

# Skagit CONSERVATION NEWS

Volume 29, Number 2

SOIL • WATER • WOODLAND

SUMMER 2013



SUMMER 2013



## Northwest Burning

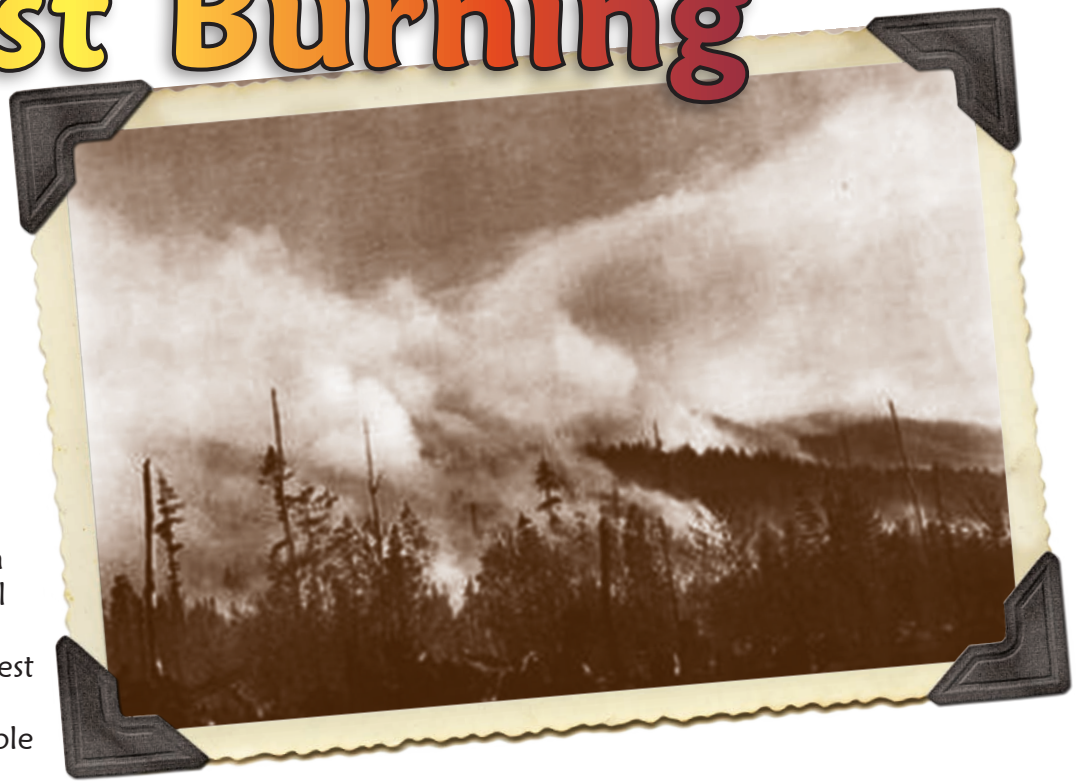
We have all heard of the Olympic Rain Forest; an area on the west slopes of the Olympic Mountains that receive over 180 inches of rain per year. Is it possible for the “asbestos forest” to burn? How much more are we at risk in Skagit County? To answer this question Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WADNR) completed a risk assessment of Skagit County in 2002. The Wildland Urban Interface Communities map shows high risk areas most prone to wildfire in Skagit County. The map can be viewed on our web site at [www.skagitcd.org/wildfire\\_related\\_maps](http://www.skagitcd.org/wildfire_related_maps).

The summer of 1951 was extremely dry, with rainfall less than 15 percent of normal. June, July and August of 1951 recorded a total of 1.15 inches of rainfall in Forks, Washington. The normal rainfall for the same months is 8.20 inches of rain in Forks. The extreme dry conditions brought several wild fires in the northwest from Oregon to British Columbia, including several in Skagit County. (Walker Valley, Cultus Mountain, Day Lake, and the Table Mountain Fire).

On August 6<sup>th</sup>, a fire started in Camp Creek, near Forks. The fire burned for several days before being brought under control, covering nearly 1,600 acres. Spot fires continued to be a problem for several weeks after the fire was controlled, and firefighters regularly patrolled the fire area. On September 20, a sudden drop in humidity and a strong easterly wind allowed a hot spot to erupt into a fire that spread rapidly. The fire, fanned by high winds, traveled 18 miles in less than 8 hours. Residents of Forks awoke that morning with the rapidly moving fire on the horizon and threatening the town. Burning a path nearly 3 miles wide, residents fled the town leaving with what prized possessions they could carry, and no guarantee that the town would survive the fire for their return.

The fire burned 38,000 acres overnight, and brought the community of Forks together in a desperate effort to save the town. The fire had a long-term impact on the community and no longer did residents say “it won’t happen here”.

And it did again in 1967. The Raft River fire started in logging slash on the Quinault Reservation. Quickly spreading to 3,000 acres the smoke drifted toward Olympia. From the Capitol grounds the dome of the Capital was no longer visible. Legislators took note and a new era of fire fighting was created at WADNR. From the design of a new engine type (the A-3T), to quick turn,



light weight aluminum hose fittings with no threads, innovation swept DNR from tactics to equipment.

Understanding fire behavior and forest health is key to being able to better prepare and respond to wildfire situations. The Pacific Northwest Research Station, USDA Forest Service is providing scientific information to help forest managers better understand the relationship between wildfire conditions and forest health. This information can be found at [www.fs.fed.us/pnw/publications](http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/publications)

Source: Olympic Peninsula Community Museum

*“We must collectively and immediately dedicate ourselves to finding a way to effectively support both essential emergency wildfire preparedness and response AND the proactive fuels reduction and forest restoration that are needed to reduce the demand for emergency expenditures in the future. Our current approach to wildland fire and forest management creates a false choice, pitting the viability of one against the other. In reality, we cannot afford to short-change either.”*

– Christopher Topik, Ph.D, Director, Restoring America’s Forests, The Nature Conservancy

## Washington State Celebrates its 100th Firewise Community!

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, the Cle Elum community of Hidden Valley Meadows Vista was recognized as the 100<sup>th</sup> Firewise Community in Washington State.

Last summer Carolyn Berglund, of Hidden Valley Meadows Vista, near Cle Elum, watched the Taylor Bridge Fire come within a mile of her community. The Taylor Bridge fire destroyed 61 homes and burned over 36 square miles. It was a teachable moment that won’t be forgotten any time soon for the homeowners in the area. Carolyn and other homeowners in Hidden Valley Meadows Vista partnered with the Kittitas Conservation District, local fire district and the Dept. of Natural Resources, to take action and create defensible space around their homes.

At the recognition event were fire agency representatives, homeowners from the community, Conservation Districts, and the media. Commissioner of Public Lands, Peter Goldmark, thanked the Hidden Valley Meadows Vista community and presented them with their Firewise Communities/USA plaque.

Skagit CD provided oversight and funding to the Kittitas CD, who took the lead on coordinating these Firewise Community efforts. Also, Fred Wefer, previous Skagit County Fire Warden who attended the event, had teamed up with Kittitas CD Firewise staff to lead Fire Prevention Team efforts during the Taylor Bridge Fire. These cross-county partnerships have proven very successful in fire prevention efforts around the state.



Washington State is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation for number of Firewise Communities/USA™.

**Above: Carolyn Berglund receives a Firewise Communities/USA recognition plaque from Peter Goldmark on behalf of her community, Hidden Valley Meadows Vista, the 100<sup>th</sup> Firewise Community to be recognized in Washington State.**

**In Circle: Carolyn Berglund shares the community’s Firewise recognition plaque with Russ Hobbs, Fire Chief for District #7 in Kittitas County.**

**CONGRATULATIONS WASHINGTON FOR BEING A NATIONAL LEADER IN WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS!**

# FORESTRY



## Skagit County Wildfire Risk

Skagit County  
WUI Communities at Risk for Wildfire (DNR)

# Beyond the Map



Right: The Skagit Highlands community, adjacent to the Big Rock 2 Fire smoking in the background.

On July 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Skagit County experienced its first newsworthy wildfire of the 2013 season.

A small 2-acre wildfire, speculated to have been started by a campfire, burned on the steep slopes of a local landmark, Big Rock in Mount Vernon. Because of the difficulty and danger fighting a fire on the steep rocky terrain of Big Rock, DNR called in a helicopter to drop 300 gallons of water at a time to contain the fire. Meanwhile, DNR fire crews cut a fire line on the more accessible north and west side of the rock. The fire got a lot of attention; partly because of its close proximity to the city of Mount Vernon and the visibility of the smoke from I-5 and surrounding areas.

This fire brings a few things to light. First, although it may be an overused line, when it comes to wildfire it's a matter of WHEN, not IF. If you think we don't have wildfires in our marine-influenced, rainy, northwest part of the state, you might have been surprised by the Big Rock 2 Fire. We are lucky to not often get the conditions lining up that can result in large, catastrophic wildfires, but we are most certainly not exempt from them.

Second, it was located right at the city limits of Mount Vernon giving evidence that wildfires don't just occur in large acres of

wilderness as many of us might imagine. The Big Rock area is identified as a high risk area in the wildland/urban interface on the DNR risk map mentioned in the previous article; however, the large development (Skagit Highlands) adjacent to Big Rock on the west side is not. Although this fire didn't directly threaten the Skagit Highlands community, the only missing ingredient was wind direction. So, where, and what is the wildland/urban interface in Skagit County? Although we have useful maps that show areas in the county that are considered "high-risk", we also have to recognize that the wildland/urban interface is not necessarily a set location; rather a set of conditions that can be found in almost any community. Such conditions include proximity of structures to vegetation, the combustibility of those structures, the type of vegetation and how it is distributed on the landscape, topography, weather patterns, micro-climates and others. These conditions can also vary from one end of a community to the other over a short distance.

Third, it garnered lots of media attention. With the recent shocking collapse of the I-5 Bridge over the Skagit River, Mount Vernon and Skagit County have been in the spotlight with the public and the media paying close attention to how we respond to community emergencies. Our ability as a community to respond and recover from a wildfire (or any disaster) efficiently and effectively is so important in this current climate. The better prepared we are, the less personal, environmental, and economic damage we suffer, and the quicker we can bounce back.

For more information on preparing your home and landscape to survive a wildfire, visit the Firewise website, [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)

For more information on community wildfire resilience, visit Fire Adapted Communities [www.fireadapted.org](http://www.fireadapted.org).

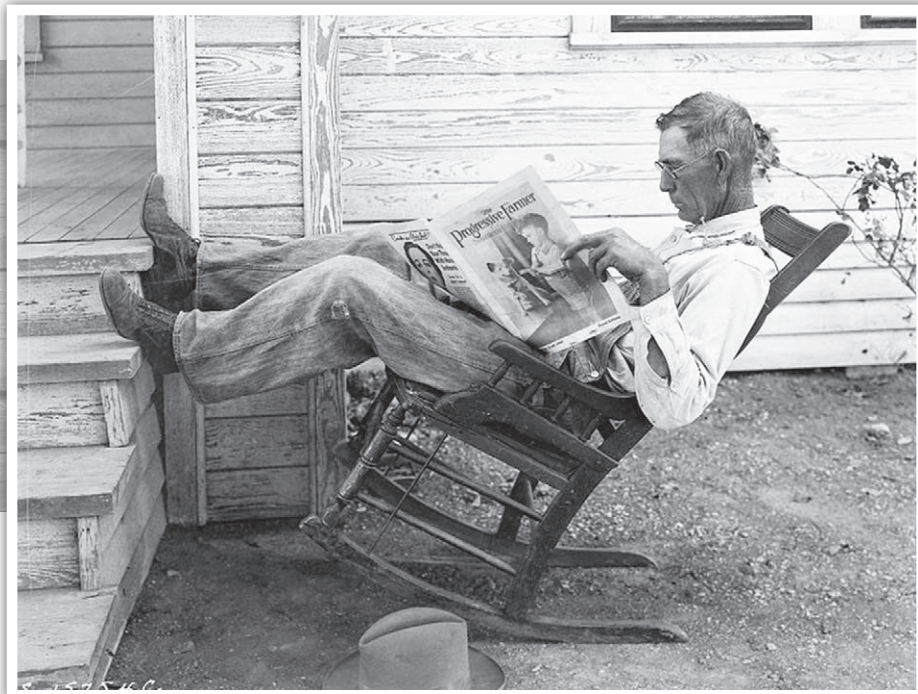


A helicopter drops 300 gallons of water on the Big Rock 2 Fire. Photo courtesy of Skagit Valley Herald, July 18, 2013





## Buying Your First Farm



**B**uying your first farm can be exciting, but there are factors that should be considered before a property is purchased to ensure that it meets the goals of the landowner. The property may have a beautiful view, but is it appropriate for raising livestock? It is important to give serious consideration to the following: land base, farmstead layout, soils, water resources, and crop expectations.

### Land Base

When looking for property to raise livestock, land base is very important. If the goal is to raise 4 horses, then the property should be larger than 5 acres or the landowner should plan to confine the horses for long periods of time. Without adequate land base, livestock will overgraze pastures and feed costs will increase.

### Farmstead

Another important aspect to consider when purchasing property is the condition and layout of the farmstead. If there are existing farm buildings, where are the buildings located and are they conducive to efficient chore time? Too often, barns are located in areas that allow water to drain into the barn and/or paddock areas or are situated so that vehicles or livestock do not have easy access to the barn. Also consider the condition of the buildings. Do they need a new roof, gutters or drainage?

### Soils

Soil type is an aspect that is often overlooked when considering the purchase of property. In Skagit County, soil types differ between lowland crop fields and property located on glaciated hills. Generally, lowland property is more productive, but may have a seasonal high water table that is near the surface for most of the winter months. Property located on hills may seem dry during the summer months, but typically have a perched water table that creates a muddy mess during the winter months. Typically, land located on glaciated hills is not as productive as lowland properties.

### Water

Water is probably the most important resource to consider when looking at property. Aspects of water resources include annual precipitation, groundwater resources, critical areas, well restrictions, water rights and drainage districts.

What is the annual precipitation for the area of the prospective property? Property on Fidalgo Island may only receive 22 – 25 inches of rain each year, whereas, property in Lyman may receive 50 – 70 inches per year.

What type of water table is located on the property? Is there a seasonal high water table or is it a perched water table? What is the depth to the groundwater during the winter months? In lowland areas, the depth to the groundwater during the winter months can range from 0 to greater than 6 feet below ground surface. Soils located on glaciated hills generally have a perched water table that is near the surface

for most of the winter months. A perched water table forms above an impermeable rock or clay layer that separates it from the main groundwater table below it. Determining the type and depth of the water table will determine if and how livestock should be raised during the winter months. Pastures that have a high water table during the winter months are not conducive to winter grazing and livestock will need to be confined to paddocks.

### Critical Areas

Streams, ponds and wetland areas provide aesthetics to property, but there are restrictions when it comes to raising livestock. Setbacks from these waterways are required depending on how the property is zoned. A prospective buyer should contact the Skagit County Planning and Development Services to determine if and/or how large of a setback is required if a property has critical areas.



# AL HAPPENINGS



## Mud and Manure Management

If the goal of the landowner is to raise livestock on a prospective property, then an important consideration is mud and manure management. In most cases, paddock areas and pasture fields become saturated during the winter months, which create large quantities of mud. Mud makes chore time difficult, has a negative impact on animal health and may lead to water quality issues. If livestock are confined to a barn and/or paddock areas manure must be collected and stored in an appropriate waste storage structure. Does the property have a manure storage structure and if so, where, when and how will the manure be applied?



## Wells

If a prospective property has a well, then the buyer should contact the Skagit County Health Department to ascertain information about the well. The Health Department should have information on the depth of the well, any water quality information and provide information on setbacks. The Health Department is also able to provide information on water rights.

## Crop Expectations

The expected yield of pastures depends on soil type, climatic conditions and the management capabilities of the landowner. Expected production of pasture grass can range from 0.5 tons per acre to 6 ton per acre depending on soil type and management. Pasture fields located in lowland areas generally produce more forage than pastures located on glaciated hills. Climatic conditions include heat units, precipitation and temperature. The ability to manage pasture fields to maximize forage production depends on the amount of time available to clip, harrow and fertilize the fields.



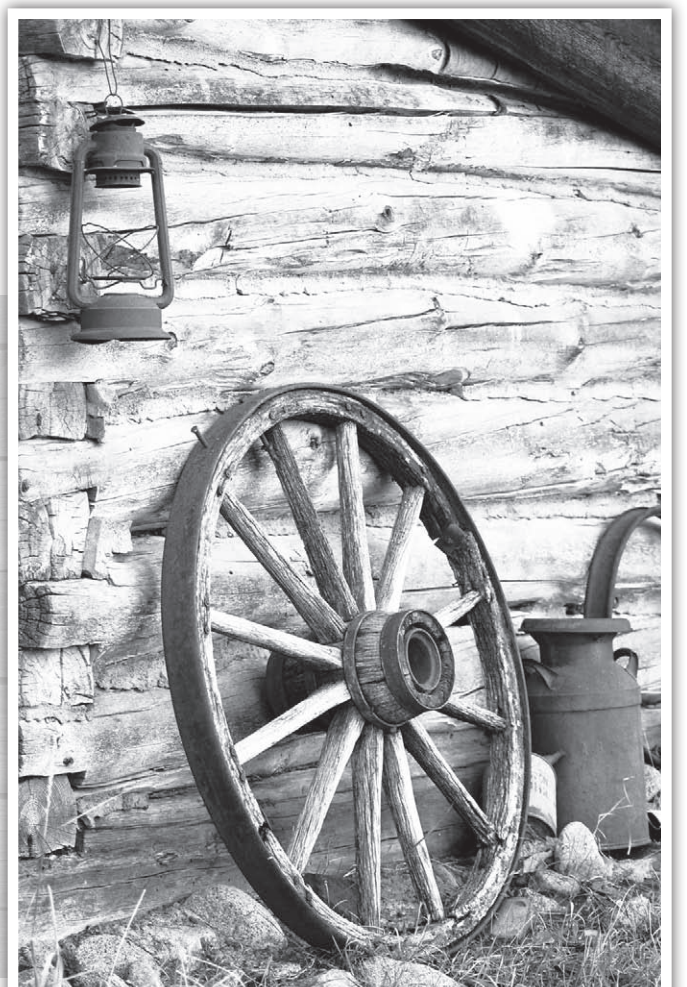
*A prospective buyer should contact the Skagit County Planning and Development Services to determine if and/or how large of a setback is required if a property has critical areas.*

## Available Resources

There is a lot of information to compile before property is purchased and it can be confusing as to where to go to obtain that information. The following is a list of resources that are available to provide needed information:

- Skagit Conservation District – (360) 428-4313
- WSU Extension Service – (360) 428-4270
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – (360) 428-7758
- Skagit County Planning & Development Services – (360) 336-9410
- Skagit County Health Department – (360) 336-9380
- Local real estate agent
- Neighbors

So, before purchasing property, make sure you consider your goals and determine whether the property is suitable to meet them. Then, not only will your dream of having a farm become reality, but you can be assured that it meets your needs and will be a healthy place for your animals and the environment.





# AGRICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

## Photo highlights from the "Behind the Farm" Tour: *Buffers & Beavers*

On July 31<sup>st</sup>, Skagit Conservation District and Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland hosted the Buffers & Beavers Tour. Congressional representatives, folks from state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations, among others, traveled through the Samish Watershed and learned about the successes and challenges of managing for multiple resource goals.



**Brandon Roozen from Western Washington Ag Association discusses the importance of the Drainage Fish Initiative and how it benefits the environment and agriculture. Photo was taken along Thomas Creek at Green Road.**



**A scenic stop on Chuckanut Drive to discuss tide gates on the Samish River.**

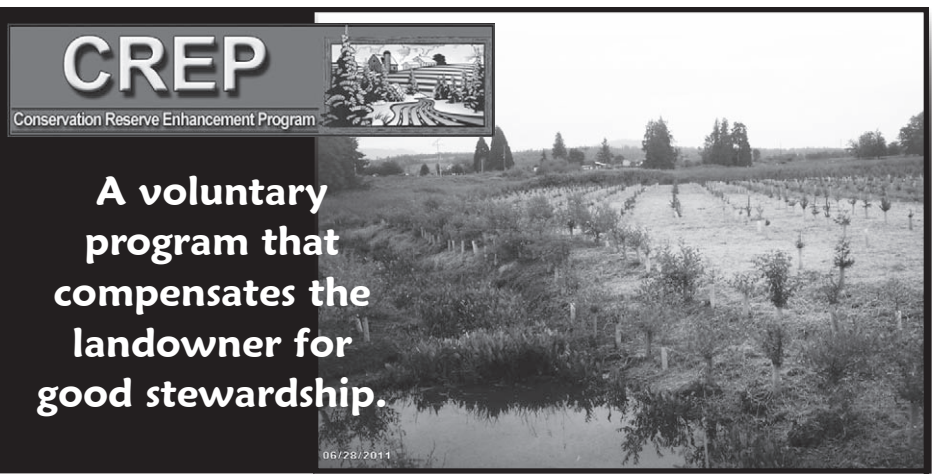


**Allen Rozema of Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland (SPF) explains his "four-legged stool" theory and why SPF supports voluntary conservation efforts, at the group's picturesque lunch stop at Taylor Shellfish Farms.**

**Nicole Hopper of Taylor Shellfish Farms prepares a feast of clams for the participants before she tells them about the importance of water quality to the shellfish industry.**



**George Vojkovich converses with Janet McRae, Skagit Conservation District Board Supervisor, about beaver damage in his riparian buffer.**

**CREP**  
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

**A voluntary program that compensates the landowner for good stewardship.**

CREP soil rental rates have increased about 30% over the previous rates as of June 2013. The average soil rental rate for Skagit County soils is now \$550/acre/year with a low of \$298/acre/year to a high of \$904/acre/year, depending on soil type.

CREP pays landowners to establish buffers of native trees and shrubs along fish bearing streams and 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 and wildlife habitat, buffers of native vegetation help protect water quality, stabilize stream banks, reduce erosion, create shade that lowers water temperature and provide attractive borders for privacy and protection.

The program pays all the expenses to establish the buffer, in addition to annual rental payments and other benefits to the landowner.

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

### Fall in Place for Winter!

#### Winterize Your Livestock Property

Monday, September 30th, 2013  
6:30 pm to 9:00 p.m.



Back by popular demand, Alayne Blicke, Horses for Clean Water, will present this upcoming informational workshop. Learn how to beat the mud and become chore efficient at the time of year when all that counts the most! Hear about great tips and techniques for getting a jump on winter. This pre-winter journey will take you through a checklist of things to do to prepare your farm for those dark, cold, blustery, and rainy winter months. Learn ways to make the coming winter less stressful and healthier for your horses and livestock, you and the environment! This training is being hosted by the Skagit Conservation District.

Pre-register by Sept. 26th  
Contact: Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District  
(360) 428-4313 or email: kristi@skagitcd.org

Skagit Valley






acres of fun for everyone

Saturday & Sunday, October 5-6, 2013, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

### New Online Tool Calculates How Much Carbon Agricultural Practices Can Remove from the Atmosphere

Colorado State University & USDA NRCS researchers have created a new tool called COMET-Farm™. This is an online tool that estimates how much carbon a producer's soil and vegetation can remove from the atmosphere. The goal of this tool is to estimate measurements of how much greenhouse gas reductions are coming from conservation agriculture and forestry. The tool is also meant to help landowners understand the impact of land management decisions on energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

For more information about how COMET-Farm™ works, visit <http://phys.org/news/2013-06-online-tool-greenhouse-gas-reductions.html>

<p><b>Choose Activities</b></p>  <p>Choose the management activities you want to audit – field management, livestock, and/or energy use.</p>	<p><b>Define Management</b></p>  <p>Enter the management data and future management scenarios for the chosen activities.</p>	<p><b>Run Report</b></p>  <p>Run the report to see how greenhouse gas emissions based on your current management compare to future management scenarios.</p>
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The COMET-Farm tool is available online at [www.comet-farm.com](http://www.comet-farm.com)



# COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP

## Thank you 2013 Marine Biotoxin Volunteers!

Hats off and a special thank you to our 2013 Marine Biotoxin Volunteers – many who have been contributing to this important program since it commenced thirteen years ago! The goal of the Marine Biotoxin Volunteer Program is to provide an



We are lucky here in Skagit County to have a healthy population of shellfish, so next time the tide is low, grab a shovel and head to the beach.... just remember, **BEFORE YOU GO, call the HOTLINE at 1-800-562-5632 or visit the web page at: [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm)**

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), which is an emerging threat to Washington waters. DSP has been detected in Washington's marine waters for some time, but had not produced toxin. That changed in 2011 when the first confirmed DSP illnesses were reported in Washington State.

PSP poisoning can be life threatening and is caused by eating shellfish containing a potent toxin. The toxin is produced by a naturally occurring organism. Cooking or freezing does NOT destroy the toxin. Common symptoms of PSP poisoning include tingling lips and tongue moving to the

hands and feet, which may begin within minutes of eating the shellfish. In high doses it can cause difficulty breathing, which can cause death without emergency life support. A person who suspects they have eaten contaminated shellfish should seek medical help immediately.

DSP produces gastrointestinal symptoms, usually beginning within 30 minutes to a few hours after consumption of toxic shellfish). The illness, which is not fatal, is characterized by incapacitating diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, and chills. Recovery occurs within three days, with or without medical treatment.

Due to the dedication and commitment of our Marine Biotoxin Volunteers, local shellfish toxicity data is generated on a regular basis, providing emergency investigative responses for local and visiting recreational shellfish harvesters. Local shellfish are gathered at low tide every other week 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. Once tested, the State Department of Health immediately gets any necessary warnings on the Marine Biotoxin Hotline to keep the public informed.

### **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.

### **If the 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?**

DOH regularly checks shellfish for PSP and DSP toxin and closes areas that have unsafe levels. Before harvesting any kind of shellfish, check the marine *Biotoxin Bulletin* or call the *Marine Biotoxin Hotline* at 1-800-562-5632 to find out what recreational areas are closed due to PSP or DSP. Do not expect beaches to be marked with a sign.

The Skagit Conservation District, Skagit County Health Department, and Washington State Department of Health commend the dedication of our 2013 Marine Biotoxin Volunteers and for their involvement in protecting the health of our community.

*Marine Biotoxin volunteers participate in an annual training hosted by the Skagit Conservation District and Skagit County Health Department. Pictured from l to r: Gordon Sjorgren, James Fukuyama, Bob Lewis, Jeanne King (Skagit County Health Dept.), Glenda Alm, and Steve Thornton.*



### **2013 Marine Biotoxin Volunteers:**

Glenda Alm, Mount Vernon	Jim Fukuyama, Mount Vernon	John Patton, Mount Vernon
Chet Bradley, Sedro-Woolley	Donna Helgeson, Sedro-Woolley	Jim Roberts, Mount Vernon
Barb Cameron, Guemes	Dick Kent, Mount Vernon	Jessie Sauer, Sedro-Woolley
Ann Childs, Mount Vernon	Robert Knowles, Anacortes	Gordon Sjorgren, Kirkland
Jim Crone, Anacortes	Bob Lewis, Sedro-Woolley	Jon Stables, Anacortes
Kathy Crone, Anacortes	Jack Mercer, Sinclair Island	Marcus Stables, Anacortes
Chuck Davis, Bow	Jack Middleton, Mount Vernon	Vicky Stables, Anacortes
Bud Freeman, Mount Vernon	Henry Nyland, Mount Vernon	Steve Thornton, Mount Vernon
Cherie Freeman, Mount Vernon	Shirley Nyland, Mount Vernon	



*Left: Marine Biotoxin Volunteers, Glenda Alm and Dick Kent of Bay View, have been participating in the program since 2010.*

**For information about the Marine Biotoxin Volunteer Monitoring Program, contact Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District @ 428-4313 or email [Kristi@skagitcd.org](mailto:Kristi@skagitcd.org)**

### **Coming soon ... Fall 2013 Watershed Masters Program**

## **Explore the Wonders of our Local Watersheds!**

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 2013 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 25<sup>th</sup> and continuing through November 13<sup>th</sup>, and participate in three Saturday watershed field adventures, scheduled for Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>, Oct. 12<sup>th</sup> and Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>. 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 20th by contacting Kristi Carpenter at (360) 428-4313 or email: [kristi@skagitcd.org](mailto:kristi@skagitcd.org)**



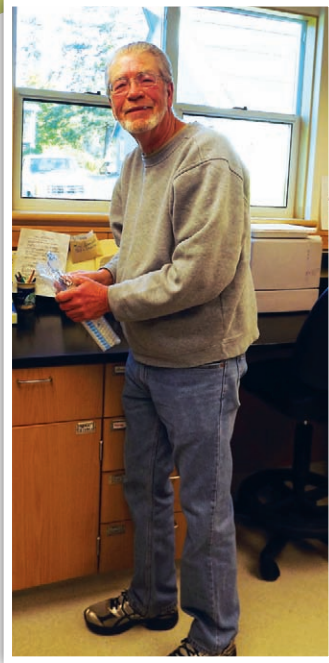
# COMMUNIT

# Stream Team Volunteers

## Stream Team Volunteers



Special recognition was given to Joyce Moon (left) and Tom Schmidt (right) for ten years of volunteer service.



On Saturday, June 8th, over 60 Skagit Stream Team volunteers gathered to celebrate another season of dedication to our Skagit County Watersheds.

This potluck event was hosted by the Skagit Conservation District and the Padilla Bay Research Reserve. Volunteers were recognized for their participation in the 2012/13 Stream Team program and for their continued dedication throughout their varying years of involvement. The event featured great food, great company, and great entertainment, like a good party always does!

Special thanks to **Paul Blau, Blau Oyster Company and Nicole Hopper, Taylor Shellfish Farms** for serving up the potluck highlight of tasty, local clams and oysters, and to **Glen Alexander** of Padilla Bay Research Reserve for providing the creative and catchy musical entertainment!



Cody Natland received a t-shirt and certificate for completing his first year with Stream Team, sampling on Joe Leary slough.

Seventy-four volunteers were presented with awards for their dedication and service. Special recognition was given to **Joyce Moon and Tom Schmidt** for ten-years of volunteer service; and to this year's "Shining Stars," including **Bill Bowen, Stephen Farmer, Jim Johnson, Sue Mitchell, Richard Oickle, Frank Repplier, and Jack Sekora** who were recognized for 5 years of service.

Also recognized were **Alec McDougall and George Viverette** for their uninterrupted 13 and 12 years of outstanding service. **Bill Bowen, Kyle Deerkop, Stephen Farmer, Lin Folsom, Jim Fukuyama, Pete Haase, Jack Middleton, and Robert Pare,** were recognized for their involvement as the "Skagit Storm Team" volunteers – this group has been on special assignment conducting storm event monitoring in priority watersheds for over 5 years. Their ongoing commitment has been a key factor in protecting public health and identifying priority stream reaches in the watershed.



Storm Team members show off their new rain slickers they received for volunteering their time during the 2012/13 season. L-R: Robert Pare, Jim Fukuyama, Bill Bowen and Stephen Farmer.

Thanks again to our 2012/13 Skagit Stream and Storm Team Volunteers!

## Stream Team 2013 Shining Stars



Bill Bowen



Sue Mitchell



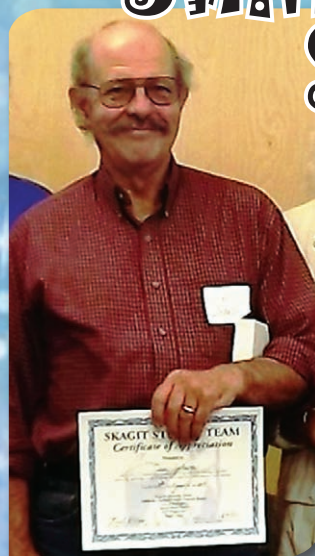
Richard Oickle



Frank Repplier



Stephen Farmer



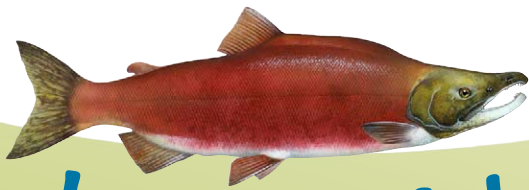
Jim Johnson



Jack Sekora



# WATER STEWARDSHIP



## So Much to Celebrate: Celebrate 15th Season

### 2012/2013 Skagit Stream Team/ Storm Team Volunteers

#### Bay View Drainage

Kyle Lorentz  
Lachelle Lorentz  
Cheryl Markey

#### Clyde Creek

Bill Carey  
Bertis Rasco  
Jon Stables  
Vicky Stables  
George Viverette

#### Fisher Creek

Andrea Doll  
Scott Doman  
Shirley Doman  
Bob Freedman  
Jim Kunzmann  
Jim Roberts  
Carol Schwartz  
Dean Schwartz

#### Gages Slough

Robyn Blankinship  
Donna Helgeson

#### Joe Leary Slough

Scott Adams  
Donald Brassington  
Cody Natland  
Crystal Natland  
Nate Schuh  
Seth Schuh

#### Kulshan Creek

Gena Dilabio  
Terri Dix  
Maria Magaña  
Alec McDougall  
Sandy McDougall

#### No Name Slough

Andrea Bachman  
Richard Brown  
Ed Lawler  
Cadence Luchsinger  
Patrick McDaniel  
Austin Rose  
James Stavig

#### Lower Nookachamps

George Bullock  
Shannon Druckrey  
James Fukuyama  
John Patton  
Holli Watne  
Mike Watne

#### Upper Nookachamps

Emilia Blake  
Bill Bowen  
Luanne Goodrich  
Hal Lee  
Hella Lee  
Dan McCroskey  
Richard Oickle  
Sally Saxton

#### Samish

Richard Brown  
Kyle Deerkop  
Stephen Farmer  
Nicole Fisher  
Steven Goodrich  
Sarah Huntington  
Jim Johnson  
Jack Middleton  
Sue Mitchell  
Joyce Moon  
Robert Pare  
Jeanette Redmond  
Richard Redmond  
Tom Schmidt  
Melissa Thompson

#### Trumpeter Basin

Rhonda Jennings  
Frank Repplier  
Jack Sekora  
Terry Williams

#### AmeriCorps Interns

Paul Argites  
Jon Eilerts  
Stephanie Fischer

#### 2012/2013 Storm Team

Bill Bowen  
Kyle Deerkop  
Stephen Farmer  
Lin Folsom  
James Fukuyama  
Pete Haase  
Jack Middleton  
Robert Pare

#### Data Entry Volunteers

Sarah Goodrich  
Steven Goodrich

#### Lab Support

Erikka Olson

Thank You  
Plant  
Sale  
Volunteers!



A group of volunteers and staff run the show on the first day of the sale.

Pictured from L to R: Donna Helgeson, Dennis Hall, Linda Herring, Beverly Dresen, Al Craney, Rebecca Bernard, Diana Wisen, Barbara Haar, Rich Brown, Carla Glassman, Joe Holtcamp, Dena Petersen, Ann Buzaitis, Jenny Hinderman & John Schuh.



A big THANK YOU to the volunteers that helped at our plant sale this year!

A special thank you to **Rebecca Bernard** (6th from the left in above photo) who went out of her way to pick up free compost at the La Conner wastewater treatment plant and make it available to plant sale customers for free! Thanks, Rebecca!

Also, we would like to recognize **Carla Glassman** for all her hard work at our plant sale. She worked all three days of our open sales and stuck around until the doors closed and the lights were turned out! Thanks, Carla!



Above: Carla Glassman (right) and Diana Wisen hold down the fort.

#### Our heartfelt thanks to the following volunteers:

Ryan Arnold	Dennis Hall	Brent Reitmeier
Linda Baker	Donna Helgeson	Seth Schuh
Rebecca Bernard	Linda Herring	Jack Sekora
Bill Bowen	Keith Johnson	Inge Siller
Rich Brown	Stephen Jordan	Jon Stables
Ann Buzaitis	Bob Lewis	Vicky Stables
Beverly Dresen	Dan McCroskey	Terry Williams
Gina Falcetti	Robert Pare	Diana Wisen
Carla Glassman	Dena Petersen	
Barbara Haar	Ryan Peterson	



### 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. 2013 through June of 2014).

#### 2013 Skagit Stream Team Training Dates:

Tuesday, Sept. 10th, 6 pm to 8:30 pm  
Thursday, Sept. 12th, 6 pm to 8:30 pm  
Saturday, Sept. 14th, 9 am to 2:30 pm

(New volunteers must attend all three training sessions)

**PRE-REGISTER by Sept. 4th, 2013**  
Contact: Kristi Carpenter  
Skagit Conservation District  
(360) 428-4313 or email: [kristi@skagitcd.org](mailto: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.





## 2013 Poster Contest



The Skagit Conservation District hosted its annual Natural Resources Conservation Poster Contest in honor of Soil and Water Stewardship Week, that took place during the week of April 28 to May 5, 2013. This year's theme was "Where Does Your Water Shed?" The contest was open to Skagit County students, grades kindergarten through twelfth, and 75 poster entries were submitted.

The poster judges this year were Susan Wood, Estuary Educator with Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve; Nicole Hopper, Education and Outreach Coordinator for Taylor Shellfish Farms; and, Susan King, Program Technician with USDA Farm Service Agency.

The Overall Winner this year was **Ethan Hansen**, a fifth grader from Jefferson Elementary. As the Overall Winner, Ethan was awarded a \$50 Tri-Dee gift card, a plaque, and professional framing of his poster. Ethan was also the Category 4-6<sup>th</sup> Grade Winner.

The Runner-Up Winner was **Shayla Axthelm**, a seventh grade student at Mount Baker Middle School. She was awarded a \$25 Tri-Dee gift card and a plaque. Shayla was also the Category 7-9<sup>th</sup> Grade Winner.

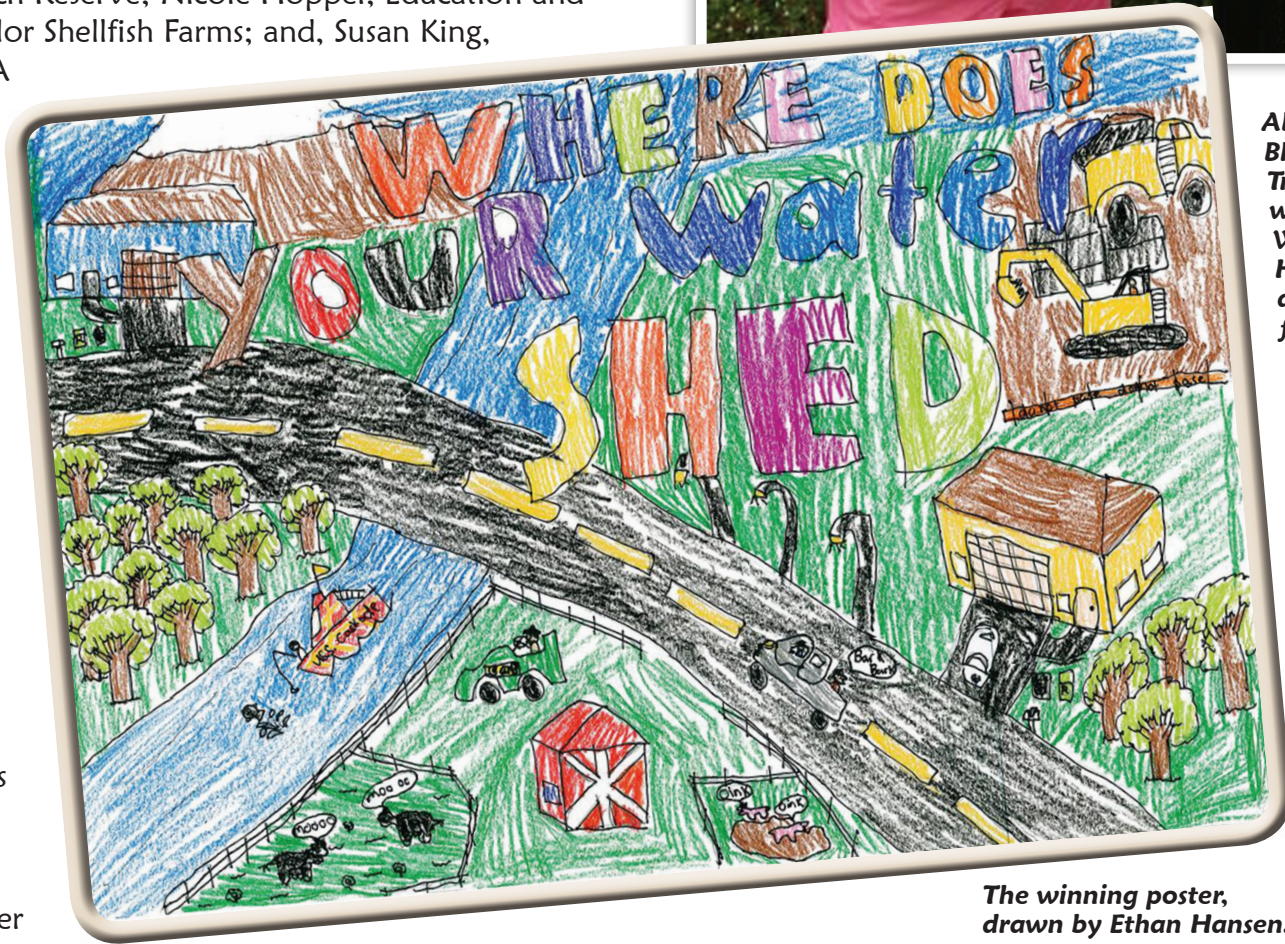
**Keaton Lawson**, a third grader who attends Foothills Christian, was the Category 2-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Winner. **James Axthelm**, a Mount Vernon High School twelfth grader, was the Category 10-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Winner. There were no entries for Category K-1<sup>st</sup> Grade.

As category winners, all of the above mentioned poster winners received a weather station and a certificate of achievement. Laminated bookmarks were also created featuring the artwork of all the award winners for them to share with friends and family. All poster entries received a participation certificate, activity booklet and a bookmark featuring this year's theme.

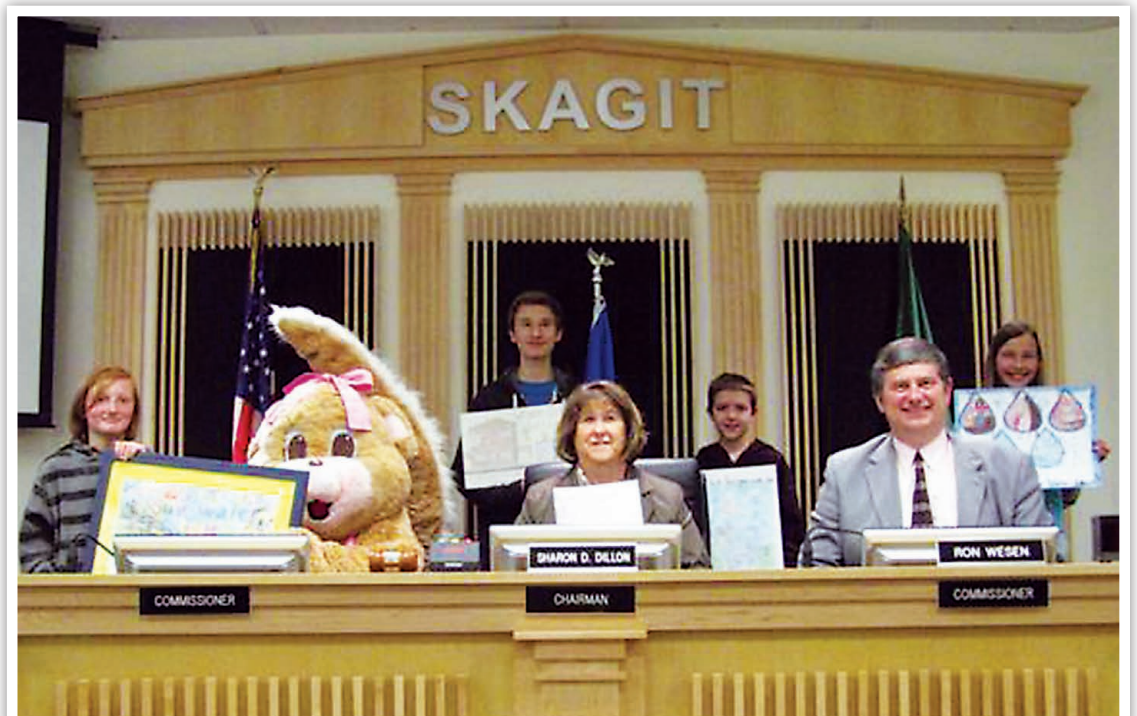
A Soil and Water Stewardship Proclamation was held at the Skagit County Commissioners Hearing Room on April 23, 2013. The award winning students were recognized for their talents during a televised presentation with the Commissioners and Blossom the Treeture™, who was able to sit in as an honorary Commissioner for the event.



**ABOVE:** Blossom the Treeture™ poses with Overall Winner Ethan Hansen and his award winning framed artwork.



*The winning poster, drawn by Ethan Hansen.*



*Contest winners were honored at the Skagit County Commissioner's Meeting.*



# CONSERVATION



## 2013 Envirothon News

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, King Conservation District hosted the 2013 Northwest Regional Envirothon at Camp Kory in Carnation, WA.

Five-member teams from each King, Skagit and Snohomish Counties competed at the event. Stanwood High School placed first, Sky Valley Education Center placed second, and Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center placed third in the competition. These top teams were given the opportunity to compete at the state event.

The Envirothon is a hands-on, natural resources science competition in which teams of high school students test in soils/land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife, and a current environmental issue. This year's current issue was Sustainable Rangeland Management.



**2013 State Champions**

**The Science and Math Institute of Tacoma, WA**

*(Continued on next page)*

## Acme Elementary School 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders Have “**The best school day ever!**”

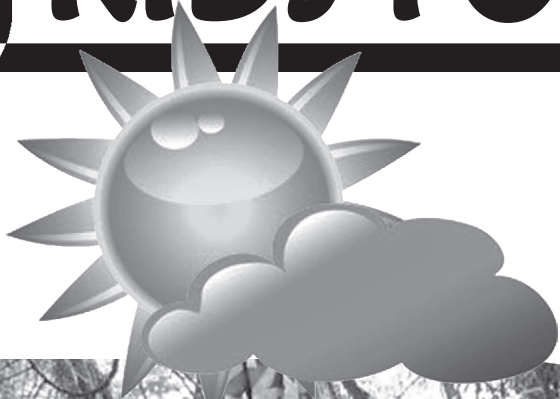
During the 2012-2013 school year the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes at Acme Elementary raised Coho salmon from egg stage beginning in January. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, the kids participated in a Field Day where each student released their Coho salmon smolt into Jones Creek (the stream behind the school).

As part of the Field Day activities they went to three stations. One station covered macro-invertebrate identification with Mr. Spring (one of their teachers); another station was on habitat assessment on the creek with Deb Virgovic, Fisheries Biologist with the NRCS; and the third station was tree planting. Each student planted 2 Douglas fir seedlings donated by Skagit CD on a site provided by the County and adjacent to a stream. They also used pencils, a partner, and a measuring tape to measure full grown Douglas fir trees.



Student consensus on the project was “**That was the best school day ever!**”

# KIDS FOR CONSERVATION



## Sixth Grade Conservation Tour



**Orlando Garcia (USFS) demonstrates poor camping practices as he douses gasoline on some helpless "trees" during the "Impact Monster" station hosted by the North Cascades National Park and US Forest Service.**

This year's annual 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation tour welcomed 750 students from 29 Skagit County classrooms to Pomona Grange Park on Friday Creek, May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. With a lucky break in the rainy weather, the excited students participated in hands-on educational activities at a rotation of seven 15-minute stations, which included topics on forest protection, the salmon life cycle, bivalves, soils, "Leave No Trace" camping practices, macroinvertebrates, and forest regeneration. The students agreed that having an outdoor classroom was a nice change.

SCD would like to thank the natural resource professionals from the Department of Natural Resources, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, Taylor Shellfish Farms, Natural Resources Conservation Service, North Cascades National Park, US Forest Service, and Sierra Pacific Industries, Inc., who dedicated their time to assist with this event. We also thank our faithful volunteers who worked so hard to make this a successful event once again.



**Nicole Hopper, Taylor Shellfish Farms, describes the biology of a geoduck to a group of students.**



**Keith Greenwood with Sierra Pacific Industries describes forest regeneration by showing the group the seeds on a fir branch.**

## 2013 Envirothon News

*(Continued from page 11)*

Six regional competitions are hosted across the state each year, with top county winners moving on to the State Envirothon Competition. This year's state competition was hosted by Asotin County Conservation District on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, at Fields Spring State Park in Anatone, WA.

This year's state winning team was the Tacoma Science and Math Institute (SAMI) from Pierce County. Gar-Pal High School, Palouse County, placed second and Stanwood High School, Snohomish County, placed third. This is the second consecutive year that the SAMI team has earned an all-expenses-paid trip to the North American Envirothon, which was held this year at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana, August 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>. They competed against 57 teams from the United States and Canada, placing 26<sup>th</sup> overall!



**Students study a hawk at the wildlife station at the state competition.**



# AFTER THE STORM

## Where Does Your Water Shed?

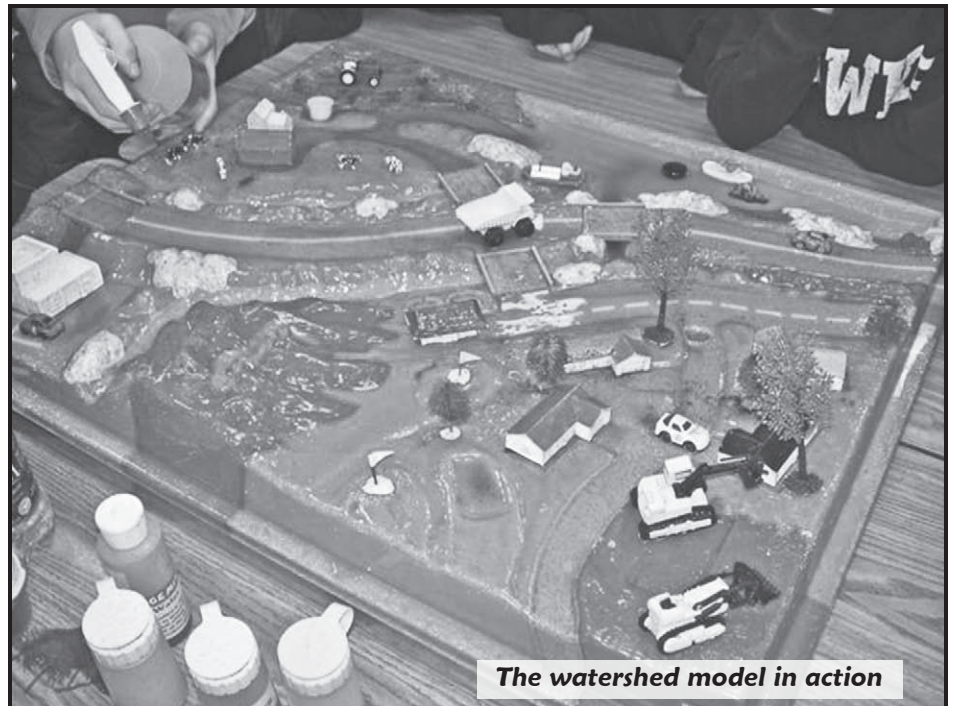


During the 2012-2013 school year, the Skagit Conservation District visited **39 Skagit County classrooms educating 940 students** about the effects of stormwater runoff in their watershed.

Using the EnviroScape® model, a tabletop, interactive example of our Skagit Watershed, the hour-long presentation guides students through the various ways that humans use the land, and demonstrates the two types of pollution; point source and non-point source. Students then see and discuss what takes place in the watershed when it rains. Following the demonstration, they develop ways to mitigate the water pollution/runoff issues. The model offers a hands-on, visual approach to learning and discussing water quality, land use, ecosystem health, and fish and wildlife habitat.

These presentations provide a unique, interactive learning experience, enabling students to make the connection between the way we live, and use our lands, and the health of our local waterways. They are able to see how the combined affects of non-point source pollution from many small sources can have a large impact on the quality of our shared water resources, and the differences they can make by each doing their part.

### Be the solution to the pollution!



The watershed model in action

### What is a Watershed?

A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place. John Wesley Powell, scientist geographer, put it best when he said that a watershed is:

**“that area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of a community.”**



#### Directions:

This puzzle is called a Cryptogram. At the top there is a KEY that lists all the letters from A thru Z with a box below. Each of the letters has a corresponding number.

The bottom part contains a secret phrase. Each of the blanks has a number underneath it. Fill in the letters that correspond to the numbers below the blanks to solve the phrase.

### Where Does Your Water Shed?

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

     E
15 7 7
7 11 2 E
11 22
15

19 15 3 E
6 5 17 25 E
8 !

Answer: We all live in a watershed!

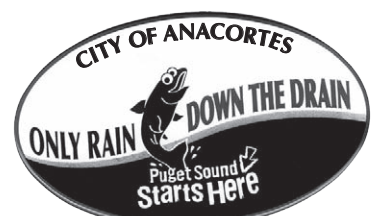


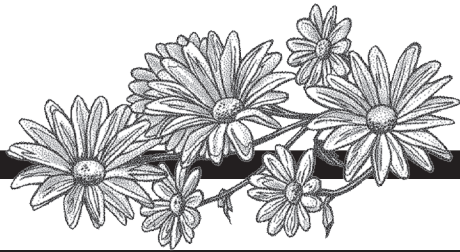
From left to right: Members of Cub Scout pack 4085 – Colin Coryell, Aiden Santos, Kelsey Hanks, Patrick Quinn, Alec Hanks and Liam Ufkes

### Anacortes Storm Drain Marking Kick-off

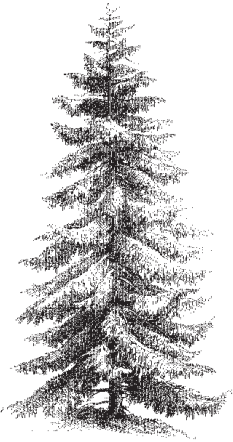
The Skagit Conservation District, in partnership with the City of Anacortes, would like to thank members of Cub Scout Group 4085 for labeling drains on several neighborhood streets in the Saint Mary’s Parish area this past June. They completed this important service project to earn their Environmental Science Bear Merit Badges, and to help improve their community.

For further information about how you can plan a similar project or install markers in your neighborhood, please call Cindy Pierce at (360) 428-4313. Marking projects are available in the cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and rural Skagit County areas.





## BACKYARD CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP CLASS



### MAKING OUR COMMUNITY A BETTER PLACE ONE YARD AT A TIME

The Skagit Conservation District, Skagit County, and the Cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley would like to extend special thanks to the participants of the 2013 Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course. We commend this group of enthusiastic community residents for completing the 6-week program and for their personal commitments to make changes in their own backyards that will benefit the environment now and in the future by improving air, water, and soil quality and will help restore lost habitat in our community (and beyond)! Thank you for making our world a better place!



**Brenda Cunningham (at right), of the Native Plant Society, leads Backyard Conservation Stewardship class participants on an informational walking tour of the Native Plant Demonstration Garden during a cold and rainy class field trip to the Discovery Garden.**



**Linda Zielinski, Fidalgo Backyard Wildlife Habitat Group (with clipboard), showcases her sustainable garden featuring vegetables, urban chickens, and a certified backyard wildlife habitat garden during a Backyard Conservation Stewardship Class field tour in Anacortes.**

### 2013 Backyard Conservation Stewardship Program "Graduates"

- |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Glenda Alm          | Sharon Klinger   |
| Linda Baker         | Patti Lee        |
| Pam Barnes          | Bob Lewis        |
| Barbara Bond-Howard | Adam McCormick   |
| Katie Brink         | Sarah Merchant   |
| Janice Buchanan     | Amber Rhodes     |
| Lynne Christensen   | Peter Rosenstein |
| Doug Common         | Lisa Selfridge   |
| Sheri Croll         | Chris Stratton   |
| Ronda Dupea         | Tara Sullivan    |
| Melcombe Forbes     | Bruce Taylor     |
| April Garrison      | Carol Thomas     |
| Viola Garvin        | Tamara Thomas    |
| Adam Hill           | Ted Thomas       |
| Chuck Howell        | Cedar Wyatt      |
| Crystal Kennison    | Yerda Yearsley   |
| Joy Kerns           |                  |



"Seeing wildlife in my garden takes me to my happy place."

- Carole Sevilla Brown, Conservation Biologist



For information on this program or if you are interested in spearheading a backyard wildlife habitat project in your neighborhood, contact Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District at (360) 428-4313 or email [Kristi@skagitcd.org](mailto:Kristi@skagitcd.org).

Additional information on Backyard Conservation and Gardening for Wildlife is available on the following web sites:

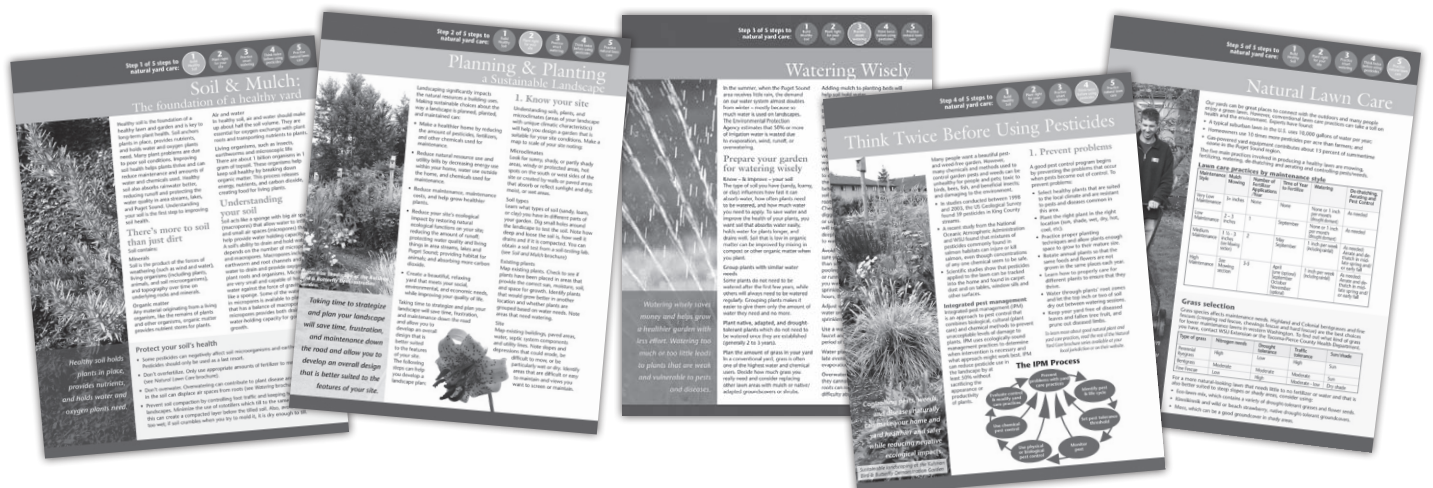
- Natural Resource Conservation Service: [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)
- WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife: [www.wdfw.wa.gov](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov)
- National Wildlife Federation: [www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org)
- Washington Native Plant Society: [www.wnps.org](http://www.wnps.org)

## NEW! Natural Yard Care Fact Sheets Available on SCD's website!

Learn how to care for your yard in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way.

5 steps to natural yard care:

1. Build Healthy Soil
2. Plant Right for Your Site
3. Practice Smart Watering
4. Think Twice Before Using Pesticides
5. Practice Natural Lawn Care



These 5 fact sheets are available on our website at [http://www.skagitcd.org/stormwater\\_programs](http://www.skagitcd.org/stormwater_programs)

# BACKYARD



## Native Plant Demonstration Garden Engages Samish Community



*It's all about community! Much work was accomplished at the June 29th garden work party at the Alger Community Hall due to the support of a passionate and hardworking neighborhood community.*

***It is amazing what can happen when you combine a great idea, commitment to community, fresh air, good earth, and a group of energized and hardworking volunteers!***

A dedicated team of over 25 Samish watershed neighbors (and a few Samish Stream Team volunteers) came together on Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup> to begin work in transforming the lot behind the Alger Community Hall, which will soon be a vibrant community native plant demonstration garden. Neighbors (of all ages) worked all day, hauling and spreading over 3 1/2 truckloads of soil and mulch. Pathways were initiated and will be completed later this summer, with planting beginning in the fall. The project will also feature observation areas, a native plant corridor/windbreak, and educational signage that will allow for self-guided tours.



***Volunteers of all ages joined together to begin work in establishing the new native plant demonstration garden at the Alger Community Hall.***



*"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 project was made possible by the Friday Creek Habitat Stewards, a neighborhood volunteer group, who were recently awarded a \$7,500 grant from the Rose Foundation's Puget Sound Grassroots Stewardship Fund to establish a multi-faceted stream and wildlife habitat enhancement demonstration site on Silver Creek at the Alger Community Hall. The project, inspired by the volunteer group with support from

the Alger Improvement Club, Skagit Conservation District, and other partners, will include incorporating specialty demonstration gardens that teach visitors how garden beds can absorb runoff, create healthy soil conditions, reduce maintenance, protect their neighborhood stream, and add native plants that provide habitat for fish and wildlife and attract birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects. The Skagit Conservation District will serve as fiscal agent and provide technical support for the project.

This project will build on the success of the stream enhancement project conducted at the site last spring with support from Skagit County's NRSP program, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, Alger Community Hall, Skagit Conservation District and the Friday Creek Habitat Stewards.

For more information, or if you would like to volunteer at upcoming work parties, contact Sue Mitchell, Co-Chair of the Friday Creek Habitat Stewards, at (360) 724-0397 or Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District at (360) 428-4313 or email: [kristi@skagitcd.org](mailto:kristi@skagitcd.org).



**Special thanks to Ani Gurnee, Aulos Design, for volunteering her expertise and designing the beautiful landscape plan for the new community demonstration garden, to Roy Blumenhagen for bringing over his tractor and spending the day moving soil and mulch (we couldn't have done it without you!), to the Alger Improvement Club volunteers who provided lunch, drinks, and goodies, and to all the community neighbors who endured the heat and provided as much enthusiasm and hard work that could possibly be mustered in a day!**



***Due to strong community support, 3 1/2 truckloads of soil and mulch were placed and spread, transforming the site which will soon showcase pairings of native plants and naturescaping techniques that homeowners can apply to their own yards to invite wildlife, lower maintenance, reduce pesticide use and support local ecology.***



***Stephen Farmer and Rich Brown put the finishing touches to one of the new garden beds.***

**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.

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Licensed contractors who do conservation public works are invited to sign up for our small works roster. The list will be used to secure bid proposals for Skagit Conservation District public works projects estimated to cost less than \$100,000.

Restoration/reforestation contractors and contractors that do work such as concrete structures, ditching, drainage, fencing, pipeline, waste ponds, wildlife ponds, culverts, stream and wetland restoration, pipeline, soil testing, and pumping are invited to sign up for our contractors lists, which are given to the public upon request. The SCD provides the information as a public service. It does not endorse any of the contractors listed nor does it verify required licenses or registrations.

For a small works/contractors registration form, call 360-428-4313 or email [skagitcd@skagitcd.org](mailto:skagitcd@skagitcd.org)



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**SCD Board meetings are held at  
2021 E. College Way  
on the third 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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- COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP ..... 7-9**
- KIDS FOR CONSERVATION... 10-12**
- AFTER THE STORM ..... 13**
- IN YOUR BACKYARD ..... 14-15**

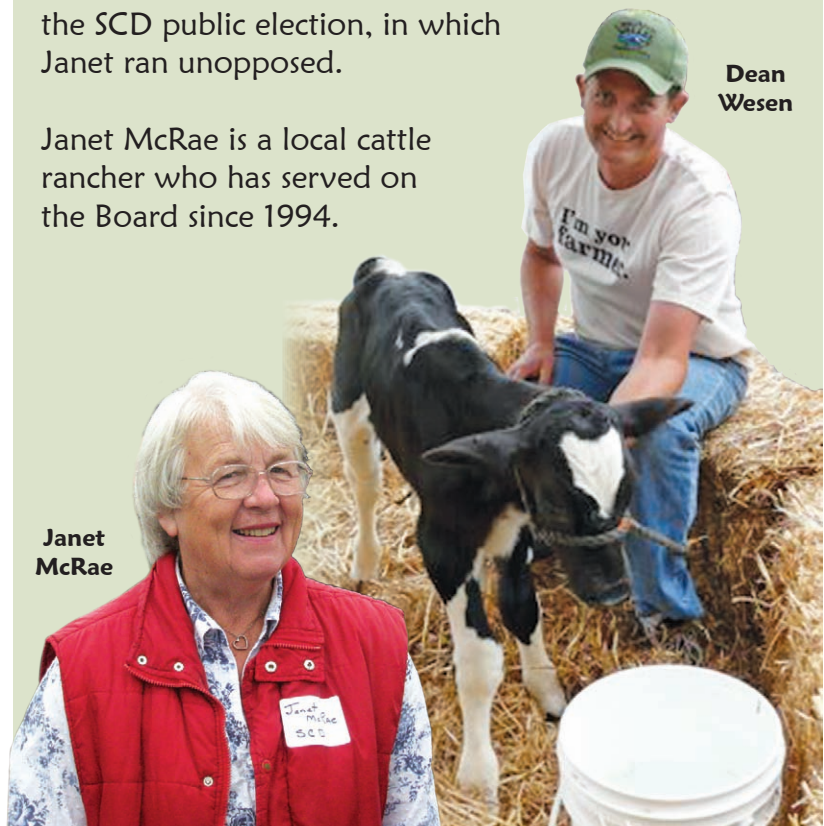
Cover photo credit: USDA Pomological Watercolor Collection. Special Collections, National Agricultural Library

**2013 SCD Board of Supervisors Election and Appointment Results**

Congratulations to Dean Wesen for being appointed in May to the Skagit Conservation District Board of Supervisors by the Washington State Conservation Commission. Dean, who is a local dairy farmer, has served on the Board since 2010.

Congratulations to Janet McRae for being elected in March to the Skagit Conservation District Board of Supervisors. In May the Washington State Conservation Commission certified the SCD public election, in which Janet ran unopposed.

Janet McRae is a local cattle rancher who has served on the Board since 1994.



**Dean Wesen**

**Janet McRae**

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