**Upcoming Workshops by Thurston Conservation District and Native Plant Salvage**

“Naturescaping for Water and Wildlife”

Learn about sustainable landscaping techniques that will save you time and money while also attracting birds and butterflies to your garden and protecting water resources! Topics include how to make a landscape plan; design ideas for outdoor living spaces; managing drainage, and other trouble spots; how to reduce unnecessary lawn; how to create habitat for birds and butterflies; and selecting water-wise plants for all four seasons. Workshop being lead by Erica Guttman in Partnership with Thurston Conservation District, Thurston County Stream Team, and City of Tumwater. Registration is required,please contact: nativeplantsalvage@gmail.com or (360) 867-2166. Workshop is being held on Thursday, November 3rd, in Tumwater, exact location TBA- find out at nativeplantsalvage.org or by calling (360) 867-2166.

“Livestock Care: Winter Edition (Farm Workshop/Tour)”

Are you ready for winter? How about your pasture? Join Thurston Conservation District on location at Stick Horse Stables to get down and dirty about mud management, pasture care, manure storage and sacrifice areas! We’ll make a plan for Spring improvements, and discuss what went wrong this year and how to fix it before next season! Workshop being led by Brian Thompson. Bring your questions, concerns and confusion for some real, surefire answers! Registration is required, please contact: swooten@thurstoncd.com or (360) 754 – 3588 Ext. 136. Workshop is being held on Saturday, November 5th, 2011 at the Stick Horse Stables 2744 Angus Rd SE, Tenino WA 98589.

##

**State Funding Continues to Support Grays Harbor Marine Resources Committee**

By Kathy Greer, Westport Resident and GH Marine Resources Committee Chair

Marine Resources Committees began forming in coastal Washington in 2008. In spring 2009 Grays Harbor became the first of the now four Committees along our coast, including ones in Pacific, Clallam/Jefferson, and Wahkiakum counties. These government and privately funded ‘bottoms-up’ grassroots and volunteer-based organizations aim to engage local citizens to help set priorities and design projects of local importance to help protect and restore the marine environment.

These committees have existed for inland waters in areas such as Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, Island, San Juan, Jefferson and Clallam counties now for the last decade and the coastal committees were somewhat modeled after them. Each of the now four coastal committees are made up of about 15 board members that represent a broad spectrum of interests, including commercial fish/shellfish, the charter industry, recreation, tribes, conservation, ports, science and education.

Overall, the coastal committees have been tasked with working with state and federal officials as the Obama Administration works on planning issues for the coast such and Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning via the President’s Ocean Policy Task Force and Ocean Action Plan The Committees are defined as a “citizen based approach” to propose and implement research, scientific surveys, and restoration projects and have shown fantastic success over the last three years in engaging coastal communities in marine stewardship activities. Research, public outreach and education, along with on-the-ground projects, have been at the top of the list of accomplishments for each.

They are also helping drive decision-making in their communities at the state and even federal levels with their active involvement in numerous legislative bills associated with marine spatial planning, oil spill preparedness, and off-shore drilling. All of these efforts reflect each area's unique local priorities that contribute to our coast’s broader marine conservation goals.

In August, the Grays Harbor Marine Resources Committee received $76,000 in state funding to continue operation for the next two years with hopefully more funds to follow as local and state agencies continue to acknowledge the great work being done by them on behalf of our coastal resources. The funding agreement was entered into with the Grays Harbor County Commission via legislative funds from the Department of Fish & Wildlife.

The county, as is the case with all of these coastal committees, serves as a fiscal and administrative capacity. Garrett Dalan, who works in the county's Environmental Health Division, serves as the MRC Coordinator for the Grays Harbor Committee. Dalan noted that the amount of money being received this year is slightly lower than in previous years but he was optimistic the state funds would survive future budget cuts.

Each of our state’s coastal Marine Resources Committees have succeeded in implementing dozens of practical, on-the-ground projects benefitting not only their regional marine areas but also their local economy. Issues that may have a significant impact on our coast such as offshore drilling, alternative energy projects, water quality, and coastal and marine spatial planning are just a few of the issues that are currently on their radar.

Committee projects that have taken place include putting on public forums and presentations on marine resource issues, providing bus transportation for students to get field experience learning about coastal issues on the beach, and setting up area water quality monitoring sites to look at ocean acidification and harmful algal blooms and their effect on local shellfish.

Recently the Grays Harbor committee and the Quinault Indian Nation received a grant to remove “ghost nets” (aka derelict fishing gear) from the Quinault and Chehalis Rivers, through a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association’s Marine Debris Program. Work began early this month and volunteers have already removed a number of nets. The nets, lost from fishing boats, sink to the bottom and continue to catch marine life, causing the death of fish, marine mammals and sea birds while also degrading surrounding habitat.

Another grant underway with the committee is one to begin the identification and removal of creosote pilings that are known to break down over time and wreak havoc on marine environments.

Marine Resources Committees have been building their capacity as an advisory body to local, state, and even federal authorities on marine issues and they continually work at bringing together diverse interests for collaborative efforts for a better understanding of our coast’s marine ecosystem through science, innovative project work, and community outreach.

Local citizens are invited to become involved with their area Marine Resources Committees through volunteer opportunities, project proposals, and/or attendance at their regular monthly meetings. For more information or if you are interested in serving as a board member on the Grays Harbor County Marine Resources Committee which currently has vacancies, please visit <http://www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us/info/pub_svcs/MRC/contact/contact.htm> or contact Garrett Dalan at gdalan@co.grays-harbor.wa.us.

##

**Invasive Species Removal YOU Can Do At Home**

By Sasha Shaw, King County Noxious Weed Control Board

Control invasive vines now to reduce weight on trees over the windy, rainy winter:

Our wet, windy winters are a big challenge for trees, especially when they are weighted down by mountains of English ivy or Clematis (old man’s beard) vines.  These vines can create a sail effect, catching the wind and creating more stress on the trees in strong winds.  Also, both ivy and clematis can develop into thick, heavy stems – it’s like having lots of small trees growing all over your tree.  English ivy vines can add over 2000 pounds to a large tree, making it hard for even the sturdiest Douglas fir to stay up in a windstorm.  Also, vines can make it tough to know how healthy a tree is and can mask problems with rot and dead limbs.  It’s best to clear the trunks now of all ivy and clematis vines, allowing the upper vines time to die back and dry up before the winter storms begin.  If you are unsure how healthy the tree is under all those vines and it is anywhere near buildings or trails, make sure to get an arborist or forester to check for you before it becomes a safety hazard.

Think about doing blackberry control in the fall:

Both of our invasive blackberry species, Himalayan and evergreen, are still growing quite actively in October, and this can be a good time to control them while minimizing impacts on dormant native vegetation.  Spraying blackberry foliage with glyphosate is effective until leaves start to turn color and die back. Also, cutting back canes and digging up the roots works anytime, but is even easier in the fall when the soil is looser than in the hot, dry summer months.  As a bonus, birds aren’t nesting now, so removing blackberries now will reduce impact on any species that might have been using the thickets in the spring.  However, when digging up blackberry, avoid exposing soil near streams and rivers where it will wash into the water during the storms and high waters of the winter.  In sensitive areas, make sure to use hand-operated tools only, not heavy equipment that can increase erosion and soil damage.  For cutting, there are heavy-duty blades that can be used on weed trimmers or brush cutters or there is the always effective, if time-consuming, long-handled loppers.  Digging roots out with a shovel works fine, but somewhat easier is a claw-style mattock that can hook onto the base of the plant and help you lever out the root ball.

Good fall pasture management will reduce weed problems next year:

The same practices that help you protect healthy pasture soils and reduce erosion will also reduce your pasture weed problems.  It’s important to keep livestock off saturated soils to avoid damaging pasture plants and leaving openings for weeds.  Weeds do much better in compacted soils than grasses so protecting your soil in the wet months will help reduce weed issues.  Also, any exposed soil is an opportunity for a weed to take hold, so make sure to spread an appropriate pasture seed mix over any thinly vegetated areas or where there was a lot of traffic over the summer.  To get ready for the winter, control the weeds, fertilize, and add lime now to reduce your work in the spring.  Also, storing manure under cover will help reduce the amount of weed seeds blowing into it and will improve the quality of the manure for mulch.

For more information about noxious weed removal contact your local Noxious Weed Control Board Office: Grays Harbor County (360) 482-2265, Lewis County (360) 740-1215, Thurston County (360) 786-5576, Mason County (360) 427-9670 ext.592.

##

**Davis Creek is Now a Fully-Functioning Salmon Stream**

By Lonnie Crumley, Streamworks Consulting and the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force

The Davis Creek Fish Passage Correction project removed one of the last fish barrier culverts in the Davis Creek Watershed and opened 12 miles of prime spawning and rearing habitat for 5 species of salmonids including Coho, Chum, Chinook, and Steelhead. Two total barrier culverts downstream from the county road were corrected by the Chehalis Tribe in 2010 through a Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant known as the “Wickett Project”. The two projects corrected all fish barriers on Davis Creek.

This project is located under South Bank Road in Grays Harbor County just north of the City of Oakville. This barrier is 2 miles upstream from the creek’s confluence with the Chehalis River at RM 43.5 in Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 23. The Washington State Office of Conservation and Recreation Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) Program contributed the primary source of funding for the project, with match grants coming from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative.

The barrier culvert removed in this project was a round, steel pipe, 5.5 feet in diameter in a stream 24 feet wide.  The new culvert installed in this project is a bottomless arch culvert 32 feet wide, wide enough to accommodate high stream flows and allow for fish passage for all life-stages of salmonids including juveniles. Large woody debris was also added upstream and downstream for habitat complexity and velocity reduction.

##

**Centralia College Builds Outdoor Learning Lab**

By Paul McFadden, City of Centralia

Centralia College has built an outdoor learning lab along and around China Creek. The stream, which flows and slices through the heart of Centralia Washington, traverses the northwest corner of Centralia College’s campus. The refurbished area gives the students an outdoor environmental lab, the public a place for a leisurely walk or picnic, and the entire community the benefit and vision of what a full restoration of China Creek could be like.

A tributary of the Chehalis River, China Creek is one of the main sources for storm water passage from the City of Centralia’s storm water system with 46 out-falls. Over the last century, with homes built along its banks, the creek has been used for solid waste and grey water discharge and garbage disposable. Trees and native vegetation have long been removed letting non-native species of shrubs and plants overgrow its banks clogging the channel, causing erosion and limiting fish habitat. All of this transformed China Creek into a seasonal flow body of water with summer time cauldrons of stagnant water and rampant flooding during the winter rainy season.

In the last 2 decades the City of Centralia, recognizing the importance of having a healthy free flowing China Creek, has taken steps to improve the ecological fitness of the stream. The City eliminated all illicit discharges from private and commercial property along the creek, solicited individuals and groups from an Eagle Scout to the Centralia College Environmental Class to pull trash from the channel.

Centralia established the “Centralia Stream Team” to engage the public in the protection and restoration of China Creek and other waterways that pass through the city. With BMP’s and educational outreach, the City storm water system maintenance program has improved yearly. Street sweeping, storm water catch basin and pipe cleaning, public education of illicit discharge, from yard fertilization to picking up their pet’s poop, have all played a big part in bringing China Creek back to life.

Now, with Centralia College’s ability to secure funding for its Kiser Natural Outdoor Learning Center, the restoration of the channel and area around it gives Centralia residents a vision as to what China Creek and other water ways passing through Centralia could look like.

##

**Fun for All at the Chehalis Watershed Festival!**

By Janel Spaulding, Watershed Coordinator for the Chehalis Basin Partnership and Grays Harbor College

The 6th Annual Chehalis Watershed Festival, held on Saturday September 17th, was another fun and successful event for residents of the Chehalis Watershed…yes that includes you!

The day started off a little rainy, well actually it was pouring, but by the time 10am came for the start of the Festival the rain had stopped. Festival attendees were able to catch a rainbow trout at the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force Fishing Pond, and take it home for dinner. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service held their fishing demonstration to teach kids how to cast with a fishing pole and by the time they were ready to try their hand at the fishing pond they were experts!

Fin, the 28ft long fiberglass salmon, was at the Festival as well as 5 schools the week prior to the Festival to teach kids about watershed education and the salmon lifecycle. Kids always get excited to see a 28ft long fiberglass that they can crawl around inside of!

The Chehalis Tribe prepared yummy salmon cooked in the traditional salmon-bake style over hot coals with cedar. Live “old-time swing and jazz” music was performed by Who Are These Guys. Attendees also got to participate in the 4th Annual Chehalis Basin Drinking Water Taste Test, with Chehalis, Centralia, Montesano, and “Bottled Water” all competing in the taste test. For the third time Centralia took home the trophy for being voted best tasting water in the Chehalis Basin.

Many local exhibitors prepared hands-on activities for kids and their families including a fish printing art activity; building a monster bug; touch and feel antlers, bones and other critters; making salmon lifecycle bracelets, learning the age of a salmon through looking at one of its scales through a microscope, getting to see close-up (through a microscope) what kinds of bugs and insects we’ll find in our stream sediment and mud; learning about the geology of the Chehalis Watershed; and seeing how litter, chemicals and other debris ends up in our waterways using the Watershed Model.

New this year was a prize raffle drawing featuring a grand prize of a 1-night stay at the Great Wolf Lodge including 6 water park passes. One lucky boy got to take home the grand prize and other winners received prizes like gift certificates, water bottles, and fishing poles.

For the 2nd straight year the Festival was sponsored by local organizations, businesses and government entities. Thanks goes to the Chehalis Basin Partnership, the Chehalis Basin Education Consortium, City of Aberdeen, City of Centralia, City of Montesano, Dennis Company, East Grays Harbor Rotary Club, Grays Harbor College, Grays Harbor County, Grays Harbor County Marine Resources Committee, Great Wolf Lodge, Hoquiam Rotary Club, Port Blakely Tree Farms, Subway, and the Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Partnership. A large number of volunteers also helped in the planning and day of the event-thank you all for your help this year!

For more information about the Chehalis Watershed Festival please contact Festival Coordinator Janel Spaulding (360) 538-4212 or email jspauldi@ghc.edu.

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