

# CLEAN SAMISH INITIATIVE



*Photo of Samish Bay, taken from the Samish Overlook*

With the fall season here, we can look forward to all of that rain we've been missing for so long. It will be great for the plants and wildlife, but a lot of rain also reminds us of the water quality issues we continue to face in our beloved Samish watershed. We hope that this newsletter provides helpful tips and resources, whether you own a small farm, have a septic system, own pets, or would simply like to learn about improving your community's water quality.

Thanks for all of your help in protecting clean water in Skagit County!

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## Funding and resources available for small farm improvements!

Struggling with wet pastures and mud this fall and winter? Do you need help moving animals to higher, drier areas to protect your pasture and animal health? Do you have manure that needs to be applied this fall or stored over the wet season? You don't have to do it alone!

The friendly staff at the **Skagit Conservation District** can support you with **FREE** and confidential advice and assistance, as well as possible funding to help pay for improvements. Find them at [skagitcd.org](http://skagitcd.org), or (360) 428-4313.

Additionally, the **Pasture Management Program**, brought to you by the WSU Skagit Extension, is another great resource for information. Find them at [extension.wsu.edu/skagit/pasture-management](http://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/pasture-management).



Skagit County's **Natural Resource Stewardship Program** is also available to you. This program is non-regulatory and **NO FINANCIAL MATCH** is required. We can help you fence out livestock, remove invasive plants, and replant.

Contact our Habitat Restoration Specialist, Emily Derenne, at [emilyjd@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:emilyjd@co.skagit.wa.us) or 360-416-1449, or download an application at [skagitcounty.net/Departments/PublicWorksNaturalResourcesManagement/stewardship.htm](http://skagitcounty.net/Departments/PublicWorksNaturalResourcesManagement/stewardship.htm)



### **Livestock Exclusion**

*Prevent access of livestock to waterways by fencing. Alternate watering systems such as off-channel watering are eligible projects.*

### **Riparian Enhancement**

*Remove invasive species such as blackberries, Japanese Knotweed, butterfly bush, English Ivy and others.*

*Plant native species such as red alder, cedar, Douglas Fir, twinberry and vine maple.*

### **Bank Stability**

*Improve bank stability and available fish habitat by creating a pool-riffle structure. This could include small scale installations of rootwads and logs.*



## Take advantage of the Septic System Inspection Rebate Program today!

Failing septic systems can leak into nearby ditches or streams where the sewage eventually ends up on our beaches where we swim, boat, and fish.

Follow these simple tips to prolong the life of your septic system avoid expensive repairs and reduce the chances of a failure:

- Fix leaks! They waste water and stress your septic system. Check toilets 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.
- 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.



Routine inspections save time and money in the long run. A septic system is a huge property investment, so maintaining the one you've got is cheaper than replacing the entire system.

The county is offering \$100 rebates for septic system inspections, pumping, or installation of risers and lids. Claim up to \$200 per household. Get details at [skagitcounty.net/septic](http://skagitcounty.net/septic) or (360) 416-1500.

## What to do with yard waste and how to avoid attracting unwanted wildlife

Our yards are our outdoor homes: fun, great spaces for relaxing. But in taking care of them, we can sometimes unintentionally create pollution, harming our environment and our families.

Dumping lawn clippings, yard waste, or leftover fruit from your fruit trees in or next to stream banks or waterways is illegal. It can produce a concentrated area of nutrient pollution, attract unwanted wildlife (like raccoons), and add to the fecal coliform bacteria problem!

What to do with yard waste? You can leave lawn clippings on the lawn. They'll slowly break down and act as fertilizer. Other yard waste and inedible fruit can be composted. We have lots of resources about composting at [skagitcounty.net/compost](http://skagitcounty.net/compost), and you can find out more about all things natural yard care at [naturalyardcare.org](http://naturalyardcare.org). If fruit is edible, you can contact Skagit Gleaners, 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). Whatever you do, please don't illegally dump yard waste or feed the wildlife.



*Raccoon latrine on top of yard debris the beach*



*Yard waste that has been dumped on the beach*



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

## Free Resources and Community Events

### Septic Systems 101 and 201 Online Training Guide

Learn the basics of owning and operating a septic system to keep it working well for as long as possible. [skagitcounty.net/Septics101online](https://www.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. Don't miss it!  
[extension.wsu.edu/skagit/pasture-management](https://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!

### Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group Fall Planting Parties

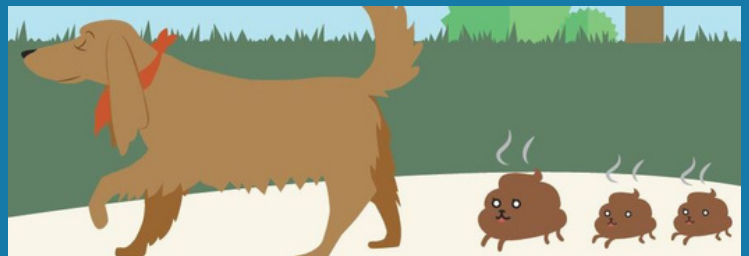
Join the fun and be an environmental steward! Volunteer events can be found at [skagitfisheries.org/events/category/upcoming-events](https://www.skagitfisheries.org/events/category/upcoming-events)

## Take the We Scoop Pledge

Too bad there is no such thing as the poop fairy. We wish there was, because this past year we completed DNA tracking in the creeks and ditches throughout the watershed and found that almost every site was positive for dog poop!

Please join us in pledging to be PoopSmart by scooping the poop in your yard, on the trail, or at the park regularly!

Take the We Scoop Pledge and become a Neighborhood Ambassador at <https://www.publicinput.com/dogpooppledge>.



### Learn More!

[skagitcounty.net/cleanwater](https://www.skagitcounty.net/cleanwater)

Find us on 

@SkagitCountyCleanWater

 YouTube

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