

SKAGIT CONSERVATION DISTRICT STORM WATER EDUCATION PROGRAM 2014 REPORT



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for:
City of Mount Vernon
City of Burlington
City of Sedro-Woolley
City of Anacortes
Skagit County*

Storm Water Education Program Summary

This progress report summarizes the storm water public education and outreach and the public participation and involvement activities that were completed by the Skagit Conservation District over the period January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014. The primary purpose of the Skagit Conservation District's Storm Water Education Program is to assist local jurisdictions with compliance efforts for the "Public Education and Outreach" and the "Public Participation and Involvement" requirements of the NPDES storm water permit by facilitating greater public awareness of the sensitivity of local surface waters, their beneficial uses, the detrimental effects of polluted storm water and illicit discharges, and measures that can be taken to reduce storm water pollution.

Skagit MS4 Partners: The Skagit Conservation District's Storm Water Education Program is a local partnership formed to develop and implement a comprehensive water resource education, outreach, and public involvement program. The Skagit Conservation District has formed partnerships with the City of Mount Vernon, City of Burlington, City of Sedro-Woolley, City of Anacortes, and Skagit County. With the exception of the Skagit Conservation District, all partners are MS4 communities required to prepare Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP) in accordance with Phase II of the Clean Water Act. The purpose of the partnership is to work together cooperatively and share a common message, avoid duplication of efforts (which in turn will save money and resources), utilize existing programs when possible and to share resources.

Program Funding: In 2008 the Skagit Conservation District applied for, and received grant funding through the WA Dept. of Ecology's Storm Water Grants Program. The scope of work outlined in the Storm Water Education Grant guided the components of the Storm Water Education Program since the grant was received in 2008 and continued through June 2011, when the grant expired and tasks completed. During this duration, the grant was supported by partnering municipalities through direct and in kind matching funds. After completion of the grant, Memorandums of Agreement were established between the Skagit Conservation District and each of the local MS4 jurisdictions to develop and implement a collaborated scope of work to continue the public education and outreach and public participation and involvement programs to engage local support of our community and protect water quality of our streams, rivers, and marine waters.

2013 Activities

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Task 1.1 Host Two Private Storm Water Facility Maintenance Workshops

Initial coordination/planning to host a Stormwater Detention Pond Maintenance Workshop in the spring of 2015 was initiated. The event is scheduled for April 9, 2015 and will be held at the City of Sedro-Woolley.

Task 1.2 Watershed Masters Volunteer Training Program

The Watershed Masters Volunteer Training Program offers an intensive forty-hour volunteer training course for interested Skagit County residents. Topics covered in the

program include an introduction to local geology, stream ecology, salmonids, soils & wetlands, nonpoint sources of pollution and storm water runoff, low impact development, composting, household hazardous waste, climate change, soils & wetlands, on-site septic system maintenance, agricultural best management practices, forest stewardship, the values and function of estuaries, and more. The training includes many expert speakers, field trips to local watersheds, and a comprehensive reference notebook. The program is designed to give participants information on ways to make positive behavioral changes in their own lives to protect water quality and to inspire local stewardship of our water resources.

Volunteers who complete the training return forty hours of service. The volunteer hours may include conducting stream restoration work, water quality monitoring, shellfish monitoring for PSP, staffing informational tables at fairs and other public events, storm drain labeling, conducting litter clean ups on local streams, making presentations to schools or community groups, etc. SCD staff works with each Watershed Master Volunteer who has completed the training to design a plan of action for returning the forty hours of training. Watershed Masters are encouraged to pursue creative projects that best meet their interest, skills, and schedule.

Over the years, participants of the Watershed Masters program have played a leading role in promoting watershed stewardship throughout our community by implementing sustainable landscaping practices in their own backyard, participating in local stewardship projects, and educating their friends, family, and neighbors.

The 2014 Watershed Masters Volunteer Training program was conducted September 24th through November 12th (8-week training) with 15 individuals completing the training. Program evaluation forms were completed by participants and included a survey of behavior changes based on information received in class. 47 sustainable backyard practices employed and reported by fall 2014 Watershed Master Graduates.

Over 3,000 volunteer hours were reported by Watershed Master Participants in 2014. Volunteer activities have included *participation in the Skagit Stream Team, Storm Team, and Marine Biotxin monitoring programs, providing staff support in hosting the “Puget Sound Starts Here” display and educational activities at local events, assisting with Rain Garden maintenance at the County Rain Garden, assisting with stream restoration projects throughout the community, leading tours at the Marblemount Fish Hatchery, conducting plant layout for a stream restoration project on Thomas Creek, providing presentations on sustainable gardening at local workshops, Admiralty Inlet restoration, participating in the Swinomish Oil Response Team, designing and installing a community demonstration naturescape garden at Alger Community Hall, storm drain labeling, assisting with maintenance at the Native Plant Demonstration Garden on Memorial Hwy., and more. One volunteer enrolled her property in the County’s NRSP program and with support from other Watershed Masters, blackberries were removed and the streambank replanted with native vegetation on Nov. 29th, 2014 (Silver Creek). Due to the energy of Watershed Masters both sides of Silver Creek have been restored in their Alger neighborhood.*

- The 2014 Watershed Masters training was ranked 4 out of 4 (with 4 being “excellent”) by all participants. A few examples of comments from participants:
 - *The experience of this course has really left an indelible mark on my mind. The speakers and our coordinator, Kristi, have all been so motivational and enjoyable.*
 - *The topics, field trips, classes and materials have all been fantastic. I’ve learned a lot about our watershed and look forward to participate in events to help rehab and sustain it.*
 - *By far the best worthwhile program I have ever encountered.*

Task 1.3 Skagit Stream Team

The Skagit Stream Team Program was established in 1998 to educate and involve local citizens in the protection and stewardship of local streams. Urban stream reaches, including Kulshan Creek & the Trumpeter basin (Mount Vernon), Gages Slough (Burlington), and Clyde Creek (Anacortes) were added to the program over the last 6 years as part of this interlocal agreement. In addition, Stream Team volunteers participated in a 3 year study of Brickyard Creek in Sedro-Woolley between 2009 & 2011. All streams are monitored twice a month with the exception of Gages Slough, which is monitored monthly.

The goals of the Skagit Stream Team program are to: 1) Inspire community stewardship of water resources by educating local citizens about land use and non-point sources of pollution and involving them in the process of water quality data gathering; 2) to develop and implement a routine sampling program that can be used to assess water quality trends, characterize the existing water quality of priority freshwater drainages, and determine how water quality conditions compare to State Standards; 3) to document improvements to water quality as a result of the implementation of Best Management Practices and stormwater prevention measures; and 4) to teach community volunteers the sampling and analytical techniques used by environmental professionals, how to manage the data collected and create a database, and the importance of establishing a long-term water quality monitoring program.

Parameters measured by Stream Team volunteers include fecal coliform (FC) bacteria, dissolved oxygen (DO), water temperature, turbidity and total depth.

- 5 Stream Team volunteers monitored the water quality of Clyde Creek in Anacortes over the 2013/2014 monitoring season (Stream Team monitoring year is October through September). The Anacortes Waste Water Treatment Plant conducts lab analysis for this program.
- 11 Stream Team volunteers monitored Kulshan Creek and Trumpeter Basin in Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon Waste Water Treatment Plant conducts lab analysis for Kulshan and Trumpeter.
- 2 Stream Team volunteers monitored Gages Slough through the 2013/14 sampling season. Edge Analytical conducted lab analysis for the Gages Slough Stream Team.

- 73 Stream Team volunteers participated in the 2013/14 Stream Team program overall, with a total of 79 currently participating in the 2014/2015 program.
- Other streams monitored by Stream Team volunteers include Joe Leary Slough, Bay View, Samish River, Nookachamps Creek, No Name Slough, and Fisher Creek. In addition, 8 volunteers conducted storm event sampling in the Edison pump station drainages and the Friday Creek watershed during the 2013/2014 season in support of the Clean Samish Initiative (Storm Team).
- Total of 50 monitoring stations were monitored twice a month by Stream Team volunteers, with the exception of Gages Slough which is monitored monthly.
- The Annual Year-End Stream Team Celebration and Recognition event was coordinated and held on June 14, 2014. 73 Stream Team volunteers were recognized.
- 1,370 Stream Team volunteer hours reported for the 2013/14 Stream Team program.
- The Annual Stream Team training was coordinated and held Sept. 3rd, 4th, and 6th, 2014.
- Data was entered on excel spreadsheet..
- The 2013/14 Annual Stream Team Report was completed and is available on our website: www.skagitcd.org.
- The annual “How Clean is Your Neighborhood Stream?” meeting was coordinated and held on Feb. 27, 2014 with 45 attendees. The purpose of the meeting is to present the annual Stream Team report and provide a water quality update to the community. Rick Haley, Skagit County Water Analyst, also provided an update on the County’s water quality monitoring program at this annual public meeting. The 2015 event is scheduled for Feb. 26, 2015.

Task 1.4 Storm Drain Labeling Program

Storm drain marking kits are available at the Skagit Conservation District. Community groups and residents are encouraged to participate in the protection of water quality by marking storm drains in their neighborhoods and throughout the community. Door knob hangars are also distributed and provide background information on stormwater runoff to homeowners in the neighborhood that the drains are being labeled.

- Staff provided support to the City of Burlington Parks and Recreation “Girl Power” workshop by supplying outreach materials on the “Operation Clean and Green Car Wash Program” and “Storm Drain Labeling” programs reaching 60 youth.
- Staff provided support to a Mount Vernon Boy Scout for his Eagle Scout project. He and his team labeled 170 storm drains and distributed 150 informational door hangers in the Skagit Valley Hospital neighborhood.
- Girl Scouts marked 12 drains in Mount Vernon.
- Staff provided support for a storm drain labeling project in Burlington. A scout completed the marking project in July to earn his Eagle Scout honors. He and his team labeled 134 storm drains and distributed 100 informational door knob hangers in the Burlington Boulevard area.
- Two Watershed Master volunteers marked 170 drains in various areas of Mount Vernon.

- The Storm Drain labeling program was promoted through both editions of the Skagit Conservation News (4,600 subscribers) and the Skagit Valley Herald. Approximately 100 promotional fliers were distributed at local events.

2. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Task 2.1 Backyard Conservation Stewardship Program

The Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course was piloted in 2005 with grant funding provided through the WA Dept. of Ecology's Centennial Clean Water Fund program. The overall goal of the program is "to increase public awareness on a variety of backyard conservation practices and to promote community stewardship by exploring and investigating the fascinating natural world in our own backyards." The program targets local homeowners and provides education on sustainable landscape practices as promoted by the Sustainable Sites Initiative. Program objectives:

- Participants will learn practices that can be applied in their own backyards to help reduce storm water pollution and create a healthy and more sustainable environment.
- Participants will be provided with the tools and resources to design sustainable, natural, backyard landscapes.
- To encourage community participation in the Backyard Wildlife Habitat and/or Backyard Sanctuary Certification programs.
- To create a network of community residents willing to share their love of gardening and the outdoors to inspire others to create environmentally friendly gardening practices that will benefit our community.

Topics included in the 6-week short course include proper use and disposal of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers (and use of non-toxic alternatives), use of native plants in landscaping, reducing size of lawn, gardening for wildlife, using bees as pollinators, applying low impact development/rain gardens, use of permeable pavement for driveways and patios, composting, managing non-native invasives, how to build healthy soils, proper disposal of pet waste, preventive car maintenance, and more. Sessions are taught by local experts.

Outcomes: The Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course has played a key role in our efforts to increase levels of voluntary implementation of conservation practices on private lands in both urban and rural areas of our community. In addition to making sustainable change in their own backyards, three grassroots community volunteer groups were formed from this program, including the Fidalgo Backyard Wildlife Habitat Group in Anacortes, Skagit Valley Backyard Wildlife Habitat Team (Mount Vernon, Conway, LaConner, & Bow), and the Friday Creek Habitat Team, which includes Burlington and Sedro-Woolley. These citizen groups have registered our communities with the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat Program (Fidalgo and Skagit have already received national recognition as a "Community Wildlife Habitat," and Friday Creek is in progress). Over 1,000 Skagit County residents, and including schools, parks, farms, & businesses, have certified their yards through this program.

- The Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course was held every Wednesday evening beginning March 26th and continued through April 30th (6 weeks). The program also included 2 field tours, including a visit to the WSU Extension Discovery Garden (composting, soils, & native plants), and a Saturday field tour of resident's homes who have taken the class in previous years and have employed sustainable backyard practices on their properties. 50 individuals completed the spring course.
- Staff provided ongoing support and assistance to Backyard Conservation Stewardship program volunteers throughout the year.
- Staff hosted and facilitated monthly meetings with the Friday Creek Habitat Stewards.
- The habitat team volunteer groups hosted educational displays at numerous community events, including local farmers markets, Alger Fun Raiser, Skagit River Salmon Festival, Festival of Family Farms, SCD's Annual Native Plant Sale, Kids in Nature: Families Outdoors at Pomona Grange Park, "End of the Trail" celebration, and at numerous related workshops held in the community.
- With support from the Friday Creek Habitat Stewards, Watershed Masters, residents of the Alger Community, and a Rose Foundation grant, a Naturescape Demonstration Garden was established at the Alger Community Hall. Educational signage was designed and installed at the garden in July 2014. The garden includes a pollinator habitat garden, wildlife habitat garden, and an opportunity to showcase native plants and drought tolerant plants that can be used in the home garden.
- A "Grand Opening" and celebration of the new Demonstration Naturescape Garden was held on July 12th with over 40 attendees.
- Maintenance and educational opportunities at the Kulshan Creek Bird and Butterfly Demonstration Garden continued with support from backyard habitat volunteers and Kulshan neighborhood families.
- Other projects undertaken over the year by the backyard conservation volunteers with support from SCD included:
 - 1) April 12th – Garden Swap, Sale, and Arbor Day Celebration (gave away 100 native plants in celebration of Arbor Day) – 250 attendees
 - 2) May 22nd – Wonders of Bats Workshop (promote pollinators) – 42 attendees.
 - 3) May 27th – Planting a Native Hedgerow Workshop – 38 attendees.
 - 4) June 19th – Gardening for Wildlife Family Event (Art for Learning at Padilla Bay Research Reserve) – 25 attendees.
 - 5) July 20th – Sustainable Samish Garden Tour – 85+ attendees.
 - 6) August 16th – Kids in Nature: Families Outdoors at Pomona Grange Park – 65+ attendees.

Task 2.2 Resource Materials/Education for Local Schools

Skagit Conservation District provides support to local schools by providing educational resources and presentations throughout the year.

- Educational packets were prepared and distributed to 500 local teachers. The packets include information on storm water, watersheds, and other resources and

- educational programs available for teachers and classrooms through the Skagit Conservation District. Promotion of the EnviroScape Model (storm water runoff and non-point source pollution) was also distributed.
- 20 storm water education presentations, using the EnviroScape watershed model, were conducted in 2014 at local elementary schools in the following jurisdictions:
 - Anacortes: 4 presentations to 104 students
 - Burlington: 2 presentation2 to 45 students
 - Mount Vernon: 4 presentations to 85 students
 - Sedro-Woolley: 8 presentations to 161 students
 - Skagit County: 2 presentations to 38 students
 - EnviroScape watershed model presentations were also provided at the Mount Vernon High School Science Night in April (200+ attendees), the Kids in Nature: Families Outdoors at Pomona Grange Park on August 16th (65+ attendees) and the Skagit River Salmon Festival on September 13th (2,500 attendees).
 - Staff provided support to Peter Donaldson, Sustainability Ambassadors, in providing an intensive stormwater education opportunity for Burlington-Edison High School North students which took place on April 15th, April 22nd, April 29th and April 30th. The 30 students were lead through education and research and followed up by giving presentations to a large group of City of Burlington and Burlington School District officials. The students also researched local rain gardens and put them on the 1,000 Rain Gardens website. One student designed a brochure highlighting the rain gardens for the Master Gardeners program. There was also meetings and discussion on working with the students to install a rain garden at the school. This is temporarily on hold due to classroom commitments.
 - A total of 250 “Discover Storm Water” educational booklets were distributed.
 - 300 “10 Things You Can Do to Prevent Stormwater Runoff Pollution” bookmarks distributed.
 - 220 National Association of Conservation District’s “Where Does Your Water Shed” activity booklets and bookmarks distributed.

Task 2.3 Storm Water Poster Contests

A Stormwater themed poster contest was conducted for local students, grades K – 12 in Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley and Skagit County (Conway, LaConner, & Concrete) during the fall of 2014. A total of 137 posters were received from students. However, no posters were received from Anacortes or Sedro-Woolley Schools. Thus, staff is following up in Spring of 2015 to try to get participation from all school districts. In addition, all posters will be reviewed in spring of 2015 and prizes/awards also will be conducted at that time.

Task 2.4 Storm Water Educational Brochures and Fact Sheets.

No educational brochures or fact sheets were designed in 2014, however, work was initiated including discussing fact sheet needs with partners. Plans underway for 2015.

Task 2.5 Workshops for Local Contractors and Businesses

An EcoPRO Sustainable Landscape training for Landscape Professionals was organized in partnership with Washington Association of Landscape Professionals (WALP) and Washington State Nursery and Landscape Association (WSNLA) and held on November 17th, 18th, and 19th and held at the WSU Extension Research Center on Memorial Hwy. The test was held on November 20th for those interested in earning their EcoPRO Certification. The training, study materials, and exam are based on 200+ sustainable best practices and required study materials. To earn ecoPRO certification, professional landscapers must demonstrate knowledge of, and voluntarily practice sustainable best landscape practices in the following eight key principles:

- Protect and Conserve Soils
- Conserve Water
- Protect Water and Air Quality
- Protect and Create Wildlife Habitat
- Conserve Energy
- Sustain Healthy Plants
- Use Sustainable Methods and Materials
- Protect and Enhance Human Health and Well-being

The program was designed to address Washington State habitat, water quality, conservation, toxics reductions issues, and to holistically address the landscape. Twelve professional landscapers from the November training passed the test and earned the ecoPRO certification. A few of the participants did not have the required professional credentials to take the test to earn the certification but plan on utilizing the sustainable practices taught in the training.

Coordination/planning of additional trainings for local landscape professionals was also conducted in 2014 with a Sustainable Landscape workshop scheduled for May 6th, 2015 at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve. Two local ecoPRO Certified Landscape Professionals, Everett Chu and Ian Horton are providing support in planning the event.

Task 2.6 PSSH Community Event Display Board

Staff hosted the Puget Sound Starts Here educational display and “Healthy Water Hopscotch Game” at numerous local events in 2014 including the Skagit River Salmon Festival, Fidalog Bay Days, Festival of Family Farms, Letterbox Trail Celebration, Storming the Sound, Kids in Nature: Families Outdoors at Pomona Grange Park event, reaching over 4,000 individuals. Youth participating in the “Healthy Water Hopscotch” game activity earned their PSSH Drain Ranger badge. In addition over 250 PSSH pet waste dispensers, shopping totes and beverage coasters were also distributed to promote the Puget Sound Starts Here message.

Task 2.7 Produce Media Advertisements

Staff coordinated with National Cinemedia to run the Puget Sound Starts Here promotional ad at the Cascade Mall and Anacortes cinemas from May 2nd, 2014 through July 10th, 2014. All of our local logos are shown at the end of the ad. It was estimated by NCM that approximately 77,376 saw the ad over the 10 week period.

OTHER STORMWATER RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES (funded by other sources):

Clean and Green Car Wash Kits

The Clean and Green Car Wash kit program continued to be promoted throughout the community and each partnering jurisdiction continued to check out the kits to groups hosting car wash events.

Storm Water/Low Impact Development Presentations

In 2014 staff provided power point presentations on storm water and an introduction to low impact development and raingardens to 2 gardening clubs (Nitty Gritty and Chuckanut Garden Club) and at 5 events to approximately 200 people.

Arbor Day Trees

Provided over 500 native plant seedlings to classrooms and youth groups throughout Skagit County in celebration of Arbor Day in April.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED:

- 15 Pet waste educational posters & outdoor signs distributed
- 200 Low Impact Development: Coming to a Neighborhood Near You” brochures distributed.
- 250 Soil & Mulch: The Foundation of a Healthy Yard brochures distributed.
- 250 Planning & Planting a Sustainable Landscape brochures distributed.
- 250 Watering Wisely brochures distributed.
- 250 Think Twice Before Using Pesticides brochures distributed.
- 250 Natural Lawn Care brochures distributed.
- 10 “Good Cleaning Practices for the Food and Restaurant Industry” posters distributed.
- 10 “Good Cleaning Practices for the Automotive Industry” distributed.
- 12 Best Management Practices for Power Washing fact sheets distributed.
- 15 Best Management Practices for Mobile Carpet Cleaners distributed.
- 100 copies of the 2012/13 Skagit Stream Team Reports distributed (the report is also on the SCD and Padilla Bay Reserve websites).
- 150 Rain Garden Manuals distributed.
- 250 “Discover Storm water” educational booklets distributed (Project Wet).
- 300 “10 Things You Can Do to Prevent Stormwater Pollution” bookmarks distributed.
- 220 NACD “Where Does Your Water Shed” activity booklets and bookmarks distributed.
- 500 Drain Ranger Badges distributed
- 100 Storm Drain marking volunteer program promotional fliers distributed.
- 25 Clean and Green Car Wash Kit promotional fliers distributed.
- 125 “Home Tips for Healthy Streams” brochures distributed.
- 150 “10 Essentials Checklist for Rural Landowners” distributed.

- 50 “Turning the Tide on Toxics’ publications distributed.
- 50 Natural Yard Care Booklets distributed.
- 125 SCD Best Management Practices for Skagit Livestock Owners distributed.
- 80 Backyard Conservation books distributed
- 150 Native plants of the Pacific Northwest distributed.

Numerous other related handouts are provided to participants of the WSM, Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course, Stream Team and participants of workshops & events.

Other (funded through other sources)

- Staff continued to participate on the Skagit EcoNet committee.
- Staff continues to serve on the Board for the Skagit Conservation Education Alliance (SCEA).
- Staff attended scheduled meetings with local NPDES partners.
- Staff published several storm water related articles for the two 2014 publications of the Skagit Conservation News – distribution 4,600+ per publication. Topics included: Storm water classroom presentations with the EnviroScape watershed model; storm drain marking events with local youth; promoted program and recognized participants of the Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course; Stream Team welcome and recognition, promoted program and recognized Watershed Masters.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR 2015

- The Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course will be conducted in the spring of 2015
- Stormwater Detention Pond Maintenance Workshop scheduled for April 9, 2015.
- Sustainable Landscaping Workshop scheduled for May 6, 2015.
- Storm drain labeling will continue.
- Skagit Stream Team program will continue with the annual training scheduled for September.
- The Annual Stream Team Water Quality Report will be published.
- 2 educational brochures/tip sheets will be published.
- The Storm water Education Poster Contest will be held in all jurisdictions in the spring of 2015.
- Informational packets highlighting storm water and water quality education will once again be distributed to local schools.
- Staff will continue to provide presentations on storm water education with the watershed EnviroScape model to local school groups.
- Watershed Masters Volunteer training will be held in the fall of 2015.
- Will participate at local events with the storm water education display (and will continue to enhance the display and handouts).
- Media advertisements will be produced for local media.
- Staff will host the PSSH educational display and “PSSH Water Quality Hopscotch” activity at local events.

- The SCD website will continue to be updated to include relevant storm water and LID information.
- News articles highlighting storm water education, LID practices, and volunteer opportunities will be included in each of the Skagit Conservation District's newsletters.
- Staff will continue to provide presentations to local groups on storm water and LID as requested.
- Stream Team data will be reviewed and will be used to target priority neighborhoods for follow-up education.
- Staff will continue to provide support to the Watershed Masters, backyard wildlife habitat volunteers, and Skagit Stream Team volunteers.
- All projects will be tracked, evaluation surveys conducted when appropriate, and reporting will continue.