

Tenmile Treasures

TENMILE CREEK
WATERSHED

Healthy Streams
Neighbor to Neighbor

A Newsletter for the Tenmile Creek Watershed Community

Tenmile Treasures - Winter 2004

Welcome to the second edition of *Tenmile Treasures*, the newsletter for the Tenmile Creek watershed community. In the last edition, we learned a little about our watershed and the important role we each play in contributing to its health and its specialness. Each of the creeks that make up our watershed is unique. "Do you mean those reed canary grass ditches?" Yes, they were once abundantly filled with chinook, coho, chum, steelhead, and cutthroat trout. Some fishing holes were deep enough to swim in. You could lie across a fallen log and watch the stream life. Can we return to those days and still use the land for the intention we bought it? Can we leave the streams in a better state for our children? We can . . . if we, as a watershed community, decide it is important.

In the community survey, 94% of the people that answered said that a community working together CAN improve water quality in a watershed. Thank you for reading this newsletter. Thank you for being part of the Tenmile Creek watershed community, where we will have *Healthy Streams: Neighbor to Neighbor!*

Volume 2, Issue 1 Winter 2004

Tenmile Advisory Committee

Jason Vander Veen, Landowner
Kevin Sterk, Landowner
Dan Thompson, Landowner
Mike Murphy, Landowner/PUD
Susie Nelson, Volunteer
Craig MacConnell, WSU
George Boggs, WCD
Henry Bierlink, APC
John Gillies, NRCS
Steve Seymour, WDFW
Darrell Gray, NSEA

In partnership with WCD, NSEA, &
WA Dept. of Ecology

Project Manager: Dorie Belisle



Trees for Streams A Tree Give-Away

Everyone receiving this letter lives or has property within 100 feet of either Fourmile Creek, Tenmile Creek, Deer Creek, Crystal Springs, or a tributary or wetland draining into one of them. We have native trees and shrubs that need a home. . . for FREE!

We got em - you plant em!

Sitka spruce, Douglas fir, grand fir, western red cedar, alder, big leaf maple, quaking aspen, plus a mixture of native shrubs. Because of a program called, "Farmers Growing Trees for Salmon", we have an inventory of healthy plants that need a home. Two years ago several landowners volunteered their land, time and growing expertise to provide healthy trees and shrubs at no cost to you. They believe we can make a difference without regulation. Those 6000 trees now need to find a permanent home.

How does this work? The trees will be available every Saturday in March from 10am-1pm. They will be bare root, so they will have to be planted that day. They can be picked up at BelleWood Acres, the apple orchard at 231 Ten Mile Road. Planting instructions will be available. Come by and pick up what you need, or you can place your order ahead of time by calling Dorie at 398-9187. I will be glad to discuss your plans or even visit your site. You are welcome to come back each Saturday to get the amount you can plant that weekend. Two years ago, we gave away 12,000 trees enhancing over 15 sub-basin watersheds in the County. Be part of this year's **TREES FOR STREAMS!**

Volunteers Needed! Call 398-9187.

What's a WID?

WID is short for **Watershed Improvement District**. It is new and it is about **YOU!** Just last month the landowners in the Bertrand Creek sub-basin voted to form a WID. As a group, they decided that they had to be involved in the health and management of their watershed. Washington's irrigation law allows them to form a legal entity to help them manage their water resource including drainage, irrigation, water quality, habitat and instream flow. The WID will also allow them to address water rights in the sub-basin.

Because of the pressures put on landowners by the Endangered Species Act (to protect chinook and bull trout) and the Clean Water Act (to protect our water), the landowners wanted to be part of the decision-making process. With the help of local and state agencies, the landowners will be able to set goals for their watershed and work out a long-term plan to reach those goals. They will help set instream flows that are reachable and will meet the needs of fish, agriculture and people. Landowners will work with the state to find solutions that make it possible for both agriculture and fish to have the water they need when they need it. Several landowners in the Tenmile Creek watershed are looking at this alternative to regulation for us as well. The Tenmile Creek WID is in the "idea" stage. Become informed-help us make the decision that is right for us.

Are you interested in learning more about a WID? Host a neighborhood meeting. Local landowners will present information.

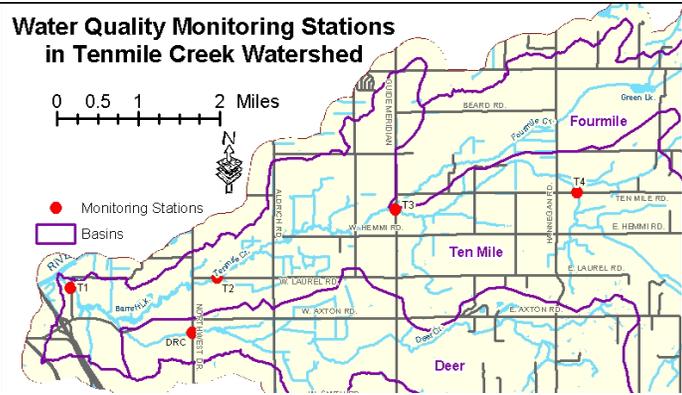
Volunteer to be part of the core committee that is looking into a Tenmile Creek WID! 398-9187

A Little Science - Fecals: Get the Scoop

What are fecals? Do we have a problem in our creeks? Are our creeks safe? How can I help? Fecal coliform is a bacteria found in warm-blooded animals. They are an indicator of the amount of animal and human waste in the water. Too high of a fecal count tells us that the water is polluted and can be dangerous to us. The count is measured in coliform units per 100 ml. The Tenmile Creek, Four Mile Creek and Deer Creek are on the Washington Department of Ecology's (DOE) proposed 303 (d) list,

Continued on page 2

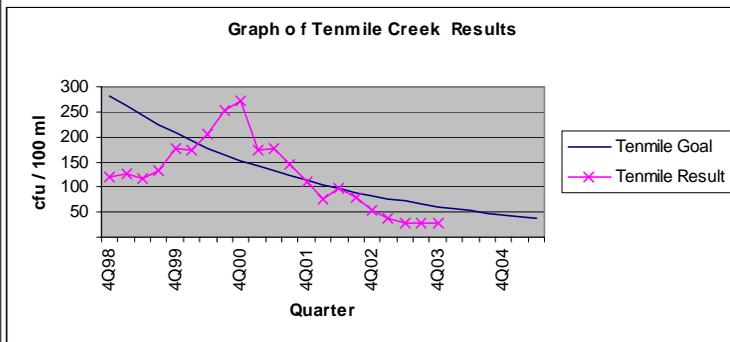
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A Little Science - Fecals: Get the Scoop (cont.)

which is a list of polluted streams in the state of Washington. To meet the standards set by the Nooksack River Watershed Bacteria TMDL (or water clean up plan) we must have a count of less than 39 colonies per 100 ml at the mouth of the river. There are five monitoring sites in the Tenmile Creek watershed (refer to map above).

The good news! The results of the monitoring are charted from 1989 to 2003. We have been meeting our goals since 2001. Much of this success is credited to changes our dairy families made in their farms' manure management. It is a success story that we should be proud of.



However, we are not out of the woods yet. Over the last year the raw data shows an increase in the fecal counts at T3 and Deer Creek (DRC) (see map above). The Department of Ecology (DOE) has expressed concern about this. Areas that may need our attention are the increased number of hobby/small farms in the watershed that may not be aware of best management practices for animal control and the increased number of older septic systems in the watershed. If either problem is a concern to you, call about available options. Some financial help is available. Call 398-9187.

Letters to the editor:

"What are all those blue tubes for?" - J. G.

Thanks for asking. The tubes play a role in success of a stream side planting by: 1) Protecting the new trees from rodent damage, 2) Creating a "Hot house" affect enhancing the growth rate, and 3) Protecting the trees during routine spraying and maintenance. The blue tubes are a temporary step in the journey to achieve better water quality.

Dialogue is good. Ask any question, share any concern or suggestion. Email to: doriebelisle@yahoo.com. Or mail to: 231 Ten Mile Road, Lynden, WA 98264

Tenmile Creek Watershed: The Story of its People and their Land - by Susie Nelson

Last August I had the pleasure of talking with two local residents, *Diane Miller*, who lives on Ten Mile Road, and *J.B. Waschke*, who has farmed on Smith Road for most of his life. Diane's and J.B.'s wonderful stories from the Ten Mile Creek watershed were taped as part of the Ten Mile Oral History Project and will be archived at the Lynden Museum. Many thanks to both for sharing their memories.

Diane, who married the late Herman Miller in 1975, lives on the Ten Mile Road property that was originally purchased in 1911 by Herman's parents, Henry and Magdalena Miller (who had 8 children—7 daughters and Herman). Diane related many stories told to her by Herman, including: being a student at the Ten Mile School, ice skating on the little pond near their home, hunting pheasant, hand-digging to make drainage improvements in the Four Mile Creek (finishing just before a blizzard hit), and working hard to make a living at beef and dairy farming. The property still uses the well that was hand-dug by Herman when he was 20 years old. Herman, one of the charter members of the Laurel Fire Department, also belonged to local, state and national cattlemans groups, and, along with Diane, donated land for the 4-H Horse Park on Hemmi Rd.

J.B. Waschke described what it has been like to live and work on his Smith Road property. His stepfather's parents moved here in 1900. In the early days Deer Creek was the only source of water for the family, livestock, and plants, making farming particularly challenging, especially during dry summers. An attempt to dig a well many years ago only produced salt water. J.B., who took over the family dairy farm when he graduated from Ferndale High School, has seen the time when almost every farm along the Smith Road between Northwest Road and the Guide was a dairy farm "every driveway had a milk stand", when pheasant and duck hunting flourished, when muskrats lived along the creek banks and helped keep the vegetation down, and when "thrashing, silo filling, and that sort of thing...was all community". Growing up, J.B. remembers fishing for cutthroat and watching salmon spawn on Deer Creek, but only indulging in such fun on Sundays, with farm chores taking the rest of the week.

We want YOUR history! Share your memories and experiences. Susie will make it easy and FUN. Call 398-9187.