

WATERSHED WISE

MASON CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Fall 2017

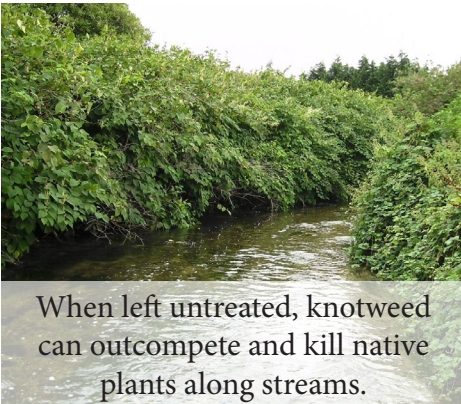


Habitat restoration crew in the Skokomish Valley.

Crew Lead Brayden Raber and members Kendall Carman, Mathew Madara, Justin Leigh, and Marissa Newby

RESTORATION CREW PLANTS OVER 25,000 TREES

Mason Conservation District takes part in many restoration projects in the county and we could not get this work done without our excellent restoration crew members. Brayden Raber has been the Crew Lead for just about two years and before that as a crew member. He coordinates a team of four to manage knotweed and other invasives during the summer months, and plants trees and shrubs along streams and riparian corridors during the winter months. This year they planted over 25,000 native plants in riparian areas around the county, exceeding our goals for the season. During the fall and spring they perform maintenance on the planting areas which consists of brushing down competing vegetation, treating invasive species, and performing plant protector maintenance. If all goes as planned the crew will plant another 27,000 this planting season.



When left untreated, knotweed can outcompete and kill native plants along streams.

This last month the crew completed knotweed control in the Skokomish Valley from the upper most extent down to Hwy 101 for the second consecutive year; results from last year's control efforts yielded 80-90% control. This season the crew began control efforts downstream of Hwy 101 and will continue that effort for the rest of the season. The restoration crew also completed the first comprehensive knotweed control effort of the Mill and Goldsborough Watershed this summer. Knotweed is an invasive plant introduced from Asia. Among a myriad of problems associated with knotweed, once established it spreads easily along waterways where it outcompetes the native vegetation that wildlife depend on.

NRCS EQIP PROGRAM APPLICATION DUE DATE COMING SOON!

The Natural Resource Conservation Service provides cost-share funding for a variety of Best Management Practices. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to plan and implement conservation practices that improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related natural resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland. EQIP may also help producers meet Federal, State, Tribal, and local environmental regulations. The first application due date for 2018 funding has just been announced. Complete applications submitted by November 17, 2017, will be the first considered. If additional financial assistance could be of help for the implementation of improvements (BMPs) on your land, you will want to begin the EQIP application process right away!



EQIP has both General and Special Focus programs. General program funding supports the implementation of BMPs from Cross-Fencing to Heavy Use Area Protection, and Special Focus programs include High Tunnels, Organic Initiative, and Conservation Activity Plans for Pollinator Habitat and Transition to Organic. EQIP may share up to **75 percent of the costs** of certain conservation practices.

There are many hoops to jump through before your application can be considered and funds are awarded on a rolling basis, so the sooner you have a complete application to submit, the better your chances are to receive an award. A step-by-step instructional page to help guide you through the application process is available at Mason Conservation District. Contact Amy at: arosen@masoncd.org or 360-427-9436 ext. 112 for a copy and more information. It's a great opportunity!



Get ready for the 2018 Native Plant Sale! We will start taking orders December 1st on our website. Mason Conservation District promotes the use of native plants and strives to provide you with a variety of high quality, affordable bare-root and small potted plants. These plants are proven growers in our variable climatic conditions and have been selected because of their beauty and adaptability to most growing conditions.

You will be able to pick up your plant orders on Friday, February 23rd and Saturday, February 24th 2018 just in time for spring planting.

If you would like to volunteer to help sort seedlings please contact Brianna at bosinski@masoncd.org or (360) 427-9436 ext. 103

View, Order, and Pay for plants Online starting December 1st on our website www.masoncd.org

LIVING ALONG THE WATERFRONT IN MASON COUNTY



Local stories about living along the waterfront in Mason County.

Story by local residents Pat Karman and Corinne Poole

We are stewards of an 8-acre parcel of property with about 200 feet of no-bank waterfront on North Bay, which we purchased in 2001. Before moving here, we lived in a wonderful neighborhood in Seattle, but we felt a pull to the water, having both grown up on the Salish Sea.

We were looking for view property, not waterfront. But after a three-year search, we could not resist this place with Douglas fir trees up to 125 feet tall, complete with an eagle's nest. Some people might consider an eagle's nest a disadvantage, given regulations that limit human activities around the nest, but we were delighted to cohabit with eagles.

For the first three years, we planted dozens of native plants, some from the Mason Conservation District and some relocated on our own property. Our objective was to provide wildlife corridors with cover and food. We attended workshops on native plant identification, soil health, vegetation management and rain gardens.

In 2004, we began building the first structure on the property, a garage/shop/storage building, then in 2005 we started building our house. We built both the garage and house with our own hands, living in a tent trailer during construction.

We noticed that it is not uncommon for neighbors to fill an area that lies inland of a gravel dune, which tends to build up along the shore during storms. We have resisted the idea of adding fill to our “front yard,” and we allowed the return of native aspen trees on the shoreline — an area that was bulldozed before our arrival. High tides and heavy rains tend to cause water to back up behind the gravel dune, creating a lake in some places. We have found that by avoiding the fill, water drains out faster when the tide recedes.

We love to swim in the bay, and we launch our kayaks and rowboat from the beach. We enjoy eating clams from our beach. We watch wildlife in the uplands and along the shore. Our swim float was even the birthplace for a baby seal in 2015. Unfortunately, the foxes and coyotes we saw after moving here have been absent, as more people have moved to the area.

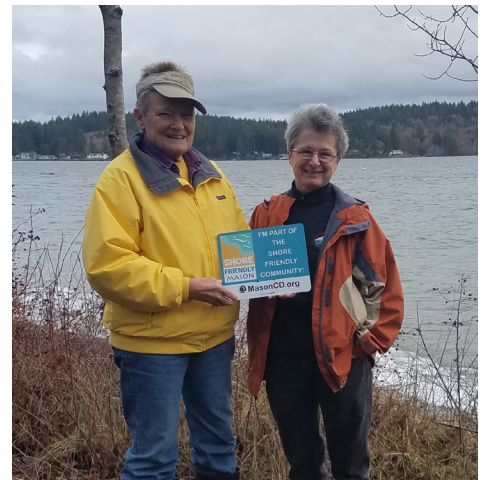
Our first contact with the Mason Conservation District may have been when we were trying to find out how to remove Scot's broom and blackberries without using poison. We made many phone calls and eventually contacted Kirsten at the district. She helped us borrow a “weed wrench” for pulling the invasive plants and also offered advice regarding our laying hens. While registering for a blueberry propagation workshop, we learned of the Shore Friendly program and decided to participate.

MCD staffers have been very helpful as a resource and “sounding board.” Their enthusiasm and knowledge have been evident during workshops, consultations and conversations, which have helped form our vision and reinforced our commitment to stewardship.

It sounds trite, but everyone needs to be more aware of the natural processes and understand that humankind cannot create substitutes for these processes. Technology cannot fix the damage.

We are a little pessimistic about the future of Puget Sound. In our experience, too many waterfront property owners ignore the impacts of their behavior rather than trying to understand the natural processes. We get discouraged when a former salt marsh gets filled in to become a great expanse of lawn treated with chemicals right to the water's edge.

We are hopeful, however, about the direction society is moving to protect Puget Sound. It is heartening to see fewer bulkheads installed and more being removed. We are encouraged by those who are learning from the Mason Conservation District, which has a lot of useful information and resources. More people seem to be enjoying the benefits of waterfront living without messing things up for future generations.



MAKING THE MUD GO AWAY

It's hard to remember now what muddy mess things were in your confinement area last winter and spring. But they were a muddy mess. And before it could happen again, one Mason County landowner jumped into action. After just a few work days, she now has Heavy Use Area Protection in her paddock area! She contacted Mason Conservation District to help her plan by providing site measurements, supply list and technical assistance all along the way.

A Get-It-Done-No-Matter-What-Before-Winter Photo Essay:

Phase One – Buy Supplies!



Then – Dig out the area



Lay Geotextile fabric



Spread a 6" layer of drain rock over the entire area, then a top layer footing material, like sand, for 6" more inches



Bonus – While at it, hook up the rain water diversion system to fill your animal watering trough!



Spread the material... and stop and admire



And if you now want to put in a project of your own, then call for technical assistance on how you can do it too!! Contact Amy at: arosen@masoncd.org; 360-427-9436 ext. 112

SET YOURSELF UP WITH FREE FERTILIZER!

Fall is the time to think about your soil and set yourself up for the season ahead. Soil test, lime, spread manure if indicated and weather conditions are favorable – manure available for **FREE** through the **MCD Manure Exchange Program!** – lime, cover crop, and make compost for spring planting with more **FREE** manure!

Mason Conservation District offers free technical assistance on soil testing, nutrient management planning, and other soil health and whole farm planning and management practices. Contact Amy at arosen@masoncd.org or 360-427-9436 ext.112 with your questions and for additional resources.



COMPOSTING IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Composting recycles the nutrients plants have taken from the soil, stabilizes them, and makes them available again to the next generation of plants when applied as a soil amendment. The process takes waste products and makes a beneficial material – so much so it's often referred to as 'Black Gold'!

- Compost adds organic matter to the soil, loosening clay soils, helping sandy soils retain water, and improving fertility.
- Making compost saves money and resources and supports the soil and environmental health.
- Using compost means using less water, no need for chemical fertilizers, and reducing leaching nutrients that contaminate our streams and bays.



Composting takes time and fall is the time to start the process, gathering materials and building piles that will be ready for your garden and plantings in the spring. Creating compost is like making a slow baking cake. A good compost pile should have a balanced ratio of ingredients and moisture and cook at the right temperature for a length of time. A compost pile should also be located away from water sources and covered during the winter rainy season so that valuable nutrients are not washed away. Then, with a little tending, you can enjoy its benefits in the spring!



What do you put in your compost pile and where do you get it? Animal manure is a great material to compost and you can get it for **free** through the Manure Exchange Program! Composted, manure provides a large amount of nutrients and has no unpleasant odor. It's an ideal resource to turn into a valuable soil amendment.

For more information on how to build compost piles to suit your needs and where to get free manure contact Amy Rosen at arosen@masoncd.org or at 360-427-9436 ext. 112 or visit our website at www.masoncd.org/manure

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AMERICORPS VOLUNTEER



Hello, my name is Brianna Widner. I have been blessed with the job of Environmental Education and Outreach Coordinator for MCD. I will be serving through AmeriCorps. Originally from North Carolina, I can't wait to learn more about this beautiful region. My background is in biology, field research, and conservation and I graduated last month with my M.S. from Purdue University in Indiana. During my studies, I learned that I have a passion for sharing science, especially environmental topics, with everyone I meet. With MCD, I will get to spread the joy of nature through weeks of field trips planned with kindergarteners through 5th graders and many more opportunities- Oyster Fest, salmon run tours, battling invasive species- that are on the horizon. I look forward to working alongside MCD's volunteers and recruiting some new faces. Thank you for the opportunity to serve!



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David Mackey, Jason Ragan, Myron Ougendal and Larry Boltz

MCD Staff

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Katrinka Hibler - District Engineer
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Justin Leigh - Habitat Restoration Crew Member
Mathew Madara - Habitat Restoration Crew Member
Marissa Newby - Habitat Restoration Crew Member
Brayden Raber - Habitat Restoration Crew Leader

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