



SKAGIT CONSERVATION DISTRICT

News

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Summer/Fall 2020

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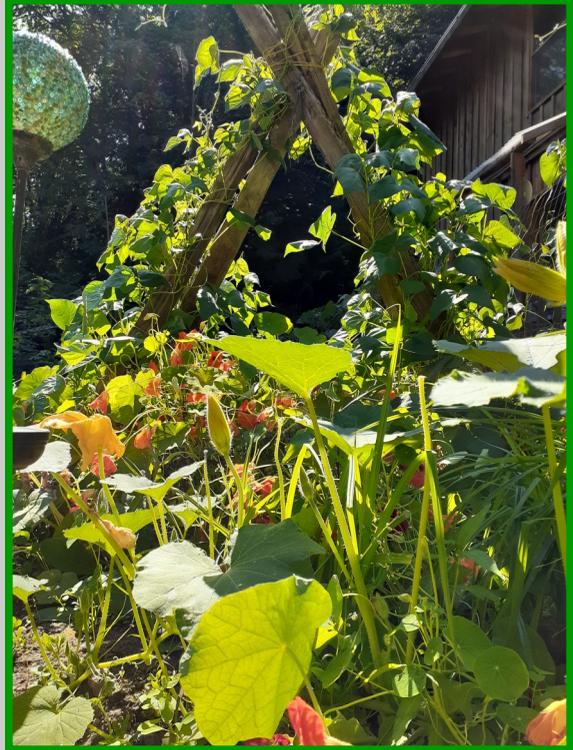


**First Place—“A Head of the Rest”
by Emmett Wild**

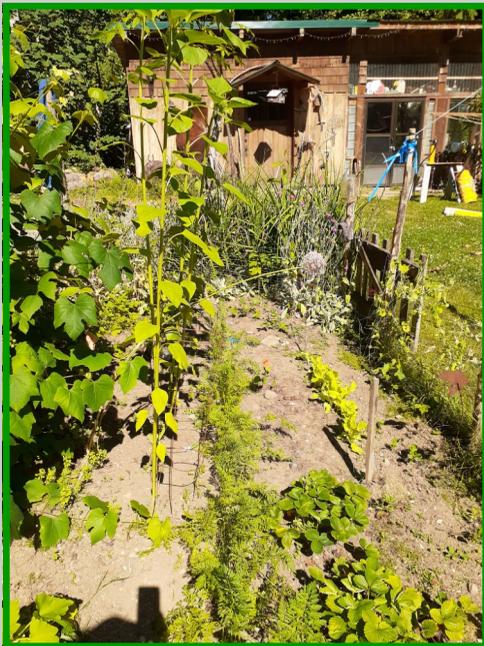
SCD STAFF SUMMER GARDEN PHOTO CONTEST



Second Place—"Just Hangin' Out" by Joe Holtcamp



Third Place—"Growing Tall" by Bill Blake



"Rows of Goodness" by Bill Blake



"Don't Leaf Me Out"
by Emmett Wild



"NW Pollinator Garden" by Carla Glassman

Meet Jesalyn Pettigrew and Mossy Gate Flower Farm

Skagit Conservation District started working with Jesalyn Pettigrew, owner of Mossy Gate Flower Farm in spring 2019, just as she was beginning to grow her farm and business. Through development of a conservation farm plan, we collaboratively identified several opportunities to improve farm operations and land management strategies. One example is working with Skagit County's Natural Resource Stewardship Program to control invasive weeds like Bohemian Knotweed and Himalayan Blackberry, and restore a streamside area to native trees and shrubs. These native plants will provide water quality and habitat benefits, as well as useful materials for the Flower Farm.



Recently, we met up with Jesalyn to visit her 2 new plots. Despite first-year challenges at these new sites, things are off to a great start. Jesalyn's business continues to thrive and grow, even in a difficult economic environment. She was kind enough to share a few insights into her experience. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

SCD: What experience helped you to make the leap to start farming?

JP: At a crossroads in my life, divorced with two boys under 3 years old and a retail shop that was struggling, I discovered flower farming by accident; it highlighted a lifestyle I've always loved and could possibly support my little family. I immediately looked into the industry and learned that I lived in a region full of amazing farmers; I attended a flower growing workshop hosted by Jello Mold Farm where I learned about a newly formed meet-up for PNW Cut Flower Growers. I attended and met Vivian Larson, founding member of the Seattle Wholesale Growers Market, who happened to be hiring! 5 seasons later and I still work for her part-time and have learned so much.

SCD: How has the pandemic affected your operation?

JP: My entire growing plan was based on wedding business. Wedding colors, volume for larger weddings, and selling primarily to Seattle-based designers. I hadn't yet started planting when the state shut down, but I decided I wouldn't change my plans at all. I planted everything I preordered last season. I applied again to the Puget Sound Food Hub to be their first flower specific grower and actually got accepted. I started filling up my roadside stand more than I used to; the local economy might not have been offering weddings, but the stay at home people were dying for beauty! My stand has been busier than ever, and while I make less per stem than I would wholesale, 1) I'm not composting, and 2) I'm bringing joy in a different way to the masses.

SCD: What is one of your successes this year with your farm/operation?

JP: I'd say I've got three: 1) growing on two new plots which expanded my normal 1/4 acre growing to 2.5+ acres!; 2) getting accepted by the Puget Sound Food Hub and my amazing landlord assisting me in buying a specialized bucket system that allows my product to be delivered via the Food Hub; 3) gaining new customer outlets despite a pandemic, and losing off-Farm job hours due to homeschooling my children.

SCD: What has been most challenging this past year?

JP: The toughest thing has been taking on so much new and learning all the new growing plots—one in particular has an insane amount of weed pressure and me alone, with the distractions of motherhood and starting way too many things this year, just can't keep up! The awesome soil of this region, aided by a wet, cool spring with a few hot days got those weeds kicking my butt!

SCD: What is a goal for the upcoming year?

JP: Pay off all current debts and see an income!

SCD: What resources have been helpful for you in your farm journey/what resources would you recommend to other farmers?

JP: The Skagit Conservation District, the Northwest Agriculture Business Center, and the locals—ask for help!! There are so many resources out there. Don't be afraid to not know.

SCD: How can people find you/find out more about your business?

JP: I'm an avid poster on Instagram @mossygateflowerfarm but I also have a website www.mossygateflowerfarm.com





Virtual Pasture Management

The Skagit Conservation District and WSU Mount Vernon were lucky to receive National Estuary Program (NEP) funding to support a Pasture Management Program. The program's foundation is education and outreach with an outcome of increased connection with landowners that will lead to farm planning and implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Like all of you, the District, WSU, and livestock owners had to adapt to Covid-19, and the need to adapt to new methods of providing education and working with landowners. So, staff decided that we could go virtual. We quickly adapted to developing a series of virtual classes beginning in late spring and running through the end of summer. The District prescribed to a virtual meeting service platform called "AnyMeeting". This platform allows for real-time communication between District staff, WSU staff, and the participating landowners and cooperators.

All the participants quickly adapted to the new social distancing virtual option of asking and answering questions specific to a livestock owner needs. We had situations where one team member would be providing an answer via live video while another staff person would share their screen with web-based site-specific soil and other landscape features to provide real-time recommendations for participants to consider. We were also able to record the sessions to be able to share if a landowner requests information on that topic in the future.

In short, Pasture Management isn't just about the grass. It is about matching the number of livestock to the capacity of the pasture potential. It is about managing water, whether it be from the sky, a stream, or watering trough. It is about rotating livestock around different paddocks or keeping them in the barn to maintain optimum grass height of 3" – 6". It is important to mow and manage the growing weeds and plants that the livestock won't eat before the plant matures and goes to seed, outcompeting the grasses and forbs that are more desirable and healthy for the livestock. We also highlighted how much money can be saved by maintaining good pastures at home through reduced feed costs and animal health. Stay tuned to our website for a new series that will begin in late fall.

To learn more about the Skagit County Pasture Management Program, go to:

<https://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/pasture-management/>

This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement PC-01J18001 to the Washington State Department of Health. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.





Raising Livestock Workshop Series

Presented by the WSU Livestock Advisor program



Are you interested in raising your own bacon and eggs and not know where to begin? Whether choosing smaller low line beef to larger framed cows, pastured poultry to milking goats, the family cow, sheep for meat or fiber, rabbits or pastured swine, these classes will give you an over view of livestock housing, selection, nutrition, reproduction, and fencing. Learn how to perform routine health checks, vaccinate and worm your animals, trim feet, and start a flock of chicks. Pasture management and renovation is covered at length, helping folks become grass farmers to support their livestock.

The networking within our WSU Livestock Advisor program can save you time, energy, and resources. BJ and Karen Martin had the idea that they could live closer to the earth, grow more of their own food, and start a small farm that would launch them on a path to self-sufficiency. But, where to start? "The WSU Livestock Advisor program helped us make wise choices about which livestock would work for our environment. The course provided a network of contacts, and the instructors and our classmates were extremely supportive. We're now producing the vast majority of our food and happy to give back to the community through WSU's volunteer opportunities. We're enthusiastic supporters of WSU's Livestock Advisor Program".

Classes will be held Wednesday evenings from 6:30 - 8:30, September 23 through November 18, 2020. Cost for the 10-week course is \$125 per farm or family. The course will be conducted online using zoom. To complete the application visit: https://wsu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5w00ZncZZvFsYyV

Questions? Please email Joan DeVries at joand@wsu.edu or call 360-395-2370.

Concerned About Wildfire?

We are too. After the September we had, it's no surprise that these issues would be on our minds.

The Skagit CD has FREE resources available to help you and your community be better prepared for wildfire.

We offer wildfire risk assessments of your property through our Wildfire Risk Reduction Program. We'll assess the risk to your structures and landscape and provide a follow-up report for your reference. You'll also receive some great resources, such as a book on fire-resistant landscaping!

We can also help your neighborhood become better prepared for wildfire through the Firewise USA Program. We'll provide an assessment of the risk to your neighborhood and help you make a plan for how to reduce it. Project funding may be available to communities who pursue participation in the Firewise USA Program. www.firewise.org

If you'd like to schedule a risk assessment or learn more about any of these opportunities, contact our Wildfire Resilience Coordinator, Jenny Coe, at 206-355-5609 or email jcoe@whatcomcd.org.



There's no such thing as the Poop Fairy!

"There 's no such thing as the Poop Fairy" is part of a new campaign that's popping up around the country and being spearheaded locally by the Skagit Conservation District (SCD) in partnership with Skagit County,



the Port of Skagit County, and the Cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley and Oak Harbor, to remind dog owners that your pets poop won't magically disappear if you leave it behind. The goal of the campaign is to inform dog owners about the impact their dogs waste can have on the environment, specifically water contamination and subsequent transmission of bacteria and disease. "While dog waste left behind can have serious public health and water

quality implications, we are hoping to have a little fun with this new campaign while reminding people to do the right thing," notes SCD Education Coordinator Kristi Carpenter, organizer of the program.

Carpenter has been working with local parks departments, HOA neighborhoods, community volunteers and other groups, to identify high priority areas frequently used by dog walkers and where poop piles are often left behind. Surveys of these areas are being conducted by SCD volunteers and educational signage is currently being installed to remind dog walkers that there is no poop fairy that magically appears to pick up their pet's waste after its left on the ground. The message is simple: "Only you can make your dogs waste disappear. Scoop it. Bag it. Trash it."

What is the problem?

When it rains (or when snow melts), the bacteria from doggy doo is washed into our storm drains, polluting local waterways. High levels of fecal coliform entering our local streams, rivers, and marine waters from runoff can cause closures in commercial shellfish beds, make our waterways unsafe for swimming, boating and other recreational activities, and spread illnesses to pets, wildlife, and people. In addition, the nutrients in pet waste can cause algae growth in water, and deplete the oxygen that fish need to survive.

Doggy doo left unattended is also unsightly and smelly, and contains an abundance of bacteria, parasites, worms, and other disease-causing organisms, including roundworms, Giardia, Salmonella, E. coli, Cryptosporidium, Toxoplasma, and Parvovirus, that can survive for days, weeks or months in soil and water waiting for a host. People and pets can come into contact with pathogens found in pet waste while playing in grass, gardening, swimming, fishing or boating.

What to do about Doggy Doo?

Scoop it, bag it, throw it in the trash! And, don't forget to wash your hands! Carry bags with you when you walk your dog or while you are on poop patrol in your yard. Seal the waste in a bag, and throw it in the trash.

- Don't like getting up close and personal? Use a pooper scooper for a more hands-off approach.
- Have a problem in your neighborhood or a public space? Consider installing a Pet Waste Station.
- Pet waste digesters and composters are available, so you can turn your pup's "trash" into "treasure!" Note: Pet waste digesters and composters are specially designed for pet waste. NEVER put pet waste in a regular compost pile.

Continued... **There's no such thing as the Poop Fairy!**

How Many Dogs are There?

There is no doggie census, and many people do not license their dogs, so there are no hard numbers indicating Skagit County's overall dog population. Instead, we can estimate dog populations based on the best available research.

Research conducted by the American Veterinary Medical Association shows that 37.4 percent of Washington State households own dogs, with an average of 1.5 dogs per dog-owning household.

In 2020, the population of Skagit County was estimated at 132,566. Thus, averaging 4 people per household, would mean that there are approximately 33,142 households in Skagit County. Assuming that 37.4 percent of those households own dogs, that means just over 12,395 Skagit County households own dogs. At 1.5 dogs per household, we can estimate the Skagit County dog population at approximately 18,593.

How much waste do they produce?

At an estimated rate of 0.33 pounds of solid waste produced daily per dog, the estimated daily production of dog waste in Skagit County is over **6,135 POUNDS PER DAY** or over **2,239,486 pounds per year!** An average-sized dog dropping produces 3 billion fecal coliform bacteria!

Our pets, especially our dogs, make great companions as we enjoy our wonderful outdoor spaces throughout Skagit County. But we need to take care of our beautiful natural environment by picking up after our pets. Whether you're enjoying an open space trail or park or just your own neighborhood, remember "There's no such thing as the Poop Fairy," and you can help keep the "magic" in the Skagit by "scooping your pet's poop!"

For more information, contact Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District (360) 428-4313 ext 1018 or email kristi@skagitcd.org.



Jason Quigly's best friend Hitch (pictured) stops at the pet waste station at Hillcrest Park to remind Jason to pick up a pet waste bag to have handy "just in case." Hitch and Jason want to do their part to keep our parks, neighborhoods and streams clean and healthy.

Thank you 2019-2020 Skagit Stream Team and Storm Team Volunteers! We love our Volunteers!



The Skagit Conservation District and partners, the Padilla Bay Research Reserve, Skagit County, and Cities of Anacortes, Burlington, and Mount Vernon, would like to give special thanks and recognition to the 2019-2020 Skagit Stream Team and Storm Team Volunteers!

Since 1998, dedicated Skagit Stream Team volunteers have been monitoring the health of priority Skagit County streams and rivers. During the 2019-2020 monitoring season, 68 community residents contributed their time to the program to help protect and improve local streams and 9 volunteers participated in the Storm Team program.

The Storm Team originated from a small group of Skagit Stream Team volunteers in 2008 who responded to a call for help from the State Department of Health in their efforts to compile enough rain event data to develop a Closure Response Strategy for Samish Bay. Over the years the Storm Team expanded its work in other priority areas and currently is monitoring 13 stations in the Padilla Bay watershed. Because of our highly competent Stream Team and Storm 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.

2019-2020 Skagit Stream Team Volunteers:

Kris Abshire	Nicole Fisher	Madi McKay	Bill Rogers
Scott Adams	Lin Folsom	Dan McCroskey	Judi Rogers
Barry Antler	Leanne Forner	Alec McDougall	Becky Rosencrans
Barbara Baker	James Fukuyama	Sandy McDougall	Tom Schmidt
Darrel Baker	Luanne Goodrich	Sue Mitchell	Sara Seward
Russ Barger	Steven Goodrich	Hannah Moon	Mark Shinkle
Tash Blackburn	Will Goodrich	James Morgareidge	John Smith
Mary Jean Brady	Kirk Hale	Virginia Naef	Darlene Thompson
James Brandt	Dawn Harju	Janet Nevitt	Steve Thornton
Mariana Brandt	Tony Harrah	Gil Ormbrek	Kent Turner
Keri Brant	Donna Helgeson	John Patton	Monica Vickers
Richard Brown	Marguerite Jacobs	Claudia Pearl	Holli Watne
Jenna Cassells	Tiana Jacobs	Frank Repplier	Mike Watne
Ann Childs	Bob Jones	Nancy Richard	Barbara Weed
Tate Cohan	Phil Latendresse	Karen Richman	Antonia Weiss
Claudia Ebsworth	Izzi LaVallee	Jim Roberts	Jamie Weiss
Tammy Ennen	Julie Maurer	Bill Robinson	Holly Young



2019-2020 Storm Team:



Barbara Baker
Darrel Baker
Mary Jean Brady

Keri Brant
Lin Folsom
Bob Jones

Alec McDougall
Sandy McDougall
Bill Rogers

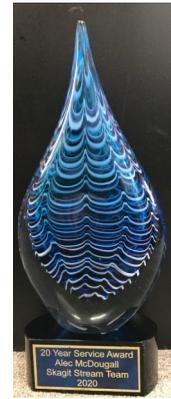
Judi Rogers
Tom Schmidt

And, now for a toast to our 2019-20 milestone volunteers!

20 Year Volunteer Award Alec McDougall



Alec McDougall of Mount Vernon was the recipient of our first ever 20 Year Stream Team Award! We are so grateful for his long-term involvement and many lasting contributions to the program!



10 Year Volunteer Award



Lin Folsom

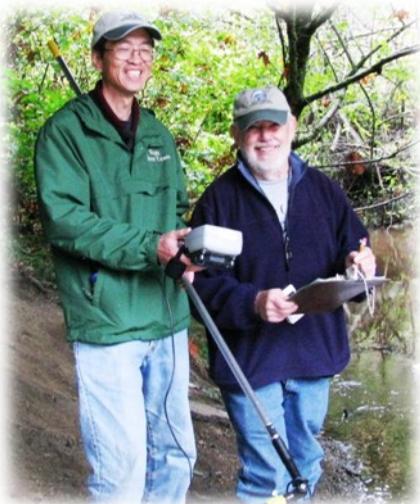


Donna Helgeson

15 Year Volunteer Award



Luanne and Steven Goodrich



**James Fukuyama
John Patton**



5-Year Shining Stars



2020 Marine Biotoxin Volunteers Help Monitor Toxins in Shellfish

The Skagit Conservation District, the Washington State Dept. of Health and Skagit County Public Health, would like to express sincere appreciation to our **2020 Marine Biotoxin Volunteers**. It is through their active participation that we were able to detect the growing presence of marine biotoxins that occurred in July and August and protect the health of community residents and visitors.

Biotoxins Close Shellfish Harvest Throughout Skagit County

Due to the growing presence of marine biotoxins detected at levels of public health concerns in July and August, the Washington State Department of Health closed recreational shellfish harvesting at beaches throughout Skagit County, including Fidalgo Island, Deception Pass, Similk Bay, Burrows and Allen Island, Sinclair and Cypress Islands, Padilla Bay, Guemes Island, Guemes Channel and Samish Bay. The harvest closure applied to all clams, oysters, mussels, geoducks, and scallops.

When specific conditions align, including sunlight, water temperature, and particular nutrients, a microscopic, poison-producing plankton can reproduce very rapidly in seawater. The over-growth of this plankton is also sometimes referred to as Red Tide. When shellfish feed on this plankton, they accumulate a toxin that can cause serious illness and even death to those who consume the shellfish. It is very important not to consume shellfish that have been contaminated by this toxin. Cooking shellfish does not prevent Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning.

2020 Marine Biotoxin Volunteer Program

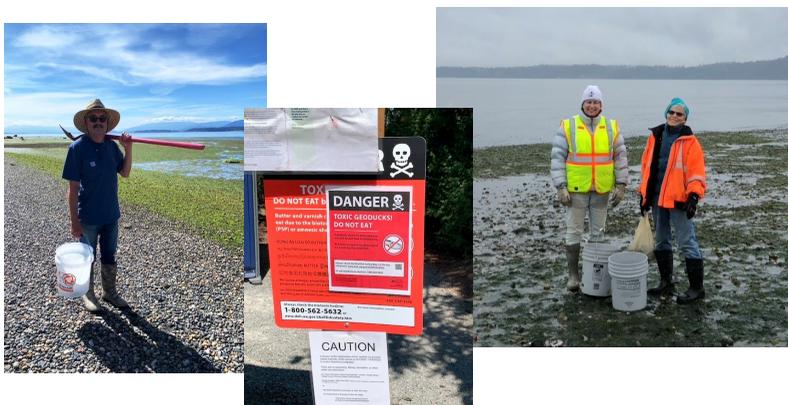
The goal of the Marine Biotoxin Volunteer Program is to provide an early public health warning of shellfish toxicity by routinely assessing our local recreational shellfish harvesting beaches for the presence of Paralytic Shellfish Poison (PSP) and Diarrhetic Shellfish Poison (DSP). Volunteers gather shellfish at low tide from local recreational shellfish harvesting beaches which are 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 Dept. of Health can then immediately get any necessary warnings on the Marine Biotoxin Hotline to keep the public informed.

We would like to recognize and thank the 32 participants of the 2020 Marine Biotoxin Program:

Mary Allred, Denise Antrim, Mike Antrim, Barbara Baker, Darrel Baker, Gail Buchanan, Phyllis Chennault, Paul Dixon, Claudia Ebsworth, Jim Fukuyama, Kirk Hale, Donna Helgeson, Phil Latendresse, Sue Latendresse, Ted Maloney, Blaine McCoy, Bryanne McNamara, Debra Merrill, Virginia Naef, Janet Nevitt, Gil Ormbrek, John Patton, Heidi Rooks, Richard Rooks, Keith Rubin, Mark Shinkle, Michelle Taylor, Barry Unema, Colene Unema, Pat Wedul, Strand Wedul, and Kyle Zbornik

Check before you dig!

Remember, always check current conditions before harvesting shellfish! Call before you dig biotoxin hotline: 1-800-562-5632. To learn more, visit the WA State Department of Health's website: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Shellfish/RecreationalShellfish>



For information about the Marine Biotoxin Volunteer Program contact Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District at:
(360) 428-4313 ext 1018
or email:
kristi@skagitcd.org

2020 AUTUMN COVER CROP SIGN-UP

Support provided by Skagit County and Skagit Conservation District

COVER CROP GRANT PILOT



This fall, Skagit County and Skagit Conservation District (SCD) are teaming up to provide grants to help farmers offset the cost of cover crop seed. Cover crops are a great way to recycle nitrogen, improve soil organic matter and carbon sequestration, reduce erosion, improve water quality, and maintain living roots and the soil biotic community.

If you are thinking about trying cover crops in your fields, consider applying for a grant with us.

2020 PILOT OVERVIEW AND ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY

- ◆ Applications will be evaluated and grants awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.
- ◆ There are no acreage minimum or maximum requirements. All planted acres must be in Skagit County.
- ◆ For the 2020 fall planting season, seed costs will be reimbursed for approved applications. Producers supply the labor and the equipment or hire the work out.
- ◆ Cover Crop seed must be planted by October 31, 2020.
- ◆ Cover crops must be terminated between March 1 and June 1, 2021. SCD farm planners will work with producers to develop an approved termination plan.
- ◆ Eligible cover crop species exclude cash crops that will be harvested in 2021 (i.e. winter wheat planned for commercial harvest).

SEED REQUIREMENTS

- ◆ All seed must be consistent with all local and state ordinances and regulations (i.e. restrictions on brassicas in commercial brassica seed growing areas).
- ◆ Purchased seed must be free of prohibited noxious weed seeds and have a germination rate of 80% or better.

HOW TO GET STARTED

- ◆ Contact a SCD Farm Planner. If you don't remember who your planner is or haven't worked with SCD before, contact Emmett Wild emmett@skagitcd.org 360-428-4313x1015 or Jeff Frazier jeff@skagitcd.org 360-428-4313x1014
- ◆ SCD Planner will collect some basic information about fields: 2020 and planned 2021 cash crop, cover crop species, seeding rate, termination plan, etc.
- ◆ Planners will work to identify fields on a map and calculate acreage.
- ◆ Once this information is collected and approved, the planner and producer will sign the job sheet and approve ordering seed.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

- ◆ Cover crops may be grazed or chopped for on-farm livestock forage after becoming well established.
- ◆ Manure may be applied in the fall at agronomic rates.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

To receive payment, producers must certify cover crop germination/establishment with the Skagit Conservation District farm planner.



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SCD Board meetings are held at
 2021 E College Way
 2nd floor conference room
 on the fourth Wednesday of
 every month at 7:30 a.m.
 and are open to the public.

Please call 360-428-4313, ext. 1000 to verify dates.



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www.skagitcd.org

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