

SKAGIT CONSERVATION DISTRICT STORMWATER EDUCATION PROGRAM 2021 REPORT

**"WE SCOOP" DOGGY PHOTO
CONTEST AND PLEDGE**
In Celebration of Skagit Water Weeks!

In the spirit of Skagit Water Weeks
submit a picture of your favorite
cute pooch out enjoying our
beautiful community and/or take
the "We Scoop Pledge!"
Deadline for photo entries is May 31st

Prizes!

For details visit: www.skagitcd.org

**SKAGIT
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Hosted by Skagit Conservation District, Skagit County, and
Cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and
Sedro - Woolley

Figure 1 The "We Scoop" Pledge and "We Scoop Cute Doggy Photo Contest" were kicked off during Skagit Water Weeks this year in support of our pet waste campaign.

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for:

City of Anacortes

City of Burlington

City of Mount Vernon

City of Sedro-Woolley

Skagit County

Storm Water Education Program Summary

This progress report summarizes the storm water public education and outreach and the public involvement and participation activities that were conducted by the Skagit Conservation District (SCD) over the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. The primary purpose of the Skagit Conservation District's Storm Water Education Program is to provide education and outreach programs in partnership with our local MS4 Permittees to educate the community about the impacts of stormwater discharges on water bodies and the steps that the community can take to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff. The SCD's Stormwater Education partnership provides a multifaceted and site-specific education plan designed to:

- Build general awareness about methods to address and reduce impacts from stormwater runoff.
- Effect behavior change to reduce or eliminate behaviors and practices that cause or contribute to adverse stormwater impacts; and to
- Create stewardship opportunities that encourages community engagement in addressing the impacts from stormwater runoff.

Skagit MS4 Partners: The SCD's Stormwater Education Program is a local partnership including the City of Mount Vernon, City of Burlington, City of Sedro-Woolley, City of Anacortes, and Skagit County. With the exception of the Skagit Conservation District, all partners are MS4 communities required to prepare Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP) in accordance with Phase II of the Clean Water Act. The purpose of the partnership is to work together cooperatively, share a common message, avoid duplication of efforts (which in turn will save money and resources), utilize existing programs when possible and to share resources and expertise.

Program Overview: An informed, knowledgeable, and engaged community is crucial to the success of a stormwater management program. Between 2011-2021, the Skagit Conservation District, in partnership with the Cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley, and Skagit County, has provided a comprehensive and multifaceted series of programs and opportunities aimed at educating, engaging, and inspiring local stewardship so that the goal of reducing stormwater pollution impacts to our local waterways can be achieved.

2020 and 2021 presented some unanticipated challenges and programs had to be altered due to the pandemic and social distancing requirements.

2021 Activities

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Task 1.1 Host Private Stormwater Facility Maintenance Workshop



Figure 2 The Managing Stormwater Facilities Workshop drew 39 attendees.

Promotion of the event was conducted via email and direct mailing to HOA contact lists in each jurisdiction, press releases provided to all local media, two promotional ads in the local newspapers, promotional fliers distributed throughout the community and posted on websites and other social media.

A "Managing Stormwater Facilities Maintenance Workshop" was coordinated and held virtually on July 21st and was well attended with **39 attendees**. The agenda included a municipal overview provided by Diane Hennebert, City of Anacortes; the Detention Pond Maintenance: Nuts and Bolts presentation was provided by Reid Armstrong, Kulshan Services, LLC; and Involving your Neighborhood Community provided by Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District. Handbooks were compiled by SCD staff and mailed to all attendees.

Task 1.2 Watershed Masters Volunteer Training Program



Figure 3 Watershed Master Volunteers welcomed guests and helped host the stormwater education display at Taylor Shellfish Farm during the 2021 Festival of Family Farms.

Due to covid restrictions we did not host a Watershed Masters training in 2021. However, staff maintained regular correspondence with our Watershed Master Volunteers via email and phone correspondence, including providing educational resources, volunteer opportunities and responding to requests for technical assistance. It is anticipated that the 8-week training program will resume in the Fall of 2022.

Watershed Masters, did, however, continue to volunteer in our community once vaccines became available and many participated in "covid friendly" outdoor activities that provide many benefits to our community. **Over 2,132**

volunteer hours were reported in 2021. Watershed Masters continue to play a key role in protecting water quality in our community and sharing what they have learned with friends, neighbors, and family. Examples of the stewardship activities conducted by Watershed Masters in 2021 include the following:

- Conducting forage fish surveys
- Providing support to our Pet Waste Campaign
- Hosting the stormwater education display at local events
- Assisted with stream restoration projects
- Eradicating noxious weeds and ivy pulls at Barney Lake
- Participating in the Stream Team program
- Participating in the Storm Team program

- Participating in the Marine Biotoxin monitoring program
- Conducting salmon surveys
- Storm drain labeling
- Implementing water conservation projects at the Montreaux HOA

Task 1.3 Skagit Stream Team

Priority streams currently being monitored by Stream Team volunteers include Trumpeter Basin, Kulshan Creek, Gages Slough, Ace of Hearts Creek, upper and lower Nookachamps Creek, No Name Slough, Joe Leary Slough, Bay View drainage, and upper and lower Samish. All streams are monitored twice a month with the exception of Gages Slough, which is monitored monthly. The monitoring year begins October 1st and continues through September 30th each year.



Figure 4 Stream Team volunteers collect water quality data along 11 priority stream reaches.

The goals of the Skagit Stream Team program are to:

1) Inspire community stewardship of water resources by educating local citizens about land use and non-point sources of pollution and involving them in the process of water quality data gathering; 2) to develop and implement a routine sampling program that can be used to assess water quality trends, characterize the existing water quality of priority freshwater drainages, and determine how water quality conditions compare to State Standards; 3) to document improvements to water quality as a result of the implementation of Best Management Practices and storm water prevention measures; and 4) to teach community volunteers the sampling and analytical techniques used by environmental professionals, how to manage the data collected and create a database, and the importance of establishing a long-term water quality monitoring program.

Parameters measured by Stream Team volunteers include fecal coliform (FC) bacteria, dissolved oxygen (DO), water temperature, turbidity and total depth.

2021 Stream Team accomplishments are highlighted below:

- 6 Stream Team volunteers monitored the water quality of Ace of Hearts Creek in Anacortes over the 2020-21 monitoring season. The Anacortes Wastewater Treatment Plant conducts lab analysis for this program.
- 11 Stream Team volunteers monitored Kulshan Creek and Trumpeter Basin in Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon Wastewater Treatment Plant conducts lab analysis for Kulshan and Trumpeter.
- 2 Stream Team volunteers monitored Gages Slough through the 2020-21 sampling season. Burlington Wastewater Treatment Plant conducted lab analysis for the Gages Slough Stream Team.
- **64** Stream Team volunteers participated in the 2020-21 Stream Team program overall.

- 10 volunteers conducted storm event sampling in the Padilla Bay watershed during the 2020-21 season in support of the Padilla Bay TMDL and Skagit County PIC program (Storm Team).
- A Total of 50 monitoring stations were monitored twice a month by Stream Team volunteers, with the exception of Gages Slough which is monitored monthly.
- The Annual Year-End Stream Team Celebration and Recognition event was coordinated and held outdoors at Bay View State Park on July 27th, 2021. **64 Stream Team/Storm Team volunteers were recognized.**
- **1268 Stream Team volunteer hours** reported for the **2020-21** Stream Team program.
- The Annual Stream Team training (for 2021-22 monitoring season) was coordinated and held Sept. 7th, 8th, and 9th (virtual).
- **72 Stream Team Volunteers** are participating in the 2021-22 program.
- Data was entered in excel spreadsheet.
- The 2019-2020 Annual Stream Team Report was completed.
- The 2020-21 Annual Stream Team Report was initiated.

Task 1.4 Storm Drain Labeling Program

Storm drain marking kits are available at the Skagit Conservation District. Community groups and residents are encouraged to participate in the protection of water quality by marking storm drains in their neighborhoods and throughout the community. The Cities of Anacortes and Sedro-Woolley organize this program separately.

Due to covid restrictions this year, work completed on this task was limited this year. We will be able to resume in 2022 with covid protocols in place.

- 30 storm drain markers were installed at Costco in Burlington by their staff.
- Inventory for Mount Vernon and Burlington markers was updated
- 100+ promotional fliers were distributed and included in the Detention Pond Maintenance and Skagit Stream Team handbooks that were mailed to attendees of those programs.

Task 1.5 Social Marketing Strategy

The Pet Waste Management Social Marketing Action Plan ("Poop Fairy "campaign) was completed and implementation underway. With consensus from the Skagit partners, option **S5.C.2.a.ii(c) 3 Public Education and Outreach** was selected with the goal of reducing fecal coliform bacteria levels in priority urban waterways by initiating a more focused pet waste management campaign.

- **Primary target audience for the pet waste campaign:** Dog walkers at public places, such as parks, trails, apartment complexes, and neighborhoods.
- **Positioning Statement:** We want all dog walkers at parks/trails and neighborhoods to pick up dog waste and dispose of it properly to keep our parks, trails, neighborhoods, and waterways clean and healthy.

Staff time also included the following:

- Compiled map of priority dog walking parks/trails identified by our local parks and recreation departments and the Port of Skagit County.
- Volunteers continued field investigations through February 2021.
- A “Scoop the Poop” Pledge program to ask dog owners to commit to picking up after their pets was established and set up on the SCD website for online pledges and a hard copy also designed to promote at local events. Complimentary poo bag dispensers were provided to individuals taking the pledge. **131 pledges received to date.**
- To promote the pledge program, a “We Scoop Cute Doggy Photo Contest” was hosted as a Skagit Water Weeks event during the month of May with **110 photo entries received.** Two winning entries were selected from each partnering jurisdiction. The contest was well received!
- The pet poop campaign was promoted in the community via news articles in the SCD news, press releases, posting on websites and social media, and by direct email.
- Staff is currently exploring costs and feasibility of establishing a Mutt Mitt program. Pet Waste Stations set up in key areas would make it convenient and encourage dog walkers to pick up after their pets when they are in public places, such as neighborhoods, parks and trails. This task includes networking with local HOA's, apartment complexes, etc., to see if there is interest and volunteer commitment to maintain the stations, which has been initiated.
- Conducted a review of our local municipalities Pet Waste codes.



Figure 5 Winning “We Scoop” photo entries received a Woofpack Trail Bag as modeled by Tiberius above, one of the Anacortes winners.

Task 1.6 Rain Garden Program (City of Mount Vernon)

SCD staff is currently exploring a few options for a feature Rain Garden project. A site visit was made to the Deer Run Condo’s on LaVenture in response to their request and interest in a rain garden. A plan for a rain garden at this site was also designed by Everett Chu, Azuma Farm and Gardens. We are also looking into another school project with support from SFEG and the Salmon in the Schools program as well as an opportunity with the Skagit Leadership Program. Anticipating at least one of these options will be pursued after the first of the year.

2. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Task 2.1 Backyard Conservation Stewardship Program

One of the priority behaviors targeted through the Skagit partnership outreach efforts has focused on yard care techniques protective of water quality. The Backyard

Conservation Stewardship Short Course targets local homeowners and provides education on sustainable landscape practices as promoted by the Sustainable Sites Initiative. Program objectives:

- *Participants will learn practices that can be applied in their own backyards to help reduce storm water pollution and create a healthy and more sustainable environment.*
- *Participants will be provided with the tools and resources to design sustainable, natural, backyard landscapes.*
- *To encourage community participation in the Backyard Wildlife Habitat and/or Backyard Sanctuary Certification programs.*
- *To create a network of community residents willing to share their love of gardening and the outdoors to inspire others to create environmentally friendly gardening practices that will benefit our community.*

Topics included in the 6-week short course include proper use and disposal of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers (and use of non-toxic alternatives), use of native plants in landscaping, reducing size of lawn, gardening for wildlife, using bees as pollinators, applying low impact development/rain gardens, use of permeable pavement for driveways and patios, composting, managing non-native invasive plants, how to build healthy soils, proper disposal of pet waste, preventive car maintenance, and more. Sessions are taught by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic slate of local and state experts.

2021 Outcomes: Due to covid restrictions in spring 2021 and not able to gather groups indoors, the 2021 Backyard Conservation Short Course was cancelled. However, funding from this task helped support implementation of the Pet Waste campaign this year. It was agreed upon by all MS4 partners that we fund implementation of the Pet Waste campaign using existing tasks and funding, so we did not have to increase our budget to fund the campaign. Refer to Task 1.5 for summary of accomplishments this year. In addition, participants of previous Backyard Conservation Short Course classes posted poop fairy signage in their neighborhoods, participated in and helped promote the “We Scoop” pledge, conducted poop surveys at priority parks, and continued to support sustainable gardening practices in their own backyards. Staff maintained correspondence and technical support to individuals who have participated in the program.

The Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course has played a key role in our efforts to increase levels of voluntary implementation of conservation practices on private lands in both urban and rural areas of our community and to promote natural yard care principles. We anticipate hosting the program virtually in early 2022.

Task 2.2 Resource Materials/Education for Local Schools

Skagit Conservation District provides support to local schools by providing educational resources and presentations throughout the year. Due to covid restrictions this year, opportunities for classroom presentations were limited, although staff did provide some in classroom and a few "outdoor" presentations. Another 2021 accomplishment was the development of a you tube video demonstrating the EnviroScape model for home or classroom use. **Here is the direct link: [Where Does Your Water Shed? - YouTube](#). The video is also featured on the EnviroScape Environmental Education website.**



Figure 6 Hundreds of local youth have had the opportunity to learn about stormwater from SCD classroom visits with the EnviroScape watershed model.

- Educational packets were emailed to Skagit County School District offices for distribution to teachers. The packets include information on stormwater, watersheds, and other resources and educational programs available for teachers and classrooms through the Skagit Conservation District.
- Promotion of the EnviroScape Model classroom presentations (stormwater runoff and non-point source pollution) was conducted.
- 17 storm water education presentations, using the EnviroScape watershed model, were conducted in 2022 at local elementary schools reaching 245 Skagit County students in the following jurisdictions:
 - Mount Vernon: 11 presentations to 184 students
 - Sedro-Woolley: 6 presentations to 61 students
- Production of “Where Does Your Water Shed” video completed and online – EnviroScape watershed demonstration.
- 100 packets containing stormwater/clean water education and activities for youths distributed at Concrete Youth Day – drive-thru event.
- Staff attended zoom trainings for educating virtually.

Task 2.3 Miscellaneous

Work conducted under this task included project administration and tracking, preparation of the annual report, and meetings and project/contract planning with partners. Other activities conducted under this task in 2021 included:

- Provided a Skagit Water Weeks Proclamation and presentation to the Skagit County Commissioners on May 4th.
- Annual contract review and correspondence.
- Provide support/resources to teachers, partners, and volunteers as requested.
- Drafted stormwater related articles for 2 editions of the Skagit Conservation News.
- Participate in Puget Sound Stormie Group.
- Correspondence and coordination with Parks and Recreation Departments HOA’s and volunteers regarding "Poop Fairy" campaign and signage installation.

Task 2.4 Storm Water Educational Brochures and Fact Sheets.

- A “We Scoop Pledge and Cute Doggy Photo Contest” promotion was designed and published on social media.
- Designed handout featuring winners of “We Scoop Cute Doggy Photo Contest” and provided to all entries as well as emailed to partners and volunteers.
- “We Scoop Cute Doggy Photo Contest” winners’ article drafted and published in Summer/Fall 2021 publication of Skagit Conservation News.
- Drafted article featuring Montreaux HOA landscape improvements in Winter 2021 edition of Skagit Conservation News.
- Poop Fairy ad published in the Winter 2021 edition of Skagit Conservation News.
- Designed “We Scoop Pledge” flier that was printed for distribution at local events.
- Provided copies of our Rainscape brochure for the MoNA watershed display.



Task 2.5 Workshops for Local Contractors and Businesses

This year we partnered with Stewardship Partners to host the **6th Annual Green Stormwater Infrastructure Summit**, which was held virtually over two days, on March 25th and March 26th. The summit focused on the north Salish Sea this year and included **53 speakers and over 200 attendees**. Staff time also included serving on the “Host” Committee to assist with event planning, organization, and promotion, recruiting presenters, and facilitating sessions during the event. The theme of the summit was “Evolving Green Infrastructure: Adapting Systems for Better Outcomes.” We received excellent feedback from attendees. More information about the 2021 Summit can be viewed at this link: 12000raingardens.org/summit2021/

Task 2.6 PSSH Community Event Display Board

Due to continued covid restrictions, the opportunity to host education displays at local events was very limited again this year. However, staff hosted the stormwater display at the Alger Seed Swap and Farmer’s Market which was held on Saturday **March 20th, with approximately 250 attendees**, and at Taylor Shellfish Farms for the **Festival of Family Farms, which was held Oct. 2nd (482 attendees) and October 3rd (335 attendees)**. Promoting the pet waste campaign (“Poop Fairy”) was a highlight at both events. In addition approximately 250 youth education packets were compiled and distributed at Festival of Farms, and included the Project Wet Discover Stormwater Kids Activity Booklet as well as fact sheets on sustainable yard care.

Task 2.7 Produce Media Advertisements

- The "We Scoop Pledge" was set up on our website and promoted on social media.
- The "We Scoop Pledge and Cute Doggie Photo Contest" was set up on our website and promoted through press releases sent to all local media resources as well as social media venues and via direct email to volunteers and workshop participants (May 4th and May 21st).
- Posted photos of "We Scoop Cute Doggy Photo Contest" on social media on July 1st.
- A new "blog" was established on our website and provides another venue to promote stormwater education.
- The Scoop the Poop rack card was posted on social media (Oct. 26th and 27th) and on our new blog (Oct. 26th and 27th).
- Smart Watering Tips education posted on social media June 23rd.
- Drainscaping ad posted on Oct. 26th and 27th on social media and new blog.
- A Poop Fairy ad was posted on social media on Jan. 12th.
- The Poop Fairy" ad was featured 4 x in the SV Herald (distribution 21,000 each)
- The "Poop Fairy" ad was featured in the Concrete Herald 2 x (distribution 5,000 each)
- The "Poop Fairy" ad was featured in the LaConner Weekly 2 x (1,200 each)
- The "Poop Fairy" ad was published in the Skagit Conservation News - Winter 2021 edition
- The "Poop Fairy," Drainscaping, "We Scoop Pledge", and Smart Water Tips ads were also emailed to all SCD volunteers and partners

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED: Due to covid restrictions opportunities to distribute educational materials was limited again this year, however, these documents are also posted on our website. Some of the documents listed below were included in handbooks for the Marine Biotoxin Volunteers and Managing Stormwater Facilities workshop participants. The Rainscape fliers were also distributed at the MoNA Watershed Exhibit.

- 294 "Poop Fairy" Pet waste educational outdoor signs posted to date
- 100 "We Scoop" Pledge fliers distributed
- 42 Detention Pond Maintenance Handbooks distributed
- 80 Spotlight on Stormwater Booklets distributed.
- 150 Don't Just Landscape: Rainscape fliers distributed
- 150 Soil & Mulch: The Foundation of a Healthy Yard brochures distributed.
- 150 Planning & Planting a Sustainable Landscape brochures distributed.
- 150 Watering Wisely brochures distributed.
- 150 Think Twice Before Using Pesticides brochures distributed.
- 150 Natural Lawn Care brochures distributed.
- 25 Best Management Practices for Power Washing fact sheets distributed.
- 25 Best Management Practices for Mobile Carpet Cleaners distributed.

- 50 copies of the 2019-2020 Skagit Stream Team Reports distributed (the report is also on the SCD and Padilla Bay Reserve websites).
- 45+ Storm Drain marking volunteer program promotional fliers distributed.
- 50 Native plants of the Pacific Northwest distributed.
- 350 Project Wet Discover Stormwater Books

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR 2022

- Priority for 2022 will be coordinating and implementing the pet waste campaign ("Poop Fairy"), including continuing the pledge program and cute doggy photo contest and initiating a Mutt Mitt program.
- The Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course will be conducted (virtually).
- The annual Stormwater Detention Pond Maintenance Workshop to be scheduled.
- Host a rain garden maintenance workshop.
- Storm drain labeling will continue.
- Skagit Stream Team program will continue
- Work in kicking off a Rain Garden program will continue, including seeking funding to provide incentives for local homeowners and partnerships with local schools.
- The Annual Stream Team Water Quality Report will be published.
- Stormwater education media ads will be published in local media (and continue throughout the year).
- 2 new educational brochures/tip sheets and/or additional "Poop Fairy" signage will be published.
- Informational packets highlighting storm water and water quality education will once again be distributed to local schools.
- Staff will continue to provide presentations on storm water education with the watershed EnviroScape model to local school groups depending on covid status.
- Watershed Masters Volunteer training will be held in the fall of 2022 depending on covid status.
- The storm water education display will be updated and hands on activities designed to promote the "Poop Fairy" program.
- The SCD website will continue to be updated to include relevant storm water and LID information.
- News articles highlighting storm water education, LID practices, and volunteer opportunities will be included in each of the Skagit Conservation District's newsletters.
- Staff will continue to provide presentations to local groups on storm water and LID as requested.
- Stream Team data will be reviewed and will be used to target priority neighborhoods for follow-up education.
- Staff will continue to provide support to the Watershed Masters, backyard wildlife habitat volunteers, and Skagit Stream Team volunteers.
- All projects will be tracked, evaluation surveys conducted when appropriate, and reporting will continue.