

VOLUME 37 NUMBER 2

A close-up photograph of several purple flowers with long, thin stamens and dark anthers, growing on a green stem. The background is a soft-focus green and blue, suggesting an outdoor setting. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Skagit Conservation

News

Summer/Fall Edition

WELCOME, NICK!



This past April Skagit Conservation District welcomed forester Nick Kunz to the team. Nick was born and raised in the upper midwest which meant summers in the woods and on the water, but it was formative experiences living in New Zealand that ultimately led him to pursue a career in forestry. While earning his Bachelor's degree in Forestry and Natural Resources, with a concentration in Geology, Nick spent a couple of summers working at a research forest where he gained invaluable exposure to leading scientists in the fields of prescribed fire, silviculture, and wildlife.

He has additional certifications in aquatic bioassessment, geographic information systems, unmanned aerial systems, and dendrochronology. His wide-ranging professional experience in water quality, restoration grants, geographic information systems, and reforestation has been with public agencies, non-profits, and Tribal governments. His most recent experience as a consulting forester in Western Washington includes working with new forestland owners, multi-generational tree farmers, and organizations committed to supporting working forests. This experience includes everything from developing forest management plans, administering silviculture contracts, assessing and delineating wetlands, conducting spatial analysis, to providing workshops and online tools for a variety of forest landowners.

As the District Forester Nick will be assisting the Firewise program, providing forest health assessments, supporting conservation practice implementation, and providing forest management planning services. He will also be providing assistance with the Natural Resource Conservation Service's cost share programs, supporting educational opportunities and the District's annual plant sale. Nick looks forward to working with Skagitonian's and the forests that sustain us.

HEALTHY FORESTS HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Yamileth Ocampo -7th grade, Conway

2021 NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

Soil and Water Stewardship Week was celebrated April 25 - May 2, 2021 with the theme "Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities"

"Trees are vital. As the biggest plants on the planet, they absorb carbon from the atmosphere, stabilize the soil, filter water, provide healthy habitat for wildlife and offer many additional benefits - for nature, people and biodiversity. Not only is it necessary to protect existing trees and plant new ones, but it's also important to advocate and educate about trees and forest conservation within your community."

The poster contest was open to Skagit County students, kindergarten through twelfth grades. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, only 39 posters were submitted; however, this almost doubled last year's contest when schools were abruptly closed before the contest deadline.

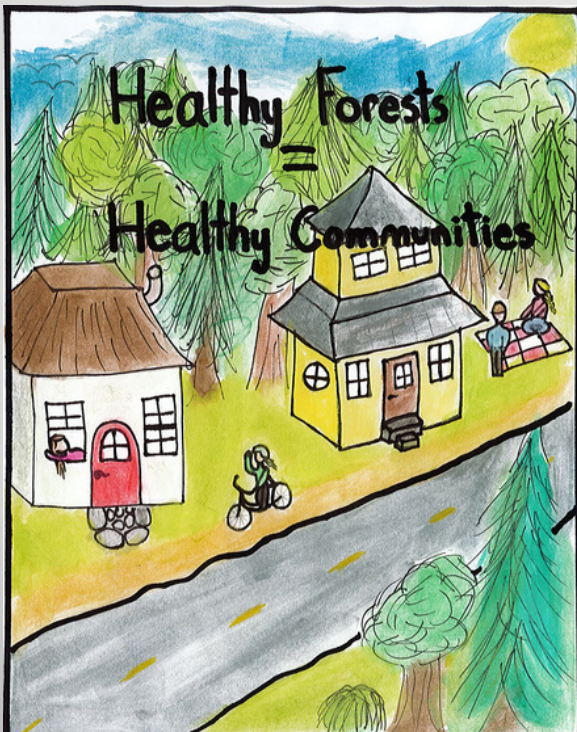
**ARTIST: ARYA YOUNGREN
GRADE 6 -LAVENTURE
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

The overall winner was awarded a \$50 Tri-Dee Arts gift card, a plaque and professional framing of her poster.

The runner-up winner was awarded a \$25 Tri-Dee Arts gift card and a plaque.

RUNNER-UP WINNER

WINNING POSTER



WINNING POSTER

WINNING POSTER



**ARTIST: RYLEE CATES
GRADE 6 -HOME SCHOOL**

Healthy Forests = Healthy Communities

Charlotte Sebens
Grade K, Summersun Montessori



We'd like to thank our poster contest judges this year from the Northwest Region
Department of Natural Resources

Judges:

- Kristy Arroyave, Dispatch Lead
- Janell Brown, Acting Dispatch Supervisor
- Brandie Bruch, Fiscal Tech Lead
- Cortney Colman, NW Timber sales/Silviculture Tech
- Jennifer Nieshe, Reception
- Andra Nordin, Aquatics Land Technician
- Yvette Novarro, Asst. to Region Manager
- Betsy Sauther, IT Coordinator (also an artist!)
- Ava Schmidt, N/R Tech

Category Winners:

- K - 1 Grade: Charlotte Sebens, Grade K - Summersun Montessori
- 2 - 3 Grade: Paola Santiago-Garcia, Grade 3 - Centennial Elementary
- 4 - 6 Grade: Rylee Cates, Grade 6 - Homeschool
- 7 - 9 Grade: Yamileth Ocampo, Grade 7 - Conway Elementary
- 10 - 12 Grade: No Entries

All grade winners received a National Geographic "Trees and Shrubs of North America" pocket guide, a certificate and activity book with bookmark.



6 WAYS TO BE BETTER PREPARED FOR WILDFIRE

1. Visit the wildfire pages on our website for information and resources on wildfire preparedness. www.skagitcd.org/wildfire
2. Schedule a wildfire risk assessment of your property with our wildfire program coordinator. You'll receive specific advice on how to reduce wildfire risk specific to your property and its unique conditions.
3. Reach out to our Forester for advice and a site visit if you have questions about the health of your forest or trees.
4. Work with your neighbors to address shared risk as a community and participate in the NFPA Firewise USA Program. www.firewise.org. Contact the wildfire program coordinator for assistance.
5. Put together a go-bag for emergency evacuations. For advice on what to put in your go-bag, visit <https://www.ready.gov/kit>
6. Sign up for emergency alerts from Skagit County Emergency Management to be in the know about emergencies. <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/BF213B7CD4E3>



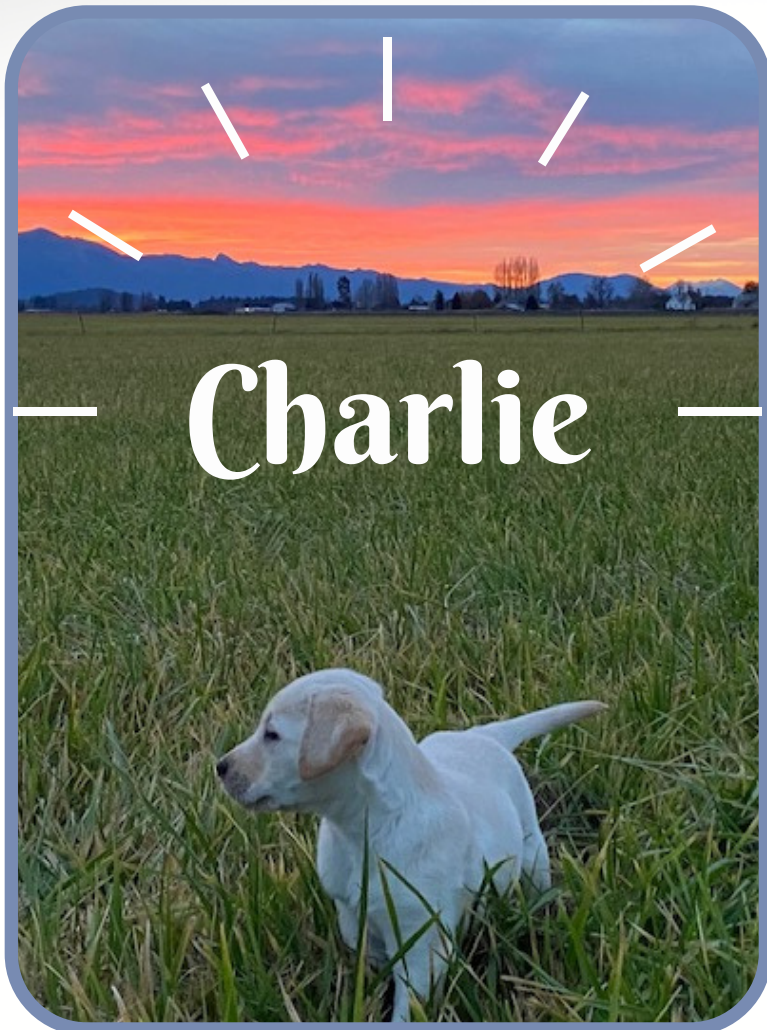
Wildfire Program Coordinator: Jenny Coe,
jcoe@whatcomcd.org
Forester, Nick Kunz, nick@skagitcd.org

"WE SCOOP" CUTE DOGGIE PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS!

We are excited to announce the winners of the "We Scoop" Cute Doggie Photo Contest and would like to extend a special thanks to all the pooches entered and their owners - and, also to everyone who has participated in the "We Scoop" pledge to date! In celebration of Skagit Water Weeks, the "We Scoop" photo contest and pledge were hosted by the Skagit Conservation District and partners, including Skagit County and the Cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley, with 2 winning entries selected for each participating jurisdiction. 110 photo entries were received overall with prizes awarded to 10 photo contest winners.

SKAGIT COUNTY OVERALL WINNERS

Charlie submitted by Jim & Barb Gibbons



JZ submitted by Marie Timber



Special thanks to this year's judges as well, who had a big job selecting from all the cute entries: Susan Wood (Padilla Bay Research Reserve), Holli Watne (Skagit Watershed Council), Christine Longdon (Skagit Conservation Education Alliance), Andrea Doll (Skagit Conservation Education Alliance), Beck Pittman (Friends of the Forest), and Lucy DeGrace (Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group).

Winning photo entries received a WoofPack Trail bag, which includes a special antimicrobial compartment for carrying bags of doggy poo, and perfect for taking on doggy adventures. Hope you enjoy these photos of some of our local furry friends. And, if you would like to check out all the photo entries (recommended), you can check them out on flicker at this link:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/192960856@N02/albums/with/72157719339824281>



Gracie-Mae



Keiko

MOUNT VERNON WINNERS

Gracie-Mae submitted by Marlo Frank

Keiko submitted by Alec & Sandy McDougall

Kimber Kaliki submitted by Krista & Skyler Wahlgren

Zero submitted by Chuck Messinger

SEDRO-WOOLLEY WINNERS



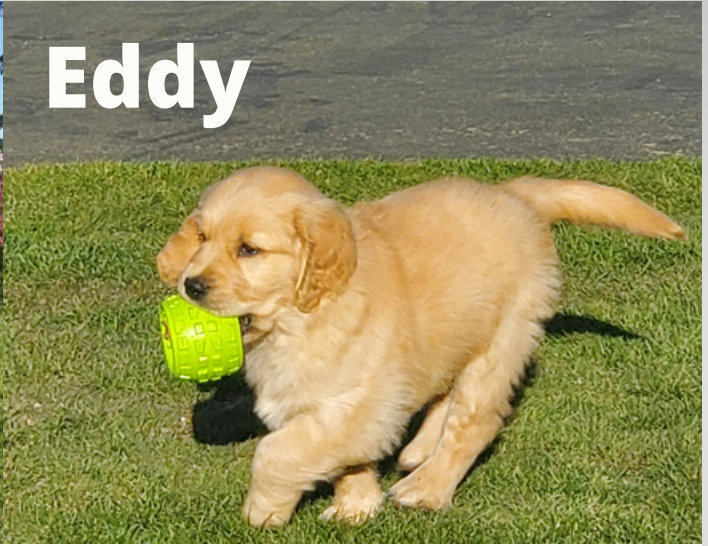
Kimber Kaliki



Zero



Blaze



Eddy

BURLINGTON WINNERS

Blaze submitted by Janet Coleman

Eddy submitted by Don & Michele Power

Tiberius submitted by Liz & Bob Wingard

Riley submitted by James & Diana Lincoln

ANACORTES WINNERS



Tiberius "Tib"



Riley the Dog

While this year's cute doggy photo contest has wrapped up, we are still taking "We Scoop" pledges and continue to offer a FREE pet poop bag dispenser to those who participate. Thank you for doing your part to help protect the water quality and health of our beautiful community.

For more information visit our website: www.skagitcd.org or contact kristi@skagitcd.org.



BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES HIGHLIGHTS

MORE THAN \$400,000 OF COST-SHARE FUNDS WERE PROVIDED TO LANDOWNERS IN JUNE TO INSTALL BMPS.

BEFORE: Local dairy with new gutters but no underground outlet. Water would run across the concrete with potential for contamination of roof water by manure.



AFTER: Underground outlet installed. Clean water running off the roof can be kept clean, instead of mixing with contaminated water.



This gutter, downspout, & outlet line divert 25,000 gal of clean rainwater from a horse confinement area in Sedro-Woolley.



A buffer fence protects Guemes Valley's wetland and aquifer recharge area from cattle access.

This summer, SCD farm planners have been busy working with landowners throughout Skagit County to install best management practices (BMPS). In June we completed 32 BMPs with 21 landowners utilizing more than \$400,000 of cost share. Projects ranged from manure storage, buffer fencing, gutters and downspouts and drip irrigation, to manure transfer pumps, winter livestock confinement areas, and waste transfer infrastructure. We have many more projects planned for this year and next.

INTERESTED IN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SMALL FARM PROGRAM? CONTACT ONE OF OUR FARM PLANNERS AT 360-428-4313.

PROTECTING OUR WATERWAYS!

THE CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

SOIL RENTAL RATES FOR CREP HAVE INCREASED DRAMATICALLY!

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program pays landowners to establish buffers of native trees & shrubs along fish bearing streams & rivers. CREP is a voluntary program to establish forested buffers along streams where riparian habitat is a significant limiting factor for salmonids. In addition to providing fish & wildlife habitat, buffers of native vegetation help protect water quality, stabilize stream banks, reduce erosion, create shade that lowers water temperature & provide attractive borders for privacy & protection.

ALL BUFFER EXPENSES ARE PAID FOR BY THE PROGRAM!

The program pays all the expenses to establish the buffer, in addition to annual rental payments & other benefits to the landowner. Rental rates are based on soil type & have increased as much as 64%. There are now some soils in Skagit County that are paying up to \$816/acre/year rent.

Land enrolled in CREP is removed from production and grazing under 10 to 15-year rental contracts. In return, landowners receive annual rental payments & a signing bonus. Landowners are reimbursed for 100% of the eligible costs for buffer establishment & maintenance. In addition, landowners may be reimbursed for fencing, livestock watering facilities, &, in the case of small streams, livestock crossings.

THE COLISCAN SYSTEM

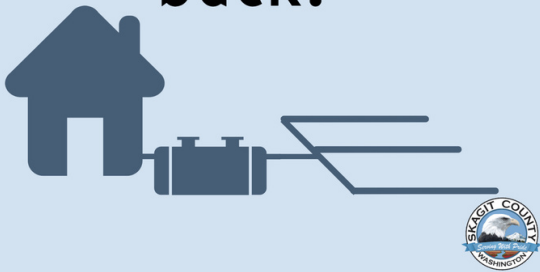
DOES MY STREAM HAVE HIGH FECAL COUNTS?

Skagit CD is partnering with the WA State Dept. of Ag to introduce a tool to answer questions landowners may have about sources of bacteria in local streams. The tool is a water sampling system called *Coliscan* that allows a technician to sample waters in locations where a landowner may be curious about fecal bacteria levels. A method referred to as "bracketing" requires sampling upstream & downstream to see if there may be an impact. The system isn't sensitive enough or designed to sample wells or drinking water sources. *Coliscan* is not used as a regulatory tool but a way to help identify if there is an opportunity to implement best management practices such as new rain gutters or a roof over manure storage that can reduce impact to local surface waters. For more information on *Coliscan*, contact Bill Blake at bill@skagitcd.org

"This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement PC-01J18001-6 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."

SKAGIT COUNTY IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE RETURN OF SEPTIC SYSTEM INSPECTION REBATES!

Septic inspection rebates are back!



skagitcounty.net/septic

Septic system inspection rebates are back! For a limited time only, the county will help cover the cost of your septic inspection! You get the inspection, fill out the form on the website, and the county will give you a \$100 rebate. You can get an additional \$100 if you install risers on your system or get it pumped, for a limit of \$200 rebate per household. Get details at skagitcounty.net/septic. Can't afford an inspection in the first place? Skagit County has a program for that too. Qualifying residents can get a septic inspection for free, and the county will take care of paying the inspector. Eligibility depends on your household income. For more details, contact Skagit County Public Health at 360-416-1500 or eh@co.skagit.wa.us for more information on the low income inspection program.

WHAT'S THE DEAL ON SO-CALLED "FLUSHABLE WIPES"?

Whether or not you have a septic system, one of the best ways to protect your pipes is to never, ever flush wipes. Even if they're labeled as "flushable." What's the deal?

The majority of wipes have plastic in them, including diaper wipes, household cleaning wipes, & cosmetic wipes. The plastic gives wipes more structure than toilet paper so they don't fall apart in your hands. But they also don't break down & flow through pipes like toilet paper does. Instead, they can clog up your home's pipes, or your septic system. They can also clog up city sewer systems. Either way, it costs a lot of money to fix!

Wipes also contribute to the microplastic pollution problem in our waterways & oceans. Septic systems and wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove microplastics from sewage, so they get released into our marine environment, where they get into the tissues of fish & other marine creatures. These bits of plastic may even end up on our dinner plates. Yikes!

Why are they labeled flushable when they're not? There are voluntary standards for labeling these products, but manufacturers don't have to follow them. That, combined with the popularity of easily disposable products, creates a problem where consumers don't get proper & honest labeling.

If you use wipes, make sure to always throw them in the trash.



THANK YOU 2021 MARINE BIOTOXIN VOLUNTEERS

Marine Biotoxin volunteers are assigned a recreational shellfish harvesting beach or collect samples from placed mussel cages where they work in teams to gather shellfish samples throughout the summer.



Marine Biotoxin teammates Judi Rogers, Phil Latendresse, & Barbara Bond Howard gather monthly mussel samples at the Anacortes Marina. Samples are tested by the State Health Dept. lab for Paralytic (PSP) & Diarrhetic (DSP) Shellfish poison.

The Skagit Conservation District, Skagit County Public Health, and the Washington State Dept. of Health would like to give special thanks to the 38 community volunteers that participated in the Marine Biotoxin Volunteer program this year.

Barbara Baker	Blaine McCoy
Darrel Baker	Bryanne McNamara
Barbara Bond-Howard	Virginia Naef
DeVere Bunke	Janet Nevitt,
Dave Crockett	Shawn Nixon,
Paul Dixon	Gil Ormbrek,
Elizabet Drozda-Freeman	Bill Rogers,
Claudia Ebsworth	Judi Rogers,
Cissy Fisher	Keith Rubin,
Suzanne Hahn	Mark Shinkle,
Merrilee Harrell	Michelle Taylor,
Casey Hart	Tamera Taylor,
Donna Helgeson	Barry Unema,
Annalise Hill	Colene Unema,
Diana Hoffman	Paul Vance,
Stephanie Kaufman	Pat Wedul,
Phil Latendresse	Strand Wedul,
Sue Latendresse	Gail Williams
Ted Maloney	Sarah Zabel

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).

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: <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/biotoxin/biotoxin.html>

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 at 360-428-4313 ext. 1018 or email kristi@skagitcd.org

SKAGIT CONSERVATION DISTRICT

GENERAL INFORMATION

SIGN-UP FOR ENEWS!

Skagit CD has moved to an eNews format. If you haven't already signed up for our eNews, please visit our website at www.skagitcd.org and click on the eNews Sign-Up button in the corner.

LOCATION AND HOURS

The Skagit CD office is open Monday through Friday 8:00 am. to 4:30 pm. Due to Covid-19, most staff are working remotely. Please be sure to call ahead and schedule an appointment if you want to meet with one of our staff.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Dean Wesen, Chair
Dave Malsed, Vice Chair
Eben Twaddle, Member
Jed Holmes, Member
Margery Hite, Member
Al Craney, Associate Supervisor

STAFF

Bill Blake, Executive Director
Denise Briggs, Bookkeeper
Kristi Carpenter, Public Information & Education Coordinator
Jenny Coe (via Whatcom CD), Wildfire Resilience Program Coordinator
Nicholas Kunz, Forester
Jeff Frazier, Farm Planner
Carla Glassman, Office Assistant
Joe Holtcamp, GIS/CREP Coordinator
Cindy Pierce, Youth Education & Data Information Coordinator
Tom Slocum, Professional Engineer
Emmett Wild, Farm/Natural Resources Planner
Alexandra James, RCPP ACEP-ALE Liaison