

WATERSHED STEWARDS

OF CLARK COUNTY

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Cover Photo: M'Linda Cox

FROM THE COORDINATOR

By Jenifer Naas, Program Coordinator

What a great spring. I have been out of the office taking care of my new baby, but our AmeriCorps member, Eric, handled all the spring events with grace and good humor! I stopped by the Home and Garden Ideas Fair and found a really great setup. We had a good number of contacts from the HGIF, so it must have worked. Thanks to Joe Seley, Sonya Norton, Shirley Morgan and Matt Vesh and Eric for the booth design.

The spring, 2011 Watershed Stewards volunteer training ended on April 5th. Our 20 new graduates have already volunteered lots of hours.

The spring 2011 Watershed Stewards are:

Cliff Anderson	Terra Hinkley
Kristin Anderson	Blake Jones
Kathleen Arsenault	Sharon Kenoski
Maddie Camp	Chrissie Kenoski
Jim Carlson	Loran Mate
Barclay Charles	Rachel Patterson
Jake Cox	Peter Schaffer
M'Linda Cox	Jean Seale
Marcia Grubb	Toni Swanson
Chris Hammond	Louise Wynn



The spring 2011 Watershed Stewards class enjoying their fish chipping field trip to the Washougal fish hatchery.

I also wanted to mention the Volunteer Appreciation event held February 24th. I really enjoyed hearing our speaker, Brian French, talk about champion trees in the Pacific Northwest. I learned a lot and I think it was a great way to thank all of you for volunteering in 2010.

1,000+ lifetime hours

George Pollock

500+ lifetime hours

Ben Dennis

300+ lifetime hours

Sonya Norton

100+ lifetime hours

Christina Brittain

Jeff Duval

Geri Kromminga

Rebecca Morris

Tracy Sand

Dave Shehorn

40+ hours in 2010

Jac Arnal

Ben Dennis

Tammy Mackey

Rebecca Morris

Sonya Norton

David Page

Randall Pearl

Dave Shehorn

George Pollock

40+ hours since training

Andrew Dean

Barb Florence

John Koroloff

Iris Krug

Young Leung

Bob Scheer

Joe Seley

Dan Wilson



These Watershed Stewards were recognized for reaching milestones in their volunteer hours.

A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR WATERSHED STEWARDS

By Jen Naas

Chrissie Kenoski is the picture of a precocious youth. She's smart and eager to learn. Perhaps that is why she audited the spring training with her mother, Sharon. Each week, they egged each other on to attend class even after a long day of work or school. Chrissie said her watershed education "paid off sooner than she thought" because she used her newfound contacts and knowledge to develop her science fair project.

Sharon suggested an easier project, but Chrissie charged ahead with a project centered on water quality. The project compared water quality at three different points along Salmon Creek.

Chrissie, with the help of Clean Water staff Chad Hoxeng and Ian Wigger, developed a method to test the water in rural, suburban, and urban environments using a turbidity meter to

draw conclusions about the water quality at each location. Using information from the 2010 Stream Health Report, Chrissie found that a higher percentage of forest cover correlated with a lower turbidity, which matched what she learned in Watershed Steward classes.



Chrissie testing the waters of Salmon Creek.



Chrissie showing off the findings of her water quality project at the science fair.

Chrissie's project won second place at the science fair and she was asked to take the project and represent Jason Lee Middle School at a science education day at WSU Vancouver.

At the science education day, with an impressed audience of students, teachers and parents on hand, Chrissie felt that her report and poster should also be accompanied with a call to action. In addition to presenting her findings, she also took the opportunity to suggest things people could do to improve the quality of their streams by using rain barrels, rain gardens, LID, and other ways to reduce stormwater runoff pollution.

Both mom and daughter enjoyed attending the Watershed Stewards class and learning something new and relevant in the "real world." Both continue to be enthusiastic advocates for the environment and have found something they have in common!

Steward With a Cause

By Eric Lambert

Ben Dennis heard his calling to watershed stewardship long before he became a Watershed Steward. Ben's story begins in 1997 when he still lived in the Methow Valley and was an avid fly fisherman. A ruling from the ESA, that threatened to close off the upper Columbia's tributary rivers from the Wenatchee River, prompted Ben to do some research on the issue. He put together a package, accepted by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, to create salmon and steelhead spawning sanctuaries in the upper sections of the Methow River. This resulted in keeping the river open for catch and release sport fisherman.

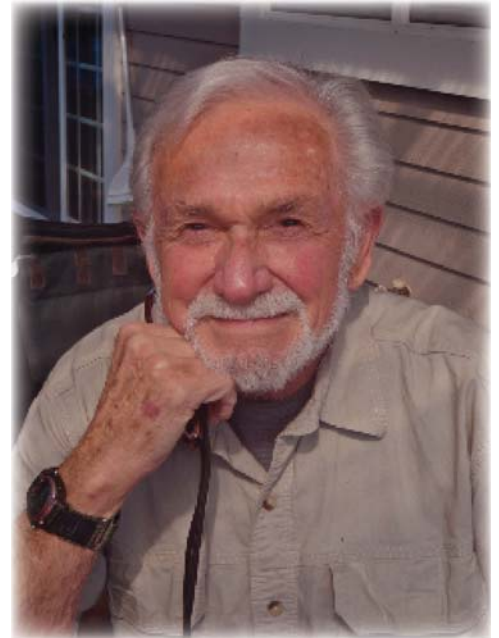
Fast forward through a decade of watershed advocacy to 2007 when Ben and his wife Leslea moved to Vancouver and we begin to recognize this fervent environmentalist who seems to have his hands in nearly every river restoration and salmon recovery project in Clark County. For Ben, becoming a Watershed Steward was more about developing a network of like minded individuals and organizations than anything else.

With skills in advertising, marketing, and graphic design, Ben utilizes his talents on the advocacy side of watershed management. He serves on boards and works with groups such as Fish First, Friends of the East Fork, Ocean Conservancy, Sierra Club and Washington State Federation of Fly Fishers. He helps create advocacy campaigns that garner support for conservation and restoration efforts.

Some of Ben's most proud contributions were made to Dave Brown's Northwest Wild Fish Rescue, a local organization dedicated to restoring salmon and steelhead runs to the Northwest. Ben's skills were instrumental to the success of the group. He designed their logo, created brochures and developed creative fund raising campaigns that helped the them gain attention and connect to valuable partners.

His most recent campaigns focus on halting the expansion of coal exports through Washington, and restoring East Fork Lewis River salmon habitats. With catchy handouts and a persuasive pitch, he explains how exporting coal hurts rivers, oceans, and global air quality. He also advocates for limiting gravel mining along the East Fork Lewis River, which he believes lowers water levels and contributes to habitat degradation for salmon and steelhead.

It's great to know that the Watershed Steward team has a member like Ben: a man with a passion for improving watershed health and a relentless approach to spreading his cause.



Ben Dennis has 500+ lifetime volunteer hours as a WS.

Spreading Watershed Stewardship One Relationship at a Time

By Eric Lambert

Erika Johnson signed up for the spring 2003 Watershed Stewards training when she was still new to Vancouver and wanted to learn more about the local environment and how humans impact it. She says the course taught her to think more carefully about stormwater and to notice the human role in watershed ecology. Since then, she approaches new projects through a lens of watershed stewardship and passes along valuable lessons to countless individuals.

For many years, Erika coordinated the Northwest Service Academy AmeriCorps LINKS program in Vancouver where she worked with AmeriCorps members engaged in environmental work throughout Clark County. In her position, Erika passed along watershed steward tips and tidbits to hundreds of AmeriCorps members and the volunteers they work with. Whether it's reminding volunteers at tree plantings to scrape their boots off in the grass rather than on the road or pointing out invasive species to unfamiliar eyes, Erika shares her knowledge of watershed stewardship far and wide.



Erika Johnson splits her time between coordinating AmeriCorps members and piloting the Roots to Road Program.

As a Watershed Steward, Erika enjoys volunteering for hands on projects, such as tree plantings, invasive removals, and other restoration work, so when I found her in a sunny garden plot on the hillside of the 78th Street Heritage Farm she seemed fully in her element. In May, 2011 Erika began coordinating a pilot program called Roots to Road, which provides training and education in small scale farming to low income and formerly homeless veterans.



The Roots to Road plot at the 78th Street Heritage Farm.

She shares her knowledge of water quality issues with the aspiring farmers and talks with them about their role as farmers in a watershed. They grow all their crops in a salmon friendly way without the use of herbicides or pesticides, while practicing efficient water usage. Hopefully, the success of the Roots to Road project will translate into a more permanent program allowing Erika to continue helping veterans and spreading her knowledge of watershed stewardship.

78TH STREET HERITAGE FARM SUSTAINABILITY

By Blake Jones

When Clark County resumed ownership of the 78th St. Heritage Farm in 2008, they made a commitment to celebrate and reflect the area's history while providing a healthy and sustainable environment for future generations. A sustainable environment exhibits responsible water management and these principles are being demonstrated all over the Heritage Farm.



Master Gardeners' certified organic vegetable plot.

A conscious effort is being made to minimize the amount of impervious surfaces for roads and paths. Additionally, Clark County installed pervious pavement for new parking spaces on the west side of the recently renovated administration building. The new surface should significantly reduce the amount of polluted stormwater runoff on site. A portion of the runoff that does occur will work its way into a planned native planted waterway mitigating much of the potential damage.



Pervious pavement at 78th St Heritage Farm.

Research indicates the organic farming taking place in the community gardens and on the Master Gardener's certified organic plot can reduce water usage. David Pimentel, a Cornell University professor of ecology and agriculture, says, "Organic farming approaches...conserve more water in the soil, induce less erosion, maintain soil quality and conserve more biological resources than conventional farming does." He concludes that organic farming increases soil quality which is conducive to water retention.

Another project on the nearby hillside should also improve water retention. The permaculture terraced forest garden has been designed to retain rainwater in a very efficient manner, mimicking natural processes. Still in its infancy, the site is irrigated during the summer but should be able to survive year round as early as 2012 without anything but the generous supply of Northwest rainwater. The combination of carefully designed terraces and straw mulch conserve water that would otherwise evaporate under the heat of the summer sun.

These projects fit with the Heritage Farm's guiding principle of sustainability and will provide water reduction education opportunities for years to come.



Various fruit trees occupy this terraced edible forest.

WATERSHED STEWARDS' WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

By Eric Lambert

Andrew Dean : Submarine Showers – To do this I get wet first, turn off the water, shampoo, turn the water back on to rinse, turn the water off, lather with soap, than turn the water on a final time to wash off. I started this in College, and I've heard that it can save hundreds of gallons a year, as well as make a dent in your water bill.

Judy Johansen: At home, I make sure all my hanging baskets hang off the porch enough so that they get watered naturally if it rains, plus I move all outside plants out from covered areas so they get watered by rain also.

Melanie Schick: The bucket flush system is a way to conserve water. If the elbow joint under the bathroom sink is removed, the sink water can drain into a five gallon bucket below. The water in the bucket is used to flush the toilet by pouring it directly in the bowl. Just be careful the bucket doesn't overflow.

David Page: We wash our vegetables and fruit in a pan and use that water for household plants. For our outdoor garden, we use soaker hoses instead of sprinklers and plant natives.

As Watershed Stewards, we focus a lot of our attention on stormwater runoff, stream health, and riparian habitat. However, with the dry summer upon us, it's a perfect time to consider a hidden component of our watershed that we rely on for daily life: our underground aquifers.

Clark County taps into three aquifers for its entire water supply: the Orchards, Troutdale, and Sandy River Mudstone aquifers. On the supply side, we can disconnect our downspouts, install French drains, and build rain gardens that help to recharge ground water, but we should also be taking steps on the demand side to conserve this precious resource that is conveniently available from our household faucets.

When asked to share their favorite or most creative water conservation practices, Watershed Stewards responses were as clever as they were entertaining. Read what your fellow Stewards suggested doing to conserve our blue gold.

Eric Lambert: I fill up a bucket with the shower water I'm waiting to get hot and use it in the garden or to flush the toilet.

Andrea Collier: I water plants with the water sucked up by my de-humidifier.

M'Linda Cox: Should we be filling up our swimming pools in the back yard or can we find alternatives to such a large use of water? If you live in the city it will raise your water bill this month and if you are on well water you're tapping into you and your neighbors' aquifer. Instead of going out and spending hundreds of dollars on a new pool, leveling the ground and waiting hours to fill it with cold water, you could join one of your local community centers like Marshall, Firstenburg or the Jim Parsley center.

Mindy Brooks: I keep a pitcher of cold water in the fridge so that I don't have to let the water run for 30 seconds to get cold.

Erin Dunbar: My husband and I recently came up with a new rule that we cannot leave a restaurant without finishing the water at the table. Now we are more aware of the water refills and only get what we can drink. It's a small change, but lots of water gets wasted in restaurants.



Port of Vancouver USA 2011 Clean Water Challenge

This year the Port of Vancouver is taking a positive step in recognizing the importance of keeping our waterways healthy by encouraging its tenants to take part in its Clean Water Challenge. This voluntary challenge aims to clean up and preserve the Columbia River as a resource by incorporating “toxic reduction activities into a reward-based acknowledgement system for achievements.” Tenants will learn methods and ideas on how to reduce water pollution through tenant newsletters, the POV website, and emails.

The POV will measure the success of the challenge through a set of criteria which includes eliminating pesticides and fertilizer use, initiating an eco-certification program for consumer products that do not contain priority toxins, training employees on how stormwater runoff affects local water bodies, using alternative equipment and vehicle washing practices that minimize runoff, moving industrial processes indoors or undercover, and proper garbage management and disposal, just to name a few.

The tenant whose actions make the biggest impact in improving water quality will receive the Environmental Tenant of the Year award at the 2012 Port RePort event. Their efforts will also be published in POV publications and on the POV website.

“In rivers, water is the last of what has past and the first of that which comes; so with present time.”
-Leonardo da Vinci

The views expressed in this newsletter reflect those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the sponsoring institutions.

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WATERSHED
STEWARDS
PROGRAM



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