

AN EDUCATIONAL PUBLICATION OF THE WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT - LYNDEN, WASHINGTON

Look Inside - 12th Annual Plant Sale

See special Plant Sale insert with plant description and order form.

SEE
MAP ON
BACK
PAGE

Local Teacher Receives Statewide Award

Harlan Kredit, a long-time science teacher at Lynden Christian High School, was selected as the recipient of the 2004 Secondary Teacher of the Year Award by the Washington Association of Conservation Districts. The award was presented to Mr. Kredit at the Association's annual meeting in Tacoma on November 29, 2004.

Whatcom Conservation District nominated Mr. Kredit for this state-wide award in recognition of his success in leading students in exploring and understanding conservation and resource management issues for an amazing 42 years. Judging criteria for the award included level of involvement of students in betterment of natural resources and applica-



Associate supervisor Bas Scholten (left) with Harlan Kredit

tion of that knowledge to community projects. It's hard to imagine that anyone could be more successful at these things than Harlan Kredit. The essential theme in Mr. Kredit's educational programs is involving students in stewardship based projects and activities to nurture a "make a difference" attitude and to promote ownership through "sweat-equity" in local watershed and community improvement.

Throughout Lynden and the Fishtrap Creek watershed, Harlan Kredit and his students study water quality, operate a student-built salmon hatchery, remove exotic weeds, plant native trees, install educational signage, collect litter, and complete many other

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IN APPRECIATION:

Thank You Ten Mile Grange



For the past three years Ten Mile Grange has allowed us to use their facility to hold our plant sale, and we are very appreciative that they do. These are some of the reasons we find this grange to be such a great location:

*** It's Close:** Ten Mile Grange is located across Hannegan Road from our of-

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Robert Barker Appointed To State Conservation Commission

Dr. Robert Barker has been a supervisor with Whatcom Conservation District (WCD) since spring 2002. He has been an incredibly valuable resource and advocate for the District, as he led meetings, conducted research, and provided policy guidance. In December 2004, the Washington Association of Conservation Districts elected Dr. Barker to represent all the conservation districts in the state by serving on the Washington State Conservation Commission. Dr. Barker will take office in January 2005 for a three year term.

Dr. Barker will go to the Commission well prepared to address natural resource issues. He received his Bachelor and Masters degrees in Biology and Physiology at the University of British Columbia before earning his PhD at the University of California, Berkeley. Following his educational pursuits, Dr. Barker served as a Professor of Biochemistry in the College of Medicine, University of Iowa, chairman of the Biochemistry Department, Michigan State University, and Professor of Biochemistry, Molecular and Cell Biology and University Provost at Cornell University. From 1991 until retirement in 1993, Dr. Barker served as the first Director



Dr. Robert Barker

of the Cornell Center for the Environment. He also served as a Director at Corning, Inc., and as consultant to the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Veterans Administration, the National Board of Medical Examiners, as well as the Oak Ridge and Los Alamos National Laboratories.

Dr. Barker retired here to Whatcom County in 1993, where he owns a 75-acre certified tree farm. In addition to chairing the WCD Board of Supervisors, he has served on the Board of the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement

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District Will Hold Board Of Supervisors Election March 8th

Whatcom Conservation District (WCD) is seeking candidates to fill two volunteer positions on its five-member Board of Supervisors. One position will be elected by Whatcom County voters on March 8, 2005. The election will take place at the Ag Service Center, 6975 Hannegan Road, Lynden, WA 98264 from 9 am to 6 pm. The other position is appointed by the Washington State Conservation Commission. Both positions are for three-year terms and will begin at the end of March 2005.

A District Supervisor serves as a volunteer member of the governing board for the conservation district, representing the general public in directing natural resource programs in Whatcom County. Supervisors must commit to attending 12 regularly

scheduled monthly board meetings, as well as committee meetings and special events. Any district elector or registered voter in Whatcom County is eligible for the unpaid positions.

Elected Position: To appear on the March 8, 2005 ballot as a candidate for the elected position, supervisor candidates must return to the State Conservation Commission a nomination petition with 25 valid signatures on it 15 days prior to the date of the election.

Appointed Position: Registered voters residing within Whatcom Conservation District may obtain recommendation forms from the WCD office or the State Conservation Commission.

For information and to request

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WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT Mission Statement:

The Whatcom Conservation District promotes conservation education and provides technical assistance to foster a healthy relationship between the environment and people.



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Lynden, WA
Permit #192

THIS NEWSLETTER is published by the Whatcom Conservation District with support from the Central Clean Water Fund under the authority of the Washington State Conservation Commission and the Washington State Department of Ecology. Call the district's office at (360) 354-2035 if you know of anyone who would like to be on the mailing list, or if you have articles of interest or questions concerning the Whatcom Conservation District.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: <http://www.whatcomcd.org>

Whatcom Conservation District
6975 Hannegan Road
Lynden, Washington 98264
(360) 354-2035 • Fax (360) 354-4678
Email: wcd@whatcomcd.org

Upcoming Events

Backyard Habitat Mentoring training begins • February 26

See story on this page.

Small Farm Conference to feature Joel Salatin • March 5

The WSU Livestock Advisors Program is sponsoring a small farm conference featuring Joel Salatin on March 5, 2005 at Skagit Valley College. Mr. Salatin has written 5 books; Pastured Poultry Profits, Salad Bar Beef, You Can Farm and Family Friendly Farming as well as his new one Holy Cows and Hog Heavens. For more information, please contact Joan DeVries, WSU Livestock Advisor Program Assistant, in Mount Vernon at 360-428-4270 or email joanrd@co.skagit.wa.us.

WCD Plant Sale at Ten Mile Grange • March 5

WCD Board of Supervisors Election • March 8

See front page for details.

2005 Regional Envirothon • March 17

WCD will be host at the Lutherwood Camp and Retreat Center in south Whatcom County. See story on this page.

National Ag Day • March 20

Log onto the Agriculture Council of America's Web site at www.agday.org to find out more about this awesome opportunity to help increase the public awareness of agriculture's vital role in our society. Join ACA's "noble aims to help the public understand how food land fiber products are produced; the role you play in providing safe, abundant, affordable products; the value agriculture brings to helping maintain a strong, national economy; and the public career opportunities in agriculture's food-and-fiber industry."

6th Grade Conservation Tour • May 2-5

See story on this page.

WSU Coached Forest Stewardship Planning Shortcourse • Feb. 7-April 4

See story on this page

2005 Regional Envirothon: WCD Hosts Competition for High Schoolers

Whatcom Conservation District (WCD) will host this year's annual Northwest Washington Regional Envirothon on March 17, 2005 at the Lutherwood Camp and Retreat Center in south Whatcom County.

Each year, a regional level competition is held in the spring to qualify teams for the state-level Envirothon competition later in the year. The national Envirothon competition is held during the summer with participants from all over the U.S. and Canada.

The District is currently signing up teams to compete in the NW Regional Envirothon. Teams of high school students from Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, San Juan, King, and

Pierce counties answer questions and carry out hands-on investigations in five different resource areas, including Water, Soil, Forestry, Wildlife and the current environmental issue, "Managing Cultural Landscapes."

Homeschoolers, FFA students, natural resource and environmental science students are all encouraged to organize teams for the competition. There is no registration fee and financial support is available from WCD for travel, etc. If you know any teachers or other environmental groups that might be interested in Envirothon, please contact Beth or Andrea at (360) 354-2034 ext. 3 for additional information

Sign-up Now for Coached Forest Stewardship Planning Shortcourse

WSU/Whatcom County Extension, Dept. of Natural Resources Forest Stewardship Program, and WA Farm Forestry Association-Whatcom Chapter are sponsoring a series of classes to be held at Mount Baker High School in Deming for owners of private forest land in Northwestern Washington. The

shortcourse consists of ten sessions. Nine classes are scheduled on Monday evenings from 6:00-8:30pm from Feb. 7-April 4. One Saturday field day will be held on March 19th.

The informational, hands-on,



practical approach of this shortcourse helps landowners learn useful information about their natural resources. Landowners set their own goals and write their own stewardship plan for

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Hank Reasoner: Saying goodbye to a long time Forest Steward

Hank Reasoner, retired forester and member of Whatcom Farm Forestry Association, passed away on August 30th, 2004. Hank's contribution to the Whatcom County 6th Grade Forestry Tour, which has been held annually since 1959, was one of his many passions. Hank started his involvement in the 6th Grade Tour in 1960 as a forester with the Department of Natural Re-

sources (DNR). In 1980 he was retired from the DNR but never missed a year of involvement in the tour. Hank taught close to 38,000 sixth grade students during his many years with the Forest Tour! Hank wove in history, Native American culture and tree identification tips in ways that intrigued and captivated students. He truly will be missed.

The 6th Grade Tour will pay tribute to Hank in 2005

In May 2005, Whatcom County sixth grade students again will have a special opportunity to see the forest through the eyes of professionals who manage it.

The exposure encourages young people to examine connections among the various aspects of Forest Protection, Forest Life, Water Quality, Soils, Wilderness/Recreation, Ecosystem Management, Regeneration and Improvement, and Timber Harvest to develop clearer understanding of the values, costs, and sometimes controversial issues

involved in forest management.

The continued commitment of Whatcom County educators, including Whatcom Conservation District, in cooperation with public and private timberland managers assures that yet another generation of young people will receive this valuable gift of a day in the woods with forest professionals.

Details about the Tour's content can be found at <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/environ/forest/guide/introduction.htm/>

Bellingham Backyard Habitat Mentors Offer Free Landscaping Consultations!



City of Bellingham Backyard Habitat Mentors are available to city of Bellingham residents to provide advice on landscaping to attract wildlife, using native plants and environmentally friendly gardening techniques. Just call the Volunteer Coordinator at Bellingham Parks and Recreation 676-6801 ext. 24 or send an e-mail at parksvolunteer@cob.org. A trained volunteer will assist you with your needs and will answer you questions.

The Backyard Habitat Mentors come prepared with experience, books galore on habitat, plants and animals, plus tons of handouts covering the most popular topics, local sources for native plants and lists of our favorite books. Visits generally last over an hour and will leave your head spinning with ideas and the necessary information to make them happen.

This is a neighbor-to-neighbor service where mentors get to pass on knowledge and enthusiasm. Training includes habitat design, birds and other wildlife, native plants, lawn alternatives, invasive species, and low impact gardening techniques. Some mentors are professionals in the field, educators, landscapers, biologists, and nursery staff, but all have worked in their own yards and want to share knowledge with others.

Gardening for wildlife and with native plants is a great way to learn about our natural wonders. Make a place around your home for the Rufous Hummingbirds with beautiful

fire-red coloration or discover what plants will bring our many butterflies visiting. Learn how to attract our hard-to-spot, mosquito-munching and under-rated bats. Our native Mason Bee, which is non-aggressive, has no queen, hive or honey, will pollinate your garden, is easy to establish, and is fascinating to watch.

We all have parts in our garden that require too much watering, maintenance, and chemical use, but not enough joy. Introduce some native plants and invite the wildlife back in. The Pacific Northwest has over 250 native plants with ornamental value, more becoming commercially available each year. With so much variety there is a native plant for every spot in your garden.

Sound interesting? Give the Volunteer Coordinator at Bellingham Parks and Recreation a call at 676-6801 ext. 24 or e-mail at parksvolunteer@cob.org to get matched with a mentor for a free yard visit.

If you have experience and are interested in becoming a Bellingham Backyard Habitat Mentor, the City of Bellingham is offering a training this spring that includes 14 hours of instruction and practice.

Dates are February 26 (9am-noon); March 3, 10, 17, 24 (7pm-9pm); and March 26 (9am-noon). For more information, contact Kendra Bradford at (360) 961-5073 or kendrabradford@earthlink.net.

Landowners Come Together to Seek Watershed Improvements

The Bertrand Watershed Improvement District (WID)

The WID is a bottom-up, performance-based approach that provides landowners the opportunity to manage water quality and quantity in a way that satisfies legal requirements of environmental protection, as well as landowner requirements to maintain a viable agricultural community.

The efforts and leadership of many local landowners and groups including the Whatcom Conservation District have led to the successful formation of the Bertrand Watershed Improvement District (WID).

In 2004 the Bertrand WID was formed and adopted by the agricultural community. Its goal is to have a local organization implement a plan for protecting and managing the Bertrand Creek system. That "plan" is the Bertrand Creek Comprehensive Irrigation District Management Plan (CIDMP). The purpose of the CIDMP is to maintain viable agriculture within the Bertrand watershed by providing certainty for farmers that their actions meet the requirements of federal laws, including the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act, and Washington State water right laws.

Currently the Bertrand system suffers from low stream flows in the summer months. Landowners and farmers that are part of the WID realize that adapting their practices and working collaboratively will bring about improvements to the Bertrand system. This watershed provides excellent conditions for berry production and dairying-its rich well-drained soils are prime for agricultural use, that combined with Bertrand's partially intact riparian habitat, natural meanders and gravels in the stream bed give us cause to do more. These conditions through an agricultural zone need to be protected and enhanced.

Farmers, fish biologists, regulators and planners are at the table determining sub basin watershed improvements and looking at the cur-

rent agricultural irrigation needs, how those needs impact Bertrand stream flows, water quality, and instream re-



The protection of a viable agricultural community is consistent with Whatcom County's Comprehensive Plan. Preservation of the rural nature of the watershed means less environmental impact compared to more developed land uses.

sources. The WCD applauds the efforts of the landowners and all those involved in this huge effort.

The WID board members are volunteers who live in the watershed:
*Vern VandeGarde, Steve Groen
 Marty Maberry, Pete Vlas
 Larry De Haan*

For more information, contact Henry Bierlink at the Whatcom County Agricultural Preservation Committee office 354-1337

Cost-Share Opportunities for Bertrand Landowners

The WID is recruiting a list of applicants interested in cost-share assistance. The funds available would be for habitat and stream enhancement projects in the Bertrand Creek Watershed. Contact the WID by February 15 for details (360) 354-1337.

Intern joins WCD staff

Jennifer Karnecki joined Whatcom Conservation District as an intern in October 2004. She is a student at Whatcom Community College and plans to attend WWU's Huxley College in the near future. Jennifer spent a year as a volunteer for the District monitoring water quality, and prior to that she did riparian restoration in Clark County as an Americorps Crew member.

Jennifer is interested in river ecology and hopes to continue her work in stream restoration and resource conservation. She will be assisting in administrative projects, water quality monitoring, and the upcoming Envirothon and annual Plant Sale. Jennifer says she is excited about the



Jennifer Karnecki

opportunities, experiences and education that her time with the District will provide.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Update



The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) has experienced great success in Whatcom County since the first project four years ago. CREP pays landowners rent and other benefits to establish forested buffers along

an increase in local beaver populations. As beavers return to areas they have historically inhabited, conflicts with human interests have occurred. Beaver activity impacts stream restoration projects when the planted seedlings are eaten.



Two-year old trees along Bertrand Creek



Sumas watershed

fish bearing streams and rivers. The program covers the cost of buffer establishment, including livestock exclusion fencing if needed. The following totals are as of January 1, 2005: 137 projects, totaling 1,274 acres, and 75 miles of riparian buffer planted with 625,110 seedlings. Please contact the Conservation District if you would like more information.

One aspect of CREP is that it increases wildlife habitat along streams, including potential beaver habitat. The summer of 2004 saw

The Conservation District has observed that when a higher density of willows and other beaver-preferred seedlings are planted in the first 10 to 20 feet of the stream, then the beaver is deterred from browsing on the remainder of the project. In most cases, a beaver-chewed tree will re-sprout remarkably fast. CREP projects have utilized more expensive beaver fencing and cages around seedlings in the past. Adapting to beaver behavior may provide solutions for successful stream restoration.

Conservation Security Program State's head Conservationist Shares His Views

By R.L. 'Gus' Hughbanks, Washington State Conservationist, NRCS

Many farmers and ranchers work to keep our soil healthy, our water clean and to improve wildlife habitat. They do these things on their own land - often at their own expense. The new federal Conservation Security Program (CSP) administered by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides a way to recognize producers who practice good stewardship and to reward them financially.

When a watershed is selected by NRCS, producers in that selected watershed become eligible for potential program participation. With current funding levels, it is anticipated that roughly one-eighth of Washington's watersheds will be-

come eligible for CSP each year.

In 2005 Washington will have 11 watersheds eligible for CSP. Watersheds were selected based on local input, natural resource data, and maps. Final decisions for CSP watersheds are made at a national level. For more information about CSP or to see selected watersheds, you can check online at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/>

Choosing the right watersheds is going to be a challenge. There are so many good conservationists in this state that we will struggle to find the best. However, I'm convinced we'll do a better job if we start from the field - as we will endeavor to do.



Beaver damage



Beaver lodge

FireWise Landscaping

FIREWISE Communities is a program to improve safety, build awareness and partnerships, and encourage the integration of fire-safety concepts into communities in the "wildland/urban interface". The wildland/urban interface is the complex landscape resulting from development in traditionally natural areas surrounded by forests and mountains. Whatcom

taller vegetation, where it is more difficult to stop.)

The FireWise Home

- 1) Remove dead or overhanging branches. During the windy conditions that exist during a wildland fire, flames, sparks and firebrands could travel from the tree to the roof of this structure.



Conservation District is working with WA State Department of Natural Resources to provide information to landowners and planners and to assist with FIREWISE community workshops. As we approach the spring planting season, consider the following tips for protecting your home:

- FireWise landscaping can create a line of defense against the threat of wildfire by creating a safety zone or "survivable space" around your home.
- The goal is to break the chain of flammable fuel between your home and the wildland. Examine the yard. What can catch fire and carry it to the house? Do firefighters have a safety zone for battling the flames? Are you sure firefighters can safely find and reach your home? Is there a clear space on your property for firefighters to turn their fire truck around?
- You can landscape for fire protection while maintaining a natural look to your surroundings. Work with the plants native to the site, using the patterns found in nature. Also consider hardiness zones and planting sites when choosing new plants.
- No plants are fireproof, but some are more fire resistant than others. Use these considerations when choosing plants and trees for your yard. The WCD plant sale is selling species such as western red cedar, dogwood, birch, maple, willow, ash, serviceberry, fern and salal, that are more fire resistant for the Pacific NW landscape.
- Group together plants with similar water needs, and space them in your landscape to create a "fuel mosaic" that will conserve water and protect against "fire ladder." (A fire ladder is created when plants are arranged next to each other in a way that allows flames to move from the ground up into

- 2) Remove leaf accumulation from your yard. Leaf accumulation provides fuel for a wildland fire.
- 3) Remove leaf clutter from your roof and gutters. During a wildland fire, leaves on the roof and/or in the gutters could be ignited by flying embers.
- 4) Remove tall, dry grasses. Tall, dry grasses provide a path for fire that can lead directly to a house.
- 5) Remove "ladder fuels". Prune tree limbs so the lowest is between 6' - 10' from the ground. Fire burning through tall, dry grass could ignite these limbs and climb to the top of the tree with relative ease.
- 6) Check your generator and/or hose to be sure it is in good repair. Refuel garden equipment carefully. Yard equipment needs annual maintenance and proper fueling. Hoses develop leaks and deteriorate with age and exposure. During wildland fire season, fuel your lawn mower properly – away from dry, flammable grasses.
- 7) Prune bushes and shrubs regularly. Remove excess growth as well as dead leaves and branches to decrease their flammability, and the threat they could pose during a wildland fire.

Dispose of cuttings and debris promptly, according to local regulations.

Many homes are destroyed by wildland fires each year. Often, these homes could have survived had the owners taken preventative action beforehand. Don't let your home become fuel for a wildfire! Follow these fire prevention tips and become "FireWise."



WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Sonya Schaller, Technician
Chuck Timblin, Technician

Continued Stories...

Thank You Ten Mile Grange *continued from page one*

since its close proximity to our regular work site saves us time and money.

*** It's Warm - but not too warm:** Both plants and people appreciate shelter from the wind and rain of early March, but the building is also not so warm that it causes

plants to break dormancy prematurely.

*** The price is right:** Up to this point Ten Mile's manager, Cecilia Benson, has graciously permitted us the use of Ten Mile at no cost.

Thank you...Whatcom Conservation District

WHATCOM CD PLANT SALE

Directions: I-5, take exit 255 (Sunset Dr./Mt. Baker Hwy.). Turn east onto Sunset Dr. and after roughly 1 mile, turn left onto Hannegan Road at the light. Follow Hannegan Rd. for 8.25 miles. The Ten Mile Grange building is just passed the Pole Rd. intersection (4-way stop) on the right.



Teacher Receives Statewide Award *continued from page one*

projects aimed at understanding and improving the entire watershed. The City of Lynden is indeed very fortunate to have such an outstanding environmental educator

setting an example for its young people. Whatcom Conservation District is thankful to have Harlan Kredit as one of its partners in conservation.

Board Member Will Represent State *continued from page one*

Association and serves as a Master Gardener.

The WCD will greatly miss Dr. Barker's direct involvement with lo-

cal conservation issues. We look forward to the benefits his experience and leadership will bring to the state level. Congratulations Bob!

Board of Supervisors Election *continued from page one*

forms, contact the Whatcom Conservation District office (360) 354-2035 or State of Washington Con-

servation Commission at (360) 407-6200.

Stewardship Planning Shortcourse *continued from page two*

their forest with guidance and "coaching" by natural resource professionals. Rewards for completing the shortcourse and plan development process include opportunities for possible cost-share and tax benefits. For topics, details and registration information, log on to <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/enviro/forest/forestworkshop.htm> or contact WSU/Whatcom County Extension at (360) 676-6736 or email whatcom@wsu.edu.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- * Introduction to Forest Stewardship, Personal Goals
- * How to write a Forest Stewardship Plan
- * How to map and describe your property
- * How to maintain forest health
- * Forest Ecology - how forests respond to disturbance
- * Planting and taking care of your forest
- * Sustainable timber harvesting
- * Wildlife habitat identification and enhancement
- * Forest resource inventory
- * Native plant identification
- * Understanding forest soils and fertility
- * Riparian, wetlands, and water quality
- * Understanding cultural resources of your Forestland
- * Enhancing aesthetic and recreational opportunities on your Family Forest
- * Where to go for help - Working with consultants and understanding technical, educational and financial

REGISTRATION FEE is \$75 per person, family or land parcel. Fee includes a Forest Stewardship Handbook, aerial photos and maps of your property, and all handouts. Space is limited to the first 30 ownerships on a first come, first-served basis, so Please Register Early!