

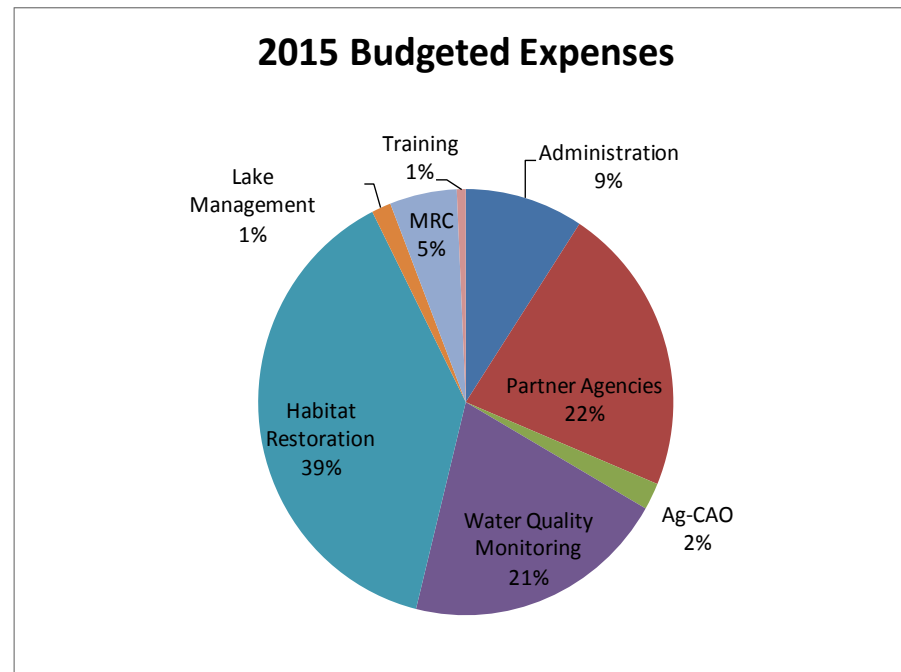


Skagit County Public Works
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
Phone: 360-416-1400
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[www.skagitcounty.net/
CleanWater](http://www.skagitcounty.net/CleanWater)

Clean Water is Everyone's Business

Clean Water Program Budget Summary



The Skagit County Clean Water Program (CWP)

Skagit County's Clean Water Program originated from the Clean Water Shellfish Protection District created in 1995, which was originally designed to reduce bacterial pollution in Samish Bay and improve the quality of local shellfish beds. The County established the Clean Water Program in 2005 and authorized the collection of special assessments "to protect and improve the water quality in shellfish growing areas" and "establish programs and projects to reduce non-point pollution threatening surface water quality in Skagit County" (SCC 6.68). The County most recently reauthorized the CWP for an additional five years in 2014 (R20140165). On your annual property tax, this is listed as "Clean Water Assessment." In 2015, the CWP special assessment fee was \$28.01 per year for a single family residence.

What was the budget for 2015?

For 2015, the CWP revenue was expected to be approximately \$2.6 million. The CWP special assessment contributes about \$1.3 million to the revenue. The additional amount of nearly \$1.3 million is primarily revenue from State and Federal grant funding.

What are CWP special assessments used for?

- Reducing non-point pollution and its negative impacts on surface waters and prevent the closures of recreational and commercial shellfish beds.
- Implementation of the County's Pollution Identification and Correction Program in the Samish and Padilla Bay Watersheds.
- Establish educational and public involvement programs to inform citizens on the causes on non-point pollution and what they can do to help address the problem.
- In addition, fees fund CWP partner agencies. Each partner has an area of expertise and implements programs to reduce non-point pollution and improve riparian habitat in Skagit County. Partners include the Skagit Conservation District, Skagit County Health Department, Skagit Conservation Education Alliance, and Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group.



Clean Water Program 2015 Annual Report



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A Message from the Commissioners

Clean water is everyone's business. We all need clean water to ensure healthy lives and safe recreation, cleaner stormwater, viable habitat for fish, shellfish, and water quality. As your commissioners representing you, we are dedicated to ensuring our waters remain clean and safe.

The purpose of this report is to share with you our mission for enhancing water quality for everyone in Skagit County. In these pages you will find the many measures we are taking to implement water quality corrective actions, educate the public and develop programs to involve our community.

We are engaged with our community to improve water quality as we work with tribes, state and local governments, our Skagit Conservation District and numerous conservation organizations to make steady progress.

Our Pollution Identification and Correction Program is producing positive results in the Samish and Padilla Watersheds. Our staff and volunteers are dedicated to working with home and property owners to help them be good stewards of this beautiful area. We encourage you to take part in the ongoing clean water efforts to improve the health of our watersheds and communities.

Sincerely,

Skagit County Board of Commissioners



Ron Wesen
District 1

Ken Dahlstedt
District 2

Lisa Janicki
District 3

History of the Clean Water Program

The CWP developed from the Clean Water (Shellfish Protection) District (CWD) created in 1995, which was originally designed to reduce bacterial pollution in Samish Bay and improve the quality of local shellfish beds by cleaning up failing septic systems in Edison and Blanchard. From 1999 – 2005, as part of the CWD, Skagit County monitored water quality through the Baseline and Samish Bay Watershed Monitoring Projects. This monitoring revealed continuing fecal coliform pollution in the Samish Basin. Fecal coliform indicates the presence of organisms that can cause diseases such as typhoid fever, viral and bacterial gastroenteritis, and hepatitis A. As a result of the continued bacterial pollution, Skagit County created the Clean Water Program to strengthen non-point pollution reduction measures, educate the public, control stormwater pollution, and develop a more thorough water-monitoring program.

All of the programs listed within this publication are wholly or partially funded by the CWP and are dedicated towards improving Skagit County's water quality.

Natural Resource Stewardship Program (NRSP)

By applying to the Skagit County Natural Resource Stewardship Program (NRSP) landowners can receive up to \$35,000 in grant funding to enhance their property, at no cost to the landowner!

This program, started in 2009, has worked with over 46 individual landowners or community groups on 38 projects next to a stream with the intent of protecting the property from bank erosion, invasive vegetation, or the desire to enhance their property for the improvement of water quality or fish habitat. Projects have included removing invasive plants and planting native vegetation, installation of livestock exclusion fencing and livestock crossings for safe passage, and the installation of logs to provide bank stabilization while benefiting fish habitat and water quality. Initial funding was received from the Department of Ecology and matched with County Clean Water funds. The program is currently on-going through-out the County with an emphasis in the Samish watershed.

Restoring Riparian Areas:

Re-establishment of native vegetation by removing streamside invasive plants, such as Himalayan blackberry, Japanese knotweed, English Ivy, and then planting native plants, such as Red Alder, twinberry, vine maple, and Western Red Cedar can help stabilize banks, shade the stream, provide a food source for invertebrates in the stream that are eaten by juvenile salmonids, and beautify ones property. Effective riparian areas also filter out harmful pollutants such as soil runoff, fertilizers, fecal coliform, and herbicides. By working closely with landowners NRSP is able to create a plan that meets the landowner's needs while still benefiting the health of the stream.

Livestock Exclusion:

Livestock can have many negative impacts on streams when their access to waterways is unrestricted.



Livestock Exclusion Fencing

These impacts can include:

- Reduced vegetation along stream banks
- Compacted soil and increased runoff
- Increased erosion resulting in poor salmon spawning gravel and property loss
- Manure-contaminated runoff resulting in high fecal coliform counts downstream

NRSP will install a variety of fencing types such as standard 4 or 5-strand barbed wire, smooth wire, no-climb horse fencing, and others. We work closely with the landowner to ensure their needs are met and their animals are contained in a safe and effective manner.

Bank Stabilizing and Restoring Fish Habitats:

Many streams in our area have failing and eroding banks. This can be caused by natural stream migration or upstream changes which increase erosion along the bank. Often landowners have limited bank vegetation which can increase rates of erosion on their property by removing all root strength below ground. Unrestricted bank erosion increases fine sediment in the system which is bad for water quality and salmon, not to mention losing property! The Natural Resource Stewardship Program can install wood in an effort to reduce bank erosion while enhancing the natural habitat and providing much needed habitat for juvenile salmonids. The NRSP program has installed over 184 pieces of wood.

Completed 2014 Projects:

Since 2009, NRSP has completed over 38 projects. County residents have restored over 80 acres of land including planting 37,916 native plants along nearly 9.5 miles! Additionally NRSP has installed 4 livestock crossings, 4.7 miles of fencing, and 184 pieces of large woody debris used for bank stability and improved salmon habitat. Projects have ranged from 0.1 acres to over 8 acres so no project is too small or too large for NRSP!

For more information, contact Emily Derenne at emilyjd@co.skagit.wa.us or (360)416-1449.



Large Woody Debris at a Restoration Site

Skagit Conservation District

Since 1944, the Skagit Conservation District (SCD) has been caring for the people and places that make our community among the most beautiful in the world. The SCD works tirelessly to keep our local farms and forests sustainable, our rivers and streams healthy, our fish and wildlife abundant, and our children and grandchildren outdoors.

The SCD is a non-regulatory division of state government governed by a board of five supervisors, who are all local landowners. All programs provided by the SCD are voluntary and free of charge. SCD works at the grassroots level with local farmers, city residents, and other rural and suburban landowners, in an effort to develop locally-driven solutions to natural resource concerns.

Resource Conservation Planning and Technical Assistance for Commercial and Small Livestock Operations
Soil, water, air, plants and animals can all be adversely affected by varied land uses. Poorly managed agricultural operations can be a major contributor to non-point source pollution. The SCD provides free technical assistance to farmers and landowners who seek out ways to minimize the impacts of livestock operations on soil and water resources.

Engaging the Community

The Skagit Conservation District proudly supports many important education and public involvement programs that provide opportunities to inform landowners, residents, teachers and students, about local conservation issues and empower them to take ownership and make a difference in our community. Over the last year, the SCD worked closely with many partners to promote conservation education in our local area through a variety of programs such as:

Storm Water Education Program: The SCD works in partnership with Skagit County and the Cities of Mount Vernon, Burlington, Sedro-Woolley, and Anacortes to raise awareness of the impacts of stormwater pollution and to promote environmentally friendly business and residential practices that minimize storm water impacts.

Volunteer Programs: Citizen involvement is crucial to water resource protection in Skagit County and SCD values the opportunity to engage and work with our community residents.



Over the last year over 170 local residents participated in the District's Watershed Masters, Skagit Stream Team and Storm Team, Marine Biotoxin Monitoring, Backyard Conservation and Community Wildlife Habitat programs, contributing over 4,900 (reported) volunteer hours.

Youth Education: Connecting our youth with the natural world, giving them a time and place to freely interact with nature, and introducing them to good environmental habits at a young age, are important key factors in our journey to a more sustainable community. In addition to providing storm water presentations in the classroom, the SCD continues to host the Annual 6th Grade Conservation Tour (775 students), Annual Soil & Water Stewardship Week poster and support the Annual Regional, State, and National Envirothon competitions for high school students.

Clean Samish Initiative

As a local Clean Water Partner, over the last year, SCD served on the Clean Samish Initiative Executive and Education Committees, key accomplishments included:

- Provided farm planning and technical assistance to 31 landowners and completed farm plans for 12 landowners in the watershed.
- Conducted a social marketing study on the adoption of conservation practices by small acreage landowners in the Thomas Creek sub-basin.
- Established an agricultural Manure Share Program.
- Hosted 6 educational workshops for a variety of audiences
- Co-sponsored the Kid in Nature: Families Outdoors at Pomona Grange Park event
- Networked and hosted monthly meetings with Samish watershed neighbors
- Hosted educational displays at 8 educational events.
- Established Friday Creek Storm Team monitoring run
Hosted educational display and hands-on watershed-based activities at 5 Samish watershed events – 480 attendees

For information about Skagit Conservation District's programs, phone (360) 428-4313 or visit our website: www.skagitcd.org.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Established in 1999, the Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (SMRC) is one of seven citizen-based advisory committees formed under the congressionally authorized Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (NWSI), as part of a grassroots effort to protect, enhance, and restore our local marine resources. The Northwest Straits Commission provides regional support and coordination to all seven MRCs. Skagit MRC relies heavily on partnerships and a large volunteer base to accomplish projects and achieve long-term success. SMRC has been primarily supported by federal grant funding through the NWSI and the NWSC, and partly by the Clean Water Program (CWP) and other grant funding administered through the Northwest Straits Foundation, a non-profit organization established to support the Initiative. Below are some of the 2015 highlights:



Forage Fish Habitat Surveys

- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Over 250 visitors attended the twelfth annual Fidalgo Bay Day held on August 29, 2015. The purpose of this free educational event is to help increase public awareness of the marine environment and foster environmental stewardship. Visitors learn about the marine ecosystem and the plants and animals that live there.
- **Salish Sea Stewards:** Skagit MRC again offered the 40 hour volunteer citizen science training program which trained 25 new volunteers who contributed over 950 hours of volunteer service.
- **Beach Naturalist:** Skagit MRC contracted with the Coastal Volunteer Partnership at Padilla Bay to train and coordinate Beach Naturalists and schedule several interpretive programs at Sunset Beach, Washington Park in Anacortes throughout the summer.
- **Oil Spill Response Workshop:** Skagit MRC and the Northwest Straits Foundation co-hosted the Oil Spill Response & Preparedness workshop on February 25, 2015 at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve.
- **Ocean Health Forum:** Skagit MRC and the NWSC co-sponsored the Ocean Health Forum on June 11, 2015.

Marine Habitats Protection and Restoration

◆ **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** Skagit MRC partnered with the Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) and Washington State Parks, in a coordinated effort, to remove approximately 540 feet (1,600 tons) of shoreline armoring and restore 0.6 acres of shoreline. Armor removal will directly benefit the nearshore ecosystem processes as well as improve sediment transport processes, improve forage fish spawning habitat, and improve nearshore habitat for shellfish and other invertebrates.



Fidalgo Bay Day Beach Seining

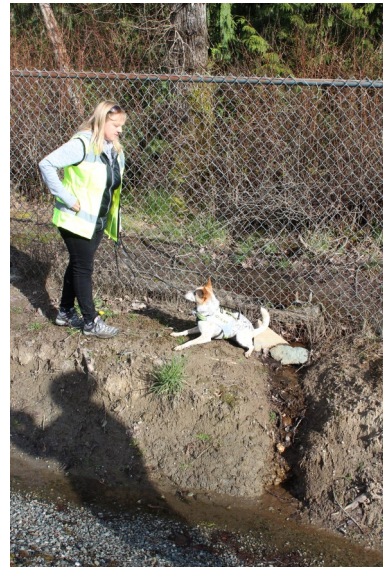
◆ **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration:** Skagit MRC partnered with the Northwest Straits Foundation to complete a feasibility study and project design for the Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration project. If funded, the project will include removal of 2,500 cubic yards of riprap along 770 linear feet of shoreline. The project would benefit habitat for forage fish, shellfish, and other invertebrates.

◆ **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** In 2015, Skagit MRC partnered with the PSRF and WDFW to monitor growth, density, and survivorship of the nearly 1,500 juvenile abalone that were introduced at four locations in Skagit County around Burrows and Allan Islands in March 2014. An additional 2,300 genetically diverse juvenile abalone seed were outplanted at four established sites around Burrows and Allan Islands and two new sites at Cypress Island in the early spring of 2015.

◆ **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Since 2002, Skagit MRC has been working in cooperation with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund and other partners, to establish several native oyster beds in Fidalgo Bay near Anacortes, Washington. To date, over 1.5 million Olympia oyster seed has been planted throughout Fidalgo Bay and Pacific oyster shell were deployed to enhance habitat for native oyster settlement.

Questions about Skagit County's Annual Water Quality Report and the monitoring program can be directed to Tracy Alker at Tracya@co.skagit.wa.us or (360) 336-9400.

Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program



The mission of the Skagit County's Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program is to protect the public from waterborne illness and other water quality related hazards. Water that is polluted with fecal bacteria has been our primary concern, however PIC methods can be used for nutrients, sediment, temperature and other pollutants. Skagit County's PIC Program has been operating since 2010 and has been successful in reducing levels of fecal coliform bacteria in the Samish Bay watershed. In 2015, the program expanded to the Padilla Bay watershed.

Water quality monitoring is the core of any PIC program. Traditionally, sampling sites are identified near the confluence of streams and are monitored on a regular basis. Where high levels of pollutants are found, source identification sampling (sometimes referred to as "bracket sampling") occurs upstream to identify an area where the pollution is coming from. Staff then follow up with site visits to property owners in the focus area to identify the source of pollution, then work with property owners to correct any problems that are found.

Some pollutants are easier to track than others, and determining the source of the pollutant can sometimes be difficult. Some pollutants such as pesticides have their source only in human activities, while others like bacteria and nitrogen may come from human activities or natural sources. Bacteria in water are particularly variable, fluctuating frequently so that two samples taken one after another occasionally have very different results. As such, tracking bacterial pollution often requires several samples through time in order to identify a pattern.

Questions about Skagit County's PIC Program can be directed to Karen DuBose at kdubose@co.skagit.wa.us or (360) 416-1400.



Clean Samish Initiative

The Clean Samish Initiative (CSI) is a partnership between state and local agencies, tribes and volunteers to identify and correct sources of bacterial pollution in the Samish Bay watershed. The partnership was established in 2009 after very high levels of bacteria were discovered in the Samish River in 2008. Led by Skagit County, the CSI partners developed a program to identify and eliminate fecal coliform bacteria sources, with the goal of reducing bacteria levels so that the Samish River meets state water quality standards.

During the spring of 2015, the CSI partnership teamed up with the Governor's Office to reevaluate our activities, experiment with new methods, and improve our processes.

Due to strong community participation and stewardship activities, we are continuing to make progress and are closer to our goal than ever. Local landowners have worked with the Skagit Conservation District to install fencing keeping livestock away from the water, collect and compost manure, and implement other best management practices designed to keep pollution out of the water. Over 1800 homeowners in the Samish watershed are up to date on their septic system inspections. Also, local dairies have worked to protect water quality by adding winter manure storage and reducing the collection of water in manured areas.

Skagit County, and the Washington Departments of Ecology and Agriculture continue to explore the watershed to identify potential pollution sources and get them fixed.

Questions about the Clean Samish Initiative can be directed to Karen DuBose at kdubose@co.skagit.wa.us or (360) 416-1400.



Fish Habitat Restoration Program

The Fish Habitat Restoration Program is an on-going County program dedicated to protecting and restoring fish and fish habitat.

Projects designed to improve fish habitat also have other water quality benefits. Riparian vegetation acts as a filter by removing pollutants before they reach streams while at the same time providing distance between pollutant sources and streams and stabilizing banks. Riparian habitat restoration therefore results in improved stream temperatures and reduced pollution levels.

The Fish Habitat Restoration Program is guided by the Habitat Improvement Plan (HIP). The mission of the HIP is to create and advance restoration strategies that support Skagit County goals for promoting the health of our watershed, improved water quality and enhanced habitat for salmon. The HIP provides a road map for restoring salmonid habitat and improving water quality by identifying short, medium, and long-term project goals. To read the current HIP, visit: www.skagitcounty.net/HIP.

In order to complete their spawning migration, salmon must be able to swim upstream to riffles where they can lay eggs before dying. Older culverts under roads however, act as barriers for fish attempting to make the upstream migration. Small culverts oftentimes present a velocity barrier for fish attempting to migrate through them and perched culverts prevent fish from jumping and entering the culvert. Conversely, large culverts and bridges allow water to flow through at a more natural rate providing a more stable stream environment for fish that also reduces flooding problems. Reducing flooding and erosion problems also improves downstream water quality throughout Skagit County.

Skagit County has over 800 miles of roads with hundreds of culverts. In the past two decades, the County has replaced many small, inefficient culverts with larger culverts or other fish-friendly crossings. Listed below are some of the Fish Habitat



Salmon Habitat Monitoring in Progress



projects from 2015:

- Granstrom Creek Habitat Improvement
- North Fork Setback Design
- Hansen Creek Reach 5 Design
- Martin Road Culvert Removal Study
- South Fork Delta Channel Design
- Freestad Lk Estuary Restoration Design

Questions about Skagit County's Habitat Improvement Plan and restoration projects can be directed to Jeff McGowan at jeffmc@co.skagit.wa.us or (360) 416-1400.

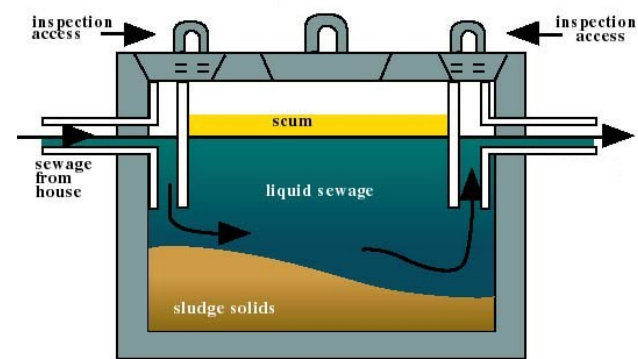


Volunteer Planting Native Vegetation

On-site Septic Systems– Skagit County Health Department

On-site Sewage (Septic) Systems Inspections

Skagit County Department of Public Health (SCDPH) assures that on-site sewage (septic) systems are designed, installed and maintained so that the effluent discharged to the ground does not contaminate ground or surface water. The Clean Water Program money goes to the operations and maintenance (O/M) program. Like cars, septic systems need to have a regular check-up and maintenance to make sure they work as designed. Maintenance specialists certified by our Department check all the parts of a septic system which can include tanks, pumps and drain fields.



A Typical Septic System Design

Inspections and Repairs

Septic systems are required to have periodic inspections by a (SCDPH) certified operations and maintenance specialist. Conventional gravity systems need an inspection every three years and all other types of systems need annual inspections.

Our inspection efforts are focused in Marine Recovery Areas (MRAs) because environmental health impact is the greatest. Septic systems on shorelines pose a greater threat of contamination to surface waters.

A septic system owner whose property is not on a shoreline and whose system is a conventional gravity system may be eligible to do their own inspection after appropriate education and oversight by SCDPH.

Quality Assurance

Public Health started a quality assurance program for our certified O/M specialists. We inspected a sampling of septic systems after receiving reports from an O/M specialist. In comparing the two inspections, we found 99% of inspections were factual and complete. Annual certification may be denied if repeat deficiencies are observed. If you have any concerns about an inspection, please contact our office.

Septics Education

Septic 101 training is available on-line and is free.

Rebates

SCDPH received funding to provide \$100 rebates on inspections and \$100 rebates for installations of septic tank risers per household. Rebates are available for work done by a certified professional between January 1, 2016 and September 30, 2017 or until those funds are exhausted, whichever comes first. To be eligible for a rebate, the applicant must have taken the Septic 101 course and have had the work completed by a certified professional. See the SCDPH website for the application form and eligibility requirements.

Financial Help

Low-interest loans are available for covering the entire cost of a repair or replacement of a septic system. Loans can be spread out over many years to reduce the monthly cost. For details, contact Clyde Williams at 360-416-1757, Treasurer Office.

Any questions, just contact Skagit County Environmental Public Health at 360-336-9474 or EH@co.skagit.wa.us.



Septic Inspection in Progress

Rebate Program

What is it?

\$100 rebate for septic system inspections AND \$100 rebate for installation of risers and lids. Funded by an EPA grant through the Washington State Department of Health.

Is it for certain places?

These rebates are for any eligible work done on a septic system in Skagit County.

Why would I need it?

Regular inspections help prevent septic system failures. Risers make the septic system easier to inspect later. That means protecting public health and improving water quality.

Water Quality Monitoring Program

Skagit County Public Works operates the Skagit County Water Quality Monitoring Program (SCMP) as part of the County's Monitoring and Adaptive Management component of the current Critical Areas for Ongoing Agriculture (SCC 14.24.120)(Ag-CAO). The monitoring program consists of 40 sites throughout western Skagit County, located both within and outside of areas zoned Agricultural Natural Resources Lands (Ag-NRL) and Rural Resource.

The SCMP has been in place since October, 2003. Each sampling site is visited biweekly (26 times per year). Parameters measured include dissolved oxygen, temperature, pH, turbidity, conductivity, and salinity. Samples are also obtained for laboratory analysis of fecal coliform bacteria (each visit) and nutrients (quarterly).

The original intent of the SCMP was to determine if positive or negative trends in water quality were occurring in areas affected by the Ag-CAO, and to determine if those trends were unique to agricultural areas or more widespread throughout the county. Data analysis indicates that for the length of the study, there are several statistically significant trends in water quality in Skagit County. As of the end of 2014 (latest data available), deleterious trends outnumbered improving trends. Positive and negative trends occurred in both agricultural and reference locations and there was no overall pattern to trend location with respect to zoning.

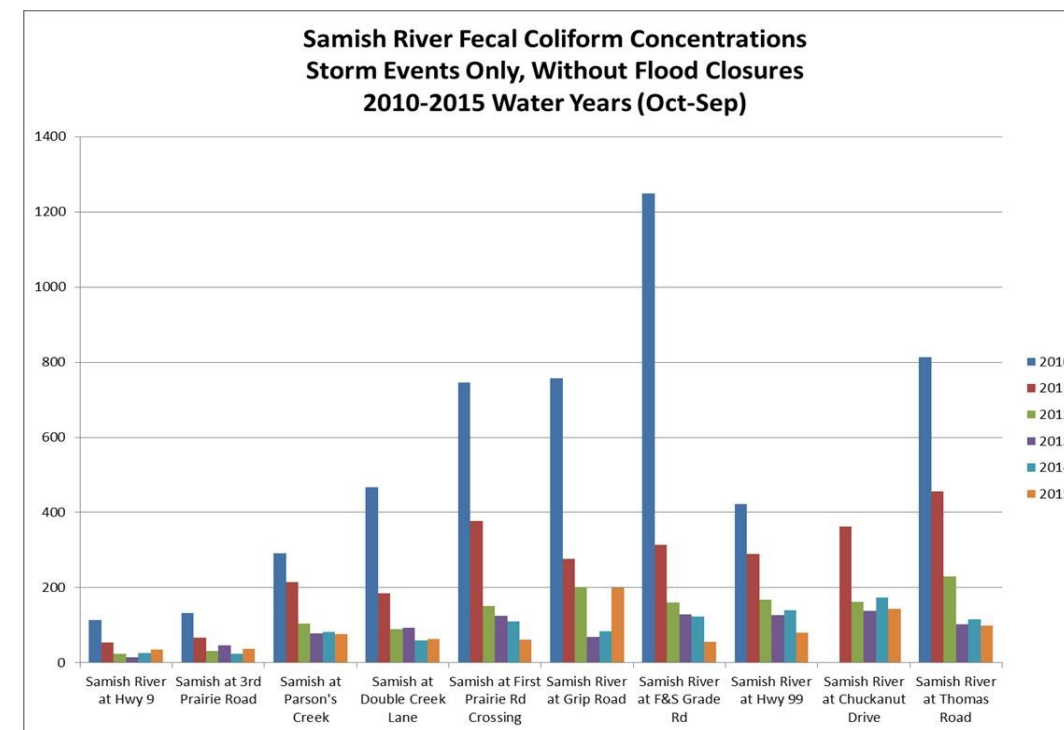
Several years ago, SCMP monitoring revealed fecal coliform problems in the Samish River. This finding led to the formation of the Clean Samish Initiative (CSI).

Part of the CSI effort is a Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program designed to locate and remediate sources of pollution through cooperative, common sense measures.

Skagit County has since expanded the PIC program to address fecal coliform pollution in the Padilla Bay watershed. Water quality monitoring remains an important component of the Skagit County Public Works – Natural Resource Division functions. Water quality is an important barometer of natural resource conditions as we seek to protect and restore our aquatic resources. County water quality staff work closely with other County departments, state and federal resource agencies, natural resource volunteer organizations, and the general public to inform them of the results generated by our programs and seek their assistance in addressing water quality issues in Skagit County.



“Each sample site is visited every two weeks to measure temperature, dissolved oxygen, fecal coliform and other parameters”



Questions about Skagit County's Annual Water Quality Report and the monitoring program can be directed to Rick Haley at rickh@co.skagit.wa.us or (360) 416-1400



Skagit Conservation Education Alliance (SCEA)

SCEA is a community based, non-profit dedicated to protecting and enhancing water quality and watersheds throughout Skagit County. SCEA accomplishes these goals by:

- Building cooperative and collaborative alliances with community residents and fellow conservation organizations.
- Hosting creative, fun education programs for the whole family that build a greater knowledge and lasting relationship to Skagit ecosystems.
- Supporting and inspiring grassroots projects that focus on conservation and protection of water, soil and related natural resources.



SCEA's annual **Skagit Watershed Letterbox Trail** ran **June -September 2015** and proved a successful quest for all those involved! Along with 15 conservation partners, SCEA hid Letterboxes throughout Skagit County. Clues led Letterboxers along a journey through the Skagit Watersheds to find boxes full of educational facts, prizes and stamps to take and record in their journals. Truly a fun filled activity for all ages.

Watershed Art and Discovery Day was hosted by SCEA staff, board members and volunteers on Saturday, June 27th at Padilla Bay Research Reserve. More than 60 children and families tapped into their inner creativity to explore Skagit Watersheds. Through collage making, jellyfish constructing, sculpting, stamp making and building wildlife habitat villages, children were able to



learn and discover the wonders of local estuaries and the creatures that inhabit our local ecosystem.

SCEA continued to serve as the lead for **Skagit ECO Net** in 2015. As the coordinator, SCEA convenes and facilitates meetings, participates in regional ECO Net activities, actively recruits new membership and facilitates communication between ECO Net and Puget Sound Partnership. Skagit ECO Net is a community of environmental, conservation and stewardship educators and professionals who encourage education, communication and outreach through connections and collaboration.

SCEA's is empowering people to help protect and heal Skagit County Watersheds and the Salish Sea.

Strategic placement of portable toilets during fishing and hunting seasons plays an important role in reducing high fecal coliform counts in the Samish River. In 2015 SCEA produced signs for **Clean Water in the Samish Watershed** to promote the usage of portable toilets.

SCEA was proud to participate in many 2015 events hosted by our conservation partners. SCEA's popular **Display Booth and Filter Feeder Tank Demonstrations** were featured at community events throughout the county including: Storming the Sound, Fidalgo Bay Day, Taylor Shellfish-tival, Kids in Nature, Festival of Family Farms, Skagit River Salmon Festival.

www.skagitcleanwater.org
(360) 428-0154



Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group

The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) is celebrating a quarter of a century of working with landowners, partners, and volunteers to restore salmon habitat and ensure clean watersheds for our community. As a nonprofit organization, SFEG relies on membership, donations, grants and partnerships to restore wild salmon populations for future generations. Funding from Skagit County's Clean Water program expands our ability to offer free educational programs to area students and take them out of the classroom to apply what they have learned in a field setting.

Enhancing Habitat

Volunteers and staff worked with many partners to plant over 29,000 native trees and shrubs along Skagit County's rivers, streams, and shorelines. These projects restore vegetation along waterways which is a critical component to decrease pollution in our waterbodies and improve water quality and habitat in our watersheds.

Educating our Youth

In 2015, Skagit County Clean Water funds helped SFEG provide out of classroom education opportunities to over 1,100 local students. This brings a total of 11,000 students that SFEG has engaged in science based environmental education programs over the past 25 years. Students are learning about way more than salmon in all three of our youth education programs (**Salmon in the Classroom, Kids in Creeks and Junior Stream Stewards**). Students are having outdoor experiences that are connecting them to the natural world. They are learning that healthy salmon means healthy rivers, which also means healthy communities for our future.

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

SFEG continued to assist the **Clean Samish Initiative** by educating Samish community members via outreach events, as well as securing additional grant funding and providing assistance to restore habitat, remove invasive knotweed plants, and monitor water quality improvements in partnership with Skagit County, the Samish Indian Nation and the Department of Ecology.

SFEG continued as a primary organizer of the 4th annual **Skagit River Salmon Festival** held at the Swinomish Tribal Community's Waterfront Park on a beautiful sunny Saturday in September. Over 6,000 people attended the Festival to learn, engage and celebrate the amazing Skagit watershed and its resources.

MONITORING OUR PROGRESS

Skagit County's Clean Water Program helps SFEG to train volunteers to track progress at habitat restoration sites. SFEG provides training to volunteers so they can become citizen scientists in our watersheds and collect valuable data related to vegetation survival and growth, forage fish spawning on our beaches, water quality in our streams, and adult and juvenile salmon use. In 2015, volunteers and student interns donated 1,800 hours collecting essential



data to share with funders, researchers and public agencies. This data is incredibly important to developing future projects and understanding the science of watershed restoration.

Major Achievements from 25 years

- 145,000 hours donated by community volunteers to watershed restoration and stewardship
- 50 miles of streams and shorelines revegetated with native plants
- 10 miles of fences built to exclude livestock and protect sensitive aquatic habitat
- 100,000 native plants grown for restoration projects in SFEG's own native plant nursery
- 20 miles of river and stream habitat enhanced through restoration actions
- 100,000 community members reached through outreach programs
- 11,000 students engaged in science-based environmental education programs

For an up to date list of volunteer opportunities and more information about how you or your group can help restore salmon habitat and keep our waterways clean and healthy for our communities, **please visit www.skagitfisheries.org or call 360-336-0172.**

