

# SNOHOMISH CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## The Nexus



## Choosing Chickens Can Be Daunting

by Donna Gleisner, *The Written Edge*

Who knew there were so many different kinds of chickens? At least 50 different breeds, many with multiple varieties, are recognized by the American Poultry Association alone, and there are doubtless hundreds more world-wide. Many breeds can trace their origins back to England, Sumatra, France, Java, Spain, Egypt, Germany, Russia, Norway or China.

Their names range from the exotic to the downright silly. Try pronouncing these breeds: Krainekoppe, Chantecler, Faverrolle, Wyandotte, Flame Jaerhon, Andalusian, Welsummer, Campine, Shamo, Crevecoeur, Ameraucana, Dorking, Cubalaya, Spitzhauben, Long Crowing, Manx Rumpie, Barnevelder, Orpington, and Frizzle. Phew - is your tongue tired yet?

After hundreds of years of domestication and cross breeding, it's no wonder there's such a bewildering bevy of different sizes, colors, shapes and types of chickens to choose from.

So exactly how does one go about deciding on which breed or breeds to get? While researching breeds and talking to neighbors who have chickens is important, [mypetchickens.com](http://www.mypetchickens.com) has a handy, dandy chicken breed selector tool you can use as a starting place (<http://www.mypetchicken.com/chicken-breeds/which-breed-is-right-for-me.aspx>). They ask a series of questions to help you narrow your search. But hold on - before you put this newsletter down and run over to your computer, here are the questions they ask, along with some background information on each one to get you thinking.

### Narrowing Your Search

#### 1. Do you need cold hardy chickens?

This is the only question I'll answer for you. Yes, you'll want cold hardy to very cold hardy breeds that can survive our increasingly more winter-like weather, as well as our typical chilly fall-through-spring rainy season.

#### 2. How important is the rate of egg-laying?

In other words, how many eggs do you want to have on a weekly basis? Young female chickens (pullets) can start laying eggs at five months of age, and typically reach peak production around nine months old. This high production rate lasts for about two and a half months. Most hens continue to produce eggs until they are two to three years old. After that, production declines to a halt. Other egg laying influences can include the bird's health, nutrition, space, housing, sanitation, humidity, temperature, contentment, and light.

In general, chickens tend to lay more eggs in the spring and summer. Shorter daylight in the fall signals hens to molt, a process that may take several months. Even with artificial lighting, hens may still molt (and stop laying eggs). Winter layers consistently produce more eggs in the colder/darker months, but fewer eggs overall.



Chicken coop fit for royal chickens belonging to Bill and Lisa Gage, our 2010 Small Farm Cooperators of the Year.

Broodiness in a breed is also a consideration. It indicates how much a hen wants to sit on eggs to hatch them (a natural tendency), versus continually laying eggs.

Egg size can vary by breed and individual hen. Unlike the Leghorn chicken, bred to lay a very large white egg commonly found on grocery store shelves, most other varieties lay medium-sized eggs of varying colors.

#### 3. Do you need especially docile birds?

Some chicken breeds flee at the first sight of humans, while other breeds don't seem to mind being held, and are even willing to eat out of your hand. Other more aggressive breeds will peck at other birds and humans.

#### 4. Do you care if the breed is unusual or rare?

Chicken breeds can be separated into different types, depending on their main uses. Breeds developed for both meat and eggs are called 'dual purpose'. 'Layers' are breeds that have a high egg production rate. 'Fancy' breeds have unusual features -- crests, feathered feet, unique colors or patterns, beards, muffs, or five toes (most breeds have four toes). Some fancy breeds are strictly ornamental, but many other fancy breeds are also good layers and dual purpose birds. 'Bantam' breeds are miniature-sized chickens, often popular for showing.

#### 5. Do you want eggs in a variety of colors?

Chicken egg colors can be white, cream, greenish blue, blue, light brown, brown or dark brown, depending on the breed. Egg colors can also vary slightly from bird to bird. For brown egg layers, the color tends to lighten as the hen ages.

### The Top Backyard Breeds

To help you decide, here are eleven excellent chicken breeds for the Northwest backyard enthusiast. All are cold hardy, adapt well to confinement, are average to above average egg layers, and most are okay with humans, if not downright docile.

## Spring 2011

Serving Snohomish County  
and Camano Island

### Take Your Best Shot

To celebrate Snohomish Conservation District's 70th anniversary, we are having a photo contest! There will be prizes awarded and we will post the winning photos on our website later in the year.

There are three categories:

1. Time Capsule (past and present)
2. Conservation In Action (people in action)
3. Ag/Conservation Around Us (barns, livestock, forests, fields)

The contest is only for amateur photographers, any age. The deadline for entering is June 30, 2011. For more information, contact Leif Fixen at 425-335-5634, ext 110. Check out the rules at [www.snohomishcd.org](http://www.snohomishcd.org).



## Inside

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# City Chickens *-continued-*

## Ameracaunas

This breed is easily recognizable due to its fluffy feathers. They grow to about seven pounds and lay lovely light blue to blue-green eggs. Ameracaunas are calm, nonaggressive birds with fun personalities.

## Australorp

This Australian breed has soft shiny black plumage with hints of iridescent green and purple. They are excellent egg producers and good meat birds, weighing up to eight pounds. Australorps are sweet, shy and dignified.

## Brahma

Originally from India, this breed has distinctive feathered legs and a very fluffy body. They are good egg layers and eight pound or heavier meat birds. Brahmas are quiet, tame and make great mothers and egg setters.



Brahma photo by Sue Tivol, [www.FeatherSite.com](http://www.FeatherSite.com)

## Buff Orpington

This breed, from the United Kingdom, is popular for both meat and brown eggs. Orpingtons can grow to eight pounds, and are friendly, calm and patient.

## Delaware

A relatively new breed developed in the 1940s, it has above average egg production and is a good meat bird, growing up to eight pounds. Delawares are quiet and friendly.

## Jersey Giant

Aptly named, this American breed from New Jersey can grow to a whopping 13 pounds. They are popular for meat as well as egg production, with an easygoing personality.



## Leghorn

Leghorns are one of the best for laying a lot of extra-large white eggs due to specialized breeding. Leghorns can grow to seven pounds, and may be more flighty and noisy than other breeds. They are also active and intelligent.

## Plymouth Rock

This breed comes in several varieties, the most popular/common being white and barred. They can grow up to eight pounds, making them excellent meat birds, plus they are above average brown egg layers. They are smart, plucky and docile.



Rhode Island Red from American Livestock Breeds Conservancy website <http://albc-usa.org/>.

## Rhode Island Red

This rust-feathered breed is the official Rhode Island state bird. Reds are prolific producers, generally easygoing, lay extra large brown eggs, and are valued for their meat.

## Sussex

Originally from England, this is an excellent dual purpose bird. They are very good layers of tinted to light brown eggs, and fat bodied up to eight pounds. Sussex birds are friendly, easily handled and curious enough to follow you around. The speckled variety gets prettier with each molt.

## Wyandotte

This breed includes varieties with beautiful feather patterns in silver, gold, blue and white. They are very good egg layers and meat birds, weighing up to eight pounds. Wyandottes are generally easygoing, although there can be a tendency towards dominance.



Gold laced Wyandotte with baby chicks. Photo by Tim Kelly, [www.FeatherSite.com](http://www.FeatherSite.com).

Whatever breed of chicken you choose, you will find that each breed has unique characteristics and will add its own personality to your backyard chicken hobby.

## Where to Buy Chicks

Most local feed and farm supply stores carry chicks in the spring, some as early as February; some as late as July. April is a big month for buying chicks and finding sales on the equipment and supplies for raising them. Call in advance to confirm hours and what breeds are available.

It is also quite common to buy chicks by mail order. These listings are not an endorsement by Snohomish Conservation District, and may not include all local or on-line suppliers.

### Local Chick Suppliers

Arlington Co-op Supply  
222 N. Olympic Ave  
360-435-3213

Bothell Feed Center  
20809 Bothell-Everett Hwy  
425-481-8882

Everett Co-op Supply  
2901 State Street  
425-259-5571

Marysville Co-op Supply  
8323 State Street  
360-659-1236

Monroe Feed  
18422 Cascade View Drive  
360-794-4663

Snohomish Co-op & True Value  
168 Lincoln Ave  
360-568-2104

Skagit Farmers, Stanwood  
8815 272nd St NW  
360-629-7033

Strotz's Country Feed, Arlington  
<http://www.strotzscountryfeed.com/>

### On-line Chick Suppliers

Dunlap Hatchery  
Box 507 4703 E Cleveland Blvd  
Caldwell, Idaho 83606-0507  
208-459-9088  
[www.dunlaphatchery.net](http://www.dunlaphatchery.net)

Lazy 54 Farm  
PO Box 429  
Hubbard, Oregon 97032  
877-344-2050  
[www.shankshatchery.com](http://www.shankshatchery.com)

McMurray Hatchery  
PO Box 458, 191 Closz Drive  
Webster City, Iowa 50595  
800-456-3280  
[www.mcmurrayhatchery.com](http://www.mcmurrayhatchery.com)

Sand Hill Preservation Center  
1878 – 230th Street  
Calamus, Iowa 52729  
563-246-2299  
[www.sandhillpreservation.com](http://www.sandhillpreservation.com)

Schlecht Farm & Hatchery  
9749 – 500th Avenue  
Miles, Iowa 52064  
563-682-7865



## Biosecurity Preventing Poultry Diseases

It's important to keep yourself, your family, your chickens and their environment clean and disease-free. Early detection of contagious bird diseases such as Avian Influenza (bird flu) or Exotic Newcastle Disease can help prevent their spread.

This means washing your hands and clothes, disinfecting shoes and equipment, not sharing supplies or equipment with others, and learning the warning signs of infected chickens.

When you bring your chickens home from a store, farm or another residence, you will want to keep them separate and monitor them for a day or two for any signs of problems.

Look for a detailed article on 'Backyard Chicken Bio-Security' in the Summer 2011 issue of the Nexus.

You can also learn more by reading page 2 of the poster at: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal\\_health/content/printable\\_version/bbiosecurity\\_viet-eng-poster.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/content/printable_version/bbiosecurity_viet-eng-poster.pdf).

### Web Resources

**American Poultry Association**  
[www.amerpoultryassn.com](http://www.amerpoultryassn.com)

**Antwi Farms**  
Very thorough site covering breeds, upkeep, eggs, FAQs, and more.  
[www.antwifarms.com/chickenhome.shtml](http://www.antwifarms.com/chickenhome.shtml)

**Backyard Poultry Magazine**  
A magazine about raising backyard poultry. The website has many free articles.  
[www.backyardpoultrymag.com](http://www.backyardpoultrymag.com)

Bobbi Lindemulder gives one of four Partnership awards to Mike McGuiness from Snohomish County Surface Water Management.



# 2010 SCD Award Winners

Snohomish Conservation District hosted their Awards Reception at Legion Hall in Everett on March 24th. Thanks to everyone who attended, we had a great turnout! Tristan Klesick gave an interesting overview of his recent trip to Chile with the AgForestry Leadership Program. He finishes the 18-month program in May.

These are the 2010 award winners who have diligently improved their operations, promoted District programs, volunteered at events and opened their farms for classes in 2010.



Alan Shank awards Dairy Farm of the Year winner Jim Werkoven, of Werkoven Dairy in Monroe, his sign and plaque.

**Cooperator of the Year**  
Stephen and Diane Edwards

**Dairy Farm of the Year**  
Andy and Jim Werkhoven

**Small Farm of the Year**  
Bill and Lisa Gage

**Wildlife Farm of the Year**  
Mark and Julie Boulter

**Merit Farm Awards**  
Alan and Laura Drager  
Neal and Serena Friedman

**Volunteer Awards**  
Don Bloom  
Joanne Fergin

**Partnership Awards**  
Debbie Terwilliger, Snohomish County  
Michael McGuiness, Snohomish County  
Andrew Corbin, WSU Extension  
Joan Deutsch, Seattle Times

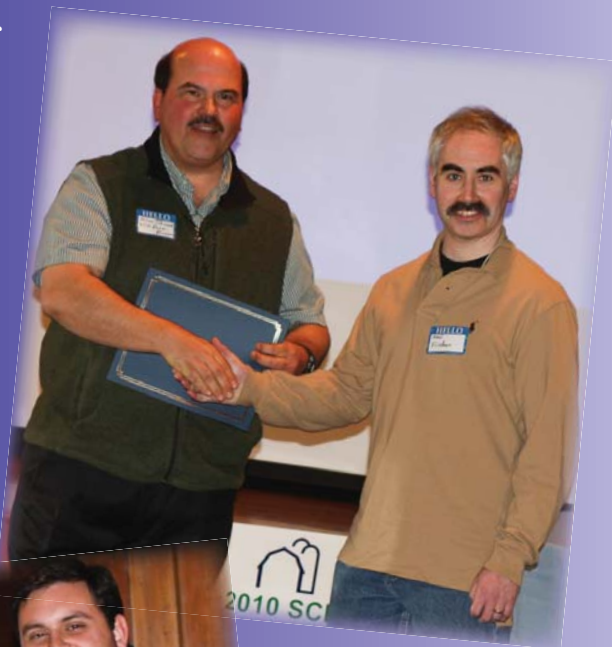
**SCD Employee of the Year**  
Ryan Williams, Habitat Specialist



Don Bloom, one of two Volunteers of the Year.



Drew Corbin with his Partnership of the Year award.



Alan Shank and Merit Farm winner Neal Friedman.



District Manager Monte Marti and Ryan Williams, Employee of the Year.



**Congratulations to all of our 2010 winners!**

# Goats: They're not that Baaaaad!

By Megan O'Brian, Small Farm Planner



Did you know that more meat and milk from goats is consumed worldwide than meat and milk from cows? The reasons are many as to why goats are so popular. There are more than 200 different breeds of goats that produce a variety of products (meat, milk, fiber) and are used for a multitude of things (show, hiking partner, pet, blackberry destroyer).

According to the 2007 Washington Census of Agriculture Publication, goat numbers have increased from 23,217 in 2002 to 32,840 in 2007. In 2007, Snohomish County ranked third in the state for total number of goats (2,172 goats on 210 farms).

Goats are great as the only animals on your property, and they can fit right in with your existing livestock. Goats can help increase the environmental health and diversity of your pasture, especially if you already have sheep, horses and cattle. Goats, sheep and cattle all prefer to eat different plants, which means there is little to no competition for the same food. Goats can also be used to help control (eat) all kinds of weeds on your property, so they can save you time (less mowing) as well as money (for gas and pesticides).

Goats, sheep, and cows are all classified as ruminants (animals with four-chambered stomachs) and four legs. That is pretty much where the similarities end. Sheep and cows are grazers, meaning they eat grass and other similar ground plants. Goats eat more like deer - they browse, meaning they mainly eat the leaves and stems of shrubs. This is not to say that goats won't eat grass, they will, just after they finish the shrubs, trees and your favorite rose bush. So, if you are looking for a lawnmower with four legs . . . get sheep!

## Why Do You Want a Goat?

This is the first question to ask yourself before getting a goat. That seems simple enough, but because there are so many goat breeds designed to produce different things and have certain traits, knowing what you want will save you time. There are many, many breeds that offer milk, meat, fiber and/or companionship. This list (sidebar below) shows the most common ones.

### Common Breeds

#### Dairy Goats

Alpine  
LaMancha  
Nigerian Dwarf  
Nubian  
Oberhasli  
Saanen  
Toggenburg

#### Meat Goats

Boer  
Fainting goats  
Kiko  
Spanish meat goats

#### Goats for Fiber

Angora  
Cashmere  
Pygora

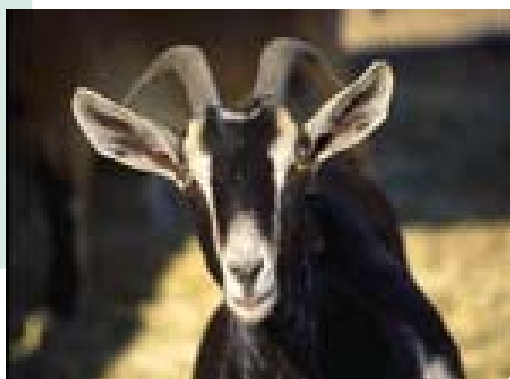
#### Other Types of Goats

Kinder – Both dairy and meat  
Pygmy – pets

If you're looking for a pet goat/blackberry destroyer, consider adopting from a reputable goat shelter. If you've looking for a goat to do more than that, find a reputable goat breeder. Also, goats do not like to be the lone animal. If you're determined to have a goat, plan on getting at least two.

## Do You Want a Male or Female Goat?

This is the second question you need to answer. Do you want to bring home a buck, doe or whether (neutered male)? Bucks are un-neutered male goats.



Generally speaking, your first goat should NOT be a buck. Their sole purpose is to breed.

They can seem cute and sweet when a kid (young goat), but as bucks gets older and enter "rut" (ready to breed) they will produce a foul odor from urinating on their face and front legs. Bucks can become aggressive and dangerous, especially if their horns are still intact. This is not to say that bucks do not have a place on the farm; they are integral to growing a herd.

Also, if you get a buck, you may want to add a neutered male or another buck (to avoid inbreeding) for company, since they need to be kept separate from the females (for obvious reasons). Bucks tend to have short life spans (eight to ten years), most likely due to the stress of breeding.

A wether is a neutered male and a good choice for pets, meat and fiber. They tend to be a little more social than female goats, don't have the buck's foul odor, and do not become aggressive. They tend to live for 11 to 16 years.

A doe is a female goat. Does tend to be less social than wethers, however they are still great for milk production and/or companionship. The average life span for a doe is between 11 and 12 years; however they can live longer depending on the age they are retired from producing kids (baby goats).

## How to Choose a Healthy Goat

Now that you know what kind of goat you want and what gender, you can turn your attention to finding healthy goats. When choosing a healthy goat, look for a shiny coat, lively manner, clear eyes, no limping when walking, no sores or infected areas, not too fat or thin, firm pelleted manure (no signs of diarrhea on the coat), and a well-shaped utter and teats (if it's a doe).

Remember, you can and should ask questions, such as:

- 1) What diseases have been in the herd
- 2) What were the worming and vaccination schedules
- 3) What criteria was used for selection and culling

Before introducing any new goat(s) to your farm, it's wise to know what diseases are already present in your current herd as well as the health history/issues of the herd your goat came from. Also, it is a good idea to quarantine the new goats from the rest of your goat herd to monitor for signs of ailments.

## Goats and Food

Myths abound that goats will eat absolutely anything from tin cans to garbage to the clothes right off your line. This is not true. Goats do like to taste and nibble on most edible plants, which may be how they got their reputation as indiscriminate eating machines. They do have a very diverse diet due to their origins, where they have lush springs and summers and barren winters.

Their four-chambered stomachs are often referred to as fermentation vats. It helps to imagine that you are feeding their stomach bacteria instead of the goat. These bacteria break down the plant to make its nutrients available to the goat.

Because of this, it is important to make any changes to your goat's diet very gradually. If you don't, bacteria disturbed by a sudden change in food can lead to bloat and even death. Unfortunately, numerous plants are poisonous to goats. See the sidebar (right) for a list of the most common culprits.

Also, goats are fairly messy eaters. You will need to keep your hay feeders off the ground or goats will urinate and defecate on the hay. This can spread disease and parasites throughout the herd.

Meat, dairy, fiber and pet goats all have different nutritional needs. Having minerals and salts available for your goats is very important. Copper is an essential mineral for a goat, but can be toxic to sheep. If you have both species, you'll need to carefully manage for this. Ensure your goats stay healthy by discussing the nutritional requirements for your animal situation with your veterinarian.

## Plants Poisonous to Goats

(this is not a comprehensive list)

Buttercup  
Clover  
Choke cherry  
Death camas  
Elderberry  
Holly trees/bushes  
Hydrangea  
Laurel  
Larkspur  
Lupine  
Milkweed  
Nightshade  
Oleander  
Poison hemlock  
Red maple  
Rhododendron  
Rhubarb leaves  
Water hemlock  
Yew

- continued on next page -

# Goats - continued

It is extremely important to allow goats free access to water at all times. A goat will drink anywhere from one half gallon to four gallons of water a day. Water usage can increase for pregnant and nursing does.

## Managing Manure, Mud and Pastures

Goats produce about five percent of their body weight in manure (60-70 percent moisture) every day. Managing that manure is important to reduce the potential for insect, odor and water pollution problems. You will need a complete manure management system that involves a collection, storage and disposal plan (spreading, giving it away or hauling it off).

Manure should be picked up from stalls and sacrifice areas regularly to prevent parasite problems. Goats are one of the most susceptible animals to parasites. They evolved to travel far distances to find food, and didn't develop a resistance to worms. Work with your veterinarian to discuss a deworming plan.

Goats will naturally distribute their manure while grazing in your pastures. However, if there are too many goats on too small of an area, this can become a problem. The recommended stocking rate for goats is four to five animals per acre. This rate can be increased with proper pasture management techniques, such as rotational grazing, feeding hay in the winter, and keeping animals off a wet pasture. Manage your pasture and worm population by letting the goats on it for three to seven days, and then keep them off that pasture for the next 60 days.

You'll also need a dry area for your goats when resting them off your pasture, and keeping them off during the winter when soils are saturated. This is known as a sacrifice area. You can create a sacrifice area of three-eighths minus rock, sand or other footing material.

One way to help eliminate worms in your pasture is to drag a 12-foot post over the pasture on a hot, dry day to break up manure and let the sun dry and kill any eggs. DO NOT do this on a wet day, as it will contaminate the rest of your pasture.

Manure storage locations should be in high, dry places away from streams and areas prone to ponding or flooding. The storage area should also be kept away from your property line (check your local zoning codes for specifics).

## Housing Goats

If you don't already have a goat shelter, the highest, driest part of your property is the best place to locate one. Its main purpose is protection from the elements. A three-sided shelter will suffice, if the opening is away from prevailing winds. The roof should be sloped to repel rain. Gutters and downspouts are needed to direct water away from the shelter and surrounding area.

If you're putting goats in your barn, make sure it is well ventilated yet draft free, especially if you plan on breeding goats and kidding (birthing). If you are housing dairy goats, stanchions or stall boxes with built-in feeders can make milking them easier. Also consider creating separate areas for pregnant does, sick goats, etc.

A minimum of ten to 15 square feet per animal in your shelter is a good rule of thumb to prevent overcrowding. You don't want overcrowded goats taking their frustrations out on each other or the structure itself.

## Fencing Choices



A 12.5 gauge Hi-tensile 7-wire fence.

Fencing goats on your property can be a real challenge. Jim Gerish, a grazing lands consultant, wisely said, "If your fence can hold water, it will hold goats". And, "If 95 percent of your goats are in your pastures 95 percent of the time... you're doing a good job". This pretty much sums up experiences some people have with keeping goats.

Typically, you want a fence to keep goats in and predators out. You have a lot different options to choose from, including modifying your existing fence (depending on what you have) or installing a new one.

Whatever you decide, 48 inches is generally the minimum height for a goat fence. Fencing for bucks needs to be closer to six feet high. All goats are agile and will test the limits of your fence, and sometimes your patience.



A fence with 2" x 6" stays (spacing).



A fence with 6" x 12" stays (spacing).

They will lean on, push against, and even stand on fencing -- especially if you, another animal or a tasty tree or shrub is on the other side of that fence.

Fencing can be divided into physical barriers and psychological barriers. Physical fencing (livestock panels, woven wire) can be costly up front, but requires less maintenance over time. Psychological fencing (electric) can be inexpensive, but you have

to make sure the fence lines are always clear (weeding or spraying) so they remain "hot".

Physical barriers are typically installed along the perimeter of your property. Woven wire fencing (two-inch by six-inch stays, or spacing, between vertical wires) is recommended for goats and sheep, as it is hard for them to get through. Six-inch by 12-inch stays allow animals to insert their head through the fence without getting stuck there.

It's also smart to put an electric wire along the middle and top of your fence to discourage climbing or leaning on it. Six-inch by six-inch stay fences are not recommended, because

goats can get easily caught and gravely injure themselves, becoming an easy target for predators. Multiple strands of barbed wire can be used instead, but DO NOT ELECTRIFY it!

Goats tend to respect psychological barriers such as electric fencing. The trick is to make sure they respect the fence before you let them out into a pasture for the first time. You will most likely need four to five strands of electric wire at the nine inch, 17 to 18 inch, 25 to 27 inch, 36 inch and 48 inch mark from the ground. Contact a fence supplier for more details on electric, battery and solar powered options, including the grounders.

All fence photos from University of Illinois Extension

## Resources

If you would like to learn more about raising goats and selecting breeds, contact the WSU Extension livestock advisor hotline at 1-877-563-6789.

### Other Great Resources

**Northwest Goat Club** – <http://www.northwestgoatclub.com/index.html>

### Washington State University Extension

<http://smallfarms.wsu.edu/animals/goats.html>

### Oregon State University Extension

<http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/goats>

### Linda Coffey, Margo Hale and Ann Wells

"Goats: Sustainable Production Overview"

<http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/goatoverview.html>

### University of Illinois Extension

Planning Sheep and Goat Fencing

<http://www.livestocktrail.uiuc.edu/uploads/sheepnet/papers/Final%20sheep%20and%20goat%20fencing%20publication.pdf>

### Goat Poisonous Plant list, Pilchuck Vet Hospital

[http://www.pilchuckvet.com/resources/Goat\\_Poisonous\\_Plant\\_List.pdf](http://www.pilchuckvet.com/resources/Goat_Poisonous_Plant_List.pdf)

# Summer Adventures for Children and Families

by Caitlin Price, Small Farm Planner

The days are getting longer and summer will soon be here. How will your family celebrate and enjoy the green growing season this year? After a long grey winter spent inside, it does us all good to get out in the garden, or hit the hiking trails and soak up all that sunshine, fresh air, and nature. Children of all ages need time outside to play in the mud, wander in the woods, and make new discoveries.

Some of us were fortunate enough to grow up on a farm or ranch, or with a nearby park. Luckily for those of us who don't have nature right outside our window, here are some of the many amazing places you can visit, and the delightful programs your whole family can enjoy.

## Nature Camps

### 4-H Forestry/Natural Resources, Countywide

Washington State University Snohomish County Extension has a great Forestry and Natural Resources 4-H Program that uses forestry and natural resource education to help youth develop and connect with nature in positive ways. Topics include wildlife, marine science, native plants, plus hiking and backpacking. 4-H programs are available year-round. More information can be found at [www.snohomish.wsu.edu/4H/NR](http://www.snohomish.wsu.edu/4H/NR) or by calling Program Coordinator Gabrielle Roesch at 425-357-6011.



Campers work together to build a nest box.



### Nature Camp, Seattle

The Seattle Audubon Society hosts a Nature Camp for youth in grades 1 through 12 at Seattle's 300-acre Magnuson Park. Participants will discover the exciting world of birds, tide pool treasures, and wetland wonders. Older campers have the opportunity to go on a three-day overnight adventure at a state or national park. For more information visit [www.seattleaudubon.org](http://www.seattleaudubon.org) or call 206-523-4483.

### Natural Resources Youth Camp, Randle

The Cispus Learning Center near Randle (south of Mt. Rainier National Park in Lewis County) hosts a six-day Natural Resources Youth Camp for ages 12 to 17. Participants learn about forestry, aquatics, soil, wildlife and outdoor leadership in the spectacular Gifford Pinchot National Forest. The program only lasts for one week and space is very limited. Scholarships are available. For more information visit [www.nryc.org](http://www.nryc.org) or call 360-754-3588.



Campers learn from career professionals in Forestry, Wildlife, Geology, Aquatics and more at the Natural Resources Youth Camp at Cispus Learning Center near Randle, WA.

### Wilderness Awareness School, Duvall

The Wilderness Awareness School, based in Duvall (NE King County), is dedicated to "caring for the earth and our children by fostering understanding and appreciation of nature, community, and self." They offer various programs for children and adults year-round. Their Summer Camp program includes a day camp and overnight camps for children ages four and older on their Duvall campus, as well as other locations around Puget Sound. For more information visit [www.wildernessawareness.org](http://www.wildernessawareness.org) or call 425-788-1301.

## Farm/Ranch Camps

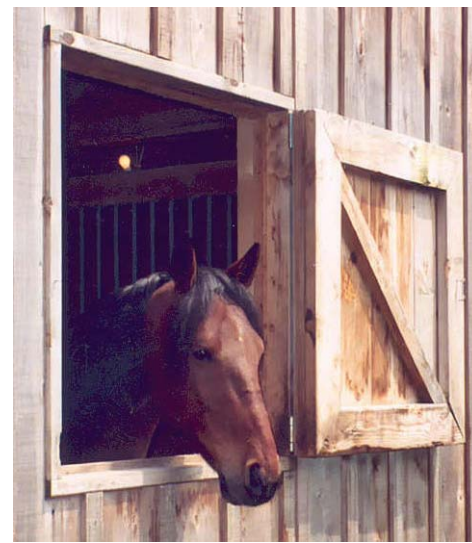
If farm experiences sound more enticing, there are many excellent farm and horse geared camps for you and your family to participate in here in Western Washington.

### Warm Beach Camp, Stanwood

Warm Beach Camp & Conference Center has a ranch with trail riding and an arena. Camps include horsemanship, vaulting, wrangler-in-training, and parent-child horse camps. Check out the beach, hiking trails, forested areas, and ropes course too. The camp has events for youth and adults. Find out more at [www.warmbeach.com](http://www.warmbeach.com) or call 360-652-7575.

### Summer Winds Day Camp, Snoqualmie

This camp is located on a small farmstead in Snoqualmie, complete with animals, woods, gardens and springs. Day camps are offered for ages five to 11 with delightful themes like 'woodland elves', 'happy farmers', and 'forest animals'. These camps fill fast so be sure to register early. For details visit [www.summerwindsdaycamp.com](http://www.summerwindsdaycamp.com) or call Becca at 425-765-5060.



### Full Moon Rising Farm, Whidbey Island

Full Moon Rising Farm offers farm and wilderness camps for children ages three to 15 on Whidbey Island. Beginning in May they will also be hosting Farming Fridays from 1 to 3 pm each week. This is your opportunity to explore farm life. They invite you to bring the family and "be playful, be helpful". For more information visit [www.fullmoonrisingfarm.com](http://www.fullmoonrisingfarm.com) or call 360-331-4087.

### Farm Life Camp, Bothell

The Farm Life Camp at Willows Edge Farm in Bothell offers youth ages five to 18 the opportunity to get their hands dirty on the farm. Proprietors Corinne and Scott Logan have focused their lives and farm around working with and educating the next generation. Campers are immersed in life on this diversified livestock and produce farm, where there is always something new to learn and different chores to be done. They also offer educational tours during warmer months, and educational birthday parties. For more information visit [www.willowsedgefarm.com](http://www.willowsedgefarm.com) or call 425-402-6781.

## Other Activities

### Summer Garden Camps, Seattle

Seattle Tilth has a wonderful children's garden program that includes tours of their Seattle gardens, as well as a mobile garden classroom. Summer Garden Camps for children ages three to 14 are offered throughout the summer at two locations. For more information visit <http://seattletilth.org/learn/kids/kids-and-families> or call 206-633-0451, ext. 105.

### Nature Rocks Website Full of Resources

The website [www.naturerocks.org](http://www.naturerocks.org) was recently launched by the Children and Nature Network and partners to "inspire and empower parents across the country to take their families to play, explore and enjoy quality time in nature". The site provides easy opportunities to connect with other families in nature, and offers creative ideas for nature activities at home.

Having fun while trying something new and 'hands-on' is one of the best ways for children to learn and grow. So whatever your summer plans are, be sure to get yourself and your family outside to celebrate the wonderful natural world that we all share!



# Are You Ready for a Wildfire?

by Leif Fixen, Resource Planner

As we hear more and more about disasters plaguing communities around the world, you might ask yourself, “Am I ready for a natural disaster?” Disaster preparedness is one area where the old saying -- “Prepare for the worst, hope for the best” -- truly is a wise motto to live by.

One disaster you can easily prepare for is the threat of a wildfire. As Westsiders here in Washington, it’s difficult to imagine the threat of a wildfire as we tromp through the rain and mud for eight months of the year. But due to our beautiful dry summers, the landscape can dry out quickly, presenting a window of time where a grass or forest fire can be a serious threat to property and lives.

In response to this concern, the Snohomish Conservation District has partnered with the Washington State University Snohomish County Extension and the Department of Natural Resources to help you and your neighbors become a “Firewise Community”. This program encourages local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters, and others in proactively protecting people and property from the risk of a wildfire. The program teaches people how to adapt to living with wildfire and encourages neighbors to work together and take action now to prevent losses in the future.

## A Firewise Home has Seven Features:

### 1. The Home Ignition Zone

The Home Ignition Zone begins with at least 30 feet of space immediately around your home and may extend out as far as 100 to 200 feet, depending on the characteristics of the surrounding vegetation. Creating and maintaining a Home Ignition Zone reduces or eliminates fire hazards presented by vegetation and wood construction (porches, decks, storage sheds, outbuildings, swing sets and fences).

**WHY? Reducing ignition hazards improves the chances that your home will survive a wildfire.**



An example of Firewise landscaping.

### 2. Lean, Clean, and Green Landscaping

With Firewise landscaping, you can create survivable space around your home that reduces your wildfire threat. Prune large trees so the lowest branches are at least six to ten feet high to prevent a ground fire from spreading into your trees. Within your Home Ignition Zone, remove flammable mulches (pine needles, bark, leaves) and any plants containing resins, oils, and waxes that burn readily (ornamental junipers, holly, red cedar). A list of less-flammable mulches and plants can be obtained from the Conservation District, your local state forester, or county extension office.

**WHY? Although bark mulch helps retain soil moisture, mulch and plants can become flammable when too dry.**

### 3. A Fire-resistant Roof

Firewise roof materials include Class-A asphalt shingles, metal, slate or clay tile, and concrete products. A fire-resistant sub-roof adds further protection. In the spring inspect your roof, looking for deterioration such as breaks and spaces between roof tiles. Keep your roof, gutters, and eaves clear of leaves and other debris. Make sure under-eave and soffit vents are as close as possible to the roof line. Box in eaves, but be sure to provide adequate ventilation to prevent condensation and mildew.

**WHY? Something as simple as making sure that your gutters, eaves, and roof are clear of debris will reduce your fire threat.**



A Firewise roof using slate roofing materials.



### 4. Fire-resistant Construction

Wall materials that resist heat and flames include brick, cement, plaster, stucco, and concrete masonry. Tempered and double-pane glass windows can make a home more resistant to wildfire heat and flames.

**WHY? Firebrands (embers that collect in small nooks and crannies) can ignite combustible materials.**

### 5. Fire-resistant Attachments

Attachments include any structure connected to your home, such as a deck, porch, or fence. If these items are not fire resistant, then your home as a whole is more vulnerable to catching on fire.

### 6. A Disaster Plan

The time to plan for any emergency is before it happens. Make time to discuss with your family what actions you will take.

- Post emergency telephone numbers in a visible place
- Leave before it is too late
- Decide where you will go and how you will get there
- Have tools available (shovel, rake, axe, handsaw, or chain saw)
- Maintain an emergency water source
- Have a plan for your pets
- Practice family fire drills

**WHY? The need to evacuate can occur without notice. When wildfire conditions exist, be ready to take action immediately as fires move fast.**

### 7. Emergency Access

Identify your home and neighborhood with legible and clearly marked street names and numbers. Make sure your driveway is at least 12 feet wide with a vertical clearance of 15 feet and a slope of less than five percent to provide adequate access for emergency vehicles.

**WHY? So emergency personnel can rapidly find you and respond quickly.**

If you’d like to have your property or neighborhood assessed to see how Firewise you are, please call SCD Forester Leif Fixen, 425-335-5634 ext. 110, for a free site visit and evaluation. You can also visit <http://www.firewise.org/> for more information on becoming Firewise.



Want to see how Firewise you are?  
Take the quiz at [http://www.firewise.org/fw\\_youcanuse/quiz/are-you.html](http://www.firewise.org/fw_youcanuse/quiz/are-you.html)

# Upcoming Events

## Spring 2011 Forest Stewardship Coached Planning

Tuesday nights starting April 12, in Everett. Visit <http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/forestryevents.htm> for details or call 425-357-6017.

## Natural Yard Care Series, Mill Creek

All classes are held at the Mill Creek City Council Chambers at 15728 Main St. The classes are free and will run from 7 - 9 PM.

**Natural Yard Care - April 6, 2011**

**Good Bug, Bad Bug - April 13, 2011**

**Sustainable Landscape Design - April 20, 2011**

## Skagit Farm Supply, Stanwood Rain Barrels and Rain Gardens

April 9, 11 AM - Noon, Free

Stacy Aleksich, SCD Low Impact Development Coordinator, will talk about what it takes to make and maintain a rain garden and rain barrels.

### Composting

April 16, 11 AM - Noon, Free

Caitlin Price, SCD Resource Planner will cover "hot" composting and compost systems for yard and garden wastes and animal manure. Both classes are in Stanwood at Skagit Farm Supply at 8815 272nd St NW.

## Farm Tour, Woodinville

April 16, 10 AM to noon and 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM (two tours). Free  
To register/get directions, call King Conservation District at 425-282-1949 or [signup@kingcd.org](mailto:signup@kingcd.org). Questions, call Megan at 425-335-5634, Ext. 106

## Rain Garden Workshop, Everett

April 19, 6 - 8 PM

Everett Community College, Whitehorse Hall 105, 2000 Tower St,  
Learn more about design options, planting suggestions, and all you need to know to create a rain garden in your yard! To sign up, please email [workshops@snohomishcd.org](mailto:workshops@snohomishcd.org) or call 425-335-5634, ext. 4.

## Streamside Landowners Course, Edmonds

Thursdays in April (7, 14, 21 and 28), 6 PM - 9 PM

Willow Creek Hatchery, 95 Pine St, Edmonds

This 4-week course will educate streamside landowners on watershed awareness, monitoring and restoration, salmonid ID, wildlife habitat needs, and more. Stacy Aleksich covers rain gardens at the April 28 class.

## Find Us at These Upcoming Events:

**A Garden Affaire, Stanwood - April 5**

**Food & Farm Fair, Everett Community College - April 20**

**Washington State Envirothon, Warm Beach Camp - May 19**

## Kailyn Brings Color to the District

Kailyn Wentz is our new Environmental Education and Outreach AmeriCorps Intern. She claims Aberdeen, Washington as her hometown, so rainboots have worked their way into her everyday fashion.



Kailyn is working on her Bachelor of Science degree in Integrated Media with a Bachelor of Science degree in Exercise Science from Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon. She has worked as the Recreation Director for a summer park and rec program, a Guerilla Marketing Intern for Pacific University, Public Relations Assistant for the Berglund Center for Internet Studies, and as a girls basketball coach.

Kailyn is excited to learn all she can during her time at the District and to share her knowledge of marketing, design, and social media. She will be coordinating the K-12 environmental education program, helping our habitat restoration folks, and getting us up to speed on social networking.

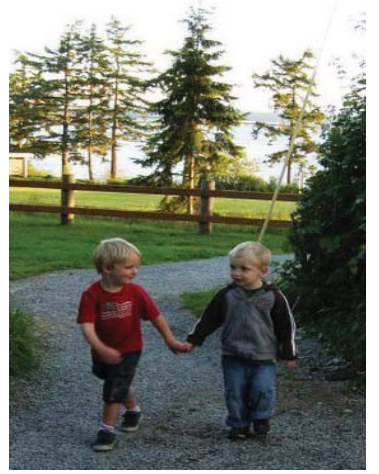


Our new intern has already participated in the WSU Growing Groceries training, the plant sale and other muddy adventures. Kailyn enjoys adventuring, learning new things, and graphic design. She now lives in Lake Stevens.

*Kailyn won us over when she told us she was "a fan of rubber boots"! Not only a fan, but a trendsetter as well. Our run-of-the-mill barn boots pale in comparison to Kailyn's!*

# The Great Outdoors Initiative ~ A Promise to Future Generations

Americans have a proud tradition of working together to conserve farmland and open space for future generations, restore rivers and streams, protect areas for hiking and biking, preserve beaches and coastlines, conserve wildlife habitat for fishing and hunting, and restore the cultural and historic sites that tell America's story. In fact, community-driven efforts to conserve America's land, water, and wildlife are a major reason why we are blessed with the parks, refuges, forests, and open spaces that we enjoy today.



On April 2010, President Obama announced the **America's Great Outdoors Initiative** as a way to create a national dialogue about conservation in America. The White House brought together ranchers, farmers and forest landowners, sportsmen and women, state and local government leaders, tribal leaders, public lands experts, conservationists, youth leaders, and others to learn about some of the smart, creative ways communities are conserving outdoor spaces.

The result was the 'America's Great Outdoors' report, "A Promise to Future Generations," available at <http://americasgreatoutdoors.gov/report/>. The report outlines ways local communities can accomplish their conservation and recreation priorities. And remember - take time to get the young people in your life outdoors! They are our future.

## WSU Island County ~ Beachwatchers Series on Camano

WSU Beachwatchers presents their Spring Wednesday night speaker series on Camano Island. All programs are free and will begin at 7 PM at the Camano Multipurpose Center located at 141 N. East Camano Drive, next to the CASA animal shelter.

In March, Don Velasquez, biologist for the Puget Sound Shellfish Program with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, will talk about 'Crabs and Crabbing in the Puget Sound'. His talk will cover the life cycle of the Dungeness Crab, threats to the species, the status of efforts to improve habitat and populations, what we can do to help and the new recreational crabbing regulations to be implemented this summer.

In April, Howard Garrett of the Orca Network will present 'The Saratoga Grays: Farming the Mudflat for Shrimp and Worms'. Participants will learn about the distinct group of resident gray whales that return to Saratoga Passage each spring. Discover who these 40-foot, 20+ ton marine mammals are and how they are faring in Puget Sound.

In May, join Susan Wood of Padilla Bay's Breazeale Interpretive Center, as she talks about our National Marine Estuarine Research Reserve. Learn about Padilla Bay and how it fits into the national system of Marine Estuarine Research Reserves, it's educational programs, and the research efforts at Breazeale. Learn more at <http://www.beachwatchers.wsu.edu/island/events/>.

## It's Spring - do you need manure? Do you have too much?

Call our Manure Share number to find a source for your garden or locate someone needing your manure.

**Call 425-335-5634, ext. 114 (Caitlin Price),  
or email [caitlin@snohomishcd.org](mailto:caitlin@snohomishcd.org)**

## Snohomish Conservation District

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### 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



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

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