



What is the Tenmile Creek Watershed Volunteer Riparian Restoration Project?

The WRIA Planning Unit and Joint Board approved the Tenmile Creek Watershed Volunteer Riparian Restoration Project as an early action project under the WRIA Watershed Management Plan process. The objective of the early action project was to provide seed money to set the stage for a larger three year pilot program. The Tenmile Creek Watershed Project is a community-based effort to improve water quality in the rivers, streams and ditches that run through an individual's property. It is a common sense approach to match the landowner's land use and management needs and our community's desire and need to improve water quality. The goal of the program is to improve the health of our streams, including wildlife habitat, while maintaining the ability to farm and work the land.

The six month early action project, for which seed money was provided, has specific goals of educating and engaging Tenmile Creek Watershed residents in efforts to restore riparian areas on a watershed or sub watershed basis.

What Tasks were Undertaken as Part of the Tenmile Creek Early Action Project?

Tasks in the early action project include:

- Establishing an Advisory Committee to assist in such tasks as identifying the pilot location for restoration and education efforts, reviewing and providing feedback on educational materials, and assisting in recruitment for planting and maintaining efforts;
- Recruiting farmers to grow nursery trees and other vegetative materials;
- Developing a protocol for selecting and distributing educational materials to landowners including preparation of a landowner questionnaire, one-on-one contact with property owners, neighborhood meetings and workshops, etc;
- Documenting site plans for future planting.

The Tenmile Creek Volunteer Restoration Project
Dorie Belisle, Project Manager
For Period 3/15/2001 to 9/15/2001

It is with gratitude and excitement that I present this final report to the WRIA 1 Planning Unit. I thank all those who were willing to risk a different way. I thank all those individuals and agencies that supported this project and help me form it into a working tool. I am excited about the response we have received from landowners and citizens of Whatcom. I have learned that landowners want to talk about their property, their concerns, and possible solutions. Healthier streams are a desire of everyone I talked to. They are, however, afraid of what "might be". Working on solutions that are doable and good both for them and the stream is a win – win for everyone. It opens the door to action. There are many challenges, as we look to restoring our streams, none of them need to freeze us -

Project Highlights:

Farmers Growing Trees for Salmon

We began 2001 with 32,000 Douglas fir trees donated by Whatcom County Public Works. Throughout the spring of 2001, approximately 17,000 were dug up and replanted to permanent stream sites. 3,898 new trees were planted. These trees were donated by the City of Bellingham, Whatcom Farm Forestry Association, and the Lummi Nation. We now hold an inventory of approximately 20,000.

Survey of Landowners in Pilot Area

A survey of attitudes and beliefs was created and sent to 37 landowners in the pilot area. The pilot area is seven miles of the Tenmile Creek and the Fourmile Creek lying between the Guide Meridian and Hannegan Roads. Twenty-five individuals responded (67% response rate). 92% of those who returned the survey believe that we can be both pro-farming and pro-environment. 72% believe improving water quality is important and that what we do affects the water quality downstream. 72% see themselves as part of the bigger ecosystem and 60% believe there are many ways to improve water quality. 64% believe the community, at large, has a role in improving water quality in the streams of our lowlands, and most crucially, 60% feel it is better to do something NOW than wait and see. 72% feel that the best way to start is to meet individually or in small groups (neighbor to neighbor) to look at the needs for land use and the needs of our streams.

Coquille Watershed and Coos Bay Watershed Visit

June 18,19,20, 2001 John Thompson (Whatcom County Water Resources), Beth Marcy (Whatcom Conservation District) and Dorie Belisle (Tenmile Creek Watershed Volunteer Restoration Project) toured and

visited with the folks from the Coquille Watershed Association and the Coos Bay Watershed Association. These groups have been doing stream restoration for eight years, combining volunteerism, partnerships and financial resources.

Landowner Visits

During the early action funding there have been 38 home or site visits. As a result of this effort, a three to five year restoration plan is now in progress for the entire length of Fourmile Creek. The entire stream was walked with Steve Seymour (Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife), Rich Zehnder (Whatcom County Public Works, Engineer Technician, Shannon Moore (NSEA), Darrell Gray (NSEA), and Dorie Belisle (Tenmile Creek Watershed Volunteer Restoration Project). Four owners joined us for various sections of the walk. NRCS will be doing an elevation survey of the stream (in-kind match), permits will be applied for and individual site plans will be drawn up.

Also, as a result of this effort, five sites on the Tenmile Creek are in various stages of planning.

Neighborhood Meetings

Tenmile Creek landowners in the pilot area were invited to a gathering, "Let's Talk Tenmile" held on Aug, 11, 2001. Seventeen landowners were invited; four came and participated in a discussion. Three of those will be doing stream restoration to various degrees. Kyle and Robin Crowder will be hosting a neighborhood gathering Nov. 14, 2001 for the landowners with property on the Tenmile lying between Old Guide and Aldrich Rd. Margie Laidlaw has offered to host her immediate neighbors, date to be decided.

Community Outreach

A display and handouts were prepared for community events. Participation included seven diverse events: Lynden Fair, World of Wood Festival, Portage Bay Shell Fish District open house, Meridian High open house, and speaking at the following meetings; Laurel Grange, Whatcom County Farm Bureau, Bellingham Sunshine Rotary.

Educational Material

Educational material has been compiled and is distributed to landowners based on their specific needs. For example, if during the visit, it is determined that the landowner has questions about the functions of the riparian areas, or filter strips, educational material is provided.

High School Stream Restoration Program

Several schools have indicated an interest in adding stream restoration to their curriculum. A pilot program is being discussed with Meridian High. This will include classroom work, propagation of native plants and stream restoration.

Continued Funding

Through funding of this project and the support of the WRIA Planning Unit and Joint Board, the Whatcom County Ag Preservation Committee was able to secure additional funding to continue this program for three years. Although early action funds were not expended on pursuing the funding, the fact that WRIA provided the seed money for the project showed other funding agencies that there is local support for a neighbor-to-neighbor approach for stream restoration. Additional funds that have been received include the National Fish and Wildlife Five Star Challenge Grant, which will be used to continue the first year of this project. A two-year grant was also received from the Washington State Department of Ecology Centennial Clean Water Fund in partnership with the Whatcom County Conservation District and Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association.

Budget

Following is the final budget for the Tenmile Creek Watershed Early Action Funds. As shown below, the project was within budget and incorporated a variety of in-kind resources including volunteers, supplies, and equipment.

Period Ending	April 15 th	May 15 th	June 15 th	July 15 th	Aug. 15 th	Sept. 15 th	Total	Original Budget
Services Contracted: WRIA Grant	\$2,800.00	\$2,800.00	\$2,800.00	\$2,800.00	\$2,800.00	\$1,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
Wages: In-kind match	\$696.00	\$234.00	\$1,138.00	\$1,356.00	\$636.00	\$384.00	\$4,444.00	\$4,200.00
Travel: Personal in-kind match	\$48.69	\$24.40	\$38.34	\$25.83	\$62.49	\$68.89	\$268.64	\$500.00
Travel: Volunteer in-kind match							\$268.64	
Goods/Services: In-kind match	\$167.22	\$104.95	\$8.80	\$27.35	\$71.99		\$380.31	\$1,000.00
Equipment: In-kind match	\$75.60	\$50.00	\$100.00				\$225.60	\$200.00
Total	\$3,787.51	\$3,213.35	\$4,085.14	\$4,209.18	\$3,570.48	\$1,452.89	\$20,587.19	\$20,900.00

Services Contracted - Dorie Belisle, Project Manager

Wages: In-Kind match - Hours donated by landowners, school volunteers, Farmers growing trees for salmon, and from agencies such as the WSU-Ext. office, CD office, NSEA, WDFW, and other community support.

Travel: Personal in-kind match - Travel by project manager

Travel: Volunteer in-kind match – The hours donated by the volunteers (match that of the project manager)

Good/Services: In-kind match – copies, printing, postage, etc.

Equipment: In-kind match – pails, equipment use, cold storage, etc.

Prepared by: Dorie Belisle 09/25/01.

Concerns and suggestions
Dorie Belisle, Project Manager
Addendum to final report

1. We have learned through past experiences that maintenance is the key to successful plantings. Grants are a great source of funding for planting, however they have an ending date. This leaves the newly planted area, after a year or two depending on the length of the grant, unprotected from the wrath of Reed canary grass, voles, beavers, neglect etc. I think this is a problem that needs to be addressed at the county level. If we indeed want habitat along our streams, to provide healthier streams, we need to put some financial support to this problem. As an example, if we get the necessary permits, we hope to plant all of Fourmile within a two/three year time frame. At the end of this grant, the maintenance stops. Maintenance should go on for 5-7 years. I would like to help explore solutions with the county's help.
2. As we plant more habitat in the Tenmile Creek watershed, and watch them grow, we will see that what one owner does, affects the owners above and below him on the stream. We must look at each sub-basin watershed as its own system. We need to look beyond the parcel-by-parcel approach. We must reach out to all the landowners within an area where changes may occur and solicit their participation in the process. There should be no surprises for anyone. I suggest that as part of any sub-basin program, such as the Tenmile Creek Watershed project a watershed assessment should be done. (I understand that much of this has been done and just needs to be compiled. It must be available in a usable, workable form).
3. I think it is important to continue to press the state to re-evaluate the CREP program. While it is good program in that is provided a financial incentive to the landowner, it does not take into account the repercussions to adjoining landowners. With a no touch clause, beaver dams, large woody debris, and an unmanaged system in agricultural lands could raise the level of the stream to the extent of impacting the usability of surrounding lands. I think we need to stress the difference between a "managed system" and a "no touch" system. To make stream restoration viable in agricultural lands, we need to acknowledge that it will be a "managed system" so the results can be a win-win for the landowner and the health of the stream. I would also like to see the buffer size negotiable to a minimum of 25-35 feet. This would make the program more feasible to many more owners, enabling us to get many more feet of stream planted and maintained in a timely manner. This would have a direct benefit to our streams (more planted miles), a direct benefit to our county (the program pays for the cost) and a direct benefit to the agriculture community (less productive land taken out of production).