

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

**See Plant Sale Insert  
New Bellingham  
Location**

## 15th Annual Native Plant Sale & Expo

**SATURDAY, MARCH 22ND • 9AM-4PM • BELLINGHAM**

See the Plant Sale insert for the list and descriptions of seedling trees and shrubs and wildflower seed mix available. Native perennials from local vendors will be for sale on the day of

the event. A pre-order option is available for purchases totaling \$100.

Order forms and plant descriptions are also available on the WCD's website [www.whatcomcd.org](http://www.whatcomcd.org). Payment must

be made by cash or check. Information and forms can also be requested from the WCD office at (360-354-2035 ext. 3) or e-mail [dlb@whatcomcd.org](mailto:dlb@whatcomcd.org).

Note the new location of the 2008

sale!! Corner of Cordata Parkway and Westerly, at the site at the new Community Food Co-op. (See map in Plant Sale insert.)

### Fresh Breeze Organic Dairy Certified Salmon-Safe

By Larry Nussbaum,  
Program Director, Stewardship Partners



Can healthy, sustainable agriculture and productive fish and wildlife habitat mutually support each other? According to Stewardship Partners, a Seattle-based conservation organization, the answer is "Yes"! The organi-

zation that evaluates and recognizes various farm operations (orchards, vineyards, dairies, vegetable growers, etc.) that adopt water quality and habitat conservation practices to benefit native salmon and overall stream health.

Fresh Breeze Organic Dairy, located north of Lynden, is owned and operated by Shawn and Clarissa Langley. For the past 15 years the Langley's operated a dairy that relied on conventional farming methods. After the milk left their farm, Darigold took care of processing and selling it. But during the past year, the Langley's moved to organic production, bottling their own milk and selling it under their own independent label.

Since the Salmon-Safe program was founded in Oregon in the late 1990s, more than 150 Oregon landowners and 50 Washington landowners have been certified. Salmon-Safe has received national recognition as one of the most reli-



Shawn and Clarissa Langley with daughter Cassidy, son Kenny and Oreo the calf. Photo courtesy of Community Food Co-op.

zation has brought Salmon-Safe farm certification to Whatcom County's Fresh Breeze Organic Dairy. Salmon-Safe is a third party labeling program

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*Fresh Breeze continued on page 2*

### Ag Service Center Welcomes New NRCS Resource Conservationist

Alex Hall, a Maryland native, has joined the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) northwest team as a Resource Conservationist at the Lynden Service Center. Alex earned his B.S. degree in Environmental Science and Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park. He began his NRCS career in 2000, working in the Chesapeake Bay region of Maryland, and transferred to a soil conservationist position in



Alex with his wife Sagit and daughter Elinor.

2005 to work on Farm Bill programs. Alex's main area of responsibility in Whatcom County will be the planning, development, and management of cost share contracts under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Alex and his wife are excited to be new residents of Whatcom County, as they realize it is a great place to raise their family. Alex can be reached at (360) 354-2035 ex 102.

### WCD Notice of Election

Do you have the time and desire to help conserve natural resources in Whatcom County? If so, Whatcom Conservation District is seeking enthusiastic volunteers to fill two positions on its Board of Supervisors. Supervisors serve without compensation, guide policy, and set the work plan for the District.

One Board position is locally elected and one is appointed by the Washington Conservation Commission. Eligible candidates must be registered voters in Whatcom County. Commitments include committee meetings, monthly board

meetings and special events.

The election will be held 9am-6pm on March 11, 2008 at the Ag Service Center, 6975 Hannegan Road, Lynden WA.

Candidate forms and further information can be obtained at the Whatcom Conservation District office (Monday - Friday 8am to 4pm), by email @ [wcd@whatcomcd.org](mailto:wcd@whatcomcd.org) or call (360) 354-2035 x 3. Forms for the appointed position are also available from the WA Conservation Commission, PO Box 47721, Olympia, WA 98504-7721 or (360) 407-6200.

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**PLANT SALE INSERT**

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT Mission Statement:** To serve present and future generations of Whatcom County through a natural resource conservation program of leadership, partnership, and technical, educational & financial assistance to foster a healthy, sustainable relationship between people and the environment.



THIS NEWSLETTER is published by the Whatcom Conservation District with support from the Centennial 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.

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# Notes from the Field

## Campbell/Tarte Creek CREP Enhancement Project



A new channel improves spring-fed water flow into Campbell Creek, enhancing Coho spawning and rearing habitat.

By **Sonya Schaller**

Brady Mayson contacted Whatcom Conservation District (WCD) looking for help in adapting former dairy farm land in the California Creek watershed for multiple uses including conservation, agriculture, and housing. With sections of Tarte Creek and Campbell Creek flowing through Mr. Mayson's property, the site provided ample opportunity for restoring fish habitat. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and Landowner Incentive Program together provided funds to accomplish instream work and riparian (stream-side) planting.



Landowner Brady Mayson and Ian Smith of Living Systems Restoration discuss restoration work.

Prior to this project, clean water from a spring-fed irrigation pond flowed through field ditches into

a polluted roadside ditch and then into Campbell Creek. A new channel allows the spring-fed water to bypass the roadside ditch and flow cleanly into Campbell Creek. The improved water quality, along with improvements in the irrigation pond outlet to reduce erosion and the addition of spawning gravel and large woody debris, all benefit coho salmon spawning and rearing habitat. The wetlands were excavated to shallow pools for the establishment of diverse wetland species.

### Project Highlights:

- 9047 native tree and shrub seedlings in 20.6 acres of CREP buffer will be planted in winter 2008
- 1145 ft of new stream channel established, including addition of spawning gravel
- Wetland enhancement includes .5 acre of ponds with adjacent planting mounds
- Instead of herbicides, sheep were used in site preparation to remove Reed canary grass in order to protect organic hay harvest boundaries.
- Placement of 10 pieces of large woody debris

Partners: WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and Living Systems Restoration.

## Fresh Breeze continued from page 1

able eco-labels in the country, alongside Certified Organic and Fair Trade.

Independent inspectors conduct on-site certification assessments of prospective Salmon-Safe farms. Inspections focus on the operation's compatibility with best management practices that protect water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat. Salmon-Safe guidelines require farms to:

- Protect streamside and wetland areas
  - Use irrigation water efficiently
  - Conserve water
  - Control erosion and sedimentation
  - Use natural soil fertility and pest control methods
  - Control animal impacts
  - Enhance on-farm biodiversity
- Once certified, a farm is able to

use the Salmon-Safe logo to distinguish their operation and products. The Salmon-Safe program has great potential to support the economic viability of fish-friendly farming by tapping into the growing consumer demand for local, sustainable food. Fresh Breeze Organic Dairy became only the second dairy to be certified Salmon-Safe in the Puget Sound region (4 dairies in Oregon are also certified). BelleWood Acres is the only other farming operation in Whatcom County certified as Salmon-Safe.

Congratulations to the Langley's in their Salmon-Safe certification!

• For more information about the program see [www.stewardshippartners.org](http://www.stewardshippartners.org).

• To learn more about Fresh Breeze Organic Dairy visit [www.freshbreezeorganic.com](http://www.freshbreezeorganic.com).

## Working Cattle Ranch Adopts Fish-Friendly Practices

Reed canary grass choked stream is re-established in preparation for native buffer planting. New livestock fencing will protect the riparian area.



By **Wayne Chaudiere**

Over 3,500 feet of fish-bearing stream run through Stan Honrud's 54 acre ranch. To protect the stream and the fish in it, Stan has been working with the Whatcom Conservation District (WCD) and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to establish over 17 acres of native shrub and tree buffer along the stream. To protect water quality and fish habitat, 1.2 miles of fencing have been installed to exclude cattle from the buffer and stream. Two new livestock watering facilities have been built outside the buffer.

Prior to the enhancement project, most of the buffer area was a dense sea of non-native, invasive Reed

canary grass, which severely choked the stream channel. To re-establish a more natural channel, WCD managed excavation of 2,200 feet of new stream meander with funding from a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant. Site preparation is complete and over 10,000 native tree and shrub seedlings will be planted this winter.

This partnership has resulted in a win-win situation, with CREP both protecting resources and financially compensating Mr. Honrud for the area included in the stream buffer. The stream system will be improved for future generations and Mr. Honrud can enjoy his viable cattle operation along with a naturally functioning stream system.

### New For CREP

## Terrell Creek Watershed Now Eligible for CREP Benefits

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) eligibility area has expanded to include the Terrell Creek watershed. Newly eligible CREP practices include hedgerows and filter strips, which may be installed along non-fish bearing creeks and ditches:

- **Hedgerow:** Width is 15 feet. Consists mainly of native shrubs, but may include trees.
- **Filter Strip:** Width is site specific. Grass filter strip can be enrolled adjacent to a hedgerow or a traditional CREP tree buffer.

CREP pays landowners an annual rental payment, a signing bonus and all expenses to establish buffers of native trees and shrubs along fish bearing streams. The buffers protect fish habitat and water quality. Costs covered under CREP include site preparation, planting, and maintenance necessary to ensure successful establishment of planted seedlings. Expenses for livestock exclusion fencing along the buffer are also paid

for by the program. Rental rates are based on the agricultural quality of the soils.

Conservation District staff can work with you to develop a stream restoration plan for your property. Please contact Wayne or Sonya at the Whatcom Conservation District with your questions.

### Current statistics for Whatcom County's CREP include:

- 204 CREP projects
- 103.3 miles of buffer established
- 1,661 acres planted in buffers of native vegetation
- 807,118 shrub and tree seedlings planted





## Winter 2008 Events Calendar

- **Feb 29th-March 2nd.** Visit us at the **Whatcom County Home & Garden Show** at the Northwest Washington Fairgrounds in Lynden. We'll have rain garden manuals, information about our plant sale, CREP, and small farm program.
- **March 1st. Trees for Streams Give-Away.** 4,000 FREE Western red cedar, Sitka spruce, and Douglas fir, grown by local farmers, need a home along waterways (streams, river, wetland, pond or lake) on your Whatcom County property! Come out to the Bob Hunter Farm, 2630 Lampman Rd. between 9:00am and noon. For details and large orders call Dorie at 398-9187.
- **March 6th. The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) Annual Meeting** will be held at the Majestic in downtown Bellingham. This event is free and open to the public. All are welcome to attend.
- **March 11th. WCD Board of Supervisors election** – see details in this issue.
- **March 22nd. WCD 15th Annual Native Plant Sale** (see newsletter insert for details).
- **March 27th. Northwest Regional Envirothon** – WCD will host the annual regional high school competition at Tennant Lake Interpretive Center in Ferndale. See event details in this issue.
- **March 29th. Septic Workshop.** See OSS update in this issue for details.



## Workshops and Training

### Watershed Master/ Beach Watchers Program

The WSU Watershed Master/Beach Watcher program provides free classroom and field training on a wide range of topics including forestry, coastal geology, marine biology, stream ecology, agriculture, beach monitoring, low-impact development and more. Spring training begins April 1st. To apply, contact Cheryl Lovato Niles at (360) 676-6736, [clniles@wsu.edu](mailto:clniles@wsu.edu), <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/envirom/water/bw.htm>

### Walk Softly and Carry a... Compost Bin!

You can learn how to build better soils through composting, and determine the best ways to recycle both organic and non-organic waste in the 2008 Master Recycler/Composter classes beginning March 19, 2008. Classes will also provide an introduction to alternative, renewable energy sources and other sustainable efforts. Field trips take you to state-of-the-art composting facilities, and other local "green" businesses.

Class runs March 19 to April 30 on Wednesdays from 6:45 – 9:00 pm, from. Contact the WSU Whatcom County Extension office for more information: 676-6736 or [joycej@wsu.edu](mailto:joycej@wsu.edu).



### District Employee Receives Statewide Recognition

Dawn Bekenyi, who has been with the WCD for 16 years, received the 2007 Washington Association of District Employees (WADE) President's Award for Outstanding Service. The President's Award recipient is chosen by the WADE president and awarded in June each year in recognition of an individual's dedication and service provided to WADE. Dawn has served as an officer of WADE for six years, is very knowledgeable of financial protocols, and has been instrumental in organizing the successful and popular annual statewide employee training. Great Job Dawn!!

## 2008 Regional Envirothon

On Thursday, March 27, 2008, Whatcom Conservation District will host the 2008 Northwest Regional Envirothon competition at Tennant Lake Interpretive Center in Ferndale. The outdoor environmental knowledge competition is open to student teams from Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, and King counties. The Envirothon is a great opportunity for high school students to compete in a team setting, to meet professionals who work in environmental-related careers, and to have a good time while testing their knowledge of environmental science and natural resource management!

See <http://www.envirothon.org/> to learn more about the competition. Contact Andrea ([ahood@whatcomcd.org](mailto:ahood@whatcomcd.org)) at WCD if you are interested in fielding a team.



The Envirothon outdoor competition involves teamwork to answer natural resource management questions.

## Small Farm Program Updates

### The Dostals Invite Locals for a Custer Area Farm Tour

Last spring 40 people participated in a two-hour farm tour led by landowners Doug and Tanya Dostal, along with WCD and NRCS staff. The tour showcased the Dostal's management areas for beef cows, horses, and sheep, as well as their CREP stream restoration project.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH » ANIMAL HEALTH » ECONOMIC HEALTH

The tour helped participants see first-hand how management practices to protect soils and water quality have contributed to healthier animals, less mud and more productive pastures (and lower feed bills!).

#### FARMSTEAD

The Dostal's 40-acre farmstead consists of a home, barns, pastures, wildlife ponds, horse paddocks, two covered manure storage areas, a runoff management system, a waste water pond, forest, and a natural stream enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).



Landowners Tanya and Doug Dostal discuss beef cow management with the tour group.

#### CONFINEMENT AREAS

Gutters and downspouts on the buildings divert clean roof runoff away from confinement area into grassy swales. The Dostal's cattle are confined to a higher ground, drier sacrifice field during the wet November through March months.

#### MANURE MANAGEMENT

The tour discussed manure collection, storage, composting and application infrastructure and techniques.



Covered horse manure storage/composting facility.

#### STREAM ENHANCEMENT

The Dostal CREP project consists of 5.8 acres along an unnamed tributary to Haynie Creek, which drains to Dakota Creek in the Drayton Harbor watershed.



# Community News

## On-site Sewage System Operation & Maintenance Program

New rules for Operation & Maintenance (O&M) of On-site Sewage Systems (OSS) are in effect in Whatcom County. The rules reinforce that owners of OSS are responsible for maintaining their systems. Failing systems can contaminate ground water that you or your neighbors drink and can pollute nearby rivers, lakes, streams and coastal waters, including local shellfish beds in Drayton Harbor, Birch Bay, and Portage Bay. Whatcom Conservation District and the Ten Mile Watershed Restoration Project

will be hosting an OSS Inspection Educational Workshop on March 29, 2008. The workshop will be held at BelleWood Acres on Ten Mile Road. Watch for more details late winter!

All septic systems are designed to operate with routine maintenance! For information about the new OSS O&M rules, please contact Whatcom County Health Department (360) 676-6724 or visit the website: [www.whatcomcounty.us/health/environmental/index.jsp](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/health/environmental/index.jsp) and click on "Sewage Systems."

## The Fate of All Those Blue Tubes

At some point you may have seen them on streamside revegetation projects, used them on your own trees, or even cleaned some out of a stream or ditch. The blue tubes, otherwise known as Norplex tree protectors, are made of high density poly-ethylene (HDPE) and help give young seedlings a good start in the field by shielding them from toothy voles, mice, deer and beaver. The tubes also help insulate seedlings from wind and harsh conditions, protect them from weed whackers, and from herbicide used to control competitive grass and weeds during the establishment period. The Conservation Reserve Enhance-



Blue tubes removed from restoration sites wait to be recycled

ment Program uses these tubes on projects for the first 3-4 years then removes the tubes as trees reach a "free to grow" stage. A large percentage of tubes are reused a second time on other streamside restoration projects. But after a second use, the tubes have well exceeded their usable lifespan. WCD has worked with RE Sources to find recycling alternatives so that these thousands of tubes are not being dumped in the landfill. The blue tubes can be recycled locally at two following locations.

### AGRI-PLAS INC. WAREHOUSE

By appointment only: 8798 Guide Meridian (old Plagerman dairy). Kyle 815-2721.

Materials accepted: All film and rigid plastics except PVC. Agri-Plas

facility transports plastics to Brookes, OR. The plastics will remain a domestic product. Most likely made into pellets and returned to local plastic manufacturers.

### SKAGIT RIVER STEEL AND RECYCLING

Located at 1265 S. Anacortes St., in Burlington. Recycles agricultural plastics and will accept used and dirty blue tubes free of charge. 1-800-869-7097.

**For more information on local agricultural plastics recycling opportunities, visit the RE Sources website: <http://www.re-sources.org/agriculturalplastics.htm> or e-mail [recycle@re-sources.org](mailto:recycle@re-sources.org).**

## County/District Partnership

### Whatcom County and Whatcom Conservation District Partner to Protect and Enhance Critical Areas through a Small Farm Technical Assistance Program

More and more Whatcom County residents are experiencing the great enjoyment of keeping horses and other large animals. Livestock typically thrive in our moderate climate, fertile soils and plentiful water. Sometimes the water is too plentiful, which can cause problems for livestock. Other times the livestock is too plentiful and our county's "critical areas" can suffer. Examples of "critical areas" include streams, wetlands and groundwater recharge areas. Since the proper care of livestock and protection of "critical areas" are not always intuitive, your county and conservation district have pooled resources to deliver solutions through field visits and farm plans.

Through this partnership, a county worker will visit landowners with livestock and critical areas. Information will be provided on how to protect critical areas by observing standard setbacks. Also, landowners interested in alternate methods of protection will be referred to the Conservation District for help in developing a farm plan. Simply put, a farm plan identifies the activities that could damage the critical area and prescribes solutions. These solutions often increase your enjoyment

through healthier animals and lower feed bills due to increased pasture productivity.

The Whatcom Conservation District will be providing small farm management workshop opportunities starting in April 2008. Workshops will provide general guidance on resource protection and developing farm conservation plans. Checkout our website and look for detail later this winter about educational and technical assistance opportunities.



*Guest columnist*

## Agricultural Restoration: reclaiming the land

By Dirk Vansant

During the Middle Ages, Benedict monks throughout Europe cultivated the concept of agricultural restoration to expand agricultural activity wherever they settled. Their monasteries were examples of agricultural

Driving through the county, one wonders why some pastures lay unused, while other pastures are overgrazed and local hay has become scarce. If you've ever considered turning that 'reed canary field' back into a productive pasture or lost hope



Custom grazing controls weeds and increases forage.

colleges. Today, much of the wilderness has been converted, agricultural resources tapped into, wetlands drained and forests cleared. Modern-day agricultural prospects look grim for many people, with a reduced land base available for agricultural production, environmental issues that can't be ignored, and prices for hay and fuel soaring. Not only is it becoming more expensive and uncertain to farm our land, but land itself is becoming less available.

in trying to fight the weeds in your field, then agricultural restoration may help improve your situation and offer resources to the community around you. Restoring a pasture can be done by developing a grazing system that complements the

inherent relationship between plants and animals on your property in order to maximize production and benefit the land.

Carefully managed, short-term, repeated grazing using sheep is the strategy promoted by Ewe Care LLC, based out of Deming, Washington. Ewe Care LLC offers customized grazing services with their flock of sheep, as well as assistance with planning and monitoring to reach client's objectives. Advantages of this approach include restoration of sensitive areas that machinery cannot access during wetter parts of the year, reduced need for chemical or mechanical inputs, and the fertility input from the animals.

For more information, please contact Ewe Care LLC at 360-927-0399 or [ewecarellc@hotmail.com](mailto:ewecarellc@hotmail.com).

**Agricultural restoration** is a concept that improves the overall quality of what we have and emphasizes sensible use. It adds value to less desirable land and uses sustainable methods to transform these resources to provide for our community's livestock needs.

## Whatcom Conservation District

### Board of Supervisors

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Dick Yoder, Vice-Chair  
Sabina Gouran, Treasurer  
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