

Stewardship Tools for Island County Landowners (Summaries of Programs and People to Contact)

Conservation Tools

Current Use Taxation Programs: These programs provide incentives that help landowners voluntarily conserve open space lands and/or manage for timber or agricultural resources. Tax deductions are available for landowners who implement forest stewardship plans. Landowners can also receive property tax reductions for preserving resources such as stream banks, wetlands, or wildlife habitat. Contact **Jan Graham**, Island County Assessors Office, 360-679-7303 (north county), 321-5111 (south county), 629-4522 (Camano Island), JanG@co.island.wa.us, for information on the Open Space Agricultural and Designated Forest Land (at least 20 contiguous acres) programs, and **Jeff Tate**, Island County Planning Department, (360) 679-7344, JeffT@co.island.wa.us, for information on the Open Space Timber (minimum 5 acres) and Open Space/public benefit rating system programs.

Conservation District Programs: Whidbey Island Conservation District provides no-cost technical assistance regarding forest and farm planning as well as a cost-share program for livestock fencing and restoration plantings in riparian areas. Contact **Karen Lennon** or **Carol Osterman** of the **Whidbey Island Conservation District** for further details on these conservation options (360-678-4708 or whidbeycd@coupeville.net). Contact Jenny Baker, 425-335-5634 Ext. 112, jenny@snohomishcd.org, for information on **Camano Island Conservation District** programs.

Wetland Reserve Program, and Wildlife Habitat and Environmental Quality Incentives Programs: The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers several stewardship programs. Under the Wetland Reserve program landowners can place eligible lands in a permanent or 30-year easement and receive financial compensation. Restoration cost-share agreements that pay up to 75 % of costs are also available. Two Wildlife and Environmental Quality Incentives Programs offer similar technical and financial assistance to landowners. Contact **Kathy Kilcoyne** at NRCS (360-428-7684 ext 132), kathy.kilcoyne@wa.usda.gov, for more information on NRCS programs. The **Conservation District** staff identified above can also be contacted for information on NRCS programs.

Land Trust Tools: Land trusts are non-profit groups that can accept land with exceptional habitat value through donations or sales. Land trusts facilitate conservation easements, which can be used by landowners who want to permanently preserve the natural character of their land but maintain ownership, and qualify for local and federal tax deductions. Contact **Patricia Powell**, Whidbey Camano Land Trust, 360-222-3310, pat@wclt.org for information on land trust tools.

Forestry Tools

Forest Stewardship Planning: Education opportunity for owners of private forestlands. Learn how you can get “coached” assistance from natural resource professionals as you author your own forest stewardship plan. Plans address forest health, silviculture alternatives, and water and wildlife resource management. Contact **Andy Perleberg**, Washington State University Extension Forest Stewardship Educator, 360-428-4270 or andyp@co.skagit.wa.us.

Forest Stewardship Program: Learn how you can improve the health and production of your forest for timber, wildlife, and other natural resources while taking a walk in the woods with a forester or wildlife biologist. This free consultation is customized to fit your objectives and the condition of your forest. Contact **John Keller**, Washington Department of Natural Resources Forest Stewardship Coordinator, 360-856-3500 or john.keller@wadnr.gov.

See other side for more stewardship tools.

Washington State Tree Farm Program: Learn how you can qualify to have your property enrolled as a certified tree farm. Contact **Duane Weston** at 360-435-4063 or DuaneWeston@cs.com.

Small Forest Landowner Office, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Offers programs that (1) help landowners with forest practice applications and negotiating thru the rules, (2) assist with replacing fish barriers on forest land (**Family Forest Fish Passage Program**), and (3) offer partial compensation for timber which landowners cannot harvest under new forest practice rules (**Forestry Riparian Easement Program**). Contact **Boyd Norton** at 360-856-3500 or boyd.norton@wadnr.gov.

Other Stewardship Tools to consider:

Fishery Enhancement: The Stilly Snohomish Fishery Enhancement Task Force is a non-profit group working to restore and enhance salmon and salmon habitat. This non-regulatory group works with interested landowners to replant native plants, replace culverts, rebuild habitat, and improve water quality. The group provides technical assistance, and possibly even funding and materials. Contact **Ann Boyce** at the Task Force (425-252-6686), ann.boyce@verizon.net, for Camano Island information.

Landowner Incentive Program, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife: A competitive grant process to provide financial assistance to private landowner for the protection, enhancement, or restoration of habitat to benefit “species-at-risk” on privately owned lands. Typically up to \$50,000 of grant assistance, or smaller grants of up to \$3,000. A 25% nonfederal contribution is required, which may include cash and/or in-kind (labor, machinery, materials) contribution. Contact **Jeff Skriletz** at 360-902-8313 or **GINNA CORREA** at 360-902-2478.

Community-based Restoration Program (CRP), NOAA Fisheries Restoration Center:

The CRP offers awards to non-profit organizations, community groups, and local agencies for the restoration of habitat to benefit marine fisheries, including anadromous fish on public or private land. Competitive projects will have (1) 1:1 non-federal match, which may include cash or in-kind contributions of labor, materials, or services, (2) assurance of long-term improvement of habitat and protection from development, (3) substantial community involvement, and (4) multi-species benefit for our nations living marine resources. Funding is distributed either through direct review by the Restoration Center or through a variety of mechanisms including partnerships with Fish America Foundation, Trout Unlimited, Earthcorps, or Ocean Trust. More information can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/> or contact **Paul Cereghino** at 206-526-4670 or Paul.R.Cereghino@noaa.gov.

Other Washington State University Extension Educational Programs

WSU Beach Watchers: Beach Watchers are professionally-trained volunteers dedicated to protecting Island County's fragile environment through education and public awareness. We love sharing our enthusiasm with others who want to know more about this beautiful place and join us in helping protect it. Visit www.beachwatchers.wsu.edu or contact **Dot Irvin**, Program Coordinator, at 360-679-7391 or 360-321-5111 ext. 7391 (from South Whidbey) or beachwatchers@wsu.edu with questions.

WSU Shore Stewards: Shore Stewards are shoreline property owners who've certified their property as a fish-friendly wildlife habitat. They play an active, positive role in the creation and preservation of a healthy nearshore ecosystem. Currently the Shore Stewards program is in a pilot phase on Camano Island in Island County. If you have shoreline property on Camano Island and would like to learn how to preserve it for future generations, then sign up to become a Shore Steward. If you have questions or would like more information about the Shore Stewards, please email or call us at one of the following local numbers: Camano: 629-4522 ext. 6012, Whidbey: 360-678-5111 ext. 6012, South Whidbey: 360-321-5111 ext 6012, or e-mail shorestewards@wsu.edu. See their web site at www.shorestewards.org.