



SCD

SKAGIT CONSERVATION DISTRICT

News

Volume 31, Number 2

SOIL • WATER • WOODLAND

Summer 2015

Skagit Conservation District

Offering free technical, financial, and educational resources for landowners

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STRESSED OUT FORESTS

Humans know all too well what it means to be stressed out. Things like work, relationship problems, traffic, and money immediately come to mind. But did you know that forests can be stressed, too? Wait a second! Forests don't have *feelings*! True, (although there are some that might disagree) but they can still get stressed in a physical way. Healthy forests provide a plethora of benefits to the functioning of our planet and the species that exist on it. As humans, our existence is tied to our forests whether we realize it or not. When forests get stressed, and those benefits that humans and other living things rely on start to slip away, our future begins look a bit gloomy. The key to avoiding a stressed out, gloomy future is to identify and address forest health problems BEFORE we see the dead trees.

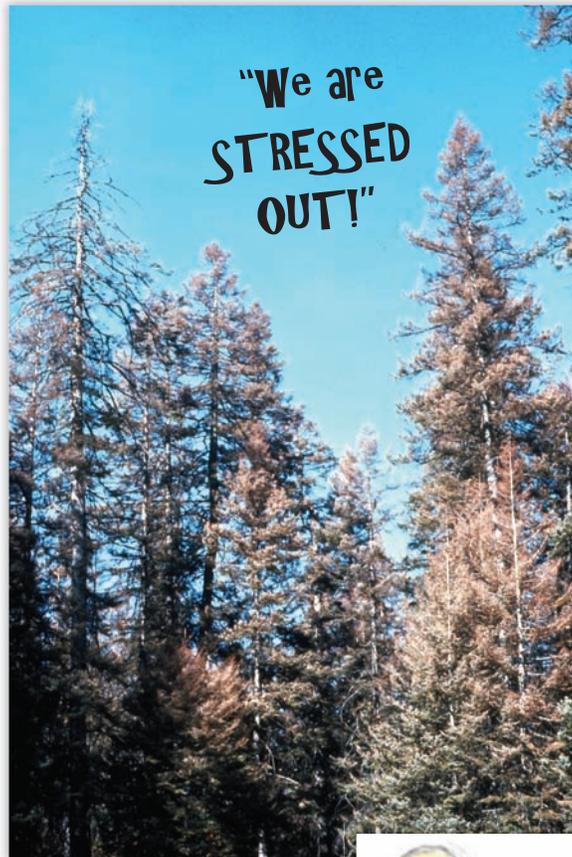
Benefits of healthy forests:

- Clean water – healthy forests act as a sponge to store, filter and release water within the watershed
- Oxygen
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Timber and other forest products
- Recreation
- Long-term carbon storage that offsets fossil fuel emissions
- Stream flow, duration & quality is improved in a healthy functioning forest
- Aquifer recharge
- Habitat connectivity

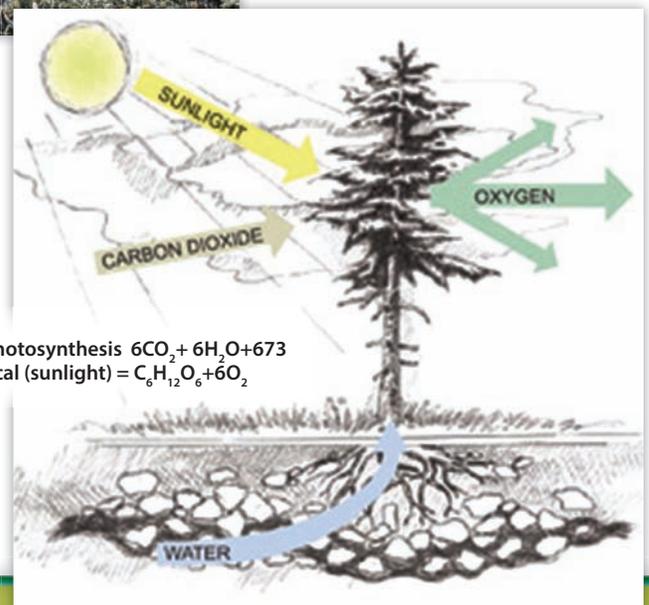
Sources of stress to our forests:

- Population expansion, conversion to non-forest use, and fragmentation of forestlands.
 - Wildlife habitat is reduced and fragmented; travel corridors and passages are lost.
 - Secondary conditions can cause water quality issues, like increased impervious pavement resulting in stormwater runoff and pollution in local waterways.
 - Increased wildland-urban interface areas (the area where homes are adjacent to natural areas such as forests), which means greater risk of community damage/ destruction from wildfires as well as damage to natural resources
- Changing climate conditions
 - With projected increases in temperatures, and reduced snowpack in the spring leading to drier conditions and drought, trees compete for moisture. As competition increases and there is less available water, the trees get stressed. This stress results in their susceptibility to insect infestations and disease.

- Diseased and insect infested trees are much more prone to wildfire ignition and spread.
- Healthy trees that normally store carbon and offset fossil fuel emissions cannot properly store carbon if they are stressed. Also, the carbon that is “banked” in our forests gets released to the atmosphere during a wildfire when the trees are burning.
- Intense wildfires can destroy the important organic layer in the soil and cause massive soil erosion during rain events because of the hydrophobic layer formed on the soil when it has been destroyed. Soil productivity is essential to water quality and stream flow.



In Skagit County stressors to our forests are interconnected with changes on the landscape and climate; often becoming a complicated and detailed web of cause and effect. There are two perspectives to take; one when considering forest health, and one when addressing forest health. When considering the issue of the health of a forest, it is important to look at the bigger picture; considering things like changing climate conditions, long-term planning, and the role of that forest within the entire watershed. As an example of reasons why to consider changing climate as a major factor in forest health, just take a look at parts of California where the iconic redwoods are dying at an alarming rate due to drought stress. These environmental changes can result in tree species shifts, transforming the forest landscape.



The other perspective is much narrower. When addressing forest health issues, we really need to be keying in to specific ecological sites. For example, on a 5 acre lot, there may be one area where hardwoods proliferate and the soil stays moist and another area within that same lot where lodgepole pine grows and the soils are much drier. Would we want to address these two areas the same way? Of course not! Knowing the specifics of your site in order to make smart management decisions is key. Managing your forest so that the healthiest trees can thrive is one of the most important things a forest landowner can do. Removing trees in poor health will reduce the competition for available soil moisture and reduce threat from insects and disease. Actively managing your forest provides important opportunities for adaptation because forests are the most plentiful source of the cleanest water. As water becomes increasingly scarce and air quality concerns increase, the importance of maintaining healthy forests in watersheds will increase substantially. The argument for managing our forests based on ecological site conditions is well supported by new research provided by J. Franklin and

N. Johnson "A Restoration Framework for Federal Forests in the Pacific Northwest", published in the Journal of Forestry, December 2012. The authors propose a forest restoration strategy where forest types are based on ecological stratification rather than the traditional categorization of "Westside forests" and "Eastside forests". Conditions typically associated with one or the other occur on both sides of the Cascade Range. An example is the Paradise Fire currently burning in Olympic National Park in the rainforest. The fire is occurring very early in the season and burning through the canopy due to unseasonably hot and dry conditions that haven't been seen since the Forks fire in 1951.

It may seem a bummer to have to think about and address losing the fundamental benefits of our forests, but it's too late to think about it when the trees are red with disease and the landscape is scarred and blackened by fire. Consider the social cost of permanently losing forests. We have the ability to avert such catastrophe and help establish resilient, healthy, beneficial forests by looking at the big picture and getting out and helping our forests thrive.

For more information or assistance with assessing the health of your forest, please contact our Forester, Al Craney at **360-428-4313**, or email al@skagitcd.org. You can also visit our website at skagitcd.org/forestry

For other useful information, check out this webinar from the Western Governors' Association called "Managing Forest Health for Water Resources" that can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGx-ilbKDhk>

QUICK TIPS FOR HOMEOWNERS: WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

With fire weather conditions so extreme this summer, it is a good idea for homeowners to be prepared!

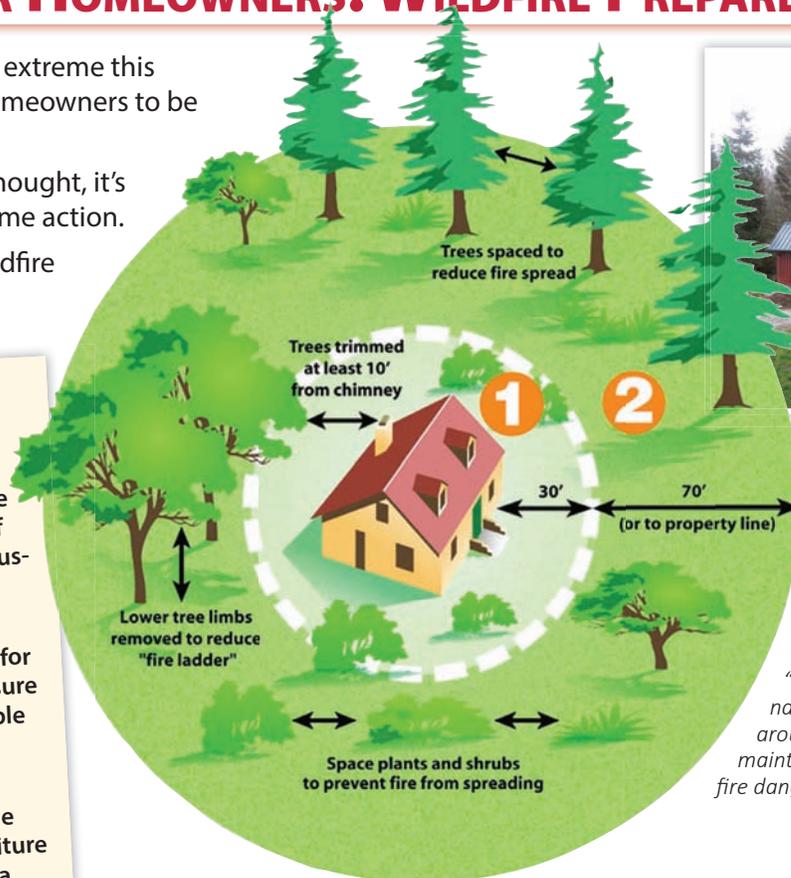
If you haven't already given it thought, it's time to get outside and take some action.

Here are some quick tips for wildfire preparedness.

Wildfire Preparedness Quick Tips:

Increase the resilience of your home by replacing flammable siding, roof and deck materials with non-combustible materials.

1. Clear brush from along your driveway to allow better access for emergency vehicles and make sure your address sign is clearly visible (e.g. reflective numbering).
2. Clean roofs, gutters and decks; remove dead branches and pine needles; move flammable furniture inside if leaving for more than a day.
3. Replace vent screens with 1/8" or smaller metal mesh.
4. Move wood piles at least 30 feet away from structures.



Above: This house features Firewise construction concepts such as a metal roof and non-combustible siding.

Left: Some additional tips for around the yard/property. This area is referred to as "defensible space", which is the natural and landscaped area around a structure that has been maintained and designed to reduce fire danger.

Need some guidance with wildfire preparedness on your property?

Call our Firewise Program Coordinator, Jenny Hinderman, **360-428-4313** or email jenny@skagitcd.org to set up a free site visit.

The Cure for Knotweed: *A success story*

There has been a lot of effort the past few years to control Japanese knotweed. As described by Department of Ecology, "Japanese knotweed is an escaped ornamental that is becoming increasingly common along stream corridors and rights-of-way in Washington. The species forms dense stands that crowd out all other vegetation, degrading native plant and animal habitat. This perennial plant is difficult to control because it has extremely vigorous rhizomes that form a deep, dense mat. In addition, the plant can resprout from fragments; along streams, plant parts may fall into the water to create new infestations downstream."

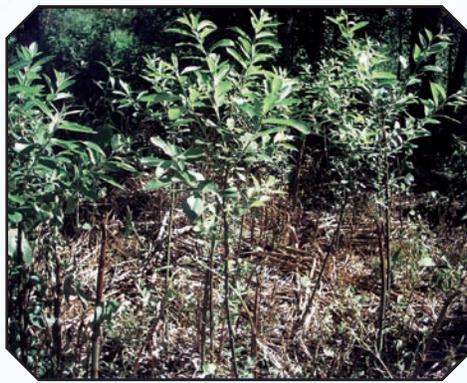
The most common way of controlling knotweed is to apply herbicide to it. This takes several treatments over multiple years to eradicate it. In the fall of 2007, the SCD worked with a landowner along the Samish River on a different approach to dealing with the knotweed problem. The landowner had a riparian buffer along the Samish River and a large area of the project area was dominated by knotweed with nothing else growing in that spot. So, what to do?

The first step was to push the knotweed over in early fall to get it to a manageable height so that herbicide could be applied. This was done in the fall of 2007.



Complete knotweed infestation.

The next spring, 6 foot tall hooker willow and pacific willow whips were planted in a very tight spacing, 2 to 3 feet from each other. These were densely planted in hopes that they would have a chance to leaf out and start forming a canopy to shade out the fast growing knotweed. In order to give the newly planted willows a leg up on the knotweed competition, one application of herbicide was applied to the knotweed.



The willows leafing out in the spring of 2008.

The willows developed a canopy very quickly and with the tight spacing there were no lower limbs growing on the willows. Each one resembled an open umbrella.



The willows formed a canopy cover with no lower limbs creating an umbrella appearance and beginning to shade out the knotweed.

"Although this process may seem slow, it has resulted in the ideal outcome – a complete eradication of a dense stand of invasive knotweed ..."

By year three, 2010, the willows had developed a good canopy and were starting to shade out the knotweed. No more herbicides were applied. There were a few knotweed plants in the area but they were slow growing and didn't get very tall due to the shade from the willow canopy.



The existing project area with no sign of knotweed 8 years later.

After 8 years growth and revisiting the project area for the first time after a number of years, there was **NO SIGN OF KNOTWEED GROWING AT ALL!** That's pretty impressive for an area that was totally dominated by knotweed 8 years ago.

Although this process may seem slow, it has resulted in the ideal outcome – a complete eradication of a dense stand of invasive knotweed and a return to a healthier stand of vegetation that will provide benefits to the Samish River and its riparian area into the future.

Clean Samish Initiative 90 Day Project Review

(Excerpted from the 6/18/15 Skagit County Public Works press release)

An intensive 90 day effort to identify and reduce sources of fecal coliform in the Samish watershed and Samish Bay has highlighted successes and on-going challenges. Although fecal bacteria is still trending to lower levels, these levels do not meet state water quality standards.

The collaborative project identified the need for increased septic system inspections and maintenance, increased mud and manure management by livestock owners, continued focused water quality monitoring, and the need to strengthen partnerships between residents and agencies and increase landowner access to available resources to assist in fixing problems on their property.

The Clean Samish Initiative has been striving to improve the health of the Samish watershed since 2010. Fecal contamination has dropped roughly 80% percent in the last five years, and the number of days that the shellfish beds are closed due to pollution has dropped significantly. By partnering with residents to reach a common goal of clean water for all, regulatory action has been kept to a minimum.



Above: It's easy to appreciate the beauty of the Samish Bay area when you have a photo like this one overlooking the bay with Samish Island in the background and Taylor Shellfish oyster beds in the foreground. The Samish River is also visible to the left of the oyster beds.

The Clean Samish Initiative remains an on-going effort. For more information please contact Karen DuBose at (360) 416-1440, or on the web at www.skagitcounty.net/CSI

Throughout the year, there are many fun and educational activities, events, and volunteer opportunities that either take place in, or focus on, the Samish Watershed. For information on these events, be sure to check our web and facebook pages! www.skagitcd.org



Above: Skagit CD and partners attended the 2015 Taylor Shellfish Festival; a family event held at Taylor Shellfish to teach people about shellfish and clean water. The watershed model, shown here, was a fun and interactive way for kids to learn about stormwater pollution and how it effects our waterways and the oysters growing in Samish Bay.



Left: One such event was the Samish Open House held at Alger Hall on June 13th. In the photo Big Foot shows some kids how to toss poo into the garbage can. This game teaches people the importance of picking up after your pets in a fun way. Big Foot has become the mascot for the "How BIG is Your Footprint? Clean Water-Every Step Counts" campaign.



For more fun Big Foot sightings visit the Skagit County's Clean Water facebook page.



4th Annual Sustainable *Where local economy*

*"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."

The Skagit Conservation District, Chuckanut Transition, and the Friday Creek Habitat Stewards would like to give special thanks to the Samish watershed residents who opened their gardens for the 4th Annual Sustainable Samish Garden Tour, which was held on Sunday, July 19th! This year's event featured five garden vistas and farms that demonstrate features of sustainability, healthy living, and environmental and community responsibility - all brimming with inspiration! Thank you to everyone who attended and to this years featured gardeners: John and Lindsay Boettcher (Knotleavin' Farm), Jim and Kara Kintzele, Sue Mitchell & David Saxton, Carla and Dave Glassman, and the Alger Community Hall (which featured the community inspired demonstration naturescape garden and stream enhancement project on Silver Creek).

Meet the Gardeners

Kintzeles' Garden and Stream Restoration Project:

Pictured, Jim and Kara Kintzele of Southern Exposure Family Farm, stand in the forefront of the 2 acre stream and salmon restoration project they completed on their Thomas Creek property last fall. The Kintzeles used the excavated soils from the restoration project to create 5 terraces on the hillside, allowing them to maximize the warmth of the natural southern exposure of the hillside to grow warm loving organic crops including melons and cantaloupe. Funding for the stream restoration project was provided through the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to help plan and implement conservation practices. Public benefits include enhanced natural resources that help sustain agricultural productivity and environmental quality while supporting continued economic development, recreation, and scenic beauty.



The Kintzeles' 20' x 70' greenhouse provides growing area for tomatoes and peppers. They also grow many specialty crops like purple cauliflower, broccoli, asparagus, artichokes and hops and basics like chard, corn, kale, squash and potatoes on their 11 acre organic farm.

Glassmans' Garden:

Carla and Dave Glassmans' beautiful 7 acre setting on the edge of a large beaver pond in the upper Samish featured a home aquaponics system, an adorable homemade insect house for attracting a variety of bugs and pollinator friends (constructed by Carla), native plantings and riparian restoration, as well as fruit and organic vegetable growing areas.



The newest addition to the Glassman garden is over 600 gallons and over 100 square feet of vegetable growing area of aquaponics. Aquaponics combines raising fish and growing plants together. Water from the fish tank is cycled through inert media grow beds where the fish waste is naturally converted to plant usable material which is taken up by the plants, both feeding the plants and cleaning the water which then cycles back into the fish tank until the next cycle of the pump. Happy fish! Happy plants!

Visitors to the Glassman's were drawn to Carla's adorable insect hotel she recently constructed to provide habitat for wild bees, spiders and ladybugs. Providing a home for pollinators and pest controllers near a garden aids in pollination and in keeping garden pests under control.



Boettchers' Garden:

Lindsay and John Boettcher of "Knotleavin Farm" shared their thirty acre and 40 year life lessons in animal husbandry, forest stewardship, and garden applications with attendees of the Sustainable Samish Garden Tour. Once there, the name of their farm was well understood – we didn't want to leave this beautiful farm/garden setting either! Visitors were also able to take advantage of a guided tour of the Raymer Conservation Area, provided by the Butler Creek Conservation Area Volunteer Land Steward, Jim Owens. This ten acre jewel adjoins the Boettcher farm and extends to a beautiful cathedral like grove of Cedars near the banks of Butler Creek.



Samish Garden Tour

and conservation meet

Mitchell/Saxton Garden:

David Saxton, Sue Mitchell, and Teddy (their dog) opened their doors to visitors for the 4th Annual Sustainable Samish Garden Tour. Their garden, nestled in a magical woodland setting along a salmon spawning stream in the Friday Creek watershed, is certified through the National Wildlife Federation & WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife as a "Backyard Wildlife Habitat/Sanctuary." Their garden featured a mix of native, pollinator, and drought tolerant plants that provide valuable habitat for native wildlife, birds, and pollinators. The greenhouse, raised bed organic vegetable garden, and drip irrigation system to conserve water were also a highlight.

This photo was captured

at Sue and David's garden. Whether you are a farmer of many acres, land manager of a large tract of land, or a gardener with a small urban lot, you can increase the number of pollinators in your area by making conscious choices to include plants that provide essential habitat for bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, hummingbirds, and other pollinators.



Another highlight at the Mitchell/Saxton garden was the use of a low impact alternative to a conventional foundation called Diamond Pier Pin Foundation System that they used in building their new home 3 years ago. Diamond Piers keep topsoil and natural drainage intact so the home's entire footprint is considered to be pervious. Normal excavation and soil disturbance permits are not needed as Diamond Pier foundations sit on the top soil, eliminating all excavation and soil compaction. This system virtually eliminates soil disturbances and stormwater impacts to protect stream health from construction activities.

Alger Hall Naturescape Demonstration Garden:

Established in 2013 by Alger neighbors and volunteers, with support from the Friday Creek Habitat Stewards, Skagit Conservation District, and a Rose Foundation Grant, this beautiful sustainable garden is all about community! Visitors had the opportunity to see pairings of native plants and naturescape techniques that home gardens can apply to their own yards to invite wildlife, lower maintenance, reduce pesticide use, protect neighborhood streams and support local ecology. The community-driven stream enhancement project on Silver Creek was also a highlight at this site.



Cider Press...

A wealth of educational resources and information were also offered at the Alger Community Hall including the new community cider press hosted by Chuckanut Transition.



Visitors to Knotleavin Farm witnessed a variety of growing methods, including inspiring ideas for dealing with clay soils. John also provided hands on demonstrations of simple farm and garden tool repair, a large scale shop food dryer, and septic system landscaping.



The Boettcher's flourishing vegetable garden.

"Sustainability is a way of living that meets the needs of the present without impacting the needs of the future."

– Sustainable Sites Initiative



4TH ANNUAL



Kids in Nature!

**Families Outdoors at
Pomona Grange Park**
SATURDAY, AUGUST 8TH · 11 am – 2 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, and partners** invite you to join us on Saturday, August 8th (11 am – 2 pm) for **Kids in Nature: Families Outdoors 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, water quality, and native plants! Take a walk on the “Treeture Trail!” Make a fairy house and discover the benefits of gardening for wildlife (and childlife)! Play games! The event will also feature a special appearance by “Blossom” the Treeture and an opportunity to meet your Friday Creek neighbors and interact with local natural resource professionals! Literature and resource information on backyard gardening, native plants, birds, butterflies, and more will also be available.

Pre-registration is requested by August 6th 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



Kids discover the treasures of trees on the The Kids in Nature “Treeture Trail”

BE SEPTIC SMART

Failing septic systems can cause waste to leak into groundwater, streams, rivers, and lakes. Let's face it - nobody wants to be responsible for polluting our public water sources with their waste. So, what are some things we can do to avoid being “poo-lluters”?

Maintenance:

- Have your septic inspected every 1-3 years (depending on the type of system) and pumped if needed.
 - If you are unsure as to the requirements for your system, contact the Skagit County Health Department or visit their website at <http://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/HealthEnvironmental/onsitesewer.htm>
- Don't overload your system by putting garbage down the drain or toilets.
- Avoid use of chemical cleaning products labeled toxic – they kill the beneficial bacteria in the system.
- Do not drive heavy vehicles or allow livestock in the drain field and tank areas.
- Maintaining a well-functioning septic system may cost you some dollars up front; however it can save you big money in the long-run. It's akin to maintaining your

vehicle or your health to avoid the expenses that often come with major repairs.

Signs of a Failing Septic System:

- If your septic system is 14 years old (or older), don't be surprised if begins to show signs of failure.
- Odors, surfacing sewage, soggy spots with lush green grass
- Lush green growth in the drain field or septic tank area, even during dry weather
- Plumbing or septic tank backups
- Slow draining fixtures

If you'd like to learn more about how your septic system works and how to take care of it, check out the free online class called Septics 101, at <http://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/HealthEnvironmental/septics101test.htm>

Being septic smart and ensuring that your septic system is working properly means you can rest easy knowing your septic waste isn't getting into our waterways.



Far left: Raw sewage in the water is detected by a dye test. A special dye is flushed down the toilet, then after a couple days nearby waterways are observed to see if the green dye appears. Its presence indicates a failing septic has leached sewage into the ground.

Left: A septic system being pumped by a professional.

Photos courtesy of Skagit County Environmental Health

Skagit Conservation District Youth Education Programs

The Skagit Conservation District offers many great youth education activities throughout the year.

Skagit Conservation Tour – open to fifth and sixth grade students and held at Pomona Grange Park each May. Students participate in hands-on educational stations hosted by resource professionals that feature forestry, salmon life cycle, bivalves, soils, and water quality activities.



Above: Salmon Life Cycle Station – hosted by Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group

Right: Macroinvertebrate Station – hosted by Padilla Bay Research Reserve



Left: Wilderness (Impact Monster) – hosted by the Forest Service

SPECIAL "THANK YOU" TO SIERRA PACIFIC FOUNDATION FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING!!

Poster Contests – open to Skagit County students, grades kindergarten through twelfth. Natural resource topics change annually.

Right: Blossom the Treeture with Overall Poster Contest Winner Analicia Lozano (left) and Runner-up Winner Anali Lozano (right). Both are eleventh graders at Emerson High School. The poster contest theme for the year was "Local Heroes: Your Hard Working Pollinators".



Arbor Day

Tree Distribution – Arbor Day in Washington is celebrated on the second Wednesday of April. The Skagit Conservation District has a long standing tradition of distributing seedlings to Skagit County students. Each year, 500 seedlings are given to area students!!!



Stormwater Presentations

– open to classes countywide. These hour-long presentations focus on water quality and feature our popular watershed model.



Envirothon – High School Environmental Science Competition where teams of 5 students compete in Regional, State and North American events.



Contact Cindy Pierce for more information, cindy@skagitcd.org or visit our Youth Education Page at skagitcd.org/youth_education



Photo courtesy of Karen Bishop

Manure Share Program

Skagit Conservation District is now facilitating the Manure Share Program. This is a community resource connecting local farmers who have excess manure on their site with local gardeners/or landscapers who need manure to improve soil in gardens and landscapes.

It's simple, FREE, and is a great way to recycle valuable nutrients and organic matter!

Visit our Small Farm page and find out more about our Manure Exchange Program and to access the most current list of manure available!

http://www.skagitcd.org/small_farm

Questions? Contact Jeff Frazier, Small Farm Planner at **360-428-4313** or email jeff@skagitcd.org



Don't miss this fun family event ...



Saturday, October 3
&
Sunday, October 4, 2015

www.festivaloffamilyfarms.com

Back in May, the Governor made an emergency drought declaration for our state. This means that cities, counties, and other entities are authorized to take measures to help alleviate drought hardships. Because droughts appear to be occurring more frequently it is important to take action on your own property to help minimize the negative impacts of drought. Here are some tips:

Drought Tips for the Farm

1. Use rotational grazing. This allows pasture grasses to grow deeper roots which lessens plant stress and allows them to deal better with dry periods.
2. Capture roof runoff. It's not too late to prepare for next summer. Installing a rainwater collection system will supplement the need for non-potable water for livestock watering.
3. Provide adequate shade for livestock.

Drought Tips for Yard & Garden

1. Skip watering the lawn. Embrace the golden brown look, but make sure to keep it mowed and use the mulching blade. The grass clippings will help insulate the soil and add water-holding organic matter.
 2. Mulch and/or compost around trees & shrubs. This helps keep weeds down that compete for water. It also helps hold moisture in. Make sure to keep the mulch away from the trunk of the tree.
 3. Water plants early in the day or late at night to reduce evaporation loss. Water less frequently, but for longer lengths of time, to encourage deep root growth. Check hoses for leaks before watering plants, and position sprinklers so they water only plants – not the road or house.
 4. Install drip irrigation. An irrigation system can save up to 60 percent of all water used in garden care.
 5. Eliminate weeds to discourage competition for water. Consider a landscape fabric between the soil and your mulch to further reduce weeds.
- For a list of drought tolerant plants for the Pacific Northwest, visit, <http://bit.ly/1CENjeZ>
- For more drought related resources, visit <http://scc.wa.gov/drought-resources-for-landowners/>

Visit our Small Farm Page for Best Management Tip Sheets including:

- ✓ Farm Planning Overview
- ✓ Heavy Use Area Protection
- ✓ Manure Management Overview
- ✓ Technical Assistance
- ✓ Cost Share Program

http://www.skagitcd.org/small_farm

Acres of Fun for Everyone!

2015 BACKYARD CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP SHORT COURSE



2015 Backyard Conservation Stewardship class participants toured the Dave Brookings Rain Garden and the County's new pervious paved parking lot at the Skagit County Administration building during an evening session focusing on stormwater, rain gardens, and low impact development.



"My garden, and those of every wildlife gardener I know, is about giving back. Giving back my tiny slice of the planet of which I am the steward. Giving back some native plants so that our bees don't continue to disappear, so that butterflies have someplace to lay their eggs, and so the birds have something to feed their young."

– Carole Sevilla Brown, Conservation Biologist

The Skagit Conservation District, in partnership with Skagit County, and the Cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley, would like to extend special thanks to the participants of the 2015 Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course! We commend this enthusiastic class of 46 community residents for completing the program and for their personal commitments to make changes in their own backyards that will benefit the environment now and in the future by providing habitat for wildlife and improving air, water, and soil quality. Thank you for your stewardship and involvement in making our neighborhoods, our community, and our world, a better place to live.

The Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course is an annual six week program offered by the Skagit Conservation District each spring. Participants learn the principles of how to create beautiful landscapes that benefit humans, animals, stream health and the environment... one backyard at a time.

For more information contact Kristi Carpenter (360) 428-4313 or email:

kristi@skagitcd.org

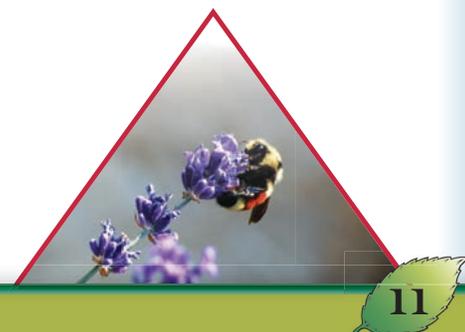


Above: The class experienced a lot of rain, a little sunshine, and beautiful garden treasures while touring the Discovery Garden on Memorial Highway with Master Gardener, Julie Powell. The class rotated through a series of stations and learned about native plants, naturescape gardening, integrated pest management (IPM), composting, and more.



Left: Sue Mehler's whimsical and beautiful woodland garden was one of the featured stops for the 2015 Backyard Conservation class field tour of certified backyard wildlife habitats, which was held in Anacortes this spring.

For a list of the 2015 BYC Short Course Participants visit our backyard wildlife webpage at http://skagitcd.org/backyard_wildlife.



Thank You 2015 Marine Biotoxin Volunteers!



"... O the Oyster passes time
Serving Nature's grand design
Without a second thought about his fate
He consumes the briny blue
Purifies it through and through
Until he's plump enough to grace a dinner plate..."

– "The Oyster is Our Friend", Lloyd Vivola

The Skagit Conservation District, Skagit County Public Health, and the Washington State Dept. of Health would like to give special thanks to the 2015 participants of the Marine Biotoxin Volunteer program. It is through their active participation that we are able to protect the health of community residents and visitors. The goal of the Marine Biotoxin Volunteer Program is to provide an early public health warning of shellfish toxicity by routinely assessing our local recreational shellfish harvesting beaches for the presence of Paralytic Shellfish Poison (PSP) and Diarrhetic Shellfish Poison (DSP).

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.



Above: What kind of clam is this? Marine Biotoxin volunteers John Buchanan and Sharon Riggs practice clam identification during the annual training at March's Point.

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.

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?

Before harvesting any kind of shellfish, call the **Marine Biotoxin Hotline at 1-800-562-5632** or visit the web page at: www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm to find out what recreational areas are closed due to PSP or DSP. Do not expect beaches to be marked with a sign.

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



The 2015 Marine Biotoxin volunteers enjoyed a beautiful sunny day on the beach at March Point to learn shellfish identification as part of the annual 2-day training event hosted by SCD and Skagit County Public Health. Pictured from left: Heidi Nichols, Raylene Levi, Gil Ormbrek and Jeanne King (Skagit County Health Dept.)

For a list of the 2015 Marine Toxin Volunteers
visit our webpage at
http://skagitcd.org/marine_biotoxin_volunteer_program

Volunteer Highlights from the 2014-2015 Stream Team Season

Thanks again for another great season of sampling and for the many volunteer hours committed to helping monitor our Skagit County waterways!
We had a record breaking 77 volunteers this year!



Alec McDougall

**15-year
Stream
Team
veteran!**



Lin Folsom



Hal & Hella Lee



Scott & Shirley
Doman

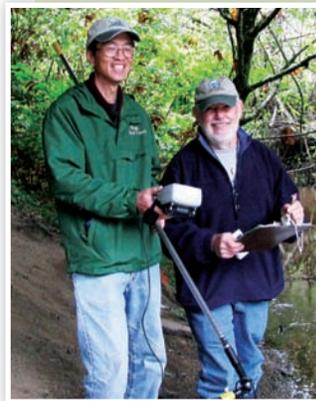


Steve & Luanne Goodrich

**Stream Team Shining
Stars – 5 years
of Volunteer Service**



Donna Helgeson

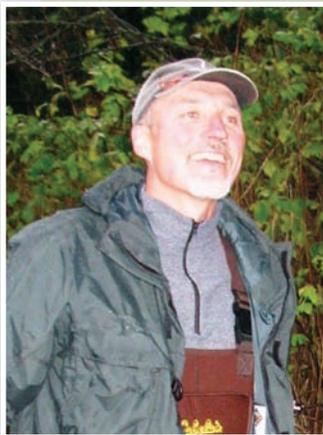


Jim Fukuyama &
John Patton



Bertis Rasco

10 years of service with Stream Team



Dean Schwartz



Carol Schwartz



George Viverette

**14-year
Stream
Team
veteran!**

For a list of all Stream & Storm Team volunteers for the 2014-2015 sampling season, visit our Stream Team webpage at http://skagitcd.org/stream_team

COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP



Fall 2015

Watershed Masters Program

Explore the Wonders of our Local Watersheds!

Above: Watershed Masters participate in a series of field tours throughout the 8 week program. Pictured, participants enjoy a beautiful Samish Bay sunset during an evening tour and session on water quality and our local shellfish resources held at Taylor Shellfish Farms.

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 now taking applications for the **Fall 2015 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 WEDNESDAY evenings beginning September 23rd and continuing through November 12th (last session on Thursday due to holiday), and participate in three Saturday watershed field adventures, tentatively scheduled for Sept. 26th, Oct. 17th and Oct. 24th. The Wednesday evening trainings will be held at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve, located at 10441 Bay View Edison Road.

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 18th** by contacting Kristi Carpenter at (360) 428-4313 or email kristi@skagitcd.org.

Join the Skagit Stream Team!

Are you intrigued by the wonders of streams and interested in finding out more about how they function? The Skagit Stream Team program provides an opportunity for local residents, age 18 and up, to participate in "hands on" water quality monitoring and to gain an understanding of the relationship between natural factors, land-use impacts, and a stream's health. Participants collect water quality data approximately once a month in the Samish Bay, Padilla Bay, Fisher Creek, Kulshan Creek, Trumpeter basin, Gages Slough, Clyde Creek, and Nookachamps watersheds (time commitment is approximately 2 - 4 hours a month, Oct. 2015 through June of 2016).

2015 Skagit Stream Team Training Dates:

Wednesday, Sept. 9th, 6 pm to 8:30 pm

Thursday, Sept. 10th, 6 pm to 8:30 pm

Saturday, Sept. 12th, 9 am to 2:30 pm

(New volunteers must attend all three training sessions)

PRE-REGISTER by Sept. 4th, 2015

Contact: Kristi Carpenter

Skagit Conservation District

(360) 428-4313 or email kristi@skagitcd.org

Training will be held

at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center,
10441 Bay View Edison Road, Mount Vernon

Sponsored by:

Skagit Conservation District, Padilla Bay

Research Reserve, City of Anacortes,

City of Burlington, City of Mount Vernon,

and Skagit County

It's all about
COMMUNITY!



Volunteer Stream Clean Up Project

Hats off and a special thank you to SCD volunteers, Scott Doman, July Fisher, Joan Lang, Henry Nyland, Jennifer Prosser, and Anne Traylor who spent a sultry and labor intensive summer morning with SCD staff, Kristi Carpenter, cleaning up a section of Martha Washington Creek (tributary of Maddox Creek) in south Mount Vernon. The group gathered to help provide support to an elderly community resident and to remove trash and debris that had accumulated near the stream bank.



MAKE YOUR MARK IN SKAGIT COUNTY

The Skagit Conservation District, in partnership with Skagit County, would like to invite local volunteer groups, such as scouts, high school students, or other special interest groups to join us in protecting our local waterways by organizing a storm drain labeling project in rural Skagit County. Colorful markers are now available to be placed on storm drains in an effort to educate the public and reduce pollutants from entering our streams.

Skagit Conservation District staff will provide supplies and training. If you are interested in scheduling a storm drain marking project, please contact Cindy Pierce, Skagit Conservation District, (360) 428-4313 or cindy@skagitcd.org.



2015 SCD Board of Supervisors Election Results

A public poll election for Skagit Conservation District Board Supervisor was held on Tuesday, March 17. The election was certified by the Washington State Conservation Commission at its May quarterly board meeting verifying that **Dave Malsed** had won the election. Dave will replace Thijs Jacobson. Thijs served as an elected board supervisor from May 2009 until January 2015. His leadership skills honed as a member of the Washington Ag and Forestry leadership program and his forestry knowledge and enthusiasm for SCD's work were assets in his role as a board supervisor.

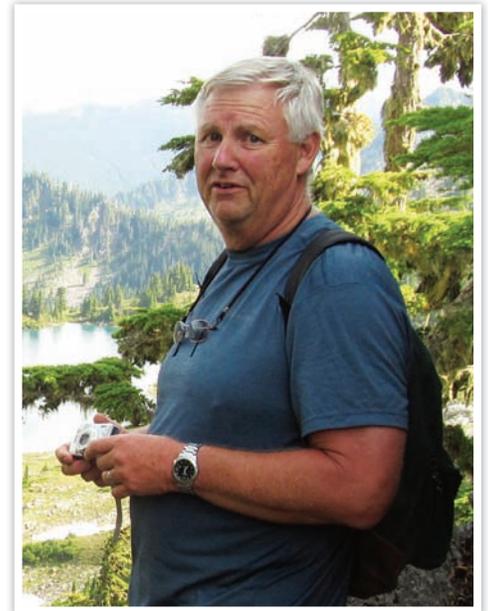
Dave was raised on Bainbridge Island, has a forest engineering degree from the University of Washington, and worked for 34 years with Washington State Department of Natural Resources. His last assignment with the DNR was as the Assistant Region Manager for Business and Operations in Sedro-Woolley. Following his retirement in 2006, Dave worked as the General Manager of Marine Service Center in Anacortes and Executive Director of

Home Trust of Skagit, a community based land trust non-profit that "helps homebuyers in Skagit County secure affordable homes" and build equity "while preserving affordability for the next buyer." Dave has also served as a fire chief in two different fire districts and was a member of the Longview School Board for eight years. Two of his biggest professional accomplishments were the rehabilitation of the Mt. St. Helen's blast area and the development of the Wake Robin Outdoor Education Center in Longview, WA.

Dave is active with the Society of American Foresters of which he was selected State Forester in 2002 and elected a Fellow in 1999. He is also a graduate of the Washington Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation's Leadership Program and Leadership Skagit.

Dave has lived in Skagit County since 2000. He enjoys sailing, hunting, woodworking, and backpacking.

Dave decided to run for the office of Skagit Conservation District Board Supervisor after several community



Dave Malsed

members asked him to consider being on the Board. Having worked with conservation districts in several other counties in Washington, Dave felt he could be of value, and he wanted to remain active in helping manage and conserve our natural resources, an area he had worked in most of his career. Dave's family has a farm in Iowa where they grow corn and soybeans. The farm has been in his family since 1845. Dave said he hopes to bring balance to the Board with his forestry and agricultural background.



SCD Welcomes New Employee

Hello! My name is **Denise Briggs**, and I am the new Bookkeeper for the District. I have lived in and around Skagit County for 31 years. I am currently living in Mount Vernon. I enjoy living here because of the beautiful landscapes of sea, mountains, and farms, the friendly people, and I really love being able to work in the same town I live in. I am extremely happy to be on the staff here, and I am looking forward to being a support to this great group of people doing this most important work of helping landowners sustain their working landscapes, while also protecting and enhancing our natural resources.

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



SKAGIT CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWS

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:

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

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