



Puyallup River Tales

*A newsletter of the Puyallup River Watershed Council
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Farmers can get salmon friendly assistance



Livestock owners learn the benefits of and how to set-up mud free paddocks at a free farm management workshop held by the Pierce Conservation District.

The Pierce Conservation District (PCD) is a subdivision of Washington State Government, and is governed by a volunteer board of elected and appointed supervisors who are local landowners. It is funded with a special assessment through Pierce County. It is not a regulatory agency, and thus has no enforcement power. However, we are knowledgeable of current regulations and can advise landowners of their responsibilities. Also, we often work as the intermediary with other agencies on a landowner's behalf. And services that Pierce County residents receive are free of charge.

The PCD was created in 1949 to promote the

conservation of renewable natural resources in Pierce County and to assist residents with the challenges they face in managing natural resources on their land. Through the livestock farm assistance program, landowners can receive technical assistance and recommendations that both protect natural resources and increase farm productivity at the same time. An example of this would be pasture management recommendations. Having a healthy pasture not only provides increased forage for livestock, it also prevents soil erosion and runoff of nutrients contained in livestock manure.

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The Puyallup River Watershed Council is a forum which promotes and implements programs that restore, maintain, and enhance the watershed in order to protect its environmental, economic, and cultural health.

Salmon Creek Stewards have looked after creek for decades

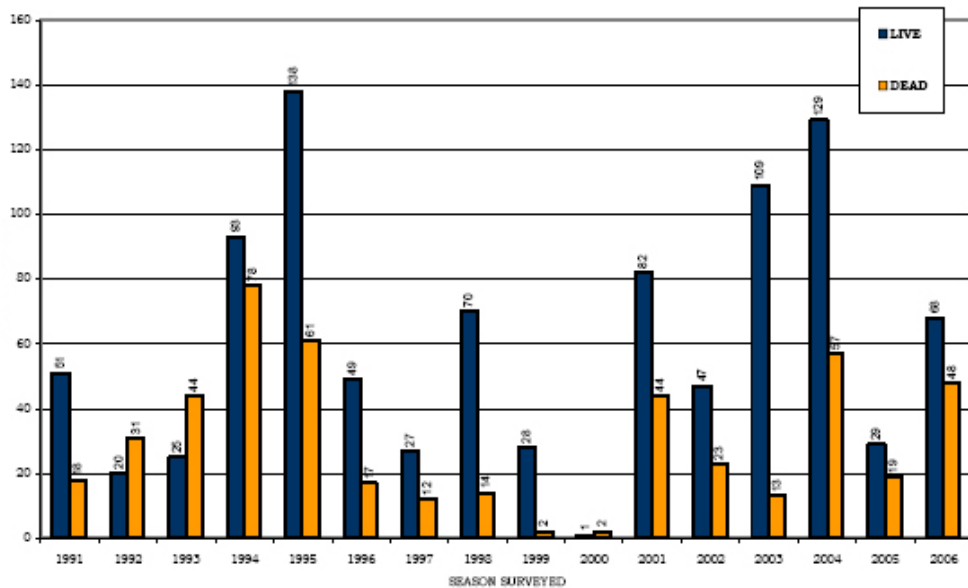
When Anne Rose Martin, moved onto the 40 acres next to Salmon Creek north of Sumner in 1942 *Salmon Creek Stewards* was born. The creek which flowed not 10 feet from her kitchen sink was teeming with life: salmon, trout, eels, salamanders, frogs, crayfish and many other members of the thriving ecosystem. It was said then, that the salmon were so numerous in the Puyallup Valley that one could almost “walk across their backs.” Even the small ditches were full of fish.

Anne taught her children and grandchildren to respect the fragile web of life that we are all a part of, teaching us to do no harm. In the 60’s she witnessed the complete decline of the salmon runs. Her son Roger Martin and later, his son Monte, worked with the state of fisheries department, treaty tribes, the state Department of Ecology and anyone else who would listen or help to restore the fish runs to the little creek.

In 1980, the first largest salmon run in 20 years came! Over 40 fish came back to the 3 foot wide by 6 inch deep spawning beds behind the house. They dug nests into the entire 30 foot length that was suitable for spawning. It was a proud event, witnessed with joy by Anne, Roger and Monte.

In 1981 a large fish-kill occurred from an illegal application of a water pollutant. A few of the fry were rescued by Roger, but most of the fish, large and small, were floating dead, in the pond behind the house

In the 80’s, the Salmon Creek Stewards working with Joseph Robel, Regional Habitat Manager



Chum salmon spawning survey data for Salmon Creek has been collected by the Puyallup Tribe of Indians since the early 1990s. This chart shows the number of live and dead chum seen by tribal staff.

for the Fisheries department, completed a project that doubled the spawning beds to the existing 60 feet. Many evergreen trees have also been planted streamside, by the Stewards.

In the 90’s, the Stream Team and Sumner High School students were planting trees along Salmon Creek next to Tapps Highway, the Stewards donated 66, 4 to 8 foot tall Douglas fir trees which the students planted along with hundreds more Willow and Douglas fir seedlings. Today that area is designated Salmon Creek Park and the trees are very tall and thick.

Salmon Creek is small and little known; four salmon were spotted last year, near the spawning beds. With the present monitoring of the stream by The Salmon Creek Stewards, the stream may yet recover; the fish are trying. New developments are putting additional pressure on the creek. Public oversight is important, becoming aware and maybe even speaking at public meetings in favor of our shared environment, including little Salmon Creek would be greatly appreciated.

For more information contact Monte, lovestrees@msn.com.

By Monte Martin

Watershed Elected Officials Learn About Low Impact Development



Elected officials and staff from ten cities and towns gather at Sumner City Council Chambers for a Low Impact Development Workshop.

Elected officials from throughout the Puyallup River Watershed gathered on February 14, 2008, for a workshop to learn more about low impact development (LID). Over 20 elected officials from 10 cities attended. LID has received increased attention in recent years as a means for accommodating growth and development while also protecting quality of life and natural resources in Pierce County and throughout the Puget Sound region. This workshop helped mayors, council members, city administrators and other local elected leaders learn more about how LID techniques can benefit cities and communities throughout our watershed.

LID techniques discussed included rain gardens, bio-retention, permeable pavement, soil amendment, and green roofs. We also learned about local government implementation of LID, including development or amendment of codes and standards, and establishment of a local working group to facilitate necessary changes. Such a group typically would include Public Works and Planning representatives and the Fire Marshall. Finally, it is necessary to develop

standard drawings, such as road sections, pervious concrete and parking lot details and bio-filter areas.

We also heard from the development community. In many instances, LID can reduce development costs and eliminate traditional stormwater ponds, and even provide additional building lots. The importance of getting industry professional support and training on installation and maintenance of techniques was noted. Also, institutional support is critical, including adequate training and support for plan reviewers and site inspectors. The workshop ended with a short field trip to view LID techniques in Sumner.

The workshop was the third in a series, sponsored by Pierce County Water Programs, MBA of Pierce County and the Puyallup River Watershed Council, and a grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

For more information on this and other workshops, visit www.piercecountywa.org/wpconf.

By Melissa Paulson

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The Conservation District also provides methods and strategies for managing the water, mud, and livestock waste that can be generated on farms. Professional designs are provided for things such as livestock and manure management facilities to help farm owners protect their resources and water quality. Landowners can obtain assistance and information through farm visits, on-farm educational workshops, how-to workshops, classroom presentations, informational publications, the District's quarterly newsletter, and in some instances cost share assistance to implement best management practices.

Livestock owners can also work with a District technician to develop a Farm Conservation Plan that is tailored to the individual needs



of the land occupier and their farm. A series of actions are developed to meet the land user's goals while also protecting water quality and natural resources. Among other things, the plan includes a schedule for accomplishing the changes that have been mutually decided upon. Farm plans often include work over a number of years- no one is expected to be able to accomplish all their goals in one year. Revisions to the plan can be made if the goals and needs of the land user change. The

District technician makes periodic check-ups to record progress of practice implementation.

If you would like to receive assistance from the Pierce Conservation District at no obligation, please contact us at 253 845-9770. We will be happy to assist you in improving your farm!

By Rene' Skaggs

Get Involved!

Volunteer groups involved in watershed health

Citizens for a Healthy Bay

<http://www.healthybay.org>
chb@healthybay.org

917 Pacific Avenue, Suite 100, Tacoma
(253) 383-2429

Friends of the Hylebos Wetlands

<http://www.hylebos.org>
chinook@hylebos.org

(253) 874-2005

Friends of Clarks Creek

(253) 864-6042

Fennel Creek Preservation Group

<http://www.fennelcreek.org>
(253) 826-1079

Pierce Stream Team

<http://www.piercecountycd.org/streamtm.htm>
streamteam@piercecountycd.org

(253) 845-2973

South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group

<http://spsseg.org>
spsseg@spsseg.org

(360) 412-0808

Friends of Swan Creek Watershed

(253) 472-7264

swancreek@prodigy.net

Friends of Lower White River

<http://flwr.wetpaint.com/page/Home>

For more information and volunteer opportunities, visit the Puyallup River Watershed Council Web site: www.piercecountywa.org/PRWC or, send an email to: PC-PRWC@co.pierce.wa.us
The Puyallup River Watershed Council meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month, 5-7 p.m., at Sumner City Hall, 1104 Maple St.