

Triangle Cove Watershed

NEWSLETTER

Working with you to improve water quality in your watershed

Island County Public Health

Spring 2015

Let's Celebrate the International Year of Soils



International Year of Soils

Spring is finally here and that means many of you will be planting gardens, native and ornamental plants and spring seeds.

Did you ever consider your soil? Do you have clay, sand, silt, or peat? Does it drain well? Was it previously forestland or pasture?

2015 has been designated as 'The International Year of Soils' to help highlight how much we depend on this precious resource. Here are a few fun facts about soil:

- ❖ 70,000 different types of soil can be found in the U.S.
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of soil has more organisms in it than there are people on earth.
- ❖ 500 years is the minimum number of years it takes to form one inch of topsoil.
- ❖ There are 5,000 different types of bacteria in one gram of soil.
- ❖ .01 percent of the earth's water is held in soil.
- ❖ 15 tons of dry soil per acre pass through one earthworm each year.
- ❖ 1,400,000 is the number of earthworms that can be found in an acre of cropland.
- ❖ In the top six inches of an acre of soil, there are 20,000 pounds of total living matter.
- ❖ 10 percent of the world's carbon dioxide emissions are stored in soil.
- ❖ 4,000 gallons of water is the amount soil needs to produce one bushel of corn.
- ❖ 11,000 gallons of water is the amount that soil needs to produce one bushel of wheat.

Fun facts are from the Audubon site: www.audubon.org. Learn more about soil at 'I heart soil' <https://www.soils.org/discover-soils/i-heart-soil>



Your Neighbors ~ the Beavers

by Lois Ruskell, Snohomish Conservation District



Living on Camano Island, you no doubt have many neighbors, some human, some not. Besides deer, raccoons, and the odd opossum, Camano Island has its own family of beavers. Likely there are more scattered around the island, but in the Triangle Cove watershed, the beaver (living unobtrusively for the most part) and beaver marsh are located at the NW corner of East Camano Drive and Can Ku Road.

The twenty-acre beaver marsh lies partway between the headwaters of Kristoferson Creek, north of Cross Island road, and Triangle Cove. Triangle Cove is a 200 acre estuary that is home to eagles, blue heron, shellfish and salmonids. Triangle Cove is tidally influenced and drains into Port Susan in the Driftwood Shores area. The rich mixture of fresh and salt water provides a myriad of food for birds, fish and other aquatic life. On any given day, you can see more than a handful of eagles and blue heron fishing the cove.

Beavers are a productive lot, creating dams across streams and rivers to flood the area surrounding their lodges. This protects them from predators and wets nearby soils to promote the growth of their favorite water-loving plants like willows. Beaver ponds and their associated wetlands provide food and shelter for other kinds of wildlife such as ducks, deer, raccoons, herons, and various species of fish.

Salmon are heavily dependant on beavers as their ponds create the ideal place for young juveniles to hide from predators and feed as they grow into adults. Beaver ponds rarely block the upstream migration of adult salmon as the salmon wait for heavy rains to raise the water level which allows them to swim over the dam. Although beavers provide benefits to the watershed, they can also cause problems to human residents. Flooding caused by their ponds can impact roads, septic drain fields, basements, pastures and crop fields.

Many years ago, the beavers in Kristoferson Creek were causing some flooding problems for the CASA animal shelter across the road from their dam. Island County worked with local residents to try a more permanent fix for the problem than removing the offending animals. Beaver removal generally costs around \$100 per animal from a licenced trapper. Because they live in families, trapping requires the removal of all members. This is only a temporary solution however, as another beaver family will likely move in.

If you have a beaver pond on your property, and the water level is too high, you can add a pond leveler, like the one shown below. You choose the water level you're comfortable with, and once installed, the leveler prevents beavers from raising the water level, no matter how much they build up their dams. If beavers are plugging a culvert in a road, you can add a beaver deceiver which 'encourages them' to build elsewhere.



View the beaver pond, leveler and deceiver at the NW corner of East Camano Drive and Can Ku Rd. There are signs and a viewing platform.

Historically, it's estimated that there were between 10 and 70 beavers per square mile across North America. The ponds and wetlands created by these beaver stored extra water during rain storms and snow-melt events. Much of this stored water then soaked into the soil and recharged ground-water supplies.

Over time, changes to the landscape, including the loss of wetlands and removal of forests and beaver dams, have resulted in more frequent flooding and higher flood water levels than in the past. Because of the Kristoferson creek beavers, water is filtered, and slowed, before passing through farms and fields on its way to Triangle Cove, and that's a good thing.



Beavers provide many benefits to a watershed. Their ponds store water to refresh underground aquifers for one!

**Residents of Triangle Cove watershed - we have news for you!
There is grant funding to help protect and clean up Triangle Cove, and you can help!**

New website helps residents with how-to videos and more

Snohomish Conservation District launched a new website to help landowners with projects like taking their own soil tests, setting up rain barrels, connecting multiple rain barrels, restoring streams and much more.

You will also find fact sheets, landowner success stories and information on native plants, green roofs and backyard chickens.

Check it out at:

www.betterground.org



Camano Conservation Celebration

April 22nd, 3 PM - 7 PM

Camano Center, 606 Arrowhead Rd, Camano Island

Earth Day is approaching and the Camano Center is hosting a multi-generational Earth Day event in partnership with Utsalady Elementary, Snohomish Conservation District and Fire Mountain Solar. A variety of fun, informative activities are planned, including a presentation about how the community is helping protect Triangle Cove's water quality. Email kathryn@snohomishcd.org for more information. The event is free, no registration required.

Funding for your projects

Everyone can use help from time to time. Triangle Cove watershed residents can get funding for septic inspections and to repair a failing septic. Funding is also available to fence animals out of streams, add a stream buffer and more! To learn what qualifies, call Kristin Marshall at the Conservation District, 425-377-7017.

News for the Triangle Cove Watershed

Kathleen Parvin, R.S., Pollution Identification and Correction Program Manager, Island County Public Health

The Triangle Cove Watersheds make up one of the largest drainage basins on Camano Island. The basin includes the developed areas of Barnum Point, Camaloch, Camaloch Golf Course, Camano Plaza, Island County Complex, Driftwood Shores, Evergreen Acres, Grove Lake and portions of Camano Hills and Driftwood Heights. The Triangle Cove Watersheds are amazingly complex and include not only the residential and commercial development but a major estuary, wetlands, over five miles of stream habitat, forested uplands, and agriculture. Kristoferson Creek is one of only three mapped salmon bearing streams on Camano Island.

A healthy watershed has vegetated stream corridors, wetlands, lakes, undisturbed uplands, well managed residential properties with regularly inspected and maintained septic systems, properly managed stormwater, and agricultural properties with good manure management.

The focus this spring and summer is on improving the rate of septic system inspections. The current rate of septic system inspections in the Triangle Cove Watersheds is 19%. Reminder notices have gone out to all property owners without a current septic inspection as of February 25, 2015. The State regulation on septic inspections requires that all conventional gravity systems be inspected every three years and that all alternative systems (any system with a pump) be inspected every year.

If you receive a reminder notice, please schedule your inspection. A high percentage of septic system inspections find a deficiency that needs to be corrected. Fixing a small problem now may prevent a system failure that could cost \$20,000 or more later. Your septic system might be out of sight but it should not be out of mind.

For those with a conventional gravity system or a conventional pressure system, you can attend the Home Owner Septic Training (HOST) Program to become certified to inspect your own system. For more information about the HOST program or to register for a class visit our website at: <http://www.islandcountyseptictraining.com>.

Septic 101 provides the basics of owning and operating an on-site septic system. This class can be viewed on the web or attended in a traditional lecture style. Septic 201 is an in-person field class. This class is required for the certification to inspect your own septic system.

This class will also make you more knowledgeable about the inspection requirements before hiring a professional. The usual cost of \$28 for a homeowner septic inspection certification will be waived for verified residents of the Triangle Cove Watersheds.

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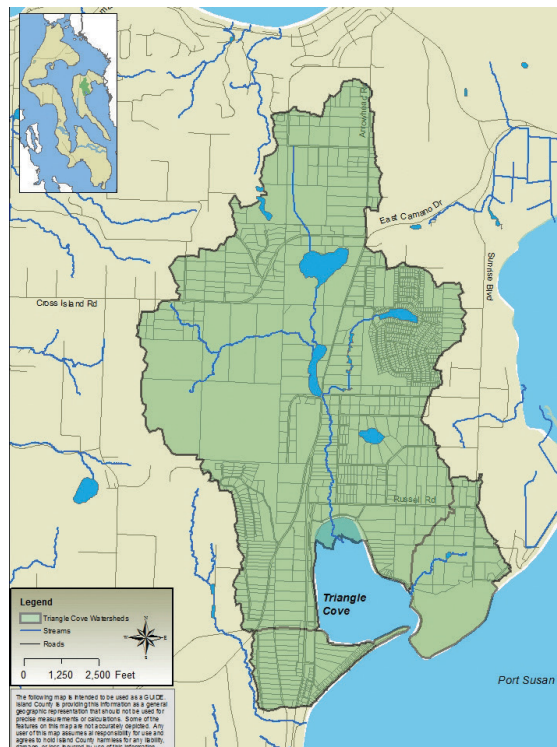
Camano Class Dates and Times

Septic 101 & 201: Thursday, April 16, 5-8 pm

Septic 101 & 201: Thursday, June 11, 5-8 pm

Septic 101 & 201: Thursday, September 3, 5-8 pm

All classes will be located at Four Springs Lake Preserve, 585 Lewis Lane, Camano Island (<http://www.fourspringshouse.com/Home/Location>). To register for the April 16th Septic 101 and 201 classes, contact Maribeth Crandell at 360-678-7914 or from Camano Island: 360-629-4522 Ext. 7914 or e-mail: Mb.crandell@co.island.wa.us. To register for Whidbey HOST classes, visit the HOST website noted above. By working together we can improve and protect water quality in the Triangle Cove Watersheds.



The Triangle Cove Watershed