

# CLEAN SAMISH INITIATIVE

Skagit County Public Works



## Resources to help you achieve your goals

Well, 2020 turned into a doozy of a year, didn't it? We're all home a lot more lately, and projects around the home, farm, and garden are keeping us busy. That's why we're dedicating this newsletter to sharing all the different resources that are available to help you meet your goals.

Maybe you know what you want to do, but don't know where to start. Could you use some financial help to get a farm project off the ground? Do you want to prevent expensive future problems with your septic system? Or maybe you want to help your community out during this particularly difficult time.

No matter who you are, you'll find useful tips and resources inside. Take a look!



## INSIDE:

Small farm improvement grants  
Page 2

Tips and tricks to extend the life of your septic system  
Page 2

Feed your community instead of the wildlife  
Page 3

Pledge to scoop the poop and become a Neighborhood Ambassador  
Page 3

FREE Resources!  
Page 4



## Small farm improvement grants now available!

We're excited to share that Skagit County has funding to help farm owners the Samish and Padilla Bay watersheds pay for and install best management practices for their farm. We are able to pay for 75% of the cost to install:

- A heavy use area for your farm animals
- A manure storage area
- New gutters and downspouts on farm buildings.

You would be responsible for 25% of the cost of construction. We can help with actual construction, too. These funds are only available to those with farm animals on their property.

We can fund the three practices below at 100%, so it would cost you nothing:

- Fencing animals away from streams (buffer width will vary from 35 to 100 feet depending on the type of stream)
- Off-stream watering facilities
- Riparian plantings in the buffer area.



If you're interested, please contact Emily Derenne at [emilyjd@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:emilyjd@co.skagit.wa.us), or 360-416-1449. Our funding isn't going to last forever, so don't delay!

## Tips and tricks to extend the life of your septic systems

Septic systems may be out of sight, but they should never be out of mind! Prolong the life of your septic system with these simple tips to help you prevent expensive repairs and reduce the chances of a failure.



**Fix leaks!** They're wasting water and stressing out your septic system. Check your toilet for leaks by putting a few drops of food coloring in the tank. If color shows up in the bowl in 30 minutes without flushing, you have a leak. Replacing a flapper is very easy and cheap!



**Spread out your water use.** Your septic system can only handle so much water at once. Staggering showers, laundry, and other high water use allows your septic system enough time to treat all the water you're sending it.



**Only flush pee, poo, and toilet paper.** Never flush anything else, especially wipes! Even so-called "flushable" wipes do not degrade enough in your septic system, and may clog pipes. Wipes, dental floss, hair...they all belong in the trash!

## Help a neighbor: Donate your leftover tree fruit!

Do you have more fruit on your trees than you can use? Put that fruit to good use in the community!

Skagit Gleaners is a local organization that will come pick your excess fruits and veggies and make sure it gets into the hands of those who need it most in our community. Find them at [skagitgleaners.org](http://skagitgleaners.org). Looking for something more local? Ask around on local neighborhood lists, or check with your neighbors. There's probably someone who has been eyeing your tree and hoping you'd share.

Can't find a human to take it? Try a local farmer! Some will take your leftovers to feed to their animals. Whatever you do, please don't feed the wildlife. Feeding wildlife can hurt them by creating dangerous



interactions with humans and our pets. And in many cases, they contribute to water quality problems. Isn't it better to help a neighbor?

## Take the We Scoop Pledge to help local farmers, and consider becoming a Neighborhood Ambassador

Wouldn't it be great if there was a poop fairy who could just make dog poop disappear? Sadly, there's no magic solution to cleaning up after our dogs.

**HAVE YOU  
PLEGGED YET?**

We wish there was, because we keep tracing mystery bacteria hotspots to dog poop! In one case, it's being left on the banks of the river. In other cases, it's tossed on the outskirts of yards when people "clean" their yards. In all cases, it adds up to a big problem.

Dog poop doesn't just disappear. Bacteria, viruses, and worms in it can live up to a year, long after it *looks* gone. Piles of it on the edges of the property sit and fester until rain washes it into nearby ditches, and then the river. This pollution hurts farmers that depend on clean water. They have to shut down until the river clears.



That means workers don't get paid, which hurts our whole community. The solution? Scoop it. Bag it. Trash it.

There's no such thing as the poop fairy. Promise to be a good neighbor by taking the We Scoop Pledge at [www.publicinput.com/dogpooppledge](http://www.publicinput.com/dogpooppledge). You can even sign up to be a Neighborhood Ambassador. We'll give you a fun yard sign to post, and some dog poop bag dispensers to share with your neighbors.





Skagit County Public Works Department  
1800 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

## FREE Resources for getting the most out of your time and space

### Septic Systems 101 Online

Learn the basics of owning and operating a septic system to keep it working well for as long as possible.  
[skagitcounty.net/Septics101online](http://skagitcounty.net/Septics101online)

### WSU Pasture Management Program

WSU Skagit County Extension has put together an excellent program full of resources for small farmers. Keep your farm animals and pastures healthy for years to come with their resource library, monthly farm planner, and regular online classes. Even seasoned farmers have learned from this program. Don't miss it!  
[extension.wsu.edu/skagit/pasture-management](http://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/pasture-management)

**PoopSmart.org:** A central source of information for homeowners. Find how to get information about your septic system, a list of certified septic inspectors, money-saving tips for small farmers, and more!

### Natural Yard Care Tips

Fall is the best time to renovate lawns and plant new landscaping because fall rains give those new plants plenty of water as they settle in. Get great tips for what plants to use in our area, how to choose safe pesticides, and more at [naturalyardcare.org](http://naturalyardcare.org).



### Learn More!

[skagitcounty.net/cleanwater](http://skagitcounty.net/cleanwater)

Find us on 

@SkagitCountyCleanWater

 **YouTube**

[bit.ly/CleanWaterYouTube](http://bit.ly/CleanWaterYouTube)