

Summary of Stewardship Tools for Mason 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 open space resources such as stream banks, wetlands, or wildlife habitat. Contact **Mason County Assessors Office**, Shelton (360-427-9670, ext. 491), Belfair (360-275-4467, ext. 491), or Elma (360-482-5269, ext. 491), for information on the Open Space Agricultural, Designated Forest Land (at least 20 contiguous acres), Open Space Timber (minimum 5 acres) and Open Space Lands programs.

Conservation District Programs: Mason Conservation District provides no-cost technical assistance regarding farm planning as well as cost-share programs for livestock fencing and restoration plantings in riparian areas. Contact **Jennifer Eklund** of the **Mason Conservation District** for further details on these conservation options (360-427-9436 or jleklund@attglobal.net). The Mason Conservation District also provides an opportunity for landowners to receive payments for enrolling their streamside land under 10 or 15-year federal contracts.

The Conservation District and the **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** also offer several additional 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. For further information contact **Jennifer Eklund** at the Conservation District or **Bari Williams** of the NRCS (360-337-4433 or bari.williams@wa.usda.gov.)

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 retain ownership, and qualify for local and federal tax deductions. Contact **Ann Haines**, Executive Director, Great Peninsula Conservancy, at (360) 373-3500, (866) 373-3504 toll-free, or info@greatpeninsula.org.

Forestry Tools

Forest Stewardship Program: **Mike Nystrom**, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources Stewardship Forester, will do site visits, help people put together forest stewardship plans, give technical forestry advice and put on educational classes. Mike administers the Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP), and is also a WSU extension forester for the area. Contact Mike at 253-350-0018 or mike.nystrom@wadnr.gov.

Small Forest Landowner Office: **Rich Wood**, of the Washington Department of Natural Resource's Olympic Region Office, administers the Forest Riparian Easement Program (FREPE) and several other programs designed to help landowners with the impacts of the Forest Practices Act. Contact Rich at 360-374-6131 or richard.wood@wadnr.gov. Or contact the Small Forest Landowner Office main office in Olympia at 360-902-1415, or access their web site at <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/sflo/>.

Other Funding Sources and Project Assistance for Landowners:

Salmon Recovery Lead Entity: Lead entities are voluntary organizations under contract with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife that assist with salmon recovery strategies in their watershed areas. The lead entities are responsible for prioritizing regional projects that can receive Salmon Recovery Funding Board funds. Lead Entities in the Mason County area include the Mason Conservation District (contact **Amy Hatch-Winecka** at 360-427-9436 or abhatch@hotmail.com) and the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (contact **Jay Watson** at 360-765-4780 or jwatson@sprintmail.com.)

Salmon Recovery Grant Program: The Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) is composed of five citizens appointed by the Governor and five state agency directors. The Board provides grant funds to protect or restore salmon habitat and assist related activities. It works closely with local watershed groups known as lead entities. **Brian Abbott** is the local SRFB contact for the Mason Conservation District (360-902-2638 or briana@iac.wa.gov.) **Mike Ramsey** is the local SRFB contact for the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (360-902-2969 or michaelr@iac.wa.gov.)

Hood Canal Coordinating Council: The Hood Canal Coordinating Council is a “Watershed Based Council of Governments. It was established in 1985 in response to community concerns about water quality problems and related natural resource issues in the watershed. The council has drafted a Salmon Recovery Plan for Hood Canal Summer Chum which includes the implementation of voluntary, incentive-based programs for landowner involvement in salmon recovery. For more information, contact Sue Texeira, Education and Outreach Program Coordinator, at 360-801-0958 or stexeira@hctc.com.

Fisheries Enhancement Groups: Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEs) are citizen-based non-profit organizations created by the 1991 Washington State Legislature to enhance salmon. Volunteer groups or individual landowners can contact their nearest RFE to discuss how to identify, fund and complete a project for salmon enhancement. Projects can include stream-side fencing, construction of off-channel rearing habitat, and estuarine and riparian habitat restoration. The program improves fish habitat on private lands with little to no cost to the landowner. For more information contact the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (360, 275-3573 or hcseg@hctc.com) or the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group (360-412-0808 or spsseg@spsseg.org.)

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. Also inquire about **Cooperative Project Grant Funding** (check for updates at http://wdfw.wa.gov/volunter/volunteer_funding.htm.)

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, (2) long-term habitat improvement and protection, (3) substantial community involvement, and (4) multi-species benefit. 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.

US Fish & Wildlife Service Private Stewardship Grants Program: The Private Stewardship Program provides grants and other assistance on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in local, private, and voluntary conservation efforts that benefit federally listed, proposed, or candidate species, or other at-risk species. For Fiscal Year 2004, the Service awarded more than \$7 million in Federal funding under the Private Stewardship Program. Three Washington state projects received funding, including private land restoration in the Tarboo Watershed of Jefferson County. A ten percent (10%) match of cash or through in-kind contributions is required. The program is available to private landowners and their partners. See http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/private_stewardship/index.html for more information.

Trout Unlimited: Trout Unlimited's mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. For information on the Mason County chapter, contact **Mark Biser** at (360) 427-8603 or mbiser@hctc.com.