



Greener Pastures Ahead for Cows

by Victor Insera, SCD Habitat Restoration Specialist

While it may be true that the grass is always greener on the other side, it may not be worth it to get there. That's what Leonard Goodisman found out after many years of grazing livestock along Swamp Creek.

Len and his wife, Nancy, bought their 2.6 acre farm south of Lynnwood in 1978. It was just what they wanted – something large enough to run some livestock on, yet small enough to manage. There is a 45 by 45 foot garden filled with spinach, lettuce, onions, peas, broccoli, cabbage, and corn that Len cultivates for his gourmet recipes. Across from the garden is an equally-sized pen with a friendly white goat. Swamp Creek runs through one corner of their property, cutting off a half-acre pasture area.



Len, and his wife Nancy, both Community College teachers, enjoy their bucolic farm on Swamp Creek, in the midst of an urban area. They raise a few chickens, sheep, cattle and a garden.

For the past thirty years, the Goodismans have raised steers, lambs and chickens as well as the large garden on their property. About four years ago, Len noticed he was losing more of his streambank to erosion. Although his steers occasionally waded across Swamp Creek to get to the half-acre pasture, Len felt the cause of most of his erosion was due to poorly planned developments upstream and an increase in flash floods. Len was concerned for the well-being of the land. He had been fighting - with some success - to preserve many of the forested and agricultural parcels in the area from being developed.

Back in 2004, Len asked the Conservation District to help him provide better forage for his livestock and protect his banks from erosion. District planner Bobbi Lindemulder visited their farm and wrote a plan with specific actions that would improve his pastures and reduce any impacts the Goodisman cows were having on the creek. Len's plan included fencing livestock out of the creek and eliminating grazing on the far pasture.

Because the plan limited Len's livestock grazing, he put it aside. However, in the next three years he experienced several major floods as more housing developments were built nearby. His creekbanks were eroding - FAST!

In 2007, Len was ready to make some changes, so he called the District again. Luckily for Len, the District and the Adopt-A-Stream Foundation had recently both received grants from the Washington Department of Ecology to protect backyard streams in the Swamp Creek watershed. This grant provided the perfect opportunity to restore Len's streambanks.

In addition, the creekside area also qualified for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (affectionately called 'CREP'). This federal- and state-funded program helps pay for installing native plants and fences along salmon-bearing streams (like Swamp Creek) to protect them. It also pays landowners an annual fee for keeping streamside land out of agricultural production.

The District and Adopt-a-Stream worked together to plan, design, and implement the improvements on the Goodisman's property. We established a 100 foot-wide streamside buffer, which included the entire half acre pasture across the creek, and also paid for installing a fence to keep livestock out of the creek. Adopt-a-Stream provided many of the plants and coordinated the planting effort with volunteers who also installed plastic 'plant protectors' around the base of all the plants.

On a sunny day this past February, 60 fifth-graders from Assumption St. Bridget School in Seattle volunteered to plant 500 native trees and shrubs. Students, parents and school staff, along with Adopt-a-Stream

and District staff, planted a variety of trees including western red cedar and red alder, and shrubs like red osier dogwood that are great at holding soil in place.

District restorationist Ryan Williams and I recently walked the buffer and were pleased to see that so many plants were healthy and growing, thanks to a wet Spring and being off-limits to cows, hungry voles and other small rodents. Working together on Leonard's land is an example of how landowners, school groups, private organizations and government can be effective partners in restoring our streams, preserving local agriculture and improving our communities - one property at a time.

"Living in Snohomish County provides a great opportunity for people to raise and grow their own food. As the population increases and farms and forests make way for residents, it's essential that we protect what is left. The Goodismans realized that to improve water quality and protect fish and wildlife habitat, they would have to take the steer by the horns".

Victor Insera

Summer 2008

Serving Snohomish County
and Camano Island

Vacant Supervisor Position Open

Snohomish Conservation District has an appointed volunteer position open for a three-year term on its Board of Supervisors. To be eligible, a candidate must be a registered voter and must own or occupy land within the Conservation District boundary, which includes most of Snohomish County and Camano Island. Anyone interested can contact the District at 425-335-5634, ext.102 for a nomination petition and information.

Fall on the Farm

We will be offering only one fall farm workshop this year, Fall on the Farm. Come learn about making a rain barrel from scratch, backyard chickens, noxious weeds, worm bins and farm practices to prevent mud and improve manure management.

This free workshop will be held on Saturday, September 21 at the Loyal Heights Community Center, north of Arlington, from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM. It is funded by Department of Ecology, the Stillaguamish River Clean Water District, and Snohomish County Surface Water Management. Register at: workshops@snohomishcd.org.

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"When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect"

— Aldo Leopold

Great Resources at Your Fingertips

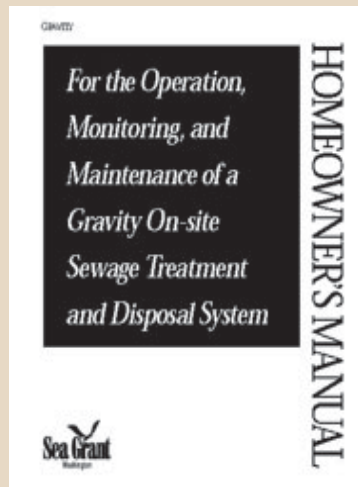
by Lois Ruskell, SCD Public Outreach Coordinator

Once in a while, we stumble across some great resources that we like to share with our clients. Some of the best publications we have found on septic systems and caring for the marine environment come from Washington Sea Grant. Established in 1968, Washington Sea Grant began as a federal experiment in local investment, building on the University of Washington's programs in marine science, engineering and policy. In 1971, it became one of the first four programs designated nationally as a Sea Grant College.

Washington Sea Grant-sponsored research maximizes the productive use of marine resources while preserving and, if necessary, helping to restore the essential qualities of a healthy marine environment. Research centers on five key areas: Living Marine Resources; Ecosystem Health; New Technologies to Enhance Ocean Productivity; Economic and Community Development; and Education, Training and Public Information. They have conducted research on everything from geoducks and derelict fishing gear to managing coastal development.

You may be asking yourself how Washington Sea Grant can help homeowners in Snohomish County. We found some great tip sheets on their website that cover issues like pumping your septic system, landscaping a drainfield, and the operation and maintenance of sand, gravity, mound and pressure distribution systems.

The Sea Grant website is <http://www.wsg.washington.edu>. Here is a sample of what can be downloaded on their publications page: <http://wsg.washington.edu/communications/onlinepubs.html>.



Sky Valley Team Places Second in State Event

A team of students from Sky Valley Education Center in Monroe, led by teacher Deb Schuldt, placed second in the 2008 Washington State Envirothon held on May 19 and 20 at Lake Wenatchee YMCA camp. Nearly one hundred high school students competed in the State Envirothon Championship, an annual natural resource competition.



Teacher Deb Schuldt, far right, led this group of students to a second place finish at the state Envirothon at Lake Wenatchee in May.

Envirothon challenges students on their knowledge of forestry, wildlife, ecology, soils, aquatics, and a current issue in resource management. This year's topic was recreational impacts on natural resources. During the competition, students move through stations working as a team to answer questions, use equipment, and solve problems. Each team is also judged on an oral presentation based on the current topic.

First place went to Whitman County's Garfield-Palouse High; third place to King County's Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center in Bellevue. Another Snohomish County team, from Stanwood High School and led by Ryan Ovenell, finished fifth. They tied for first with Sky Valley in the Regional event in March, so both teams were able to compete at the state event. The team from Garfield-Palouse High will advance to the North American competition sponsored by Canon, to be held in Arizona this July. Congratulations to all these hard-working teams!

More than 95,000 miles of ocean and Great Lakes coastline span the United States. More than half of the U.S. population lives in coastal areas—and that number continues to grow.

Another great, easy-to-read publication is the Blue Thumb Gardening Guide. It was originally written for Hood Canal homeowners, where pollution has threatened sensitive aquatic life for several years. The 'ten tips to make your landscape thrive and keep local waters healthy' are applicable anywhere in the Puget Sound area. Here is a summary of the tips for healthy gardening:

1. Test your soil
2. Select the proper fertilizer
3. Apply fertilizer as directed
4. Leave grass clippings in your yard
5. Install a native plant border
6. Compost yard waste
7. Mulch
8. Water wisely
9. Identify the pest
10. Try non-toxic pest control



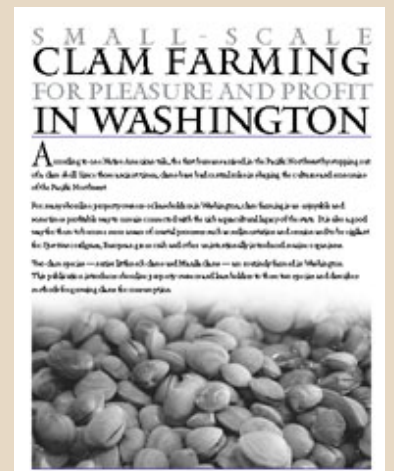
We will place a link on our website to these great publications.

All About Shellfish

Are you interested in clam or oyster farming? Sea Grant has publications on beginning these ventures as well!

If you're a shellfish harvester, or want to be, read these publications:

- ❖ The Nutritional Value of Shellfish
- ❖ Gathering Safe Shellfish in Washington: Avoiding Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning



How to Help Your Stream

Is your property on a creek, stream or river? Do you enjoy watching birds, fish and wildlife? If so, you may be able to enhance your water features while protecting your stream's health and water quality. It can be as easy as adding tall trees to offer more perches, placing woody debris into a streambed to increase hiding pools for fish, or controlling erosion that's allowing sediments to cloud the water, making it hard for fish, frogs and other aquatic life to breathe.



Snohomish Conservation District is able to assist landowners with habitat improvement projects including streamside plantings, placing logs in streams, and removing fish barriers. Call one of our restoration specialists for a free site visit: Victor Inera at 425-335-5634 ext. 106, or Ryan Williams, ext. 116.

Staying Down on the Farm

Farm Transition Workshop and Counseling Series

This course, offered by the Washington Agricultural Institute, is geared towards agricultural professionals, legal and financial advisors, and new and exiting farmers. It will be held on:

- Monday, July 7** - Daylong workshop for Agricultural Professionals – Transition Support Training
- Tuesday, July 8 - Thursday, July 10** - Individual family transition counseling sessions (6) for previous workshop attendees
- Friday, July 11** - Daylong workshop for farmers, farm families and agricultural business owners

The classes and counseling sessions will be at WSU Mount Vernon Northwest Research Center, 16650 SR 536 in Mount Vernon.

Registration includes lunch, snacks and written materials. The cost is \$50 for the Ag Professionals Workshop; \$35 for Farm Families. To register, call Mary Heinrich, Washington Agricultural Institute at 360-572-4356. Email: washingtonaginsitute@earthlink.net for more information.

Farmland Protection Options Now in Place

by Mark Beardslee, AICP, Senior Planner
Snohomish County Long Range Planning

On June 3, the Snohomish County Council adopted changes to the County's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) policies contained in the County's comprehensive plan. Under these adopted changes, the County will have more flexibility to create areas set aside for farm preservation. Transfer of Development Rights can protect farmland from economic pressures to convert it to non-farm uses and help focus development in designated urban areas.

Under this program, a landowner can split the right to develop a residence from developing the land itself, and can sell that development right, called a credit, to a developer. The developer can then use that credit to develop in an existing urban area, usually at a higher density. This is a market driven program where the value of the credits is set between the buyer and the seller.

Pilot Program Starts in Arlington

This new policy will be implemented this year, focusing on areas currently identified for farmland protection near Arlington, as part of a Snohomish County Transfer of Development Rights pilot program. Together Snohomish County and the City of Arlington will draft a transfer strategy to create a market for development credits in Arlington. The county will work with landowners to create optional protection and development zones without having to go through the once-a-year county docketing process. This means the county will be better prepared to respond to market pressures and changes in both the farming and housing industries throughout the county.

Transfer of Development Rights is part of the county's Focus on Farming Initiative, created by County Executive Aaron Reardon in 2004, which promotes strategies to preserve farmland and improve the economic viability of farming in Snohomish County. "TDR is just one component of a robust strategy to preserve farmlands and improve the economic outlook of farming in Snohomish County," Reardon said. "By preserving our valuable farmlands, we help secure the future of scenic open spaces and fresh, healthy, locally-grown foods."



Development pressures on Snohomish County farmland have been significant, and will likely remain so, for the foreseeable future.

Tualco Valley's Purchase of Development Rights Program

Snohomish County also operates a successful Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, where development rights are bought from landowners in the Tualco Valley – a fertile farming area near Monroe – to protect future farming there in perpetuity. "Through our efforts to transfer and purchase development rights from our farmlands, we are able to reduce the economic incentive for the conversion of farmlands to other uses," Reardon said. "This is an important goal that helps preserve our valuable farmlands and the viability of local farming for future generations." Snohomish County also is working with farmers to create new opportunities that make local agriculture profitable.

A Huge 'Horse-Hearted' Thank You

by Pam Grudin, Administrative Assistant

When we decided to 'bring the horses home' to our farm in Lakewood, from a boarding facility, we knew two things: 1) we wanted to keep them safe, and 2) we did not want them standing in mud (as we had seen so many times in our travels around the area). We began our studies of how to accomplish this with classes given by Snohomish Conservation District and Horses for Clean Water.

Turns out that we had a few good ideas of our own, and we learned about many more Best Management Practices through these classes.

We also began attending farm tours offered by these same folks to see how others put these "BMPs" into use. In between classes and tours, we worked on our own place - determined to make the best small horse facility we could.



Pam and her horse Clancy.



Bobbi Lindemulder, Pam Grudin, and Alayne Blicke in front of the Grudin's new signs.

In 2005 we were privileged to receive a Merit Farm award from the Conservation District and a Demonstration Farm designation from Horses for Clean Water. What a thrill this was for us! All that hard work really does pay off.

The next year we hosted four farm tours, which we felt was a good way to say "Thank You" to the District folks. They had helped us set up our confinement area, engineer gutters and a rainwater harvesting system, as well as offer advice on composting and pasture management. They even helped us engineer fencing to keep our horses off a stream that bisects our pastures. On top of that, they helped pay for the fencing!

This year I am attending more farm tours and classes as a part-time District staff member. These visits remind me of the value of continuing education. With every tour, I have learned something new or a new twist on an old theory. I am reminded of the valuable work the planners, engineers and restorationists at the District do every day to reduce our impact on the environment, and how we can all work to improve our situation and that of our neighbors.

Let The Sorting Begin!

The Agriculture Plastics Recycling events held in Stanwood and Monroe in May were a HUGE success. We had some great volunteers, happy depositors (who had obviously been cleaning out their garages, barns and greenhouses), and mass amounts of useful plastic to be routed to another use rather than a landfill. If you missed it this year, keep your eyes open for more events like this on the Snohomish County or Conservation District websites. Hope to see you, and your pots, soon!



The Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe was the drop-off site for agricultural plastics including twine, nursery flats, and bale wrap.

Potmakers[®] - an Alternative to Plastic

Snohomish Conservation District has Potmakers[®] available at our Lake Stevens office. What's a Potmaker[®]? It's a small wooden tool that can turn newspaper into starter pots for seeds.

We have been using them as door prizes at our farm tours, but have extras available, first-come, first-serve, for \$10 plus tax. Stop in and pick one up if you would like to recycle your newspaper into a useful product. Call first to make sure we haven't run out!



Recycle your newspaper into a starter pot; just roll and press - no glue required.

Announcements

WSU Snohomish County Extension Classes

Monday, July 7: Intensive Grazing with Bobbi Lindemulder

Held at WSU Snohomish County Extension, 600 - 128th St SE, Everett.

If you graze livestock, having a good grazing plan is paramount to the health of your animals and land, and ultimately to the success of your farm. In this workshop you'll learn how to judge poor quality vs. healthy pasture, define a grazing plan based on your goals, how plant growth and grazing time affects rotation, how to map your individual system including sizing and timing, maintaining your pasture system, seeding, fertilizers, soil testing, and mowing.

Speaker Bobbi Lindemulder is a Certified Farm Planner with Snohomish Conservation District. She and her husband Chuck own West Valley Beef, a grass-fed beef operation in Duvall where they are working towards the goals of sustainable farming and promoting local agriculture. Cost: \$35 per farm/organization, \$25 Master Gardeners/Livestock Advisors.

Farmer-to-Farmer Series

Join WSU to hear area farmers share their knowledge and experiences. The knowledge needed to farm profitably used to be passed from one generation to the next. For many, that connection no longer exists resulting in the skills necessary for success no longer being readily available to new farmers. We'll visit five experienced farmers in the region. Cost: \$15 per tour per person. Tours begin at 10 a.m. and typically last two to three hours.



Monday, July 21: Dignam's Piggery, Stanwood, WA

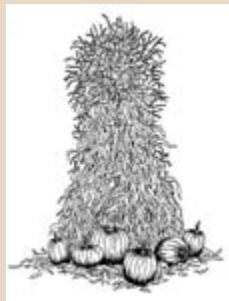
Jim Dignam, WSU Livestock Advisor and swine breeder, will expound upon everything swine. Topics covered include farrowing, weaning, raising your own bacon, health care, feedstocks, and housing.

Monday, August 11: Bob's Corn Maze, Ricci Farm, Snohomish

Join us on one of Snohomish County's Centennial Farms as Bob Ricci explains how their yearly Corn Maze provides a significant portion of the farm's yearly income, helping them maintain a way of life that goes back to the year of Washington's statehood, 1889! Learn what it takes to develop a corn maze on your farm including planning the design, planting, development, and maintenance. You'll also learn about liability issues with bringing the public on your farm as well as insurance, marketing, and 'people' herding.

Monday, August 25: Carlton Farm, Everett, WA

Find out how this small, diverse family farm thrives on the edge of suburbia. Growing everything from beans to zucchini as well as flowers and pumpkins, the Carlton family have learned what it takes to turn a former dairy into a successful market farm. Learn what it takes to run an on-farm store, 60 acres of diverse vegetables and pasture, run a horse boarding facility, and build a fantastic pumpkin cannon.



Monday, October 6: Gretchen's Wool Mill, Sultan

Meet Friesian dairy sheep and learn how they are utilized for dairy, meat, wool, and soap products. Topics covered include health, feeding, dairy processing, and a tour of the Mill to learn about wool fiber processing.

Ten-Week Courses

Cultivating Success: Sustainable Small Farming and Ranching

This course has students taking a realistic look at their goals and resources, and helps them evaluate what type of small acreage enterprise is right for them.

Students will be exposed to all types of farming and ranching systems, guest farmers will speak to the class, and field trips are taken to local farms. Starts Thursday, September 10, 6:30-9:30 pm. Held at University Center in the Everett Station, 3201 Smith Ave, Everett.



For more information, contact Gabrielle Roesch, 425-357-6011, gabrielle90@wsu.edu.

To Register for any of the above classes and tours:

Pre-registration is required as space is limited. Download the form at <http://www.snohomish.wsu.edu/ag/workshops/registrationform.pdf> and mail with your check. For more information about any of these programs, email Kate Halstead khalstead@wsu.edu or call 425-357-6024.

Livestock Advisors Training

Starts Wednesday, September 17, 6:30-9:30 pm. Held at University Center in the Everett Station, 3201 Smith Ave, Everett. For more information, contact Joan DeVries, 360-428-4270 ext. 240, joanrd@co.skagit.wa.us.

Beach, Lake and River Lovers Unite



Since 2003, hundreds of waterfront residents, farmers, parks, port districts, cities and businesses have joined Shore Stewards. Shore Stewards is a group of folks who are learning better ways to manage their land to preserve critical habitat for fish, wildlife, and birds. Residents of Snohomish, Island, Skagit, Whatcom, Jefferson, and Clallam Counties and Hood Canal can all benefit from the program. Regionally, there are over 1,000 Shore Stewards.

Island County differs in important ways from other Puget Sound counties. The two main islands are small in area but dense in population with more than 212 miles of shoreline! Cities are few; most residences rely on septic systems for sewage treatment. For this reason, Shore Stewards developed the [10 Guidelines for Shoreline Living](#) for Island County residents and businesses.

10 Guidelines for Shoreline Living

Use water wisely

Maintain your septic system

Limit pesticide and fertilizer usage

Manage upland water runoff

Encourage native plants and trees

Know permit procedures for shoreline development

Develop on bluffs with care

Minimize bulkheads, docks and other structures

Respect intertidal life

Preserve eelgrass beds and forage fish spawning habitat



If you have shoreline property in Snohomish or Island Counties, or live in a community with shared access to the beach, think about becoming a Shore Steward.

In Snohomish County, call Chrys Bertolotto at 425-357-6020 or email her at chrys@wsu.edu.

In Island County, call Scott Chase at 360-387-3443, ext. 258 or email him at schase@wsu.edu.

Even if you don't have the time to go through a Shore Stewards class, you can learn plenty, get up-to-date information, or just find out what's happening in the shoreline community through the Shore Stewards website: www.shorestewards.org.

Free Monthly Newsletter On-line

For interesting articles on timely issues related to marine resources, check out the library of Shore Steward newsletters available at: <http://www.shorestewards.org/island/newsletter>. The May issue highlighted our local crab species, Dungeness. These crabs are found from Alaska to Mexico and are especially abundant in Puget Sound.

The May issue also highlighted the problem with lost and missing crab traps, also known as crab pots. The bottom of Puget Sound is unfortunately littered with lost crab traps, about 14,000 of them. Many of these pots are continuing to trap and kill crabs long after the pots are lost.



A recent recovery of derelict crab traps.

The Northwest Straits Initiative, working with county Marine Resources Committees, has run a derelict gear removal program since 2003. As of September 2007, almost 1,300 pots have been removed.

Read more about this issue and how using a simple escape cord can help save this precious resource in the May newsletter.

Snohomish Conservation District

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