates and location TBA.

MOUNT VERNON FARMERS MARKET

1415 E. Kincaid St., Mount Vernon, WA.
Downtown Mount Vernon
(360) 540-4066
mvfarmer1@hotmail.com
www.mountvernonfarmersmarket.org

DIRECTIONS: Downtown Mount Vernon next to the Skagit River.

INFORMATION: Mount Vernon Farmers Market runs from May 26 to October 20. Join us every Saturday morning from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. to shop for the freshest of local fruit, veggies, meat, cheese, bread, flowers, craft goods and ready-to-eat food. Live music, children's activities and cooking demonstrations make the Farmers Market a great way to start your summer weekends! Also dont forget the Wednesday Market at the Skagit Valley Hospital from mid-June to mid-September.

Hours: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

SEDRO-WOOLLEY FARMERS MARKET

Hammer Heritage Square,
Ferry & Metcalf, Sedro-Woolley
360-202-7311, contact market
mng. Jeremy Kindlund
sedrowoolleyfarmersmarket@gmail.com
www.sedrowoolleyfarmersmarket.com

DIRECTIONS: Highway 20 Sedro-Woolley Ferry St. exit into town, on the corner of Ferry and Metcalf under the clock tower.

INFORMATION: Located in the heart of Sedro-Woolley, nestled in the surrounding North Cascade mountains, you will find a wide variety of locally grown fresh fruits, cheese and organic veggies, including berries, greens, tomatoes, broccoli, beets, carrots potatoes, beans, cucumbers, squash, onions and garlic in season. Enjoy homemade bread, baked goods and soup while relaxing under our gazebo. Brighten your home with beautiful flowers, plants and unique crafts. View the mural of an old train and ring the bell for an old nostalgic feeling.

Hours: 3-7 Wednesdays from May 23 thru October 17.



KIDS FOR C

Annual 6th Grade Conservation Tour



Over 800 students from 31 Skagit County classrooms converged on Friday Creek in Pomona Grange Park; May 21st and 22nd. Despite the rainy weather, the students had a great time rotating through seven 15-minute stations with hands-on educational activities. Topics included 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 getting to be outside 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, US Forest Service, and Sierra Pacific Industries, Inc. who dedicated their time to assist with this event. We also wish to thank the dedicated volunteers who gave their valuable time to make this event successful.

The District would also like to extend a huge thank you to our sponsors **Sierra Pacific Industries, Inc.** and the **Washington State Society of American Foresters, NPS Chapter**, for their generous donations toward funding bus transportation for the schools.



Cindy Bjorklund, Ranger for the North Cascades National Park, describes the practice of hanging your food while camping in the forest to a group of students.



Students dig through a worm compost bin to find red wiggler worms.

6th Grade Conservation Tour Sponsors

The Skagit Conservation District would like to give special thanks and recognition to Sierra Pacific Foundation and The North Puget Sound Chapter of the Society of American Foresters for their generous support towards transportation funding for the 6th Grade Conservation tour.



Sierra Pacific Foundation
Growing Healthy Communities...

2012 Envirothon News Update

This past spring, the Whatcom Conservation District hosted the 2012 Northwest Regional Envirothon. The competition was held at the Tennant Lake Interpretive Center in Ferndale. Fourteen teams from King, Snohomish, Skagit and Whatcom Counties competed at the event. Mount Vernon High School took the honors as our county's winning team.

Regional competitions are hosted across the state, with top county winners moving on to the State Envirothon Competition. This year's State competition was hosted at the end of May at Lake Wenatchee YMCA Camp.

The State winning team was the Tacoma Science and Math Institute (SAMI) from Pierce County. Union High School in Clark County, placed second and Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center from King County, placed third. The SAMI team has earned an all expense paid trip to the Canon North American Envirothon, which was held at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania at the end of July.



Students test their knowledge of soils at the NW Regional Envirothon.

CONSERVATION

2012 Poster Contest



ABOVE: From left - Overall Winner, Shayla Axthelm, Commissioner Ron Wesen, Blossom the Treeture™, Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt, Category K-1 Winner Zoey Nichols and Commissioner Sharon Dillon.

It is important to understand where the food comes from that you eat each day. You see a wide variety of products in your local grocery store, but where does it all come from? What is the connection to the soil you walk on every day? Trace your food back to the soil. Food gets its start in the soil!

The Skagit Conservation District hosted its annual Natural Resources Conservation Poster Contest in honor of Soil and Water Stewardship Week, April 29 to May 6, 2012. This year's theme was "Soil to Spoon". The contest was open to Skagit County students, grades kindergarten through twelfth, and 190 poster entries were submitted.

The poster judges this year were Toby Rodgers, Soil Scientist with Natural Resources Conservation Service, Mike Shelby, Executive Director of Western Washington Ag, and Ellen Bynum, Executive Director of Friends of Skagit County.

The Overall Winner this year was **Shayla Axthelm**, a sixth grader from Jefferson Elementary. As the Overall Winner, Shayla was awarded a \$50 Tri-Dee gift card, a plaque, and professional framing of her poster. Shayla is also the Category 4-6th Grade Winner.

The Runner-Up Winner was **Gabriela Santiago**, a fifth grade student at Allen Elementary. She was awarded a \$15 Tri-Dee gift card and a plaque.

The following students were category winners:

K – 1st Grade: Zoey Nichols, a kindergartener who attends Summersun Montessori.

7th – 9th Grade: Rosenda Ventura, an Emerson High School ninth grader.


10th – 12th Grade: Jovani Villanveva, a twelfth grader also from Emerson High School.


The above mentioned category winners received an herb garden and a certificate of achievement. All poster entries received a participation certificate, "Soil to Spoon" activity booklet, and bookmark.

A Soil and Water Stewardship Proclamation was held at the Skagit County Commissioners Hearing Room on April 24, 2012, and the winning students were recognized for their talents at a televised presentation with the Commissioners.



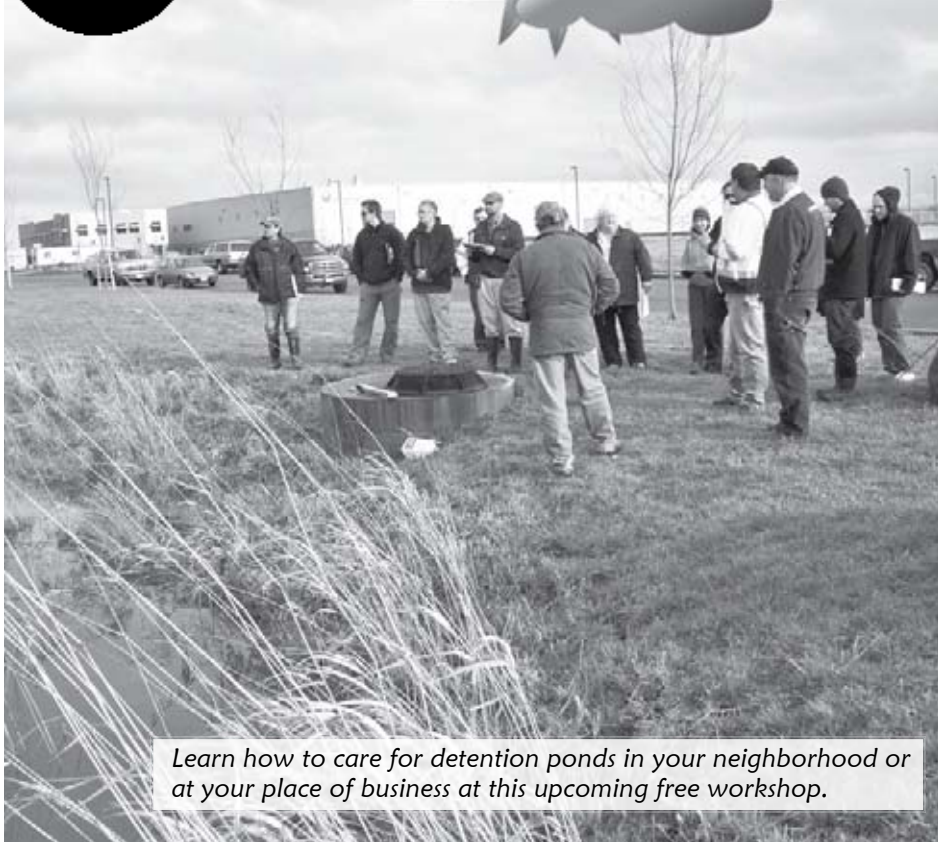
RIGHT:
The winning poster created by Shayla Axthelm.





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Word List:
 AGRICULTURE
 BREAKFAST
 CONSERVATION
 CROPS
 DAIRY
 DINNER
 EARTH
 FARMERS
 FRUIT
 GARDEN
 GRAINS
 GROW
 LIFE
 LIVESTOCK
 LUNCH
 MARKET
 MINERALS
 NUTRITION
 ORGANISMS
 PLANTS
 PROTEIN
 RANCHERS
 RESOURCES
 SOIL
 VEGETABLES
 VITAMINS
 WATER
 WHEAT



Learn how to care for detention ponds in your neighborhood or at your place of business at this upcoming free workshop.

2012 Stormwater Poster Contest

Anacortes



Poster contest winners left to right: Mike Cain, 3rd Place, Joseph Pesaturo, Honorable Mention, Ava Hawkins, 1st Place, and Jake Romag, 2nd Place. All the students are from David Hancock's 4th Grade Fidalgo Elementary class.

Maintenance Techniques and Practices for Subdivision Stormwater and Drainage Systems

A **FREE workshop** to assist neighborhood associations, business owners, and property owners who are responsible for maintaining a stormwater pond or other stormwater drainage system in their neighborhood is being offered by Skagit County, the Cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley, and the Skagit Conservation District. Topics will include: how stormwater management systems work; how to keep your system in compliance with new regulations, step-by-step instructions for routine maintenance to prolong the life of your detention pond, improve its appearance, and prevent flooding and property damage; how to plan, budget and assess the neighborhood for upkeep costs; basic things all stormwater facility owners should know and do ... and more! The workshop will include a field tour to a neighborhood stormwater detention system to discuss how to detect problems, keep maintenance costs low, and enhance the function to safeguard water quality in your watershed.

Thursday, Oct. 4th

5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

**City of Sedro-Woolley, City Council Chambers
325 Metcalf, Sedro-Woolley, WA**

Please pre-register by September 28th by contacting Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District at 428-4313 or email: kristi@skagitcd.org

The Skagit Conservation District, in partnership with the City of Anacortes, hosted a stormwater awareness poster contest this past spring with the theme "When It Rains, It Drains". The contest was open to Anacortes area students grades K-8. It was held as an educational component to meet the requirements of the city's Phase II Stormwater Management Permit. As a compliment to the contest, stormwater/watershed classroom presentations were also offered. Approximately 300 Anacortes elementary students participated in these hands-on presentations.

The First Place Winner was **Ava Hawkins**. For her winning entry, Ava was presented with a bicycle from **Skagit Cycle Center**, a plaque, and professional framing of her artwork. Also, a copy of her poster was framed and is on display at Anacortes City Hall.

Second Place went to **Jake Romag**. Third Place Winner was **Mike Cain**, and Honorable Mention was given to **Joseph Pesaturo** for his entry. Gift certificates from local merchant, Read Me A Story, were awarded to these participants, as well as certificates of achievement signed by Anacortes Mayor Dean Maxwell and Skagit Conservation District Chair Janet McRae.

All of the contest winners are from David Hancock's fourth grade Fidalgo Elementary class. Informational stormwater bookmarks were created featuring the artwork of the winning artists and are available to the public at the Anacortes City Library. Certificates and activity booklets were given to all contest participants.

Special thanks to our contest judges Lin Folsom and Monica Oppel of Anacortes!

IN THE CLASSROOM: We All Live in a Watershed



Cindy Pierce, Youth Education Coordinator, assists students with adding "pollutants" to the EnviroScape® model.

During the 2011-12 school year, the Skagit Conservation District visited 42 Skagit County classrooms educating over 1000 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 eventually ends up in the same place.

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

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 are able 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 audience comes away with knowledge about stormwater runoff, water pollution, water quality, watersheds, and stewardship.

~When it rains, it drains!

THE STORM



ABOVE: Andrew Kirk carefully applies adhesive to the back of a storm drain marker before he places it next to the storm drain; one of many that he put down in Mount Vernon.

Local Scout Coordinates Storm Drain Marking Project

Andrew Kirk, a senior at Mount Vernon High School, installed 187 storm drain markers in Mount Vernon at the end of March. He coordinated the project and recruited fellow scouts, leaders, and parents to help get the job done. Andrew is a member of the Mount Baker Council, Troop 4100, and selected the marking project to earn his elite Eagle Scout ranking.

Andrew contacted the District and selected the area that he was interested in marking, mapped out his plan, and was able to mark the storm drains on a sunny Sunday afternoon. He and his team also distributed approximately 200 door hangars to residents in the 18th Street neighborhood informing them of the project, as well as explaining the importance of keeping our storm drains free of pesticides, oil, and other contaminants that could ultimately pollute our streams and rivers, harming wildlife and impairing human health.

The District wishes to thank Andrew and his group of volunteers for their hard work in completing this important project. For further information about how you can plan such a project or install markers in your neighborhood, please call Cindy Pierce at (360) 428-4313. Marking projects are available in the cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and rural Skagit County areas where applicable.



LEFT: Storm drain markers for the City of Mount Vernon read "Only rain down the drain", "Puget Sound Starts Here"; a helpful reminder for neighborhood residents that their actions at home are connected to the health of our Puget Sound watershed.



This past spring, 16 Brownies with the Clear Lake Girl Scouts Troop 43561 took to the North 30th Street neighborhood of Mount Vernon and marked approximately 30 storm drains. Great job girls!

LEFT: Members of Girl Scout Troop 43561 proudly pose in front of a newly marked storm drain.



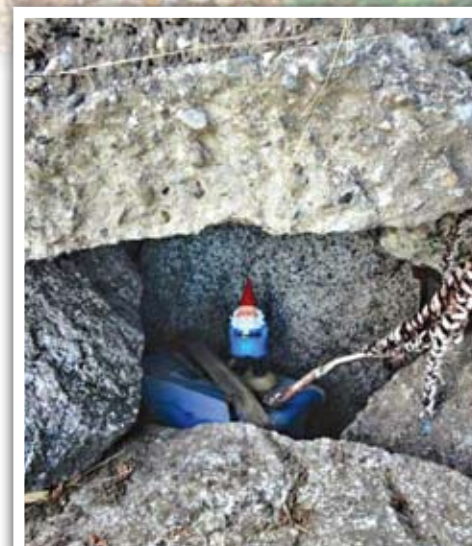
Skagit Watershed Letterbox Trail

Discover and Explore the Wonders of the Skagit Watershed!

The clues for the Annual Skagit Watershed Letterbox Trail were released on Sunday, June 24th at a special kickoff event hosted by the Skagit Conservation Education Alliance (SCEA) and the Padilla Bay Foundation. Letterboxing is a fun, exciting way for kids of all ages to explore the natural world and to learn about our beautiful community (great family activity). Participants follow clues to discover letterboxes hidden throughout the Skagit watershed, each hosted by a participating organization. Each letterbox also includes a "secret word" to record in your journal and to learn about the natural world. New to letterboxing? All you need is a journal (or small tablet), an inkpad and ink stamp, and a sense of adventure. Pick up your trail clues at a local library, at the Skagit Conservation District office, the Skagit PUD office, or online at www.skagitcleanwater.org, www.skagitcd.org, or at www.atlasquest.com. For more information contact Richelle Potter, SCEA Program Manager, at 428-1054 or email: richelle@skagitcleanwater.org.



ABOVE: The Skagit Watershed Letterbox Trail provides an opportunity for kids of all ages to explore the natural wonders of Skagit County while learning how to protect our watershed.



RIGHT: The "Roamin' Gnome" on the Skagit Watershed Letterbox Trail. As kind of a cross between geocaching and a scavenger hunt, participants follow clues to discover hidden letterboxes.



We wish to thank the businesses and individuals who help to sponsor this publication of the **Skagit Conservation District News**.

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.

- ▲ **Schuh Farms**
- ▲ **William F. Black Soil Testing**

Skagit Conservation District Family Tree



Glenn Sakuma
*Growers of strawberries, red raspberries, blackberries, blueberries and apples
 Tissue cultured and certified strawberry, raspberry and blackberry plants*
 P.O. Box 427 • 17400 Cook Road • Burlington, WA, 98233 • Cell: 360-661-4168
 Ph. 360-757-6611 • Fax 360-757-3936 • e-mail: glenns@sakumabros.com

Charlie Urbick
 President
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Board of Supervisors

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- Dean Wesen, Vice Chair
- Wendy Pare, Auditor
- Thijs Jacobson, Member
- Janet McRae, Member

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 Website: skagitcd.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Board Election Results

The SCD held an open public election for a board supervisor position on Tuesday, March 20. There were two candidates, Keith Wagoner, who is on the Sedro-Woolley City Council, and Thijs Jacobson, who has been an SCD board supervisor since 2009.

The SCD would like to thank both candidates for participating in our election. After counting the ballots, the pollsters found that Thijs Jacobson had won the election, and the Washington State Conservation Commission Board certified the results of the election at its May meeting.



**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.**



What's Inside ...

- 70TH ANNIVERSARY 2-3**
- COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP .. 4-5**
- IN YOUR BACK YARD 6-7**
- 70 YEARS OF CONSERVATION 8-9**
- FIRE & FORESTRY 10**
- AGRICULTURAL HAPPENINGS... 11**
- KIDS FOR CONSERVATION... 12-13**
- AFTER THE STORM 14-15**