Welcome to Tenmile Treasures

This is the very first issue of Tenmile Treasures, the newsletter for the Tenmile Creek watershed community. The Tenmile Creek watershed is the living space for many treasures - we have 65 miles of streams including Tenmile Creek, Fourmile Creek, Deer Creek, Crystal Springs, and many other small tributaries and springs. Our treasures include coho, fall chinook, chum, steelhead and cutthroat trout. We have 35 square miles of land in our watershed with many made up of rich fertile soil. We are home to diverse plants, trees and flowers.

Our greatest treasure, however, is you! Yes, you are a Tenmile Treasure. Together we can enjoy and protect what we have. We can make the decisions that will keep our watershed healthy, but allow us to enjoy and work our land. We are each very unique with a different history and story to tell. We can learn from each other and together we can have Healthy Streams: Neighbor-to-Neighbor.

A Little Science

What is the Tenmile Creek Watershed?

The term "watershed" describes an area of land that drains down slope to the lowest point. The water moves either underground or on the surface. Generally these pathways converge into a stream or river. For our drainage area, that is the Tenmile Creek. The Tenmile Creek watershed is one small sub-watershed that is part of the larger Nooksack River watershed.

Connectivity is a term that refers to the physical connection between tributaries and the river. In our watershed connectivity refers to the physical connection between Fourmile Creek, Deer Creek and Crystal Springs to Tenmile Creek, and the connection between these systems and the Nooksack River and Portage Bay. It also refers to the connection between surface water and groundwater and between wetlands and these water sources. Because water moves downstream in a watershed, any activity that affects the water quality, quantity, or rate of movement at one location can change the characteristics of the watershed at locations downstream and/or upstream. For this reason, everyone living or working within a watershed has connectivity to everyone else. Cooperation is needed to ensure good watershed conditions. This is important for the health of the stream as well as for the landowners that live near and use that natural resource.

Fish and small insects travel through streams...but live in watersheds. 99% of what happens in a stream is affected by what occurs outside of its banks - - in the watershed. The water level in Tenmile Creek rises from rain hitting every square inch of area within the boundaries of our watershed. Water quality is affected by the amount of impervious surface in our watershed. Paved and compacted surfaces prevent rainwater from passing through a natural cleaning process. A porous, vegetated surface can filter pollutants from water before that water enters Tenmile Creek. Chemicals from rubber and oil, carrying heavy metals from our cars, affect watershed health, along with sediments and pollutants from our fields, yards and roads. Water quality also is affected by what we don't see, like bacteria from our septic systems.

There are over 170 sub-basin watersheds in Whatcom County that determine the health of the Nooksack River and the bays into which they drain. They determine the health of our community and our families.
UPDATE: What’s been happening in the Tenmile Creek Watershed?

Did you know . . .

that 14,000 trees were planted for you this spring?
Need trees? We’ve got’em!
Four farmers in Whatcom County planted plugs (seedlings, about 8 inches tall) in
their fields to use as nursery stock. They will care for them until they are big enough to be
planted and survive the rigors of stream life. Then the trees will be given to you to plant
and care for along your stream. The farmers are Greg Ebe (potato), Curt Maberry (berry),
Kim and Peter Vlas (dairy) and Lonnie Honcoop (Edaleen Dairy). We have western red cedar,
Sitka spruce, Douglas fir, big leaf maple, aspen and alder. Start planning now for next
spring! We have trees, whether you need 10 or 100. Call me if you want help getting orga-
nized. 398-9187

Tenmile Creek Watershed: The Story of its People and their Land

What was the Tenmile watershed like 20, 40, 60 years ago? What did the creek and sur-
rounding land look like? How were the land and water used? What work and recreational activities
took place on or near the creeks? What kinds of fish, birds, wildlife, trees and plants were abun-
dant? Who were the people who lived here and what did they do for a living and for fun?

60% of the landowners, who took the
Tenmile Creek Watershed survey, want to know more historical information about those that
shared the land before us. We are ready to begin!

Susie Nelson, a volunteer with the Tenmile Watershed Project is coordinating the project to inter-
view many long-time residents. The Lynden Pioneer Museum is our partner. They will archive the
history we collect. Those who share will receive copies of our project - a priceless living history.
As this project progresses, we will develop ways to share this information with you.

How can you help?

Talk to your neighbors, friends, grandparents, aunts and uncles. Pass on their names and phone numbers to us. We will contact them and explain the entire process. We will interview them when and where they are the most comfortable. They will be able to edit all that is written. They don’t have to be famous, or have any special skills; we will just be visiting with them. Together, we can pass on the Tenmile living history to our children. Call 398-9187

Letters to the editor . . .

Ask any question. . . we will search out the answer. E-mail or mail in any question concerning the Tenmile Creek Watershed. We will print your question and the best answer we can find. Are you wondering what all those blue tubes are doing? Are you wondering about beaver control, canary grass control, or a particular farming practice you see? Got suggestion or concerns? Let’s get a dialogue going. Hope to hear from you soon. E-mail is doriebelisle@yahoo.com Mailing address: 231 Ten Mile Rd. Lynden, WA 98264

Tenmile neighbors from the Guide Meridian west to Aldrich Rd.

It all began with a neighborhood meet-
ing back in 2001 to discuss the health of theTenmile Creek and the needs of landown-
ers. What developed were individual plans for
eleven families. Some allowed us to plant
trees and shrubs along the creek. They de-
cided the number of plants and where they were to be planted. One allowed us to improve
his bridge, which was a barrier to fish, and contributed to flooding for neighbors up-
stream. Some enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program in order to
receive rent for the use of their land planted in
trees along the stream. For some we pro-
vided the trees, while they provided the labor. Others offered to grow trees in their
garden, in order to provide free trees for others. All together it resulted in a healthier stream: neighbor to neighbor. Way to go!

Tenmile Neighborhood Meetings

Other neighbors are working together and we will continue to report on their adventures. Tenmile Neigh-
borough meetings are fun and informative. Call if you would like to host one. 398-9187