



Skagit

CONSERVATION NEWS

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SOIL • WATER • WOODLAND

SUMMER 2009



SUMMER 2009

What If.....?

Wildfire Evacuation Checklist

If, in the event of a wildfire, you are forced to evacuate your home, please consider the following tips for safe evacuation.

What should I take with me when I evacuate?

- Gloves, handkerchief to cover your face, water to drink, goggles
- Flashlight and portable radio
- Wear only cotton or wool clothes with long pants, long-sleeved shirt or jacket, a hat and boots
- Important documents (bank, IRS, trust, investment, insurance policy, birth certificates, medical records)
- Credit & bank cards
- Medications
- Prescription glasses
- Driver's license
- Passport
- Computer backup files
- Inventory of home contents
- Photos of exterior of house and landscape
- Address Book
- Cell phone and charger
- Personal toiletries
- Clothing for 3-5 days
- Family photo albums and videos
- Family heirlooms

Family Members, Pets, & Livestock

- Plan several evacuation routes from your home
- Designate a safe meeting place and contact person
- Relay your plans to the contact person
- Evacuate pets & livestock whenever possible. Don't turn them loose
- Contact the local humane society for assistance with animals if needed

How should I prepare my car?

- Place vehicles in the garage, pointing out with keys in the ignition
- Keep vehicle fuel tank full during fire season
- Roll up windows
- Close the garage door, but leave it unlocked
- If applicable, disconnect the electric garage door opener so that the door can be opened manually
- Place essential items in the car

How should I leave my home?

- Close all interior doors
- Leave a light on in each room
- Remove lightweight curtains and other combustible materials from around windows
- Close fire-resistant drapes, shutters, and blinds
- Turn off all pilot lights
- Move couches and easy chairs to the center of the room
- Close fireplace damper

What about the outside of my home?

- Place combustible patio furniture in the house or garage
- Shut off propane at the tank or natural gas meter
- Close all exterior vents if possible
- Prop a ladder against the house to provide fire fighters easy access to the roof
- Make sure that all garden hoses are connected to faucets and attach nozzles set on spray
- Close all exterior doors and windows
- Leave exterior doors unlocked
- Turn on outside lights
- Wet down wood shake or shingle roofs before leaving
- Fill trash cans and buckets with water and place where firefighters can find them

Keeping Your Forest Healthy

Consider EQIP: A prescription for forest health

EQIP is a voluntary program administered by NRCS that is available to private forest landowners. It provides incentives to improve forest stands and treat related natural resources such as forest health, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

Among other activities, EQIP can help with wildfire mitigation activities such as:

- Pre-commercial thinning
- Slash treatment
- Tree planting to improve suitable forest stands
- Pruning
- Fuel Breaks



For more details on this program, please visit
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/EQIP/>

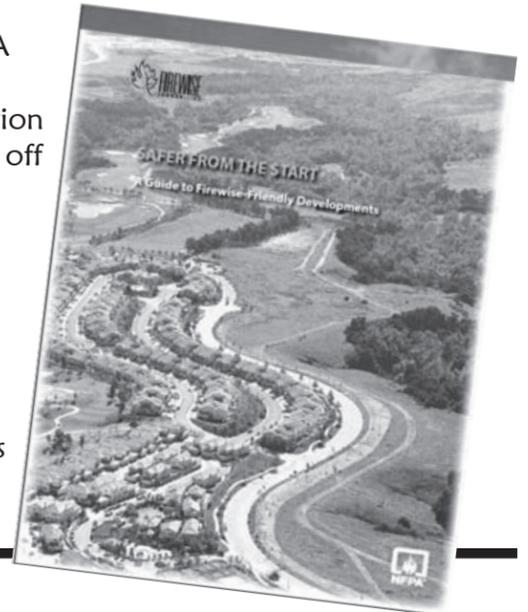
For assistance in developing a forest stewardship plan for the EQIP program, please contact Al Craney at the Skagit Conservation District, 360.428.4313

FIREWISE WEBSITE UPDATE

NEW PUBLICATION AVAILABLE ON THE FIREWISE.ORG website

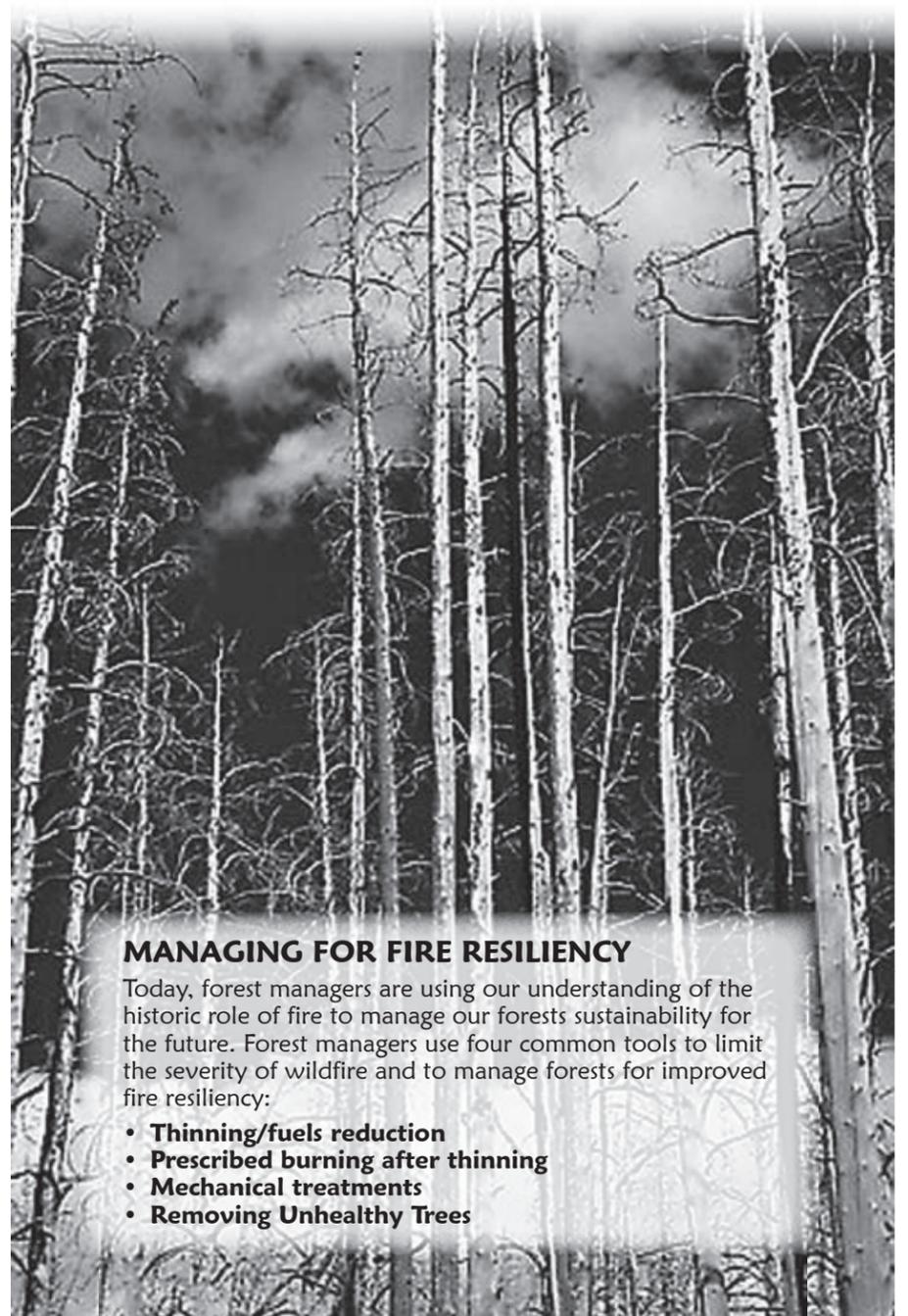
SAFER FROM THE START: A Guide to Firewise-Friendly Developments. This publication can be downloaded for free off the website.

GREAT RESOURCE for:
Residential developers
Landscape professionals
Community managers
County planners
Wildfire education specialists



FUEL LADDERS

Overcrowded forests allow fires to jump quickly from the ground to tree tops. When ground fires ignite understory trees, flames spread to tree canopies. Shrubs, small trees, snags and downed logs, low branches and harvest debris can all act as a fuel ladder during a forest fire.



MANAGING FOR FIRE RESILIENCY

Today, forest managers are using our understanding of the historic role of fire to manage our forests sustainability for the future. Forest managers use four common tools to limit the severity of wildfire and to manage forests for improved fire resiliency:

- Thinning/fuels reduction
- Prescribed burning after thinning
- Mechanical treatments
- Removing Unhealthy Trees



AGRICULTURE HAPPENINGS



The Founding Farmers

(Article reprinted from American Farmland Magazine, Spring, 2009)



As a nation, we were founded by farmers.

Our first president George Washington, renowned as a soldier and a statesman, was also a farmer, considered one of the finest agriculturalists of his day. He managed his lands at Mount Vernon, Virginia, with great care and wrote extensive letters about his progressive methods of agriculture. Second president and influential founding father John Adams descended from farmers in Massachusetts, where he retired to tend his beloved lands in Quincy.

"Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens," wrote Thomas Jefferson in 1785. Our third president and principal author of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson was one of the staunchest supporters of agrarianism to ever serve. Jefferson asserted the virtues of rural life and an ideal of democracy as a collection of family farms. "I have often thought that if heaven had given me a choice of my position and calling, it should have been on a rich plot of earth.... No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth," he once wrote.

Many of the nation's presidents were of rural origin throughout the 1800s. Abraham Lincoln, true to his roots as a frontier farmer, signed agricultural legislation that transformed American farming and society. In a three month span in 1862, Lincoln signed legislation creating the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the land grant agricultural university system, and the Homestead Act, which populated the West with thousands of farm settlers.

Nearly 150 years later, far fewer of our nation's residents have a direct connection to farming, but a national commitment to cultivating the role of American agriculture lives on—thanks to the founding farmers.



Fall Pasture Care

When the cool, wet Pacific Northwest weather arrives, established pastures will require some consideration in order to be a productive source of forage for the following growing season. The arrival of fall rains brings on a renewed life to the pastures, known as Fall Flush.

Fall Flush is the time when pastures prepare themselves for the upcoming winter months. There will be some green-up and top growth, enabling the plant to store energy and nutrients in the lower portion and the roots. The pasture plants will also form meristemes or growth buds for next year's top growth. It is critical that the pasture plants be given the opportunity to store some energy during this time and that the growth buds are not damaged.

Damage occurs when pastures are overgrazed or livestock are allowed to graze in a pasture when the soils are too wet. This causes soil compaction and "pugging", which is the term used to describe the indentations caused by hooves and/or mechanical damage.

The fall months are a good time to repair any damage that may have been inflicted during the growing season. The pasture(s) can be overseeded with an Annual Ryegrass or Festulolum to repair damaged or bare areas. Overseeding will provide



a vigorous, productive and palatable cover crop that will persist for several years and will allow the perennial grasses to recover. This is also a good time to apply a fall fertilizer, 10-20-20 and lime to provide needed nutrients for strong root development. The seed, fertilizer and lime can all be applied at the same time and harrowed down together.

Livestock should be excluded from having access to sensitive areas during the fall months to decrease the potential for damage. Sensitive areas include newly seeded areas and/or wet areas. A "sacrifice area" or paddock should be constructed to confine livestock when they should not have access to the pasture(s).

If you would like more information about pasture management or any other livestock Best Management Practices (BMPs), contact John Schuh at the Skagit Conservation District. He can be contacted through e-mail (john@skagitcd.org) or phone (360-428-4313).



SKAGIT COUNTY FARMLAND LEGACY PROGRAM
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
Phone (360) 336-9365
Fax (360) 336-9478

The Skagit County Farmland Legacy Program (FLP) has turned the corner on protecting over 6,500 acres of farmland through agriculture conservation easements. The FLP, which was created in 1997 by a resolution following a county supported tax initiative, purchases the existing development rights and then places an easement on the land. The FLP has an advisory board (Conservation Futures Advisory Board) comprised of farmers, a banker, the land trust and conservation district. They meet monthly and are tasked with recommending properties to the Board of County Commissioners based on site selection ranking criteria and available funding.

"Honoring our past, sustaining our future, where Skagit farms are the pride of the community."



As of July 2009, there have been 137 development rights extinguished. The majority of the funding comes from the conservation futures tax collected annually in combination with USDA Farms and Ranchlands Protection grants and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program funding. The FLP has also received generous support through its partnerships with Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland and numerous private donors. The goal of the Program is to reach 7,000 protected acres by the first of the year.

11TH ANNUAL

FESTIVAL of FAMILY FARMS



Saturday, October 3rd, 10a.m. – 4p.m.
Sunday, October 4th, 10a.m. – 4 p.m.

Visit www.festivaloffamilyfarms.com for more details.

SKAGIT COUNTY FARMER'S MARKETS

Anacortes: Saturdays, May 16 – October 10
Mount Vernon: Saturdays, May 30 – October 17th & Wednesdays, June 1 – September
Rexville: Sundays, June – November
Sedro Woolley: Wednesdays, May 27 – October 14
Bayview: Saturdays, April 25 – October 31





KEEPING IT CLEAN

Samish Bay In Crisis

Fecal Coliform pollution in the Samish River and its tributaries is threatening the health of Samish Bay.



When rainfall amounts exceed 0.3" in a 24-hour period, the Samish River carries excessive amounts of fecal bacterial pollution downstream making shellfish consumption temporarily unsafe to eat. Under these rain events, shellfish harvesting is suspended for a five-day period to allow the shellfish to cleanse themselves before harvesting is reopened. Since April of 2008, shellfish harvest in Samish Bay was suspended a total of ten times due to pollution, closing down our Samish Bay shellfish industries for nearly 2 months overall over the last year. While fecal coliform bacteria is not harmful to the shellfish, it can be harmful to humans. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) monitors Samish Bay marine waters on a regular basis and is responsible for classifying commercial shellfish growing areas and protecting human health.

What are fecal coliform bacteria?

Fecal coliform bacteria are found in waste from warm-blooded mammals, including humans, livestock, domestic pets, waterfowl and wildlife. It ends up in our streams lakes, rivers, and drainage ditches, and eventually our marine waters from direct discharge of waste from mammals and birds, from agricultural and stormwater runoff, and from human sewage, including failing on-site septic systems. Fecal coliform bacteria indicate the presence of sewage or manure contamination of a waterway and the possible presence of other pathogenic organisms. Overall, the presence of fecal coliform contamination is an indicator that a potential health risk exists for individuals exposed to this water. Some waterborne pathogenic diseases include ear infections, dysentery, typhoid fever, viral and bacterial gastroenteritis, and hepatitis A.

What is being done?

Samish Bay is on the state's list of polluted water bodies and by federal law must be cleaned up. The Washington State Dept. of Ecology recently completed a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL or "clean up

plan") study, which provides a plan for reducing fecal coliform loading in the watershed. According to the study, fecal bacteria in the Samish River needs to be reduced by 72 percent in order for the bay to meet state water-quality standards. The report names several likely sources of fecal bacteria in the river: from livestock waste, domestic pet waste, recreational use, failing septic systems, and wildlife. Local and state agencies, including the State Dept. of Health, WA Dept. of Ecology, Skagit County Public Health Dept., Skagit County Public Works, Skagit County Planning Dept., WA Dept. of Agriculture, and the Skagit Conservation District have increased collaboration, technical assistance, education, and remediation efforts in the watershed. In addition, the Skagit County Public Works, with support from Skagit Stream Team volunteers, have continued to monitor throughout the watershed during rain events and have provided data to help identify pollution hot spots in the drainage (refer to graph).



A day's waste from one large dog can contain 7.8 billion fecal coliform bacteria.

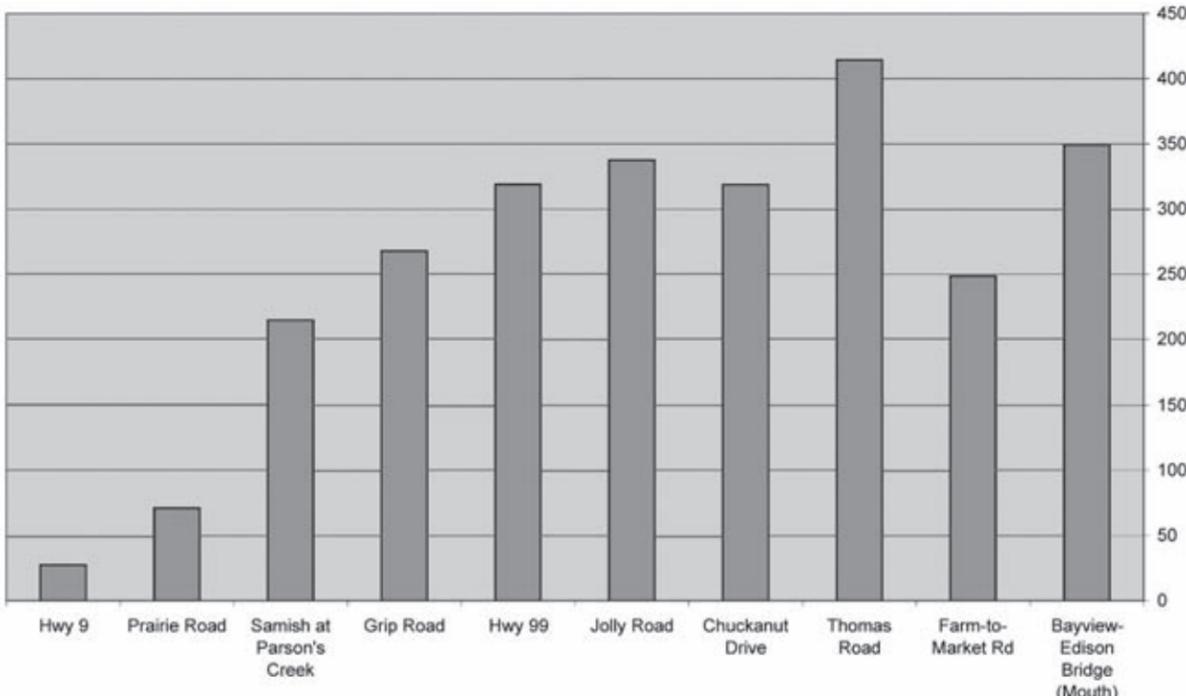
We Are All A Part of The Problem and A Part of the Solution:

Because pollutants that are carried into our streams and drainage ditches from storm water runoff are diffuse in nature, the sources are more difficult to assess and cannot be easily controlled. Pollutants generated by land-based activities are picked up by rainwater, moving over and through the ground, eventually finding their way into a stream, drainage ditch, or river that ultimately discharges to the bay. Stormwater runoff pollution is the result of many actions of many different people, animals, and industries. The effects of one individual or even one source are usually not in themselves significant, but the cumulative effects of many sources and the actions of many individuals in the watershed can cause significant water quality problems. Thus, cleaning up the Samish River will require the involvement of **everyone** who lives, works, or plays in the drainage – **one yard at a time.**



The average 1,000-pound horse produces 50 pounds of manure per day!

Geometric Mean Fecal Coliform at Samish River Sampling Locations – Skagit Storm Team Data



The above graph presents the Geometric Means for fecal coliform at 10 Samish watershed monitoring stations, which is from data collected during rain events over the last year. The state standard for fecal coliform bacteria is not to exceed 100 ppm. As noted on the graph, eight of 10 monitoring sites are in severe violation of freshwater state standards for fecal coliform bacteria. The graph is courtesy of Rick Haley, Skagit County Water Quality Analyst.



SOLUTIONS

There are 3 key ways that the Skagit Conservation District is encouraging Samish watershed residents to get involved.

1. Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs):

- Pick up pet waste, bag it, and throw it in the garbage.
- Limit livestock access to streams, drainage ditches & ponds.
- Install gutters, downspouts, and drains to direct roof runoff away from livestock use areas.
- Manage livestock grazing to meet pasture carrying capacity.
- Establish sacrifice or confinement areas to contain livestock during winter.
- Keep rain off of manure piles by covering them with a tarp.
- Compost manure and stall waste.
- Plant riparian areas with native trees and shrubs.
- Inspect and maintain your on-site septic system.

2. Take Advantage of Our Cost Share Opportunities

If your property is adjacent to a riparian area you may be eligible for cost share opportunities. Cost sharing can reduce costs of installing Best Management Practices, including riparian fencing & planting, gutters & downspouts, alternative watering sources for livestock, and more. Please contact John Schuh, SCD Livestock Technician, for more information – call 428-4313 or email john@skagitcd.org).

3. Get Involved

Participate in the Skagit Stream Team, Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course, or Watershed Masters Program (Contact Kristi Carpenter @ 428-4313 or email Kristi@skagitcd.org).

“ Singly, one farm may cause little pollution but, added together, small acreages can significantly impact a watershed.



As we gear up for the rainy season, help reduce bacteria contamination in the watershed by implementing Best Management Practices on your land. ”

WE MAKE HOUSECALLS!

Need assistance? The Skagit Conservation District works with farms of all sizes, from small acreage landowners to larger dairy and beef operations and can provide site-specific land management assistance. All services provided by the Skagit Conservation District are FREE, voluntary, and without obligation. To schedule a visit, contact John Schuh, SCD Livestock Technician at 428-4313 or email: john@skagitcd.org.)



Another Successful Year for the 6th Grade Conservation Tour

Over 750 students from 30 Skagit County classrooms were able to take part in the 2009 Sixth Grade Conservation Tour.

The event was held once again at Pomona Grange Park on Friday Creek this past May. The students participated in hands-on education at a rotation of seven stations, which included topics on forest protection, the salmon life cycle, composting, recycling, soils, forest regeneration, macroinvertebrates, and Leave No Trace camping practices.

Several dedicated natural resource agencies dedicated their time to assist with this event and we wish to extend a huge thanks to these organizations that continue to support this event and make it a success:

- Dan Heidal and Chris Hankey - **The Department of Natural Resources.**
- Lucy DeGrace - **Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group**
- Callie Martin - **Skagit County Master Composter/Recyclers**
- Jared Hamman and Alex Hall - **Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey.**
- Keith Greenwood - **Sierra Pacific Industries**
- Cindy Bjorklund - **North Cascades National Park Complex**
- Orlando Garcia, Barbara Johnson and Barbara Richey - **U.S. Forest Service**

We would also like to give a special thanks to our volunteers April Glaefke, Maria Magana, Jack Middleton, Bob Orwig, and Ingeborg Siller.



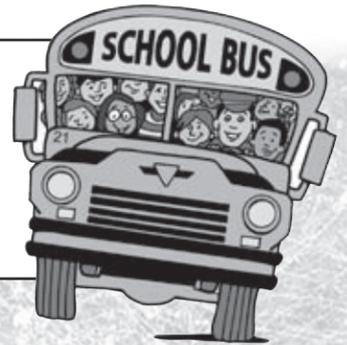
▲ Keith Greenwood of Sierra Pacific Industries explains the specifics of forest regeneration to a group of students.



◀ Jared Hamman of the NRCS Soils Survey illustrates how long it takes to form an inch of soil.

WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE THESE VALUABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCES WITHOUT PEOPLE LIKE YOU!

PROCEEDS FROM OUR PLANT SALE FUNDED TRANSPORTATION COSTS FOR STUDENTS TO ATTEND THE 6th GRADE CONSERVATION TOUR.



Volunteers Diana Wisen and Cleveland Hall work diligently alongside SCD's plant sale boss, Al Craney, packaging huckleberries for customer orders.

Thank You Plant Sale Volunteers!

Thanks to the help of many volunteers, our 2009 annual plant sale was a success. The proceeds of our annual sale paid for the transportation costs for many of the 30 classes of over 800 sixth grade Skagit County students attending the Annual 6th Grade Conservation Tour. Without this funding, many of the students would not have had the opportunity to take part in this fun and educational experience. Also, a big "thank you" to all of you that came out to support our plant sale by purchasing native plants!

Our heartfelt thanks to the following volunteers:

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Sammy Adams | Keith Johnson | Nicole Scott |
| Jeremy Baker | Barbara Kolar | Jack Sekora |
| Ann Buzaitis | Dick Lease | Randy Stevens |
| Gretchen Cohan | Elaine Lease | Barbara Stewart |
| Richard Crierie | Mike Leers | Norm Stewart |
| Suzanna Dentel | Jonny Losey | Anthony Swanagan |
| Mark Fessler | Maria Magana | Maxine Swanagan |
| Barbara Haar | Mike Newman | Tom Thompson |
| Bill Hall | Tina Newman | Shelia Tuff |
| Cleveland Hall | Dena Peterson | Louis Steffano |
| Nancy Hall | Grace Popoff | George Viverette |
| Alison Hitchcock | Nick Popoff | Nancy Wampler |
| John Hoyer | Loren Sande | Diana Wisen |

CONSERVATION

"Dig It! The Secrets of Soil" POSTER CONTEST

The Skagit Conservation District hosted its annual Natural Resources Poster Contest in honor of Soil and Water Stewardship Week this past April. The theme this year is "Dig It! The Secrets of Soil" which is based on the Smithsonian exhibit that is on display in Washington D.C. The contest was open to Skagit County students grades K-12.

The Overall Winner was **Nayomi Anyika**, a third grader from Edison Elementary. For her entry she was awarded a \$50 savings bond, a plaque, and Borders bookstore gift cards. Nayomi was also the Category 2-3rd Grade Winner.

The Runner Up Winner, as well as Category K-1st Grade Winner, was Kindergartener **Sara Kumar** from Summersun Elementary. Sara was awarded a plaque and Borders bookstore gift cards.

Floresita Gomez, a fourth grader from Allen Elementary, was the Category 4-6th Grade Winner and **Jasmine Sweet**, a twelfth Grader from Emerson High School, was the Category 10-12th Grade Winner. For their efforts they were awarded Borders bookstore gift cards and certificates of achievement.

Judges for this year were Crystal Briggs, a soil scientist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Sandra Starbuck, Executive Director with the Farm Service Agency and Jennifer Hoines, IT Specialist with the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The award presentation was held in conjunction with a Soil and Water Stewardship Proclamation at the Skagit County Commissioners Hearing Room. The students were recognized for their talents in a televised presentation with the Commissioners.



Floresita Gomez - Category 4-6 Winner



Nayomi Anyika (right), Overall Winner of the "Dig It" poster contest and Sara Kumar (left), Runner Up Winner, hold up their posters as they pose with Blossom for a photo.



Jasmine Sweet - Category 10-12 Winner



THIS PAST APRIL, OVER 250 SEEDLINGS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO LOCAL STUDENTS IN HONOR OF ARBOR DAY.

State Poster Contest Winners Announced

(Excerpt from Outreach News, Washington State Conservation Commission)

The Conservation Commission is proud to announce the winners of the 2009 State Poster Contest, "Dig It! The Secrets of Soil." The five winners received prizes donated by the Washington Society of Professional Soil Scientists and the Washington Association of Conservation Districts. The winning posters will advance to the National contest sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts. Congratulations to the following winners:

Overall State Winner and First Place for grades 2-3: **Nayomi Anyika**, Edison Elementary, Bow;
 First Place for grades K-1: **Sara Kumar**, Summersun Montessori, Mount Vernon;
 First Place for grades 4-6: **Floresita Gomez**, Allen Elementary, Bow;
 First Place for grades 7-9: **Cyndee Kieffer**, Harrington Middle School, Harrington;
 First Place for grades 10-12: **Jasmine Sweet**, Emerson High, Mount Vernon.



2009 State Envirothon Update

The Skagit Conservation District was proud to host the Washington State Envirothon Competition this past May at Camp Lutherwood on majestic Samish Lake in Whatcom County. This annual high school two-day competition challenges students on the topics of forestry, aquatic ecology, soil/land use, wildlife and a current environmental issue that changes each year. The current issue this year was "Biodiversity in a Changing World." Each team competing at the state competition was top seed in their regional level proving that they are state competitors—these students are the best in the state.

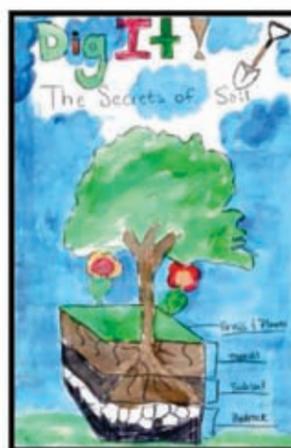
Each five-person team is given a set amount of time to rotate through a series of stations taking written exams and working together, problem solving as a team. An oral presentation is also part of the competition and the students are given several hours the night before to prepare their presentation for the three-judge panel of diverse professionals. The scenario proposed positive and negative impacts of proposed tree thinning on Blanchard Mountain in the Samish Watershed.

The 2009 Washington State Envirothon championship went to **Stanwood High School**, with Mercer Slough Environmental Ed Center and Garfield Palouse High coming in second and third. The Stanwood team, accompanied by their coach and science teacher Ryan Ovenell, earned an all expense trip to Asheville, North Carolina in August for the Canon North American Envirothon Competition.

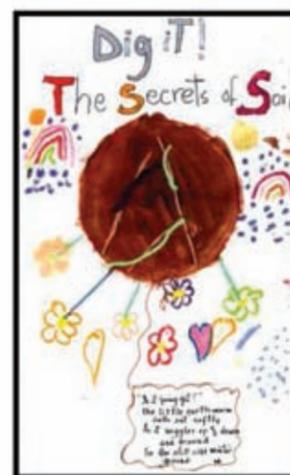
At the North American event, the Stanwood team competed against the top teams from all over the United States and Canada. Members of the top 15 teams each received Canon scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000, as well as Canon merchandise. We are proud to have had Stanwood represent the state of Washington!

Stanwood High School Envirothon team advisor Ryan Ovenell (from left) and team members Jack Medicott, Scott Weisse, Alexa Flem, Thor Pearson and Andrew Salmon are first place winners of the State Envirothon Competition.

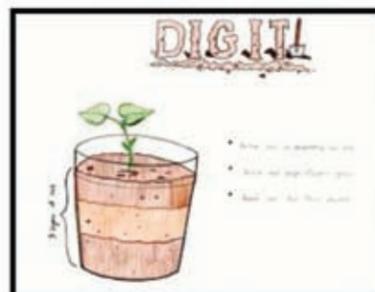
2009 Natural Resources Poster Contest Dig It! The Secrets of Soil



Nayomi Anyika—Edison Elementary, Grade 3 Overall Winner and Category 2-3rd Grade Winner



Sara Kumar—Summersun Montessori, Grade K Runner Up Winner and Category K-1st Grade Winner



Jasmine Sweet—Emerson High School, Grade 12 Category 10-12th Grade Winner



Floresita Gomez—Allen Elementary, Grade 4 Category 4-6th Grade Winner



AFTER T

Scout to Earn Eagle Status with Marking Project

Cody Haveman, a Sedro-Woolley High School Junior, marked 272 storm drains in the Sedro-Woolley area this past June. He coordinated the project and recruited fellow scouts and parents to help implement his plan. Cody is a member of the Mount Baker Council, Troop 4067 and has selected the marking project to earn the status of Eagle Scout.

The City of Sedro-Woolley has a contract with the Skagit Conservation District to fulfill education components of their Phase II Stormwater Ecology permit. Storm drain marking is one of the tasks within the grant and Cody took the opportunity to devise his plan and exceed his original goal of marking 200 drains on Trail Road and it's arterials, Klinger Street, Spring Lane and Hospital Drive. He also distributed 300 informational door hangers to the local residents informing them of the project, as well as 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. He had predicted that a crew of 8-10 people should complete the job in two days, but his crew was extended to 13 people and the total marking project took just over five hours. We commend Cody for a job well done and congratulate him on his Eagle status!



Cody Haveman poses with his sign that he created to inform local citizens of his project, which his father, Doug Haveman, drove behind the crew as they marked storm drains.



Cody Haveman demonstrates proper installation of storm drain markers to his crew.

STORMWATER IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS!



Scout Marks Drains in Country Club



Casey discusses his plan with his crew as a member cleans debris from the marking area of a storm drain.

This past May, Sedro-Woolley High School Freshman **Casey Haveman** designed a plan to mark storm drains in the Skagit Golf and Country Club neighborhood, as a step toward earning his Eagle Scout status. Casey, along with his brother Cody (also featured on this page) is a scout with the Mount Baker Council, Troop 4067. With help from a 20-person crew, Casey was able to complete his project in four hours, instead of the eight hours he anticipated.

The Skagit Conservation District, in partnership with Drainage District 19, assisted Casey with the project by supplying maps and all marking equipment necessary for the job. Casey and his crew marked a total of 120 storm drains, cleaned up garbage and debris near drains, and distributed 200 informational door hangers to neighborhood residents that provided tips to prevent stormwater runoff.

Most people are not aware that most storm drainage does not go through a water treatment facility. When it rains, pollution such as leaking oil, antifreeze and gasoline from cars, grass clippings, fertilizers, and animal waste easily wash off properties and flow into our storm drains, out to local waterways and eventually to Skagit Bay. These storm drain markers are an important way to remind everyone that they have a part to play in protecting their environment.

We wish to thank Casey for carrying out his well-designed plan and for bringing attention to the importance of stormwater management!



Scouts demonstrate the proper technique when applying glue to a storm drain marker.




If you are interested in scheduling a storm drain marking project, please contact Cindy Pierce at the Skagit Conservation District office at (360) 428-4313 or cindy@skagitcd.org.

Burlington Teens Mark Up Neighborhood

You might be thinking that we are talking about gang members spray-painting a community, but that is far from the case. Two Burlington-Edison High School Seniors, **Keith Thomas** and **Jake Knutzen**, came to the Skagit Conservation District looking for a volunteer project for school. Cindy Pierce had just the opportunity for them. This past spring, Keith and Jake marked approximately 200 storm drains and distributed informational door hangers in the neighborhood of Lucille Umbarger Elementary School. All the supplies were provided to the students to complete the job and were funded by a Washington State Ecology

stormwater management implementation grant. The Skagit Conservation District has partnered with the City of Burlington to provide educational components to meet the city's NPDES Phase II Stormwater Management plan.

Storm marking volunteer opportunities are available countywide. If you would like to organize a group outing, need a project for school or your organization, or you just want to make your neighborhood more environmentally aware, please call Cindy Pierce at the Skagit Conservation District at 360-428-4313.

THE STORM

Skagit County Rain Garden Demonstration Project Breaks Ground!



Come by and check out the new “rain garden” demonstration project that has been designed and constructed at the Skagit County Administration Building, located at 1800 Continental Street in Mount Vernon! The project is a partnership of Skagit County, Skagit Conservation District, WA Dept. of Ecology, and volunteers from the Skagit Conservation District, including the Skagit Valley Backyard Wildlife Habitat Team and Watershed Masters who helped with the planting. Dariotis Construction Co., Inc. of Mount Vernon is the contractor for the project.

The County rain garden demonstration project highlights ways to reduce stormwater runoff and improve the water quality of our local streams by collecting rooftop runoff, which will be filtered through the garden and into the soils rather than running off the ground and into our storm drains. The County rain garden project will help benefit the water quality of Kulshan Creek, and ultimately, the Skagit River.



SCD volunteers from the Watershed Masters and Skagit Valley Backyard Wildlife Habitat Team spent an afternoon together planting the rain garden at the County Administration Building. Front row: Heidi Nichols, Kristi Carpenter (SCD), Ani Gurnee. Back row: Jeremy Westra, Jack Sekora, Patrick Hurley, Loren Sande, and Corrinne Sande.

What is a Rain Garden?

Rain gardens are attractive landscaped features planted to flowers, shrubs, or other native vegetation that soak up rainwater. Rain gardens can be small homeowner style gardens, large complex bioretention gardens, or anywhere in between. They can be “wild” or formal looking depending on the plants selected and the desires of the homeowner. Beyond its use for stormwater control, a rain garden provides attractive landscaping and a natural habitat for birds and butterflies, while encouraging environmental stewardship and community pride. After a rain, the rain garden fills up with a few inches of water and slowly infiltrates into the soil. This reduces the amount of water running off the ground and into the storm drain. A rain garden allows about 30% more water to soak into the ground than a conventional lawn.

Why are Rain Gardens Important?

As cities and suburbs grow and replace forests and open space, increased stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces becomes a problem. Stormwater runoff from developed areas increased flooding; carries pollutants from streets, roofs, parking lots and even lawns into local streams and lakes; and leads to costly municipal improvements in stormwater treatment structures. By reducing stormwater runoff, rain gardens can be a valuable part of changing these trends. While an individual rain garden may seem like a small thing, collectively they produce substantial neighborhood and community environmental benefits.

- Increases infiltration into the ground, which recharges the aquifer
- Helps protect communities from flooding and drainage problems
- Helps protect streams and rivers from pollutants carried by urban stormwater runoff – lawn fertilizers and pesticides, oil and other fluids that leak from cars, and numerous harmful substances that wash off roofs and paved areas
- Enhances the beauty of yards and neighborhoods.
- Provides valuable habitat for birds, butterflies, and many beneficial insects



RAIN GARDEN DIAGRAM: A raingarden is a shallow depression that is planted with suitable trees, shrubs, flowers and other plants allowing runoff to soak into the ground and protect water quality.

The rain garden collects and filters runoff from the roof of the building – the runoff from the roof is discharged through the pipe shown and then directed into the basin and rain garden.



For More Information on Rain Gardens: An excellent “how-to” manual for homeowners can be obtained from the **SCD office**. Contact **Kristi Carpenter, (360) 428-4313** or email: **Kristi@skagitcd.org**

Or, see these additional information sources for details and instructions on rain garden creation.

WSU Extension Pierce County:
www.pierce.wsu.edu/Water_Quality/LID/index.htm

Stormwater Manager’s Resource Center:
www.stormwatercenter.net

Center for Urban Water Resources:
www.depts.washington.edu/cuwrw/home.htm

WA State Dept. of Ecology:
www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sq/stormwater/index.html

Low Impact Development Center:
www.lowimpactdevelopment.org

EPA Nonpoint Source Pollution:
www.epa.gov/OWOW/NPS

Stormwater Awareness

Poster contents, open to students grades K-8, were held in both Burlington and Sedro-Woolley this past spring. The contests, sponsored by the Skagit Conservation District, in partnership with the City of Sedro-Woolley and the City of Burlington, were held as educational components to meet requirements of the city’s Phase II Stormwater Management permits.

First place winners received bicycles from Skagit Cycle Center, plaque and a professional framing of their artwork. Copies of their posters were framed and are currently on display in each of the city municipal buildings. Second and third place winners received Michaels gift cards for art supplies and certificates of achievement.

All of these students were recognized at city council meetings this past May. Artwork from the top three winning posters was used to create informational bookmarks, which are available at both city libraries.

Sedro-Woolley

- First Place – Hallie Stiles, Lyman Elementary, Grade 4
- Second Place – Kathrine Morgan, Mary Purcell Elementary, Grade 4
- Third Place – Shayna Corne, Lyman Elementary, Grade 5

Burlington

- First Place – Cole Rusom
 - Second Place – Haili Price
 - Third Place – Ben Rathbone
- (All from Edison Elementary, Grade 5)

A special thank you goes out to our judges:

Burlington

Mayor Ed Brunz
City Council Members: Bill Aslett, Helen Doyle and Joanne Valentine

Sedro-Woolley

Mayor Mike Anderson
Mark Freiberger, Director of Public Works
John Coleman, Senior Planner



Sedro-Woolley poster contest winners Kathrine Morgan, Hallie Stiles, and Shayna Corne pose with their winning artwork.

First place winner Cole Rusom shows off his framed artwork and his new set of wheels with other winning classmates Ben Rathbone and Haili Price and their teacher Karla Lechner.





AFTER T

A Collaborative Project Aims to IMPROVE WATER QUALITY OF HOLMES HARBOR



Downstream end of new drainage system. One-way tidegate on the end of the pipe will keep brackish water from coming up into the landscaped areas as it did before the project.



Completed Filterra Stormwater Bioretention Filtration System which will filter and treat stormwater runoff before it reaches Holmes Harbor.

This spring, Washington Conservation Districts' Northwest Region Engineering Program, in which Skagit Conservation District participates, was involved with an exciting collaborative stormwater treatment project on Whidbey Island.

The "Freeland Park project" was funded by a Washington Department of Ecology grant to improve water quality within the Holmes Harbor Shellfish Protection District by addressing non point source stormwater runoff into Holmes Harbor. The grant recipient, the Island County Department of Planning and Community Development, approached the Whidbey Island Conservation District (WICD) to help them identify a project sites for a demonstration project that would not only result in water quality benefits but also serve as high profile demonstration for the community. After considering several sites, WICD and the Planning Department selected the parking lot at Freeland Park, a popular beach and boat launch located just outside of the village of Freeland.

Our engineering program director Tom Slocum and Island County's Department of Public Works (DPW) Surface Water Manager Phil Cohen designed several improvements at the park to correct existing drainage problems and to treat and infiltrate runoff from the parking areas. These included installing new catch basins, storm sewers, infiltration trenches, three rain gardens and a proprietary Filterra™ Stormwater Bioretention Filtration unit. As a result, stormwater runoff from the park into Holmes Harbor will be filtered and cleaned, and the chronic winter ponding in the parking lot, which some locals call "Lake Freeland," will cease to exist.

Island County Planning contracted with WICD to lead the engineering design and project coordination and with DPW to construct the project. Island County's Parks and Recreation Department and the South Whidbey Lions Club partnered to help salvage plants from the existing landscaping and to water the new rain garden plants. The Lions volunteered their time and raised funds to maintain all of the landscaping in Freeland Park. On June 4th WICD hosted a rain garden workshop and planting day, during which participants received training and information on how to design and install their own rain gardens to help clean up Holmes Harbor and the waters surrounding their communities.



Tom Slocum with Island County Public Works staff looking at the subgrade soils under the main rain garden area.



Volunteers planting the rain gardens as part of the June 4th Rain Garden Workshop and Planting Day.



One of two interpretive signs installed on the edge of the large rain garden to help visitors to the park understand the impacts of stormwater runoff and learn about rain garden techniques that can be applied to their homes.

For more information the design of the Freeland Park project please contact Stacy Smith at stacy@whidbeycd.org



Stormwater Presentations Provide Fun Hands-on Education for Local Students

This year, the Skagit Conservation District had the opportunity to educate eleven Skagit County classrooms on the importance of stormwater runoff and the functions of their watershed. The students learned that there are two types of pollution; point source and non-point source, then visualize and discuss what takes place on the model when it rains.

Students were very excited to take turns putting pollutants, chemicals, and other substances on the watershed model – using cocoa for soil and sediment; different colors of gelatin powder to represent chemicals such as pesticides, detergents, and fertilizer; coffee to represent animal waste; and chocolate sauce as oil and grease. The students took turns deciding where to place the pollutants, and then spray model with water to represent the rain we have here in the valley. In turn, the eager students were able to see all of the different pollutants run off the landscape into the storm drains, ditches, streams and rivers and eventually out to the bay.

They learned many things about their watershed and the many different functions and land uses that are so important to all of us such as farming, logging, industry, recreation, and living with clean water in mind. They were able to correct different issues that they saw happening and were able to come up with best management practices to help maintain a clean and healthy environment for wildlife and humans. They came up with ideas, such as taking your car to a carwash or washing it on a grassy lawn to filter out the detergent in the water instead of washing it on the street where it would eventually flow into our waterways. Practices, such as selective logging, planting hedgerows and buffers, proper vehicle maintenance, and picking up after pets, were also discussed.



Excited students enjoy hands-on learning with the watershed model.



Car Wash Kit Informational DVD



Adult host, Jenny Hinderman takes a moment to review her lines while the carwash crew (Melissa Howlett and Madiosn Campbell) and youth host (Sarah Tisinger), are working hard in the background to illustrate a carwash scene with the kit. Dan Leniczek and Rich Monroe from Skagit County Media are behind the camera directing the scene.

A seven minute informational DVD has been produced about the benefits of using a car wash kit during car wash fundraising events. The DVD includes locations of where to borrow a kit, installation instructions, and a review of materials provided for promotional purposes.

- Producer / Director
 - Dan Leniczek – Skagit County Media Department
 - Rich Monroe – Skagit County Media Department
- Executive Producer – Organization – Pizza Rustler
 - Lori Kyle – Skagit Conservation District
- Cast on the DVD:
 - Adult Host
 - Jenny Hinderman – Skagit Conservation District
 - Youth Host
 - Sarah Tisinger – Anacortes High School
 - Background and demonstrators
 - Melissa Howlett – Mount Vernon High School
 - Madison Campbell – Anacortes High School

The filming took place at the Mount Vernon Fire Hall / LaVenture Road station with cooperation from Captain Terry Hill.

Copies of the DVD have been provided to each kit location for promotion. It is linked as a streaming video on the Skagit Conservation District (SCD) webpage www.skagitcd.org. Skagit County Media television station 21 will include it in their programming and the Anacortes Cinema will use it as filler when appropriate. The Skagit Marine Resources Committee (SMRC) has a link on their website that is also accessible from the Northwest Straits Commission's website. It will be used at a variety of events for the SMRC, the SCD, and the Skagit County Education Alliance (SCEA).

Operation Clean & Green

Tips for Your Fundraising Car Wash
Comply with the Washington State Clean Water Act



When you're washing a car in a driveway, you're not just washing a car in a driveway.



Be part of the pollution solution!

We all need clean water. We drink it, fish in it, play in it, and work in it. We enjoy all it adds to our lives. In fact, we need it to survive. Fish, wildlife, and aquatic plants do, too.

What's the problem with car washing? There's no problem with car washing. It's just how and where it's done.

The soap, dirt, and oil washed from cars flow into storm drains that run directly into local waters. The phosphates and other chemicals in the runoff harm fish, wildlife, plants, and water quality. Phosphate can also cause excess algae, which harms water quality and uses up oxygen in the water that fish need.

What your car wash fundraising group can do

- Borrow a SudSafe™ Car Wash Kit to catch car wash water and redirect it to a grassy area or into a sewer system.
- Use phosphate free biodegradable soap.
- Use shut off nozzles to conserve water.

Where to borrow a car wash kit

- City of Anacortes 293-1920
- City of Burlington 755-9715
- City of Mount Vernon 336-6204
- City of Sedro-Woolley 855-0771
- Skagit Conservation District 428-4313
- Skagit County Public Works 336-9400, ext. 3174

What comes with the Car Wash Kit?

- Storm drain insert to capture wash water
- Pump and extension cord
- Hose to redirect wash water
- Grate puller and safety cones
- Sandwich board with information about the Operation Clean & Green program and colored dry erase markers to advertise YOUR event
- Litter bags and brochures that detail the program for you to give to YOUR customers
- A DVD instruction sheet to help you have a successful, Clean & Green carwash.

For more information, call the Skagit Conservation District at 428-4313 or visit our website at www.skagitcd.org

Don't feed soap to the storm drain. Wash cars right. Keep our waters clean!

Program partners: Northwest Straits Commission, Skagit Conservation District, Skagit County Public Works, Skagit Marine Resource Committee, and WA State Department of Ecology



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

For more information contact:
Skagit Conservation District
2021 E. College Way, Suite 203
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 428-4313
skagitcd@skagitcd.org



Can you dig it?
Volunteer Jessie Sauer found that digging for clams was a lot of fun but to be proficient, one needs a trusty shovel.

THANK YOU, 2009 MARINE BIOTOXIN VOLUNTEERS!

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

Special thanks 2009 Marine Biotoxin Volunteers! From May through September, these dedicated community volunteers collect and track shellfish samples from 13 local recreational shellfish harvesting beaches for concentrations of PSP (paralytic shellfish poisoning) toxin so beaches can be closed in a timely manner if shellfish are unsafe to eat. Initiated in 2000, 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 the 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.

2009 Marine Biotoxin Volunteer:

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
ROB FORETICH, Anacortes
KATHY FOURNIER, Oak Harbor
BUD FREEMAN, Mount Vernon
CHERIE FREEMAN, Mount Vernon
DAWN GILMAN, Anacortes
JAY GILMAN, Anacortes
PATRICK HURLEY, Sedro-Woolley
ROBERT KNOWLES, Anacortes
ELAINE LEASE, Mount Vernon
RICHARD LEASE, Mount Vernon
JACK MERCER, Anacortes
JACK MIDDLETON, Mount Vernon
JESSIE SAUER, Sedro-Woolley
DONALD SLACK, Anacortes
PAT STEFFANI, Anacortes



Stephen Farmer, Jeanne King (Skagit County Health), Kathy Fournier, Jessie Sauer, and Patrick Hurley identify clams species during the 2009 Marine Biotoxin Volunteer training, which was held in April.

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 increase to high numbers in marine waters, the condition is sometimes (and somewhat erroneously) referred to as a "red tide."

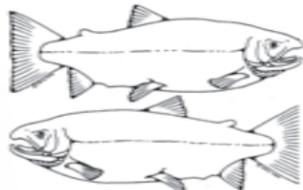
What causes unsafe levels of PSP?

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.

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 DIG:

- Eating shellfish contaminated with marine biotoxin can kill you.
- Biotoxins are NOT destroyed by cooking or by freezing.
- Call the Marine Biotoxin HOTLINE before you dig at 1-800-562-5632 or visit the web page at: www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm

If you are interested in volunteering for this program or for more information, contact Kristi Carpenter at (360) 428-4313 or email: Kristi@skagitcd.org.



Explore the Wonders of our Local Watersheds!

We are now taking registrations for the Fall 2009 Watershed Masters Program!



Watershed Masters explore local streams, rivers and our marine resources. All sessions and field trips are lead by local experts. Pictured above, the Fall 2008 Watershed Masters have fun on the beach and learn about marine life at Bayview State Park.

Are you interested in meeting new friends, learning from local experts about the wonders of the Skagit River watershed and participating in meaningful community projects? The Skagit Conservation District is pleased to announce that we are now taking applications for the **Fall 2009 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 29th through November 17th and participate in three Saturday watershed field adventures, tentatively scheduled for October 10th, October 24th, and November 7th.

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 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.

Volunteer Thank You!

7th Annual Samish Bay Bivalve Bash and Mud Run

"O oysters come and walk with us... A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk along the briny beach..."
 - The Walrus and the Carpenter, Lewis Carroll

The Skagit Conservation District, SCEA, and Taylor Shellfish Farms would like to thank and recognize the many volunteers and natural resource agencies that provided support at the 7th Annual Samish Bay Bivalve Bash and Mud Run! This event just would not be possible without our great volunteers! As a member of SCEA, Skagit Conservation District helps support the annual event by scheduling and organizing the many needed volunteers and the participating natural resource agencies and organizations who provide educational displays and activities at the event. Many of the event volunteers are participants of the District's Watershed Masters, Skagit Stream Team and Backyard Conservation Stewardship program.

The Samish Bay Bivalve Bash and Mud Run celebrates the cultural, biological and economic

importance of shellfish grown in Samish Bay. The popular fun to watch 250 yard low-tide Mud Run is one of the highlights of the event. Other activities include shellacious food fare, oyster shell sculpture contest, silent auction, oyster shuffleboard, volleyball, bivalve crafts and beach activities (including building fairy houses with the Skagit Valley Backyard Wildlife Habitat Team), educational displays, marine touch tank, beer garden, live music by the Atlantics, and more!

The list of over 150 volunteer names was too numerous to publish. Thanks go out to each and every one of you.



STEWARDSHIP



Special thanks to SCD Supervisor, Paul Blau (pictured above), and Bill Dewey of Taylor Shellfish Farms for the "shellacious" foodfare they cooked up in recognition of our 2008/09 Skagit Stream Team volunteers.

STREAM TEAM HALL OF FAME MEET OUR 2009 SKAGIT STREAM TEAM "SHINING STARS!"



A SPECIAL THANK YOU to Skagit Stream Team Volunteers, **Elaine and Dick Lease of Mount Vernon, Mark Morrow of Edison, and Jeanette Redmond of Anacortes** for contributing 5 years of volunteer service as Skagit Stream Team volunteers. These four dedicated individuals were each recognized with the Skagit Stream Team "Shining Star" award at the Annual Skagit Stream Team Year-End Celebration, which was held on Saturday, June 6th at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve, for outstanding community service and for their long-term commitment to protecting our local creeks and streams. Previous recipients of this special award include Lyn Bishop, Mariepaule Braule, Deryl Hart, Pat Jordan, Jim Karlson, Barb King, Mike King, Lisa Lewis, Ed Maynard, Nancy Maynard, Alec McDougall, George Miller, Joyce Moon, Tom Schmidt, Richard Vignos, George Viverette, and Michelle Woodward.

2008/09 Skagit Stream Team Volunteers: We love our Stream Team!

The Skagit Conservation District and partners, the Padilla Bay Research Reserve, City of Mount Vernon, City of Burlington, City of Sedro-Woolley, and Skagit County, would like to give special thanks to the 2008/09 Skagit Stream Team Volunteers! Since 1998, dedicated Skagit Stream Team volunteers have been monitoring the health of priority Skagit County streams and rivers. During the 2008-2009 monitoring season, 64 community residents contributed their time to the program to help protect and improve local streams. Because of our Stream Team volunteers we have been able to establish long-term baseline water quality data, identify hot spots, and document improvements over time on stream and river reaches that otherwise may go unmonitored.

The 2008/09 Skagit Stream Team volunteers were recognized with a special celebration, which was held on Saturday, June 6th at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve. Local clams and oysters were prepared and served by local Samish Bay shellfish growers, Bill Dewey of Taylor Shellfish Farms, and Paul Blau of Blau Oysters. Skagit County Commissioner Ron Wesen provided a special thank you presentation to the volunteers, and Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District, and Susan Wood, Padilla Bay Research Reserve presented certificates of appreciation. One of the highlights of the event, was a performance by Kulshan Creek Stream Team volunteers (also known as the "Salmon Sisters"), **Terri Dix (who composed the lyrics), Gena Di Labio, and Maria Magana**, who performed and sang "Home on the Sound," with audience participation.

Special recognition was also given to the 2009 Stream Team "Shining Star" recipients (see accompanying article), to **Jeanette Redmond** who entered all the data in an excel spreadsheet over the past year, and to our "Samish Storm Team" volunteers, **Jack Middleton, Kurt Buchanan, Pete Haase, Jack Sekora, Pat O'Hearn, and Tom Schmidt**. This dedicated group of volunteers spent countless hours over the last year conducting rain event monitoring at 13 stations in the Samish watershed. Their commitment has been valuable in protecting public health and identifying priority stream reaches in the watershed.



Gena Di Labio, Maria Magaña & Terri Dix help assess the health of Kulshan Creek by collecting samples at five monitoring stations on a regular basis.



Mark Morrow



Elaine Lease



Dick Lease



Jeanette Redmond

2008-2009 Skagit Stream Team Volunteers:

Bayview Drainage

Heather Jones
Nathan Jones
Vivian Mizuta
Joyce Moon
Michele Morse
Marina Rogowski

Brickyard Creek

Bill Bowen
Jerry Corrion
Pete Haase
Patrick Hurley
Jim Johnson
Jack Middleton
Richard Oickle

Fisher Creek

Fallon Burrow
Shannon Burrow
Scott Doman
Shirley Doman
Peter Dowden
Louanne Goodrich
Lindy Perrin
Carol Schwartz
Dean Schwartz

Gages Slough

Andy Bruland
Andrew Horton
Rebecca Horton
Patrick Hurley
Barb King
Mike King
Danita Smead

Kulshan Creek

Gena Di Labio
Terri Dix
Maria Magana
Alec McDougall
Sandy McDougall

No Name Slough

Everett Chu
Michelle McPhee
George Miller
Patrick O'Hearn
Stephanie Rasco
George Viverette

Samish Bay

Mariepaule Braule
Kurt Buchanan
Joseph Cox
Stephen Farmer
Stephen Goodrich
Deryl Hart
Sarah Huntington
Dick Lease
Elaine Lease
Sue Mehler
Lynn Morrow
Mark Morrow
Jeanette Redmond
Richard Redmond
Denise Runyan
Ron Runyan
Tom Schmidt

Samish Storm Team

Kurt Buchanan
Pete Haase
Jack Middleton
Pat O'Hearn
Tom Schmidt
Jack Sekora

Trumpeter Basin

Barbara Cheyney
Rhonda Jennings
Janis Kautz
Carol Owens
Don Owens
Frank Repplier
Jack Sekora



Special Thanks!

WILDLIFE HABITAT GARDEN TOUR HOSTS

The Skagit Valley Backyard Wildlife Habitat Team, Skagit P.U.D., and the Skagit Conservation District would like to extend special thanks to all the individuals who hosted "wildlife habitat garden tours" at their private homes for the 1st Annual Skagit Valley Wildlife Habitat Garden Tour, which was held on June 27th! The free event provided an opportunity for local residents to visit local gardens that have been certified as backyard wildlife habitat sanctuaries and to learn from these local wildlife habitat enthusiasts how to attract birds, butterflies, and other wonderful wildlife to their own garden!

- Kathy Hirdler**
- Lea Ann Vaughn**
- Ken and Linda Taylor**
- Robert and Janet Morgan**
- Heidi Nichols**
- Nancy Brown**
- Jerry and Kerry Salaz**
- Donna Schram**
- Jane Mayer**
- Bruce and Ingrid McBane**
- Ed and Mary Epps**

During the Wildlife Habitat Garden Tour held on June 27th, participants had the opportunity to meet the gardeners, ask questions, take in ideas, get inspired and enjoy the variety of gardens featured on the tour. This beautiful circulating habitat pond at the home of Bruce and Ingrid McBane of Bayview is fed by runoff from their roof.



2009 Backyard Conservation Stewardship Class Engages 47 Local Residents!

The Skagit Conservation District would like to commend the 47 "graduates" of the 2009 Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course! The annual 6-week program, held March 18th through April 22nd, teaches the importance of environmental stewardship by providing guidelines for adopting backyard gardening practices that have a positive impact on water quality and offset the loss of wildlife habitat in our community.

The Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course has engaged 265 participants since the program commenced in 2005. "The enthusiasm and community support for the program has been outstanding," notes SCD program coordinator, Kristi Carpenter. After taking the course, many of the graduates have had fun incorporating what they learned in their own backyard landscape. Some have completed the requirements to have their backyards certified through the National Wildlife Federation (www.nwf.org) and/or the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (www.wa.gov/wdfw). And some have gone a step further, like the members of the Skagit Valley Backyard Wildlife Habitat Team and the Fidalgo Backyard Wildlife Habitat Group, who have contributed thousands of volunteer hours promoting backyard conservation practices throughout our community. Last summer, the Fidalgo Backyard Wildlife Habitat Group achieved national recognition as a "Community Backyard Wildlife Habitat" by inspiring 550 Fidalgo Island

homeowners, "one yard at a time," to meet the backyard certification requirements.

The Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course has also gained the support of local municipalities, including the City of Mount Vernon, City of Burlington, City of Sedro-Woolley and Skagit County who have partnered with the Skagit Conservation District to educate and involve our community in reducing impacts to water quality from stormwater runoff. The best place to start is in our own backyards!

Together, the thoughtful actions we employ in our own backyards and neighborhoods will have a substantial positive effect by protecting and sustaining our streams, rivers, and wildlife "one yard at a time!"

We would also like to extend special thanks to the many organizations and individuals who shared their time and expertise in support of the program: Skagit Valley Backyard Wildlife Habitat Team, Fidalgo Backyard Wildlife Habitat Group, Libby Mills, Morning Light Design, WSU Extension Master Gardeners, Skagit County Master Composters/Recyclers, Native Plant Society, Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board, Skagit County Health Dept., Skagit County Public Works, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Deception Pass State Park, Floribunda Design, WA State Dept. of Ecology and WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife.

A WA Dept. of Ecology Stormwater Education Grant provided partial funding for the Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course. For more information about the program, contact Kristi Carpenter (360) 428-4313 or email: Kristi@skagitcd.org

2009 Backyard Conservation Stewardship Program "Graduates:"

- James Asa**
- Bill Bowen**
- Luella Breckenridge**
- Orville Breckenridge**
- Bonnie Brigham**
- Jannette Brigham**
- Robin Carneen**
- Juniper Carpenter**
- Suzanna Dentel**
- Jim Duffield**
- Linda Duffield**
- Tracy Edwards**
- Viola Garvin**
- Virgil Garvin**
- Terry Gorynski**
- Allison Gruss**
- Kathie Hansen**
- Mary Ruth Holder**
- Deanna Howard**
- April Hustead**
- Linda Johnson**
- Amy Jones**
- Kelly Joy**
- Myrna Judy**

- Jeff Kanske**
- Kimberly Kirk**
- Kathy MacMillan**
- Robin McDowell**
- Melissa McKay**
- Jennifer Milton**
- Angela Monahan**
- Gerald Patterson**
- Phyllis Patterson**
- Joan Pederson**
- Marshall Pederson**
- Marlo Quintasket**
- Susan Redd**
- Toby Rubner**
- Patricia Sheldon**
- Craig Sjostrom**
- Elizabeth Sjostrom**
- Danita Smead**
- Larry Stradford**
- Pamela Stradford**
- Brian Smead**
- Lea Ann Vaughn**
- Danielle Wensauer**

"It's been a busy day! First, One hummingbird, then Another!"

—Robert Sund



Pam Pritzl of the Native Plant Society provides a hands-on introduction to native plants during a Backyard Conservation Stewardship class field tour to the WSU Extension Discovery Garden last Spring. Mahonia (Oregon Grape) pictured above, is a great choice in any garden - it is drought tolerant, deer resistant, and attracts birds and butterflies.



Backyard Conservation Stewardship Program participants, Jannette and Bonnie Brigham, check out an owl pellet found in a brush pile during a class field tour at the home of Jack and Anne Middleton of Bayview.



"In the long run, the fate of each community still lies in the hands of the people who live there."

—Margaret Mead



Jack Hartt, Deception Pass State Park, showcases the LID (low impact development) features, including a rain garden, native plant landscaping, and a pervious paved turn-around area, that were incorporated at the new park office. The stop was one of several featured sites during a Backyard Conservation Stewardship class field day.

BACKYARD



Skagit Watershed Letterbox Quest

Discover and Explore the Wonders of the Skagit Watershed!

The 2nd Annual Skagit Watershed Letterbox Quest is now in progress and will continue through mid-October! Pick up your trail clues, which will lead you to 17 unique sites throughout the Skagit and Samish watersheds. Letterboxing is a fun, exciting way for all ages to explore the natural world and to learn about the treasures of our beautiful area (great family activity). Participants follow clues to discover letterboxes hidden throughout the watershed, each hosted by a participating organization. Each letterbox includes a journal (for stamping) and a stamp (most hand made) for participants to place in their own journal (be sure to bring a journal and stamp with you). In addition, participants will collect a "secret word" to record at each site. Skagit Conservation Education Alliance (SCEA), in partnership with 13 other local organizations (including the Skagit Conservation District!) is hosting the project. You can find the 2009 Skagit Watershed Letterbox Trail clues on line at www.skagitwater.org or at www.atlasquest.com or they can be picked up at our local public libraries or at the Skagit Conservation District office, located at 2021 E. College Way, Suite #203. A big October celebration is being planned for participating individuals and families – for date and time email: Peteh@skagitwater.org.



The Skagit Watershed Letterbox Quest provides outdoor fun, education, and adventure the whole family will enjoy! Pictured above, three generations of the Demming-Vollegraaf family follow the clues to a hidden letterbox in the upper Skagit watershed.



Help Support the Skagit Valley Backyard Wildlife Habitat Project – Certify Your Own Yard as a Backyard Wildlife Habitat or Sanctuary!

It's easy and affordable (and FUN!) -- all you need are trees, shrubs and flowers that attract butterflies and birds or other wildlife; providing food, water, shelter and a sustainable place to raise their young. A certified site can be as small as a container garden on your patio. And what fun you and your family can have viewing and learning about wildlife and enjoying and relaxing in your very own backyard sanctuary. No garden is too big or small to make into a wildlife friendly haven!

The Skagit Valley Backyard Wildlife Habitat Team, a local volunteer citizen group working in partnership with the Skagit Conservation District, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, has been spearheading local efforts in the greater Mount Vernon area. By meeting a goal of 250 residential, business and schoolyard certified habitats, the greater Mount Vernon area will receive national recognition as a "Certified Community Wildlife Habitat!" Other Puget Sound communities working towards the same goal include: Bainbridge Island, Bellingham, Central Houghton neighborhood, Crescent Valley BMA, Edmonds, Mercer Island, NE Seattle, Poulsbo, Sammamish, Shoreline, and Whidbey Island. The communities of Alki, Camano Island, Fidalgo/Anacortes, Lake Forest Park and Tukwila have already achieved this designation. The basic idea of the program is that by becoming healthier for wildlife, communities also become healthier for people.

Certifying your yard 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.

Can you find the five elements of wildlife habitat in your backyard?

There are five main categories that the program promotes. Use this checklist to determine if your backyard could be certified as a haven for birds, butterflies and other wildlife by providing the five elements.

1. Food for nourishment

- Birdfeeder
- Shrubs or trees that produce fruits, acorns, seeds or berries
- Wildflowers that produce nectar
- Healthy insect populations to feed birds and other wildlife

2. Water for drinking and bathing

- Birdbath
- Pond
- Shallow dish

3. Cover to protect wildlife against the elements and predators

- Densely branched shrubs
- Hollow logs
- Rock piles
- Brush piles
- Stone walls
- Evergreens
- Meadow grasses
- Pond

4. Places to Raise Young

- Mature trees or grassland areas
- Host plants for caterpillars
- Pond for amphibians
- Brush or rock pile
- Burrows or dens

5. In addition to the four habitat basics, it's also important to use sustainable gardening practices.

- Growing native vegetation
- Minimizing chemical pesticides and fertilizers
- Building healthy soil
- Composting



Congratulations! If you checked boxes in each of the above categories, your yard could become a certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat site through National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Wildlife Habitat™ program and/or the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife's Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary program. If you would like to learn more, contact Donna Schram, Skagit Valley Backyard Wildlife Habitat Team at (360) 848-0692 or Kristi Carpenter, SCD, at (360) 428-4313 or email: ddschram@comcast.net or Kristi@skagitcd.org about how to get certified.

The Skagit Valley Backyard Wildlife Habitat Team is spearheading local efforts to achieve recognition as a Community Wildlife Habitat for the greater Mount Vernon area. Bottom Row: Donna Schram (kneeling), Heidi Nichols, Kerry Salaz, Jerry Salaz Back Row: Kristi Carpenter, Loren Sande, Corinne Sande, Mike Newman and Tina Newman. Missing from photo: Ani Gurnee, Anne Middleton, and Stefanie Spatzier



Volunteer Spotlight... RICH BERGNER EARNS NATIONAL HONOR!

Rich Bergner, above, received national honors and recognition for his involvement in the Fidalgo Backyard Wildlife Habitat Group.

Hats off and special congratulations to **Rich Bergner** of South Fidalgo who was selected by the National Wildlife Federation as its National Community Volunteer of the Year! A participant of SCD's Watershed Masters Volunteer program and Backyard Conservation Stewardship Program, Rich has also been recognized at the local level for his many volunteer contributions and was the recipient of the Skagit Conservation District "Inspirational Award" in 2007. In late March, the National Wildlife Federation named Bergner the National 2008 Community Volunteer of the Year for his work in leading local efforts in helping Fidalgo Island become a certified Wildlife Habitat Community. After completing the Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course in 2005, Rich inspired other Fidalgo Island residents to join him in forming the Fidalgo Backyard Wildlife Habitat Group. Together they achieved their goal of earning national designation as a "Community Backyard Wildlife Habitat" last summer with over 572 Fidalgo homes, businesses, schools, parks, and churches certified as suitable habitat for wildlife and providing sustainable gardening practices. Thank you, Rich, for your commitment to making our community a better place to live and for your numerous volunteer contributions!

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

– Margaret Mead (1901-1977), Anthropologist
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Skagit Conservation District Sponsors ...

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Manager
Local Government & Community Relations
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360.766.5504 fax Burlington, WA 98233
360.941.2100 cell
ray.trzynka@pse.com
PSE.com

WHO WE ARE:

District Staff

Cora Amburn-Lijek, Staff Assistant
Susan Bridgman, Administrative Assistant
Kristi Carpenter, Public Information & Education Coordinator
Al Craney, Forester
Jennifer Hinderman, Firewise Program Coordinator & Resource Technician
Joe Holtcamp, CREP/GIS Coordinator
Carolyn Kelly, District Manager
Lori Kyle, Resource Monitoring Specialist
Cindy Pierce, Youth Education & Data Information Coordinator
John Schuh, Livestock, Small Farm Planning & Technical Program Coordinator
Tom Slocum, Professional Engineer

Board of Supervisors

Janet McRae, Chair
Paul Blau, Vice Chair
Thijs Jacobson, Auditor
Tony Hansen, Member
Ryan Sakuma, Member

WEBSITES:

Skagit Conservation District – www.skagitcd.org
Washington State Conservation Commission – www.scc.wa.gov

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A public election for Skagit CD board supervisor, which is a volunteer position (i.e., There's no pay, just coffee and doughnuts at the monthly meetings.) was held on March 10th at the Mount Vernon USDA Service Center. The election was certified by the Washington State Conservation Commission at its May 21st quarterly meeting. Congratulations to Thijs Jacobson, who won the election! Thijs replaces Mike Naylor, who did not run for re-election and was appointed an Associate Supervisor at the June 23rd board meeting.

At its June 23rd monthly board meeting, the Board of Supervisors voted Janet McRae as Chair, Paul Blau as Vice Chair, and Thijs Jacobson as Auditor. Janet has served as a supervisor since 1994, operates a cattle ranch with her husband, Jim, and is a board member of the Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland and the Skagit County Cattlemen. Paul has served as a supervisor since 1996 and is the owner of Blau's Oysters. The other two supervisors are Tony Hansen and Ryan Sakuma. Tony joined the board in 2007 and is a livestock consultant. Ryan Sakuma also joined the board in 2007, is the Support Director at Sakuma Brothers, Board Chair of the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, and is a graduate of Leadership Skagit. For information about our newest supervisor, please see the article about Thijs (at right).

New Skagit CD board supervisor, Thijs Jacobson, Auditor



Welcome to Thijs Jacobson, who was sworn in as a Skagit CD (district) board supervisor and voted Auditor at the June 23rd board meeting. Thijs is married to Meagan, a stay at home mom who takes care of their two-year old daughter Olivia, whom Thijs adores. Thijs works at Washington Alder in the Resource Department. His work includes assisting log buyers, writing grants, researching alternative energy sources, and keeping up with government policies and regulations. In his free time, Thijs enjoys watching and playing sports, especially basketball and martial arts.

Thijs is a graduate of the 30th Class (which he claims is the best class ever) of the Washington Ag and Forestry Association's (WAFA) leadership program and was the recipient of the Carol Mercer Award. The award is voted on by the class members and is given to the person in the class who motivated them the most. Thijs said that the WAFA's leadership program was an amazing experience, which taught him leadership skills, how to speak in public settings, how the political process works, and how to thoroughly prepare for presentations of ideas and issues to individuals and groups and in public meetings; it also made him aware of many agricultural and forestry issues and opened up networking opportunities. Thijs said it is this leadership program that led to his involvement in the district first as an associate supervisor and now as a supervisor.

As a new supervisor, Thijs hopes to learn more about the community so that he can make an impact and make improvements. He said he likes the fact that the district works one-on-one with landowners as a partner, offering voluntary conservation solutions at no cost to the landowner. Some of the challenges he expects to face as a new supervisor are learning about all of the district's projects and locations, monitoring the follow-through of the staff, learning about the staff and helping them to reach a level of excellence, and figuring out how best to increase public awareness of what the district has to offer.

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SKAGIT CONSERVATION DISTRICT
2021 E. COLLEGE WAY, SUITE 203
MOUNT VERNON, WA 98273-2373
PHONE: (360) 428-4313
Website: skagitcd.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



SCD Board Meetings are held at 2021 E. College Way on the third Tuesday of every month at 6:30 a.m. and are open to the public. Please call (360) 428-4313 to verify meeting dates.