

Tenmile Treasures

A Newsletter for the Tenmile Creek Watershed Community

TENMILE CREEK
WATERSHED

Healthy Streams
Neighbor to Neighbor

Time for a Change. . . This is the last newsletter issue!

The Tenmile Creek Watershed Restoration Project began in 2001 with the goal of connecting Tenmile Creek watershed landowners to the natural resources that surround them. We wanted to improve water quality and quantity, while ensuring that we could continue to use our land as intended, whether to farm or to enjoy as our backyards. A series of six grants over the years have enabled us to accomplish many improvements. As that funding is coming to an end, this is your last copy of *Tenmile Treasures*. WE have decisions to make. Do we continue the Tenmile Creek Watershed project? YOU DECIDE.

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Tenmile Advisory Committee

Henry Bierlink, APC
George Boggs, WCD
Darrell Gray, NSEA
Craig MacConnell, WSU
Mike Murphy, Landowner/PUD
Susie Nelson, Volunteer
Leroy Plagerman, Landowner
Steve Seymour, WDFW
Kevin Sterk, Landowner
Eric Sundstrom, Landowner
Dan Thompson, Landowner
Art Zawicki, Landowner

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

Project Manager: Dorie Belisle

"There is nothing impossible to him who will try."

~Alexander the Great

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We've come a long way baby. . . As program manager, this has been a labor of love, but it is now time to retire. Our farm is growing and demands more time. It has been a pleasure meeting many of you. There is no greater gift than working side-by-side to make our watershed a little healthier.

Almost 400 of you helped through your participation in the many activities of the Tenmile Creek watershed community.

Together . . . Learning about and improving the Tenmile watershed included:

- Walking the creek and holding neighborhood meetings,
- Removing non-native species and establishing native shrubs on 12.5 miles of stream habitat,
- Removing fish passage barriers and improving several culverts,
- Installing 7 in-stream habitat improvement structures,
- Recording and archiving 12 oral histories, with two presentations to enjoy these stories,
- Establishing water monitoring stations to record data and completing a study to identify flow problems, and;
- Hosting two workshops for septic system care and one workshop for small farm management.

Future Needs. . . Our water quality is looking better than ever, but challenges exist. We need to address the many miles of stream still choked with non-native Reed canary grass. We need to balance drainage with adequate in-stream flow. Tenmile Creek watershed is "closed" by Department of Ecology to further water withdrawals because of low in-stream flow during summer and early fall months. Farmers need to irrigate and wells are drying up under certain conditions. How do we hold back more water to supplement summer and fall stream flows? How can we protect our wetlands? Increased development decreases water infiltration and storage capacity. Can we manage this resource for all of us who use it?

Now what? . . . With current funding at an end, WE HAVE CHOICES TO MAKE. We can:

- 1) Do nothing. Enjoy what has been accomplished and worry about what the future might hold. Or,
- 2) Form a committee to explore alternatives to continue what has just begun:
 - a. Form a Tenmile non-profit funded through your donations and eligible for future grants, or;
 - b. Form a Tenmile Creek Watershed Improvement District funded through a special tax and future grants, or;
 - c. Look into other options.

If you believe that it is important to have a healthy watershed, with enough clean water for healthy farms/homes and fish, then you have to be willing to put in time and energy to keep the Tenmile Creek Watershed Restoration Project going in one form or another. Are you interested?

Mail in to: Dorie Belisle, 231 Ten Mile Rd. Lynden, WA 98264 or email: doriebelisle@yahoo.com or call 398-9187.

Yes, I will participate in a committee to discuss options to keep the Tenmile Creek Watershed Restoration Project going.

Name: _____ Address: _____

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Last issue!
See how you can help.

On-site Sewage System (OSS) - Pee, Poop, Paper - Period!

Ninety-five (95) brave souls faced the snow and cold on March 29th at an outdoor workshop to learn about natural resources we are trying to protect and about new Whatcom County OSS Operation & Maintenance regulations. Workshop participants watched a septic system inspection/pumping and learned basic "Do's and Don'ts" of septic care.



Tenmile watershed residents learn about proper septic system operation and maintenance.

Highlights to keep your system working so we can protect the watershed AND keep your hard earned money in your pocket include:

- Your on-site sewage system (OSS) is a living system. Living microbes feed on bacteria/pathogens. Do not put anything down your drain that has a "danger" or "poison" label. Best rule of thumb is "Pee-Poop-Paper - PERIOD".
- Make sure all family members know the rules: Don't flush cigarettes, sanitary/sex products, matches, paper towels, hair, medications, or cleaning products.
- Don't use ANY septic system "improvement" products. Save your \$\$\$! There is no such thing as a safe and effective septic additive. Don't be misled by all the advertising. Remember pee-poop-paper-PERIOD; the bugs will do the rest.
- Don't add yeast, shredded cabbage or raw hamburger - your own waste is all that is needed!
- Limit your use of the garbage disposal - it is like adding another person to your home. Never put grease down your sink or disposal.
- Avoid using bleach! Use laundry detergent sparingly.
- Don't compact the soil over your drain field! Don't drive or park on the drain field and don't allow large animals on the field. The microbes live in air spaces between soil particles. A compacted drain field does not work.
- Keep large trees away from drain field. Drip line of trees should be at least 10 feet away.
- Just remember: Pee-poop-paper-PERIOD.

Water Quality Update: Monitoring will continue for temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, and fecal coliform. I will continue to work with WSU Extension on the telemetry monitoring project. It is important for us to have current information about the health of our streams. We have reduced our fecal bacteria count to near target levels, although we are still getting spikes. We must remain diligent in our manure management whether we own 600 cows, or one horse and a llama. Whatcom Conservation District (354-2035) and the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (715-0283) can assist you in improving your stream habitat and farm management. I'll be happy to help in any way I can. Thanks for making a difference!



Our final tree give away took place the first three Saturdays in March. We gave away 3,407 trees. Our fields are empty and so are our coffers. The request to take over the program went out to several groups. Whatcom Farm Friends said "YES"! They will provide a new home for *Farmers Growing Trees for Salmon*. With support from the PUD#1, Haggen Food & Pharmacy, the Community Food Co-op, the Whatcom Community Foundation, Whatcom

Farmers Co-op and many individuals, financial resources are now in place to continue the project through 2011. Twenty-five thousand (25,000) new conifer plugs have been ordered from Fourth Corner Nursery for planting in farm fields in 2009. The community has stepped up to keep this project going. Start planning your planting projects now!



Participants receive trees for streamside planting!