



## Old Homestead Springs to Life

By Tammy Edmonds, Stillaguamish Farm Planner



The roundhouse at Paca Pride, right, accomodates group events and meetings (log home in the background).

When you first meet city-turned-country entrepreneur David Capocci, you are easily drawn into his world. In the blink of an eye, you quickly become aware of his many passions: llamas and alpacas, fiber art, gardening, animal husbandry, building, and learning the intricate details of farming and forestry. David is also an enthusiastic student of Permaculture who loves to “recycle and make do”.

David, his partner Glenn Budlow, and business partner, Tim Leingang, are busy establishing Paca Pride, a guest ranch featuring rustic tent and yurt camping near Granite Falls. It currently has one guest yurt, three tent platforms, a heated roundhouse for group events, and room for ten more yurts.

A former systems analyst from the Seattle area, David and his friends moved to this 17-acre wooded location — once part of the original Robe Ranch — in 2005. When you first drive in, you notice a new Lincoln log-style home with a yurt on one side. The log house contains a small store, restrooms with showers on one side, and a large vegetable garden on the other. Between the log house and garden is where a new outdoor kitchen will soon be built.



David Capocci in front of the roundhouse yurt.

This set-up will allow campers to harvest from the garden, wash their produce, and fix meals. Farther beyond the garden sits a small barn surrounded by paddocks for the alpaca and llamas. A mobile chicken pen (or chicken tractor as they are commonly called) and a covered compost bin are near the barn as well.

### From Dream to Business Reality

The idea of homesteading excites David and he incorporates that enthusiasm into his daily living and plans for the ranch. You could say he followed his dream, and then you realize his dream includes a well thought-out business plan, a farm plan, and a forestry plan.

The business plan encompasses hosting events in the heated, cozy roundhouse; offering farm products such as eggs, knitted socks and hats made from the alpaca wool; and renting yurts or tent camp sites to families who want to camp, hike nearby trails and cook meals made from eggs and produce from the ranch.

Amenities will eventually include small easy-to-heat hot tubs, a sauna, electricity and blue-flame propane heaters in the yurts, and a fire pit for evening events. Also in the plan are the outdoor kitchen, a cordwood-walled greenhouse, flower gardens, and rain gardens to help slow the movement of water through the garden area.

David is also thinking about providing fun family activities for guest campers, such as do-it-yourself birdhouse kits. With all the permits finally in place, Paca Pride owners are moving rapidly to prepare for hosting their first guests and events this spring and summer.

### Farm Plan Guides Projects

Using a farm plan created by Snohomish Conservation District planners, David is managing the resources on his property - a pristine creek, trails, second-growth timber, fenced pastures and animal waste. He has already incorporated several best management practices listed in his farm plan, such as paddocks, a sacrifice area for the livestock, and a covered compost area. Paca Pride also received cost-share funding from the District to fence the creek. Fencing will protect the critical streamside areas from erosion and damage from livestock browsing.

## Spring 2010

Serving Snohomish County  
and Camano Island

### Appointed Position Open on Board

Snohomish Conservation District has one appointed volunteer position open for a three-year term on its Board of Supervisors. The Washington State Conservation Commission makes the appointment.

To be eligible, a candidate must be a registered voter and may be required to own or occupy land within the Conservation District (most of Snohomish County and Camano Island).

A conservation district supervisor is a public official who serves without compensation and who sets policy and direction for the conservation district. Published appointment procedures can be viewed at the District office and are available from the Washington State Conservation Commission.

Anyone interested in serving should contact Snohomish Conservation District at 425-335-5634, Ext.4 or the Washington State Conservation Commission at 360-407-6200 for an application form and more information. Snohomish Conservation District or the Conservation Commission must receive applications no later than May 7, 2010.

## Inside

- ❖ Edmonds Celebrates
- ❖ News From Bear Creek
- ❖ Pest Control Options
- ❖ New Director Starts
- ❖ Annual Award Winners
- ❖ National Habitat Effort
- ❖ Meet Danilo



# Old Homestead Springs to Life - continued -

Building cross-fences to better manage their grazing animals and to help improve grass production is one of David's next projects. Currently, David uses the chickens to help spread alpaca droppings by letting them out on the pastures every morning to dig and scratch. They break up the droppings, which makes nutrients more accessible to the grass.

## Becoming a Community Supported Forest

When the owners bought the property, it consisted of second-growth forest, a clearing and a creek. The clearing was formerly used by logging operations and before that, Native Americans. An old skid road leads down to the creek, which bisects the property. The creek is why, according to David, there was any forest left at all. The riparian area along both sides of the creek protects the creek and its wild inhabitants. It could not be developed by former owners due to the sensitivity of the creek and surrounding slopes.

The group also has a forest plan from the Department of Natural Resources. "We're basically managing the cycles of the forest," said David. They want Paca Pride to become a Community Supported Forest that will emphasize native species, forest management, a woodlot, and forest edibles such as huckleberries, blueberries and mushrooms seeded into an old slash pile.

## Recycle or Reuse It!

With a keen eye for sustainability, David derives great pleasure in thinking of new projects that use existing materials. For example, the mobile poultry pen is one-of-a-kind made from carport parts, leftover tarps and wood from building the home. During construction of the log home, David had no dumpsters brought in for construction debris – it all went into the barn to be recycled for later use.

The garden beds were made from large logs, wood and windows from an old house in town, and a plethora of compost from the animals. The manure storage structure has a concrete floor made from leftover cement from the house foundation as well as wood and log pieces that remained. Unusable and broken railroad ties (delivered, no less!) help shore up the toe of an eroded trail bank that is heavily planted with native aspen and dogwood from the Conservation District's annual plant sale.

Almost everything on the property is part of something else or has been recycled or reused in some way. Even the alpacas are mostly rescue animals from area farms that did not need them for breeding. That's okay with David; he's focusing on fiber and hopes to add more black and grey animals to improve his selection.



The many colors of alpaca at Paca Pride.

Paca Pride is a great place for folks to get back to their homesteading roots, explore history, learn about farming and enjoy nature. Check it out yourself on Saturday, July 10, when we will offer a tour of the farm which will cover gardening, composting, cross-fencing, and of course, alpacas! Watch our website for details.



Above, David opens one of his many vegetable beds.

Below left, Mucho the alpaca.

Below right, Elvis the rooster visits the turkey hen.



District Farm Planner Tammy Edmonds and Paca Pride's David Capocci.

## Edmonds Celebrates ~ Community Wildlife Habitat Certification

Edmonds will receive Community Wildlife Habitat certification from the National Wildlife Federation in April. This follows two years of dedicated work by the Backyard and Community Wildlife Habitat team, with the support of 161 residents, five schools, and 19 common places/parks. All registered their property as Backyard Wildlife Habitats through the National Wildlife Federation, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Association of Zoos and Aquariums.



Celebrations will take place on Saturday, April 24, and Sunday, April 25. On Saturday, the Community Wildlife Habitat Certification Celebration will be at Yost Park, 9535 Bowdoin Way, and held in conjunction with Edmond's annual Watershed Fun Fair. From 11 AM to 4 PM, there will be displays, a native plant sale, demonstrations, hands-on activities, guided nature walks, and storytelling in a giant turtle tent. National Wildlife Federation's very own Ranger Rick will be there. Everyone is invited to wear a wildlife-related costume or wings. There will be tables with ideas and materials for making costumes and masks.

On Sunday, April 25, the celebration continues with the grand opening of the Willow Creek Hatchery Wildlife Habitat & Native Plant Demonstration Garden at 95 Pine Street, sponsored by Pilchuck Audubon. This event also includes tour maps to Backyard Habitat Certified yards. From 1PM to 3 PM there will be an open house at the Willow Creek Hatchery Garden. For more on the Backyard Wildlife Habitat Project, go to [www.edmondsbackyardwildlifehabitat.org](http://www.edmondsbackyardwildlifehabitat.org).

## Ecology, Districts and Others Partner to Cleanup Little Bear and Bear Creeks

by Megan O'Brian, Certified Farm Planner

Snohomish Conservation District, in partnership with King Conservation District, has received funding from the Department of Ecology to improve water quality and educate residents about non-point source pollution in the Little Bear and Bear Creek watersheds. The project resulted from high temperatures and low dissolved oxygen that have been found in streams in this South Snohomish/North King County watershed.

Starting in April, the Conservation District will be conducting a Livestock Survey to pinpoint where livestock operations are located. This will help the District focus outreach efforts in the area. A research firm will be helping determine how residents get information in localized areas. After the survey and research have been completed, the Conservation District will conduct targeted workshops, outreach events and farm tours for Bear Creek residents.

Both Conservation Districts are offering landowners free on-site technical assistance concerning agricultural activities, pet waste, leaking septic systems, well and stormwater problems, and natural yard care. For landowners who have livestock on their property, free well testing is available for up to thirty people and free soil tests for up to fifty landowners.

Partners include: Adopt-A-Stream Foundation, Water Resource Inventory Area 8, Water Tenders, Upper Bear Community Council, and the City of Redmond. For information on the program or to request a free site visit, soil test or water test, please contact Megan O'Brian at 425-335-5634, ext 106.

# “The Flies are Coming, The Flies are Coming!”

by Alan Shank, Certified Farm Planner



Poster girl Gracie from Snohomish

“Be prepared,” say the Boy Scouts of America. It’s sound advice, especially when it comes to insects and your precious livestock. Waiting until your horse or cow is covered with nuisance insects is giving flies, mosquitoes and no-see-ums an advantage you will be hard pressed to win back.

How best to prepare? Controlling insect pests requires an early multi-pronged approach that includes structural, biological, and mechanical strategies. Starting now gives you the jump on bugs and minimizes your use of expensive and potentially harmful chemicals.

Most horse properties include a house and a stable. If the farm is not managed well, these areas will also be home to houseflies and stable flies. Flies and mosquitoes keep animals from eating and resting and can carry serious diseases.

Houseflies don’t bite but are known to transmit 65 different diseases to livestock simply by landing on them. Biting stable flies have not been confirmed to transmit disease except for mastitis in lactating mares and cows. Mosquitoes can carry West Nile and other diseases that afflict horses.

The MOST effective thing you can do is to reduce fly and mosquito habitat and food sources. Here’s why: a fly lays eggs on or near decomposing feed, manure and mud. They evolve into adult flies in about eight days. One female lays up to six batches of 150 eggs each. So in her three week lifespan, one female can produce up to 900 more flies that are calling your place ‘home sweet home’.

Flies can travel up to a quarter mile but stick close to their birthplace if conditions are ideal. Adult flies also like the moist shade of tall grass and weeds around buildings. Like mosquitoes, flies also enjoy small areas of standing water often found in mud puddles, old tires, or anything that holds shallow water.

## Structural Strategies

Preventing mud, standing water, waste feed and areas of accumulated manure are critical to reducing fly populations. These nine strategies may help:

- ❖ Create a winter confinement paddock - this keeps livestock from forming bare areas in pasture and muddy areas close to buildings.
- ❖ Gently slope/smooth your paddock so that water can escape, not puddle.
- ❖ Add mud-prevention footing material such as 5/8 minus gravel or hog fuel to eliminate churning wet soil into mud.
- ❖ Make sure your gutters and downspouts work and direct roof water away from the livestock area to prevent mud and standing water.
- ❖ Use compost bins to collect, store and compost your manure. The heat from composting destroys fly eggs and kills fly larvae.
- ❖ Remove manure from paddocks daily - this prevents the formation of mud and removes fly habitat, food sources and insect-attracting odors.

## New Director Welcomed

Snohomish Conservation District recently named Monte Marti as its new District Manager. Marti comes to the District after more than 25 years as a manager with Verizon Northwest. He has also served as a member on the Conservation District’s volunteer Board of Supervisors for the past 25 years and had worked for the District for a short time in the 1980’s.

While he was a District volunteer supervisor, Marti also served the Washington Association of Conservation Districts as their Secretary Treasurer and as a Northwest Area Director, and was a member of the Plant Material Center Advisory Board. Marti holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics and a Master of Arts degree in Agricultural Economics, both from Washington State University.

### Note from Monte

“First, I would like to thank the Snohomish Conservation District Board of Supervisors for this opportunity to serve as district manager. Second, I would like to thank and applaud Bobbi Lindemulder for her efforts the past 18 months. Bobbi did an excellent job managing the day-to-day activities here.”

“The District has a long-standing reputation for excellent service. Staff and board members work hard to address the identified resource needs within the District. We will continue to provide the service you need in the future. I am excited about the future of Snohomish Conservation District. There are many opportunities to pursue and challenges to address. We (the District, partners and cooperators) must tackle these opportunities and challenges, and I have the confidence that we can work together to accomplish positive outcomes. If you have questions about any of our programs, call: 425-335-5634 ext 107, or email: [monte@snohomishcd.org](mailto:monte@snohomishcd.org).”

- ❖ Put hay in a feed bunker or trough instead of on the ground – this eliminates decomposing hay and protects horses from colic. Wasted feed churned into mud provides habitat, food and moisture.
- ❖ Regularly cut or mow vegetation adjacent to buildings – this removes cool, moist habitat.
- ❖ Remove water collection points like old tires, tarps and discarded lids – this removes water for all nuisance insects like no-see-ums, not just flies and mosquitoes.

## Biological Strategies

Native birds and bats are like jet fighters in the battle against insects. One violet green swallow or barn swallow can eat 6,000 insects a day, and a bat can eat 600 mosquitoes an hour!



- ❖ To attract violet green swallows, place several swallow-designed birdhouses on your barn, preferably on the south and/or west side. They leave no droppings. If you have barn swallows, place a board under their nest to catch droppings.
- ❖ Mount bat houses on south-facing outside walls, at least 12 feet off the ground.
- ❖ Order parasitic wasp fly predators that eat fly larvae. These fly predators, about the size of a gnat, are completely harmless and annoyance free. Sprinkle the pupa near animal manure and in other problem areas. Start using fly wasps early in the Spring. They are very effective as one tool in your fly management program, but are not sufficient alone. Don’t use fly wasps if you plan to rely on insecticides or feed-through chemical control.

## Mechanical Strategies

In addition to prevention and biological controls, there are traps, both with and without attractants. They are most effective on houseflies.

- ❖ Be careful of where you place sticking tapes so as to not catch birds or bats.
- ❖ There are kits to help you make milk jugs into traps. Note whether the attractant is primarily for houseflies or biting stable flies.
- ❖ Place the jugs to attract flies away from the barn and livestock. Placing them in livestock stalls attracts flies there and increases your problem.
- ❖ Harrow any pastures that contain fresh manure to break up the manure and dry it out.

## Chemical Strategies

Relying on sprays and feed-through insecticides is a last resort for a few reasons. First, a few flies survive each time chemicals are used. Survivors, immune to the chemical threat, breed new flies with the same resistance to chemical controls. Second, pesticides kill beneficial insects that help control flies such as dung beetles, mites, nematodes and the parasitic wasps that you ordered. This makes for chemical dependency because now you have removed all the natural insect predators. Lastly, you could accidentally pollute a nearby stream, pond or lake. Structural, biological and mechanical controls should enable you to control flies with minimal chemical use, if any at all.



From my experience using best management practices, I’ve learned that what’s good for the environment is good for my horses! By managing manure, mud, roof water and weeds and making a home for local birds and/or bats, you and your livestock will be much more comfortable and healthy during fly season.

## District Honors Farmers and Partners

On February 11, 2010, Snohomish Conservation District honored several local farmers, agency staff, volunteers and a teacher with awards for their cooperative efforts in natural resource management and education. The winners received a plaque or certificate and, for the farm operators, a road sign listing them as a 2009 Merit Farm.

### The 2009 Award winners were:

#### Farm Awards

Dairy Farm – Giles Dairy, Patrick and Kary Michaelis

#### Merit Farm Awards

Howling Coyote Ranch - Gerald, Laura and Makaila Boyce

Elizabeth Mitchell

Gary and Darcy Baker

#### Volunteer Award

WSU Master Gardeners

WSU Livestock Advisors

#### Partnership Awards

Whidbey Island Conservation District

Clare Flanagan

#### Teacher of the Year

Ryan Ovenell, Stanwood High School



Darcy and Gary Baker

# Announcements

## Horses, Dewormers, Dogs & Manure

Maple Valley, WA

Sunday, April 18, 1 to 3pm, Free

What happens when a dog eats manure from a recently dewormed horse? It depends, but if the dewormer was ivermectin and you have a herding dog sensitive to that product, you might find yourself in a condition red-alert, making a speedy trip to the emergency clinic! Attend this outdoor event at the Maple Valley farm of Alayne Blickle to learn the latest on deworming horses, concerns/updates for dog owners on potential sensitivities to horse dewormers, and how to properly handle manure after your horse has been dewormed.

Equine veterinarian Dr. Steve Latimer will discuss the latest info on equine deworming protocols. Small animal veterinarian Dr. Melanie Caviness will speak on the canine aspect of the issue — what happens when dogs are exposed to horse dewormers? What are the symptoms and what can be done? Alayne Blickle will cover composting and information on manure management. WSU will provide instructions and testing kits to so you can test your dog to see if it carries the mutant gene that makes it particularly sensitive to ivermectin (and other drugs.) Sample collection will be demonstrated and test kits supplied. Mail-in test fee to WSU is \$70/test. To register, or for questions, call 425-432-6116 or [Alayne@horsesforcleanwater.com](mailto:Alayne@horsesforcleanwater.com)

## Brier Goes GREEN!

Free Classes on Thursdays April 22, 29, & May 6

Brier City Hall

2901 228th St SW, Brier

Thursday, April 22

Emily Bishton, Green Light Gardening

Natural Yard Care, 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM



Using natural yard care methods to create and maintain your lawn and garden is the key to long-lasting beauty and sustainability. This class will help get you started by learning how to build healthy soil, water wisely and efficiently, and use proper mulching and pruning methods. Natural yard care helps you prevent garden problems, and provides successful and safe remedies if pest or disease problems do arise. This all adds up to the combination of a more beautiful garden *and* less maintenance for you!

Child-friendly Garden Design, 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Natural yard care is key to achieving a child-friendly garden. This class will teach you about the tried-and-true plants, design techniques, and other garden features that will inspire and nurture the children in your life, and the child inside you! See great photos of children's ideas and a hands-on display. A free poster is available for the children who visit your garden.

Thursday, April 29th

Jennifer Carlson, Haven Illustrated

Sustainable Landscape Design, 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Learn how to read your land and make practical landscape design decisions for your property. Topics will cover how to identify and conserve natural resources, use the existing conditions on your property, and create a healthy, beautiful, low-maintenance landscape.



Right Plant/Right Place, 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Properly preparing your soil before planting can feed plants and conserve water. Select appropriate trees and plants for specific growing conditions that are disease and pest-resistant. Jennifer will bring a variety of low-maintenance and hardy plants for the class.

Thursday, May 6

Sharon Collman, WSU Extension, Snohomish County

Good Bug, Bad Bug, 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Sharon is a well-known entomologist in the Central Puget Sound area. She will help you distinguish between good bugs, such as pollinators, and bugs that might harm your plants. Learn easy, non-toxic ways to control the bad bugs and techniques you can use to attract the good bugs.

Lois Ruskell, Snohomish Conservation District

Backyard Composting Basics, 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Have you always wanted to start a worm bin but don't know how? Do you have a compost pile in your yard that does not seem to be working? Learn how and what to compost and innovative techniques such as hugelkultur, compost fences, worm bins and more.

To register for the free Brier classes, email [workshops@snohomishcd.org](mailto:workshops@snohomishcd.org) or call 425-335-5634, ext 4. Please leave phone number and number attending.

# Good Weather Shines on the March Plant Sale

Our 25th Annual Conservation Plant Sale is history! We had great weather, patient customers and some really dedicated, hard-working volunteers who helped us package, label and sort over 68,000 trees, shrubs and perennials.

We'd like to thank our **21 individual volunteers**, plus folks from these groups who generously gave their time to help us!

Northwest Service Academy

Snohomish Garden Club

Hilltoppers Garden Club

Master Gardeners

Sky Valley Education Center class

Monroe Montessori Middle School

Washington Native Plant Society

Backyard Wildlife Habitat Group

Stilly-Snohomish Fisheries Task Force

and any we might have missed ~ Thank You!



Srivas Brugalette helped his Dad Godal select enough trees to fill two wagons at the March Plant Sale!



## Habitat Stewardship Week April 25 - May 2, 2010

A national campaign called 'Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats' kicks off in April. The program is sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts and focuses on introducing youth to the value of our natural spaces.

There are activity books for youth of all ages, posters, calendars, restaurant placemats and educators guides available. They are colorful and easily adaptable to the classroom, home school programs, church events and 4-H groups. Find out more at [www.nacdnet.org](http://www.nacdnet.org). Materials can be purchased at the web store at [www.nacdstore.org](http://www.nacdstore.org).

## New Intern in the Schools

Danilo Rodriguez joined the District in January as the Americorps intern for 2010. He will be working in area schools teaching classes on the lifecycle of salmon, how to keep watersheds healthy, use of native plants, and how to become better stewards of our natural resources.

He comes to us from California's Bay Area, where he taught natural resource-related subjects for the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

Originally from Indiana, Danilo has a Bachelor's degree in Recreation from Indiana University-Bloomington. While there, he also participated in the 'Semester-at-Sea' program, a two to three month college-credit program on the sea and in ports. Danilo will work with local teachers on environmental education topics, and will assist our habitat and water quality specialists in the field. Welcome Danilo!



Danilo teaching students at Seattle Hill Elementary about the salmon life cycle.

## Snohomish Conservation District

### Board of Supervisors

Adam Farnham  
Mark Craven  
Karl Hereth  
Steve Van Valkenburg  
One Vacant Position  
**Associate Members**  
Dick Barr  
**District Manager**  
Monte Marti

**Phone** 425-335-5634, ext 4  
**FAX** 425-335-5024  
**Contact:** Lois Ruskell  
425-335-5634, ext 108  
**Editing:** Donna Gleisner  
The Written Edge  
425-923-7110

**Website:**  
[www.snohomishcd.org](http://www.snohomishcd.org)

*The NEXUS is published quarterly and distributed free of charge to residents of the District. Funding provided by Snohomish County Surface Water Management, Washington Department of Ecology, and the Washington State Conservation Commission.*