

# SNOHOMISH CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## The NEXUS



## New Garden for Seniors in Arlington

Leslie Credgington, Americorps Intern

In January 2009, the Snohomish Conservation District hired a new Americorps intern, Leslie Credgington, who came to us from the Northwest Service Academy in Trout Lake. Leslie had previously worked for a local compost company and had taught environmental education in Whatcom County prior to joining the District.

The Conservation District partnered with the Stillaguamish Tribe to fund Leslie's 11-month position. For the past year, Leslie taught topics such as salmon lifecycles, water quality, native plant identification and watershed health in primary schools throughout Snohomish County. She also helped collect water quality samples and worked on various habitat restoration projects with our restoration specialist, Ryan Williams.

Although the Conservation District has hosted eight student interns in the past, we had never before partnered with the Northwest Service Academy. It was an exciting new relationship for us.

As part of her internship with the Academy, Leslie was required to spearhead a Community Action Project of her own choosing in her community. This is the Service Academy's way of boosting civic engagement. Their goal is to build future leadership so interns will be active agents of change, rather than passive members of society.



A resident helps plant seeds and new starts in one of the newly-filled beds.

For her project, Leslie chose to coordinate the design and installation of raised bed vegetable gardens at a Smokey Point senior community. The Stillaguamish Senior Apartments is a 156-unit residential community in Arlington for disabled and low-income seniors.

This was the perfect opportunity, as last summer the senior

complex had to remove a large area of trees to make way for a new sewer line that would run through the middle of the complex. After the pipeline was completed, they were left with a large, open sunny area.

Several ideas on how to use this area were evaluated with a community food garden being the final choice. Everyone thought the residents would enjoy being outside and doing a little gardening. Plus they would be supplying fresh food to the greater senior community via the local food bank, which is also located in the apartment complex.

While several residents showed an interest in managing the garden and growing vegetables, the apartment complex owned no gardening tools or other resources to build the beds. All the wood for the raised beds, seeds, soil and tools to maintain the gardens had to come from donations and other fundraising efforts.



Kimberly-Clark employees helped assemble the planting beds as part of the United Way Day of Caring.

As project lead, Leslie appealed to various businesses for support. Donations were graciously received from:

**Cedar Grove Composting** - 10 yards of vegetable garden mix for the beds

**Master Gardener Foundation** - funding to purchase wood for the beds and supplies for a drip irrigation system

**Kimberly-Clark** volunteers to assemble the beds and fill them with soil on the United Way Day of Caring, September 18, 2009

**Sunnyside Nursery** - plants and seed  
**Apartment residents** - labor for planting

Adele Erbeck, Service Coordinator for the Stillaguamish Senior Apartments, outlined where the raised vegetable beds were to go. Minerva Castaneda-Conley, a student of the WSU Extension "Growing Groceries" class, taught apartment residents how to grow vegetables, weed properly, and maintain the plants. She also applied for the grant to fund supplies.

Leslie and her partners can be proud of this garden that keeps on giving. It not only helps seniors help themselves, it also helps others in the community who need a source of fresh produce.



Leslie and Minerva completed the project on October 8th by installing a drip irrigation system that conserves water, reduces labor, and reduces soil erosion and nutrient leaching from the beds.

## Winter 2010

Serving Snohomish County  
and Camano Island

### Assessment Update

#### Snohomish County Votes Yes

Snohomish Conservation District received approval for an assessment of \$5 per parcel and \$.05/acre from the Snohomish County Council before Thanksgiving. The vote was four to one in favor of the proposal which will fund services to District residents for five years, beginning in January 2010.

#### Island County Votes Yes Too!

Island County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved an annual assessment of \$5 per parcel for lands within the Whidbey Island and Snohomish Conservation Districts, to begin in January 2010. The fee will be collected for ten years and will expand services related to natural resources and water quality on both Camano and Whidbey islands.

Both assessment proposals dovetail with Puget Sound Partnership's efforts to clean up Puget Sound's water, protect critical habitats and wetlands, and promote low impact development.

#### Thank You!

The District Board of Supervisors and staff would like to express our appreciation to our constituents, partners, and other residents who supported a more stable funding source for SCD.

## Inside

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- ❖ New Water Specialist



# Brier Goes GREEN!

## With It's Natural Gardening Series!

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

Brier City Hall  
2901 228th St SW, Brier  
1.) 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM &  
2.) 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM



### Thursday, April 22nd

Emily Bishton, Green Light Gardening

#### 1.) Natural Yard Care

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 off right by knowing 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 time for you!

#### 2.) Child-friendly Garden Design

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 with activity sheet is available for the children who visit your garden.

### Thursday, April 29th

Jennifer Carlson, Haven Illustrated

#### 1.) Sustainable Landscape Design

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, utilize the existing conditions on your property, and create a healthy, beautiful, low-maintenance landscape.



To Register, email [workshops@snohomishcd.org](mailto:workshops@snohomishcd.org)  
or call 425-335-5634, ext 4

### Thursday, April 29th -continued-

#### 2.) Right Plant/Right Place

Learn how properly preparing the 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 hardy plants for the class to see.

### Thursday, May 6

#### 1.) Good Bug, Bad Bug

Sharon Collman, WSU Extension, Snohomish County

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.

#### 2.) Backyard Composting Basics

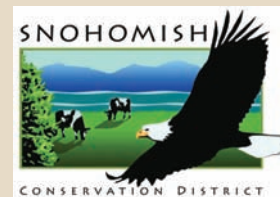
Lois Ruskell, Snohomish Conservation District

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 composting? Lois will show you how and what to compost, and some innovative techniques such as hugelkultur, compost fences, worm bins, and more. Learn how to keep your leaves, twigs and food scraps working for you.

#### Sponsors:



Funded by a  
Centennial Clean  
Water Fund grant.



## Benefits of Water Rights

by Washington Water Trust

If you own land in the Stillaguamish River Basin, you may be able to: 1) earn additional income from your property, 2) receive technical assistance to restore your stream, streambank or wetland and/or 3) possibly get some tax relief for restoration and other improvements to your property if they benefit the environment.

Organizations, such as the Washington Water Trust, a nonprofit organization that works exclusively on water rights, will be contributing their technical and funding expertise in the Stillaguamish Basin on an on-going basis. They can walk landowners through critical management steps that every water right holder should know. This organization's nonprofit, independent structure and grant funding allow flexibility to educate water right holders about their rights and any available options in a completely confidential setting.

#### Options for Income

Opportunities exist to earn additional income from your water rights. If you would you like to better understand your water right (if you're using one), you may be a good candidate to access stewardship dollars in the Stillaguamish River Basin. Water, soil and sun are the most precious ingredients for a productive farm and a healthy watershed. Just as the sun and soil provide more than one economic benefit to farms and farmers, proper water management and streambank stewardship can also provide additional economic benefits to farms and their owners.

#### Restoration Can Reap Benefits

While every property is different and every water right is different, exploring the stewardship programs currently available may provide surprising and significant benefits to you, your property, and the stream that runs through your land.

For a voluntary, incentives-based, non-regulatory stream restoration program to work, Washington Water Trust needs your participation. There is no cost, and all inquiries are totally confidential. Please call if you have any questions about access to stewardship project funding or about water right management. Call 206-675-1585 and ask for Kelly (at ext. 103) or Amanda (at ext.100).

SCD 2

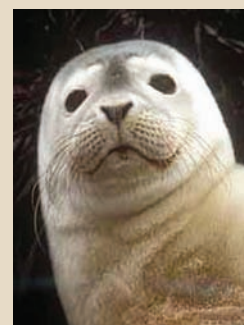
## 'Puget Sound Starts Here' Campaign

**Puget Sound Starts Here** is a partnership of regional governments dedicated to improving water quality in Puget Sound and our local lakes, rivers and streams. The campaign raises awareness of issues impacting the Puget Sound/Salish Sea and helps residents learn simple ways they can help keep stormwater clean and reduce flooding, soil erosion, etc.

A website, <http://www.pugetsoundstartshere.org/>, has ideas for reducing pollution such as picking up pet waste, taking our cars to commercial carwashes, and reducing use of yard chemicals and fertilizers. The website even has coupons for consumers to use for a carwash at one of the participating sites, a 'mutt mitt', and organic fertilizers. It is hoped that as we all become aware of the daily activities that pollute our creeks and rivers, small changes in our habits will equal cleaner water entering Puget Sound.

#### Some things to consider:

- ❖ About 75% of the toxic chemicals getting to the Sound are carried there by stormwater that runs off paved roads and driveways, rooftops, yards and other developed land.
- ❖ 549 streams, rivers and lakes across the Puget Sound Region are polluted.
- ❖ Harbor seals in Puget Sound are seven times more contaminated with the persistent toxic chemicals known as PCBs than those living in Canada's Strait of Georgia, which adjoins the Sound.
- ❖ Transient and southern resident orca whales are considered to be "among the most PCB-contaminated mammals on the planet."

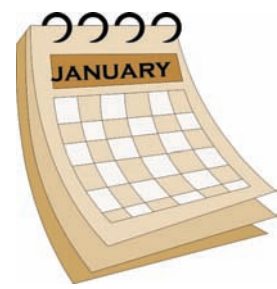


Check out the Puget Sound Partnership website, look for activities in your area, and take the pledge to help Puget Sound stay healthy. It's not too late!

# How to Know When Your Grass Will Start Growing

by Alan Shank, Certified Farm Planner

## When Does Grass Begin to Grow in The New Year?



It all depends on how warm the soil is. Soil temperature determines whether soil microorganisms, such as bacteria and fungi, are active or not. These organisms transform the raw materials of the soil into available nutrients for plant roots. No grass will grow without active soil organisms to help them.

Soil temperature mirrors air temperature. So instead of putting a thermometer in the ground, you can use a formula called “T-Sum 200” to track soil temperatures indirectly and determine when grass will begin to grow.

### Here's How it Works

Each day, starting January 1, write down that day's high and low temperature. Plug those numbers into the formula below to calculate the day's “soil heat degrees.” A day has positive heat degrees if the daily temperature average is above freezing (32 degrees F), or zero heat degrees if it is below freezing. There are no negative heat degree-days no matter how cold it gets.

#### The formula for calculating each day's heat degrees is:

(the day's high temperature + low temperature)/2 = average daily temperature (degrees F)

(average temperature – 32 degrees F) x 5/9 = heat degrees for the day

#### Example:

**(47 degrees – 34 degrees)/2 = 40.5 degrees average temperature**

**(40.5 degrees – 32 degrees) x 5/9 = 4.7 heat degrees**

Add each day's heat degrees together, starting with January 1 (January 1 + January 2 + January 3... etc.) When the total heat degrees reaches 200, soil is warm enough for grass to grow. This usually occurs in February.

Note that T-Sum 200 only indicates when **existing** grass will start growing. The soil is still not warm enough for seeds to germinate. Wait until late March or early April to apply grass seed.

Note, too, that at T-Sum 200, the grass has a long growing season ahead of it. It isn't growing rapidly yet in February, so it can't absorb lots of nutrients from manure or fertilizer. However, a light application of compost or manure is okay. Nor is this grass ready to be grazed or trampled. The ground is still saturated, and very susceptible to compaction. (Compaction squeezes air spaces out of the soil that are needed for root growth and water permeation.) Wait until the grass is six to eight inches tall before modestly grazing and then only if the ground isn't too saturated.

### When Does T-Sum Typically Occur?

T-Sum 200 usually occurs around February 8 in the Everett, Washington area. Since 2001, it has occurred as early as February 4 and as late as February 23. T-Sum 200 for the Arlington area usually occurs a few days later than Everett. Temperature data for other local cities has not been readily available.

If you'd like to track T-Sum 200 for your immediate area, you'll need a source of information for that day's high and low temperatures. It's easy to get a weather forecast for a specific area but it can be hard to find informa-



With some monitoring and simple calculations, you can determine when your grass is producing in the Spring, which will help you determine when your pasture-stocking season will begin.

tion for a previous day's weather, although your local newspaper may carry the previous day's temperatures and precipitation in their archive.

Another, more fun option for tracking daily high and low temperatures is to set up your own weather station. You can purchase relatively inexpensive yet accurate weather stations to track temperatures at your farm or house. They are easy to set up and provide a wealth of useful weather-related information.

Tracking T-Sum 200 is a good habit to develop as you start your new grass year. It's a way of actively thinking about the grass life cycle from the first day. One of the most important skills in grass management is observation, and T-Sum 200 is a tool that heightens your observation skills of weather and plant life.

### When T-Sum is Achieved, What Next?

When T-Sum 200 is close, you may want to do an inexpensive soil test to determine your fertilizer needs. This is also a good time to observe the population of weeds in your pasture because they'll be waking up, too.

If your pasture is small enough and weeds are not overwhelming, you may be able to pull them up by hand. It's a bit early to use herbicides because rain will wash off the chemicals. In most cases, (blackberries being one of them), plants need to be growing very actively for chemicals to be effective. A better option would be to encourage optimum grass growth so that the grass out-competes the weeds. You can spread a light layer of compost after T-Sum 200 has been reached — if you can do it without causing too much soil compaction with your equipment.

If you do track T-Sum 200 at your location, please share your information with Alan at 425-335-5634, ext. 120 or [alan@snohomishcd.org](mailto:alan@snohomishcd.org). You are also welcome to contact Alan near the beginning of February to see how T-Sum 200 is progressing in the Everett and Arlington areas.

**Have fun tracking T-Sum 200 and launching your 2010 grass year!**

## Will Your Land be a Legacy or a Family Liability?

By Kevin Zobrist, WSU Snohomish County Extension

Landowners often dream of having their children inherit their forest or farmland and manage it with the same care they have taken. Unfortunately, this rarely happens without thoughtful planning. Those who fail to plan risk a final outcome they may not like—loss of their land and their legacy. Even those who do plan for the future of family-owned land don't realize their future business partners often sit down with them each evening at the family dinner table.

This fall, Washington State University Snohomish County Extension will present *Ties to the Land*, a two-part workshop designed to help landowners plan for the future of their land and legacy. Part one is Thursday, March 11, 2010 from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.; part two is on Thursday, April 1, 2010 from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Both sessions will be held at Hadley Hall in the Arlington Boys & Girls Club, at 18513 59<sup>th</sup> Ave NE in Arlington.

Originally developed by landowners, extension agents, and business experts from Oregon State University, the *Ties to the Land* workshop explores succession planning—the human side of estate planning. This award-winning program stresses the importance of three actions:

1. **Creating a plan with your entire family**
2. **Involving all generations in management decisions early on**
3. **Holding family meetings to understand everyone's goals**

Workshop participants will learn how to start, and continue these important conversations, as well as learning tips on how to guide the process so that everyone feels part of the final result.

Local landowners Don and Florence Theoe recently participated in this workshop and stressed its importance. “Talking about these tough issues as a family is critical, especially when multiple heirs with varying levels of interest and engagement in the family business are involved,” says Don. “The *Ties to the Land* workshop and associated materials provide excellent guidance on how to get these conversations going.”



The cost for the two-part workshop is \$75 per family; pre-registration is required. For more information on the series, contact Kevin Zobrist at 425-357-6017, email [kzobrist@wsu.edu](mailto:kzobrist@wsu.edu), or visit <http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/TTL2010.htm>. To register, contact Karie Christensen at 425-357-6039 or [klchristen@cahnr.wsu.edu](mailto:klchristen@cahnr.wsu.edu).

# Announcements

## District Open House and Awards

Join the Snohomish Conservation District to celebrate a year of successful restoration, conservation and education in 2009! It's time for the annual appreciation 'Open House and 2009 Awards' to honor the partners, land-owners and farmers who we work with. Join us on Thursday, February 11, 2010 from 1 PM to 4 PM. Awards will be presented at 2 PM. Cake and refreshments will be served directly after the presentation.

## Country Expo Expands Possibilities



Whether you're a seasoned farmer (or would like to be), or own a few acres (or wish you did), you're sure to benefit from the Country Living Expo and Cattlemen's Winterschool on Saturday, January 30. Choose from more than 100 interesting one- to two-hour classes given throughout the day at Stanwood High School.

You can also check out local agricultural businesses and services at the trade show and visit with other farmers. Classes fall into one of eight categories and cover everything you'll need to know about cattle, horses, goats, sheep, alpacas, chicken, turkeys, pigs, bees, vegetables, fruits, forests and pastures.

You can also spend an hour or two learning how to:

- ♦spin wool
- ♦tan hides
- ♦maintain a chain saw
- ♦garden in containers
- ♦make soap
- ♦build a strong fence
- ♦restore a wetland
- ♦compost correctly
- ♦generate your own energy
- ♦do your own taxes
- ♦practice arc welding
- ♦can fruits and vegetables properly
- ♦dye fabric
- ♦get the right tractor for your needs

Doors open at 7:30 am for registration, coffee, pastries, and the trade show.

The \$50 cost (before Dec. 31; \$55 afterwards) includes all educational classes and a catered BBQ lunch. Register online at: [http://skagit.wsu.edu/CountryLivingExpo/images/2010\\_Registration\\_form.pdf](http://skagit.wsu.edu/CountryLivingExpo/images/2010_Registration_form.pdf). You can also print and mail the registration form. For details on the class offerings, go to: [http://skagit.wsu.edu/CountryLivingExpo/images/information\\_booklet\\_2010.pdf](http://skagit.wsu.edu/CountryLivingExpo/images/information_booklet_2010.pdf). This event is presented by WSU Extension, WSU Livestock Master Foundation, and the Cattlemen's Association.

## Water Specialist Joins the District

Bill Bove joined the District in September and will be working mostly on grant-related work in the Stillaguamish and Miller-Pilchuck watersheds. He will also help with work in the Bear Creek and Fish Creek areas, and with water assessments for the WSU-Qualco digester project.

Bill has over 30 years of water quality, soil testing, statistics and crop modeling experience. His wealth of knowledge on irrigation, moisture testing and soil physics will be invaluable as the District strives to help farmers operate sustainably.



Bill grew up on a dryland wheat, barley and cattle farm in Walla Walla County. He graduated from Washington State University (WSU) with a B.S. in Agronomy. Bill worked in the sugar cane fields of Hawaii for Amfac, Inc. and its subsidiary plantations on the islands of Maui and Kauai. There, he designed and oversaw the installation of drip irrigation systems that replaced traditional furrow irrigation methods used for sugar cane. Bill's two sons were born in Hawaii.

After four years in Hawaii, Bill and his family came back to the mainland to work for WSU's Agricultural Engineering Department in Pullman, where he stayed for 31 years. In Pullman, Bill worked on crop modeling and the installation of soil moisture sensors and weather stations. He also monitored water quality using water discharge and temperature devices.

While at WSU, Bill took classes in statistics, soil physics and related subjects. He has also worked with agricultural drainage districts in King County on best management practices. Bill moved to a farm near Stanwood while he waits for his wife Sue to complete her teaching contract in Pullman next Spring. Bill looks forward to working with landowners and others on water quality issues in Snohomish County and on Camano Island.

# Celebrating 25 Years



*Blue-eyed grass, one of many perennials for sale at the general plant sale in March.*

*by Clarence A. Rechenhain, Courtesy of USDA NRCS PLANTSdatabase.*



*Two benches such as the one shown above will be given away at the 25th Annual Plant Sale in March.*

2010 marks the 25th anniversary of the Annual Conservation Plant Sale hosted by Snohomish Conservation District. Here are the details:

## 2010 Sale

**Friday, March 5**  
**10 AM - 4:30 PM and**  
**Saturday, March 6**  
**9 AM - 3 PM**

## Location

**Evergreen State Fairgrounds**  
**Rabbit/Cavy Barn**  
**14405 179th Ave SE,**  
**Monroe, WA**

## Specifics

**Open to the Public**  
**Cash and Check only**  
**First Come - First Serve**  
**Pre-orders have a**  
**\$25 minimum**

## Enter to Win

To celebrate our 25th anniversary, we will be giving away two Aldo Leopold-designed benches, built by students from Kamiak High School's industrial design class. Aldo Leopold was a forester, conservationist, educator, writer, and farm owner who loved the land and took time to observe what was happening on his small farm in the Sand Hills of Wisconsin. He used benches similar to these from which to observe his surroundings.

**A color brochure and order form are available at:**  
<http://www.snohomishcd.org/plant-sale>

## Snohomish Conservation District to Host Election February 9, 2010

Snohomish Conservation District has one elected and one appointed volunteer supervisor position open each 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 (see below for specifics on District boundaries). Elections will take place on February 9, 2-6 PM in the District Conference Room located at: 528 - 91st Ave NE, Lake Stevens, WA 98258.

For information on the Supervisor election, or to nominate a person for the three-year volunteer term, please contact the Election Official, Bobbi Lindemulder, at 425-335-5634, ext 109.

### To vote in the Conservation District's election, you must:

- 1.) Be a qualified voter in Snohomish or Island County and
- 2.) Occupy land as an owner, lessee, renter, or tenant lying within the Snohomish Conservation District, which includes all of unincorporated Snohomish County, Camano Island, and the following cities that have requested to be in the District or were incorporated after the District was formed:

**Arlington, Brier, Lake Stevens, Lynnwood, Mill Creek, Mountlake Terrace, Mukilteo, Snohomish, Stanwood, and Woodway.**

## Snohomish Conservation District

### Board of Supervisors

Duane Weston, Chair  
Monte Marti, Vice-chair  
Mark Craven, Secretary  
Adam Farnham  
Karl Hereth

### Associate Members

Dick Barr

### District Manager

Bobbi Lindemulder, Acting

**Phone** 425-335-5634, ext 4

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425-335-5634, ext 108

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

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