

# 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](mailto:bill@skagitcd.org)

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