

MAY 2021

MASON CONSERVATION DISTRICT

BOARD OF SUPERVISOR SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

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State Legislative District #35
Congressional District #6

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Jen Thurman-Williams and Whitney McDaniel finished up this year's field experiences with the Shelton School District. Videos were produced on sites like Cranberry Lake (pictured) and delivered to the students in a virtual format.



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH UPDATE

BY BARBARA ADKINS, JEN THURMAN-WILLIAMS, MARK MEAD AND WHITNEY MCDANIEL

The education and outreach team has launched Mason Conservation District's newest programs supporting Fresh Food and Community Agriculture. The District received an award of an urban agriculture conservation grant through a partnership with the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This award will fund the "Farms in Translation" program, which will assist veteran and beginning farmers with increased and focused training, as well as outreach to low and limited English proficient (LEP) farming communities. This will include a partnership with the Hands on Personal Empowerment ("HOPE") Garden Project to build a food forest and community garden.

The District also received an award of a Food System Support grant through a partnership with the Washington State Conservation Commission. This funding will support the "Mason-Shelton Food Chain - Linking Food to Families" program. The goal of this program is to develop a gleaning program serving Mason County and the City of Shelton. Gleaning is a term used to describe the practice of collecting fresh foods leftover from local farm and garden harvests, markets and other valuable resources in order to provide it to families in need. It is a way of preventing the unnecessary waste of quality food by providing to low-income populations, who are often unable to buy healthy, local foods because of cost or availability. Once established, this program will be AmeriCorps and volunteer driven.

The education and outreach team also helped to begin a second round of participant recruitment for the Rain Garden program. This program is focused on reducing stormwater runoff within the City of Shelton. In 2021, six rain gardens were successfully built and planted. Mason Conservation District is looking for six more willing property owners in the Mountain View neighborhood, where rain gardens will help reduce stormwater flows and pollution entering Goldsborough or Shelton Creeks.

SHORE FRIENDLY MASON UPDATE AT OYSTER BAY

BY STEVE HAGERTY AND MATTHEW PHILLIPS

The initial phase of a shoreline restoration project located at Oyster Bay in Totten Inlet is now complete! Large patches of non-native invasive bamboo have now been cleared and the area has been mulched (see below). Future phases of the project, pending funding, will also include: re-establishment and management of a marine riparian buffer with native plants (to provide water quality and habitat benefits), and removal of approximately 90 feet of hard armor, to restore a more natural shoreline.

Many thanks to the generosity of Julie Kikuchi and Daniel Walsh, owners of the property, who have supported this project in many ways. Also, thanks to the Washington State Conservation Commission for supporting funding of this phase and Streamline Earthworks, LLC for completing the initial work.



Photos: Before (left) and after (right) bamboo removal and mulching. Photos courtesy Matt Phillips.

RESTORATION CREW UPDATE

BY MARISSA NEWBY, JUSTIN LEIGH, CHASE JOHNSON AND DAVID WISE

Over the course of the planting season, the crew planted 24,978 bareroot trees and shrubs in the Skokomish Valley, as well as 5,187 bareroot trees and shrubs in CREP plantings, and another 163 plants in other contracted plantings. This is a grand total of 30,328 bareroot plants that the MCD Crew got in the ground in the 2020-2021 planting season! This covered a total of approximately 60 acres in the Skokomish Valley alone. The crew is now well into maintenance season, and is looking forward to spray season.



Photos: The crew planted a total of 4,400 native plants at the YMCA location in Shelton. Photos courtesy of Whitney McDaniel.

FORESTRY TEAM UPDATE

BY MARK MEAD AND MARGARET KREDER

With the hire of Margret Kreder, the forestry program at Mason Conservation District is now working for small landowners in Mason, Thurston, Kitsap and Pierce Conservation Districts. Funded by the Southwest Washington RCPP and the Puget Sound Conservation District Caucus Regional Forest Stewardship Pilot Program the forestry program works with small forest landowners to develop forestry plans that meet the owner's objectives and meet county timberland taxation requirements, help landowners acquire federal cost sharing for forestry practices and aid in the development of conservation easements. Since January of 2021, Margaret and Mark Mead have been to 25 forested sites and completed 17 forest plans for the landowners.



Photos: (Left) Area Forester Margaret Kreder enjoys her work. (Right) The District's foresters have seen clearcuts, recent tree plantings, overstocked stands, and stands ready for harvest while visiting recent sites. Photos courtesy of Mark Mead.

GETTING TO KNOW OUR NEWEST STAFF

MARGARET KREDER
STEWARDSHIP FORESTER



Margaret joins Mason Conservation District as the new Stewardship Forester after working four years as a forester with a small consulting company in Oregon's Willamette Valley, where she also previously lived and worked on her family's farm. Margaret has a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Sciences from Washington State University where her studies led her to Wildlife Ecology and Forestry. She is a member of the Society of American Foresters and recently became a Certified Tree Farm Inspector as well as a member of the Washington Farm Forest Association. Margaret is excited to work with the community for the betterment of the region's forest resources.

KEITH UNDERWOOD
SENIOR CONSERVATION MANAGER



Keith is a fisheries biologist, who has 30 years of experience implementing salmon restoration projects in the Columbia and Puget Sound area while working for tribes, consulting firms and power utilities. He recently led salmon reintroduction efforts in the Skokomish River for Tacoma Power. Keith has also worked with irrigation districts, farming communities and environmental organizations to resolve water use and endangered species conflicts. Keith and Mary Jo (his wife of 32 years) grew up in the Tacoma area, found each other at community college, moved to Spokane to finish college and lived in the Spokane area for 15 years. They moved back to the west side of the state 17 years ago. During Keith's free time, you will find him gardening, building home improvement projects or outside enjoying nature and it's many wonders. Keith is a strong believer in solving problems through collaboration and is looking forward to working with the community to improve our environment.