

SHORE STEWARDS NEWS

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Shore Stewards Expands to Four New Counties!

We are excited to report that Shore Stewards will expand to four new counties in 2006: Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom and Clallam, thanks to a new PSAT grant obtained by the Northwest Straits Foundation! Puget Sound Action Team (PSAT) will fund this expansion through their Public Involvement and Education (PIE) Fund. Out of 76 proposals for their 2006-2007 funding period, 15 were chosen, including this grant to the Northwest Straits Foundation to expand the program as part of the WSU Beach Watchers program in each county. As stated in PSAT's announcement, "The Shore Stewards program will recruit and help 350 shoreline landowners adopt best management practices and develop a stewardship ethic for waterfront living". PIE funding is provided "to educate and involve the public in protecting and restoring Puget Sound." For additional information on Puget Sound Action Team and the PIE funding, you can check PSAT's website at <http://www.psat.wa.gov/> and click on "PIE recipients announced" in the right hand column. To see what else PSAT is doing around Puget Sound, check out PUGET SOUND NEWS at http://www.psat.wa.gov/News/ps_news.htm

Shore Stewards began as a pilot program on Camano Island. Island County's WSU Extension Director Don Meehan and Island County Marine Resource Committee's Executive Director Gary Wood came up with the exciting idea of creating a stewardship program designed for properties located along the shoreline. Starting in late 2002, WSU Beach Watchers on Camano researched and wrote the book, application, and original website. Many of these Beach Watchers still volunteer on the Shore Stewards Committee. Much of the original funding for the Shore Stewards in Island County came from Puget Sound Action Team, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, and the Northwest Straits Commission. Further funding has come from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Washington State Department of Ecology, and the Island County Marine Resources Committee continues to be a strong supporter of the program. In January of 2005, Shore Stewards in Island County expanded to Whidbey Island, and three counties along Hood Canal (Jefferson, Kitsap and Mason) began the program under the WSU Extension in Jefferson County. Links to many of the programs listed in this paragraph are included on page four.

Coordinators of the program for the different counties have been meeting to determine how the program should grow, with an emphasis on a regional approach to many of the key elements of the program. Puget Sound Action Team is designing a regional Shore Stewards book, and the website and newsletter may also take on a more regional look in the near future. With expansion comes change to some of the original "requirements" of the program. In Island County, membership was originally restricted to households along the shoreline, which was soon changed to include those who lived in communities with shoreline or beach access. When Jefferson County adopted the program, they included property owners who live along their beautiful streams and rivers as well, as these property owners also have a significant impact on nearshore water quality. Island County has no real rivers to speak of, and our streams are small and seasonal when compared to those in the other counties, so inclusion of property owners along our streams was not originally considered. We do have salmon streams on each island, though, so property owners alongside streams in Island County will now be eligible to join Shore Stewards.

Shore Stewards welcomes the addition of Clallam, Whatcom, Snohomish and Skagit counties, and we will keep our members updated on any regional changes as they happen!

Arsenic: New Standards Now in Effect

Do you have arsenic in your drinking water? Many wells in Island County do. As described in the 2003 WRAC paper on Arsenic (see bibliography), “Arsenic occurs naturally in rock and soil, water, and plants. A series of glacial events created the groundwater aquifers utilized in Island County. These glaciers deposited sands and gravel containing naturally occurring arsenic. As groundwater moves through these aquifers it dissolves some of the arsenic in these deposits.”

Long-term arsenic consumption has been linked to cancers and other adverse health effects. How much arsenic is considered too much is a matter of opinion. The standard set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and which was used from 1975 through the end of 2005 was 50 parts per billion (ppb) or less. In 1999, the National Academy of Sciences suggested a new standard at 5 ppb. The EPA established a new standard of 10 ppb, which became enforceable by the Washington State Department of Health Office of Drinking Water (ODW) on January 23, 2006. According to the 2003 WRAC report, of the 1327 wells that were sampled for arsenic, 235, or 18%, had levels higher than the 10 ppb standard. You can see a map of Island County wells and their arsenic concentration by linking to their report in the bibliography.

How does this affect your water system? According to the ODW, “this new water quality standard applies to community and non-transient non-community water systems that have at least one non-purchased source”. If your community receives its source from surface water like a river, a sample for arsenic must be collected by December 31, 2006. Groundwater (well) sources must collect a sample by December 31, 2007. These samples are taken after treatment, but before they enter your distribution system. Water systems that show the highest excessive arsenic levels in the state will be the first ones targeted for enforcement, with the two major components of the compliance strategy consisting of quarterly monitoring of each sampling point and assisting those systems that exceed levels to bring their levels within compliance. Compliance can come about as a result of treatment, or by using a non-treatment method that may include blending, developing a new water source, or tying in with a neighboring system that is within acceptable arsenic levels. To help with the costs of implementing compliance, financial support is offered through the federal Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. Information may be found at http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our_main_pages/dwsrf.htm . See the bibliography for links to publications on arsenic treatment technology.

What is Missing From Your Water

Most of those who are reading this newsletter have moved to Island County from elsewhere, many from cities or other locations that have municipal water systems. Water from aquifers and wells is a new concept for many of our readers, and there are differences that we all struggle to take into consideration. One way in which our situation differs from living in a city is that our water is not fluoridated. Unless you drink water from the Oak Harbor or Naval Station water systems on Whidbey Island, your water is not fluoridated. This may be a good thing or a bad thing to you, as fluoridation is a very controversial subject on which Shore Stewards takes no position. If you check the web, you will see strong opinions on both sides of the issue. Many cities in the U.S. fluoridate their water, while some (like Bellingham) repeatedly vote down fluoridation.

If you favor fluoride but do not have it in your water, you should consult with your dental professional. The companies who sell bottled water are starting to produce fluoridated water, though it is hard to find. A recent scan of the bottled water aisle of a large grocery store found eight 8-ounce bottles of a *fluoridated* popular brand at \$2.99. You should see more in the future.

Rain Barrels and Cisterns

Our rural great-grandparents (and their parents and grandparents) who lived on farms realized how precious a commodity water was, and did not waste a drop if they could avoid it. Most farmers harvested not only crops, but also harvested the rain in rain barrels and cisterns. Water captured from roof runoff could be used in the garden during the dry summer months, saving much of the well water for other uses. With increasing populations on the islands in Puget Sound, which receive the majority of their water from aquifers, the use of this “old” technology is once again becoming familiar. How much water can you save? Consider that for every inch of rain that falls on a thousand foot catchment area, you can expect to collect about 600 gallons of rainwater. Your roof catchment area is equal to the total square feet of the main level of your house plus the extension of your eaves. A typical plastic rain barrel holds from 50 to 80 gallons; you can increase the amount of saved water by having a rain barrel for each downspout, or by linking two or more rain barrels. To save larger amounts of water, you could install an underground cistern, which is typically a concrete structure designed to store much larger quantities of water.

Where do you get a rain barrel? If you are able to obtain a clean plastic barrel that has not contained toxic chemicals from a restaurant or other source, you can build one cheaply using materials available at any hardware store. You can also buy a manufactured unit from your nursery or any number of other gardening outlets. Check with your library or the bibliography below for instructions on building your own rain barrel or where to buy one, if you can't find one locally.

Bibliography

1. **2003 Water Resource Advisory Committee (WRAC) Report on Arsenic:**
<http://www.islandcounty.net/health/Envh/wrac/TopicPapers/Arsenic5.pdf>
2. **Other Island County WRAC topic papers you may find of interest:**
<http://www.islandcounty.net/health/Envh/wrac/TopicPapers/TopicPapers.htm>
3. For publications on arsenic treatment, go to the Office of Drinking Water publications website, <http://www4.doh.wa.gov/dw/publications/publications.cfm> and click on “Alphabetically by Title”. See the following publications:
Arsenic treatment technology: Evaluation handbook for Small Systems (EPA Pub. 816-R-03-014), and
Arsenic Treatment for Small Water Systems (ODW Pub. 331-210)
4. **How to Make a Rain Barrel** City of Ottawa, 2006.
http://www.ottawa.ca/city_services/water/efficiency/rain_barrel_en.shtml
5. **Rain Barrel Information and Sources:** King County. Everything from how to build your own rain barrel to where to get supplies or where to buy ready-made rain barrels.
<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/PI/rainbarrels.htm>
6. **Rain Barrel Fact Sheet:** Whatcom County Master Recycler/Composters. Good information on how to stack and link multiple rain barrels, as well as another way to make your own. <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/compost/rainbarrel.htm>

Links

Island County Marine Resources Committee (with link to Northwest Straits Commission):
<http://www.islandcountymrc.org/>

WSU Beach Watchers (regional site; click on Island County):
<http://www.beachwatchers.wsu.edu/>

Island County WSU Extension: <http://www.island.wsu.edu/>

Hood Canal Shore Stewards (Jefferson County WSU Extension):
http://jefferson.wsu.edu/OPWW/8-shore_stewards.html

Calendar of Events

Saturday, May 21st, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm: Recycle Your Junk Tires! Volunteers from WSU Beach Watchers and WSU Waste Wise programs, with help from the Island County Health Department, will help you get rid of that junk tire problem. Prices are \$2 for each off rim passenger or light truck tires, or \$3.75 on rim. Large truck tires are \$6.75 off rim, and \$15.75 on rim. No tractor, plane, or other very large tires. They should be relatively clean and free from contamination. On Camano, go to the Camano Road Shop on Can Ku Road, behind the CASA Animal Shelter. On Whidbey, location is at the Coupeville Solid Waste Facility, 20018 SR 20, behind the Recycling Facility. For details, contact Janet Hall halljn@wsu.edu, or call her at 678-7974 or 321-5111, ext. 7974. Phone number on Camano: 629-4522, ext 7974.

Tuesday, May 23rd: Whidbey 101: Living on the Island

Are you a recent newcomer to the island? Or an established islander and want to know how to live more wisely on the island? This is a lively introduction to the unique community resources available to you to enhance your island life. Includes information on fun community events and festivals; local clubs and organizations; caring for your septic system; emergency preparedness for earthquakes and tsunamis; easy ways to reduce your solid waste; alternative transportation; and ways to build and support your local community. Heller Road Fire Station in Oak Harbor. Time and further information in the May newsletter.

To view archived copies of past Shore Stewards Newsletters, go to www.shorestewards.org

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