

Hedgerow Pilot Project – Maddox Creek Pioneers in Conservation

Resource Challenge

Maddox Creek, also known as Big Ditch, serves as drainage for the urban, rural and agricultural areas that it flows through. Much of the natural watercourse has been moved, modified and straightened over the years to accommodate infrastructure. Approximately 5 miles of the 7-mile stream has been channelized and straightened. Approximately 2.8 miles of Maddox Creek flows parallel to Interstate 5 and is within 100 feet of the interstate. Maddox Creek is listed as containing Coho salmon and Cutthroat trout. Maddox Creek’s drainage is maintained by Drainage District 17 of Skagit County, who periodically cleans out the sediment that accumulates on the bottom of the streambed to maintain the stream’s drainage. The network of waterways and ditches that drain Skagit Valley are vital to maintaining the productivity of Skagit Valley’s agricultural lands. A majority of the sediment in Maddox Creek is due to the steep sides of the stream banks that periodically slide off into the stream. Due to the maintenance of cleaning out the stream by Drainage District 17, the 2.8 miles of Maddox Creek that flows parallel to Interstate 5 is void of any woody vegetation and is mowed to control noxious weeds.

Project Summary

The project was a pilot project to see if establishing a hedgerow along Maddox Creek could provide shade to the stream, reduce the amount of sediment entering the stream by stabilizing the stream banks, remove and replace non native vegetation with native vegetation, improve water quality and improve wildlife habitat all while still maintaining the drainage function of the stream. A hedgerow was established on 2,000 lineal feet of Maddox Creek as it flows parallel to Interstate 5. A permit was required from the Washington State Department of Transportation for the hedgerow due to the close proximity of Interstate 5. The 2,000-foot lineal hedgerow was divided into four 500-foot sections. In each section, a different variety of shrubs were planted to see which shrubs best provided the desired function. A total of 4,040 shrubs were planted.

Project Results

This was an amazing cooperative and collaborative effort between many organizations with different interests. It is the first hedgerow along a maintained drainage waterway in Skagit County. We hope that the future results of the project show that fish and drainage can coexist. Thanks to the cooperation of Drainage District 17, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Department of Transportation, with funding provide by the Shared Strategy, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and The Nature Conservancy in participation with the Skagit Conservation District, 4,040 shrubs have been planted along 2,000 lineal feet of Maddox Creek. Two signs will be installed to recognize the project and the partners involved. Ongoing monitoring will be provided to measure the results of the project.



Hedgerow shrubs planted along Maddox Creek

More Information

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Key Partners Involved

Drainage District 17
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington State Department of Transportation
Skagit Conservation District
Shared Strategy
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
The Nature Conservancy

Skagit County CD

Board of Supervisors

Betty Norton, Chair
Janet McRae, Vice-chair
Mike Naylor, Treasurer
Paul Blau, Member
Tony Hansen, Member

Funding

Federal:	\$25,300	Shared Strategy, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and The Nature Conservancy
Local:	\$20,400	Conservation Commission and Drainage District 17, Skagit Conservation District
Total:	\$45,700	

Background Information

The Skagit CD has been serving local citizens since September 16, 1942. The District encompasses 1,735 square miles and is home to over 113,000 residents and is the second highest county in the state for population growth.

The Skagit River System is the largest of the Puget Sound drainages in total drainage area (WDF 1975). The main stem of the river is 162 miles long. The Skagit River, after the Columbia, is the largest river on the west coast of the contiguous United States.

Agricultural resources are very important to Skagit County's economy and community. Over 71 different crops are grown in Skagit County, and forestry is also an important resource. Forestlands account for 29% of the county's total acreage.

Shellfish industries, as well as commercial and recreational fishing, represent integral natural resources that have influenced Skagit County economically and culturally.

Mission Statement

To provide voluntary, incentive based options that support working landscapes while protecting and enhancing our natural resource land base.

Natural Resource Priorities and Goals

Water Quality Conservation:

To protect and improve the quality of surface and groundwater for the benefit of all users and user groups, targeting waterbodies on the 303(d) list. To participate in watershed planning and implementation activities, which further the District mission and goals while supporting stakeholder involvement.

Fisheries & Wildlife Habitat Improvement:

To promote and provide assistance for fish and wildlife habitat protection and enhancement activities targeting endangered and threatened species and state and local species of concern.

Agriculture Promotion and Assistance:

To support efforts to protect and preserve prime farmlands and provide opportunities to promote sustainable agriculture for farms of all sizes and economic scale.

Forestland Stewardship:

To implement a cooperative forest stewardship program which will protect the area resources while supporting long-range silvicultural production.

OTHER DISTRICT INFORMATION

Information - Education Priorities and Goals

To provide conservation educational opportunities and volunteer activities to residents of all ages throughout Skagit County, increasing knowledge of resource issues while building community stewardship.

Critical Geographic Areas

The entire district is a critical geographic area.

Natural Resource Information: More Work to Do

Skagit County has 800 miles of fish bearing streams and rivers

- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program: To date, 69 active, signed contracts totaling 469.7 buffer acres with 197,126 trees planted and a total of 142,650 stream feet. One new contract signed and 11.8 buffer acres of 2420 trees to be planted in the spring of 2008.

Skagit County has 255,081 privately owned acres of forestland and 621,989 acres of publicly owned forestland

This fiscal year . . .

- Firewise and Community Wildfire Protection Planning: 26 home assessments; 6 presentations; 4 community-wide assessments completed; wildfire protection outreach methods for 8 communities; Shelter Bay, Chuckanut Ridge, and Eagles Nest are recognized as Firewise Communities. One draft CWPP in eastern Skagit County.
- Forestry: 12 forestry plans were written for 890.4 acres. 19 cooperators were given technical assistance on 450 acres. 7 forestry plans were written for approximately 240 acres.
- Professional Engineering: 19 cooperators received engineering technical assistance; 3 cooperators implemented 8 BMP's.

Skagit County has over 100,000 fertile acres of farmland

- Livestock: Cost-share was provided to landowners totaling \$14,893.50; provided technical assistance to 41 landowners; 6 Dairy Nutrient Management Plans written; 3 plans were written for commercial livestock operations; 7 small farm conservation plans written. 9 projects were implemented.

Information – Education Achievements:

- 6th Grade Conservation Tour: over 800 students
- Soil and Water Stewardship Poster contest: 335 posters
- 16 classroom presentations to over 285 students
- Newsletters were distributed to over 4,500 readers
- 6,000+ people attended the Bald Eagle Festival
- 35,000 people attended the Skagit County Fair
- 3,000+ people attended the Family Festival of Farms
- 1,500+ attended the Bivalve Bash

Volunteer Programs Goals and Priorities - Community Participation & Involvement:

Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short-course generated 66 participants with 35 completing requirements for certification. The Lake Stewardship Program had 7 participants. 54 participated in the Skagit Stream Team Program monitoring 45+ stations located in 6 priority watersheds twice monthly. 18 volunteers sampled 13 local recreational shellfish harvesting beaches for PSP. 16 volunteers completed the Watershed Masters Volunteer Training Program with 8 completing their 40-hour volunteer service commitment.