

WHIDBEY WATERSHED STEWARDS

Connecting water, land, wildlife and people

Green Home Tour Returns April 2!

Spring 2011



Nine years ago, Whidbey Watershed Stewards presented the first Green Home Tour on South Whidbey.

“Eco-building techniques were fairly new then, and people flocked to see straw bale homes, some with solar arrays or living roofs,” remembers event organizer Rene Neff. “We used Island Transit buses, to keep a low carbon footprint. It was exciting and we learned a lot, repeating the tour in 2003.”

Now, after a break of several years, WWS is delighted to offer the tour again, in a new format and with new earth-friendly ideas to explore. On Saturday, April 2 from 10 am to 3 pm, participants can drive themselves (hopefully in carpools) to five South Whidbey locations and tour seven very different structures.

You’ll hear from own-

ers and experts about low-impact development techniques, energy-saving building methods and materials, water conservation, and how to retrofit for solar panels. Eco-building resource lists will be posted on the WWS blog for anyone to access. (See back page)

“We want to encourage people to see how these ecological practices work and adapt them to their own situations,” says Nancy Stiefel Boyle, WWS event chair. “Each home offers a different way to think about use of precious resources like land and water. This is important as our population expands.”

The Homes

Homes on the tour vary greatly: from a working farmstead in Glendale to a new development in Langley; from straw bale structures in a co-housing community, to a

unique approach for single-family living.

There is an emphasis on low-impact development, energy-saving heating methods, and landscapes that help manage on-site water and stormwater.

Practical Information

Tickets for the tour are \$20 each (\$10 for students and youth) and are available at Book Bay and Moonraker shops, by mail from WWS, and at www.brownpapertickets.com with local pickup of directions.

Carpools are strongly encouraged due to limited parking at some locations. There may be walks to get to a location, rough ground to walk across, and shoe removal at some locations. Be prepared!

Our deepest thanks to the homeowners, site volunteers, and to our co-sponsors Puget Sound Energy, Whidbey Island Bank, Whidbey Telecom, and Whidbey Marketplace.

Mark Your Calendars

(Volunteers welcome!)

Green Home Tour

Sat, April 2 10am-3pm
See article for ticket info

Outdoor Classroom Training

Wednesday, April 13
9:30 am–2 pm incl. lunch
Sessions: April 26-June 3

Earth Day Service Project and Nature Walk

Sat, April 16 11am-4pm
Bayview Corner

Maxwelton Smolt Count

May 1 – June 1

Habitat Stewards & friends

Work on restoration sites
1st & 3rd Fridays,
10am-Noon;
Sat., March 26, June 4
9:30 am -2 pm

Salmon Enchanted Evening

A fun fundraiser!
Saturday evening, July 23

For information on any of these events, call
360-579-1272
or email
info@whidbeywatershed.org



GREEN HOME
TOUR 2011

Sat, April 2
10 am – 3 pm

Tickets \$20 in advance

Checks payable to WWS send to
PO Box 617 • Langley 98260

Or available at:

Book Bay, Moonraker, and
Brownpapertickets.com

Small Parcels, Big Local Impacts

Growing up, did you have a favorite backyard hideout? Did your sisters and brothers play in a local woods or have a tree fort? Those small bits of open space in neighborhoods, where kids can roam and explore, are becoming recognized as important contributors to the development of children who are cooperative and curious.

Recent studies brought to light by Richard Louv in his seminal *Last Child in the Woods* have found that children deprived of nature experiences are more prone to ADD, and are less able to concentrate and work well with others.

Even on Whidbey Island where we are fortunate to have a rural landscape, there can be limited places for children to explore. Children are more able to access property within walking distance of their homes; trips to the park are limited by parents' ability to participate in an outing.

"Small parcels of land don't provide significant ecological functions, but they

offer public open spaces that are otherwise absent," says Robin Clark, WWS Watershed Program Manager. "Land Trusts and funding sources are focused on large or unique parcels, and few organizations work with the smaller, more accessible places."

In the Maxwellton Neighborhood

In 1997, Joseph Miller donated a 1.5 acre parcel down the street from the Outdoor Classroom to our organization. It has a view of soaring eagles (there is an eagle aerie), a salmon creek, and a wetland. For the Miller family, the land was a gift to those who would come after them, and a promise that future generations could also be inspired by the return of the salmon.

Mr. Miller felt that "the donation would be a formidable educational tool to teach youngsters the importance of preserving the environment." As it turns out, research is showing that his intuition was right.



In the Clinton Neighborhood

At the same time in 1994 that Whidbey Watersheds was forming (as Maxwellton Salmon Adventure), a group in Clinton formed to purchase and protect property around Old Clinton Creek. Now that land is stewarded by WWS.

The property includes a steep ravine on the way down to the beach, yet some residents recall their childhood playing in it, and there is tell-tale evidence

that young people still use the area. When you are in the ravine, it is as if civilization is very far away.

This year the Watershed Stewards will work on creating signage, native plant communities, and trail improvements for both properties. If you'd like to help us create better habitat for wildlife and people there, contact:

Robin@whidbeywatersheds.org
or 360-579-1272.

Program Manager Robin Clark planted native shrubs at the high school during a Habitat Stewards workshop at Sound Waters.



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Past and present WWS Board presidents flank other Board members at our January retreat.

Working for Whidbey!

We have a new President and have added two new Board members recently.

Great thanks go to Linda Ade Ridder who led WWS for the past five years and who remains on the Board. Now John Worthington takes the helm. We welcome Nancy Stiefel Boyle from the Glendale community and Patrick McDaniel of Puget Sound Anglers to the Board.

Thanks to careful stewardship of your donations, a successful summer fundraiser, the fall FinFest and some well-timed grants, we finished last year at about break-even. This year we have small program-related grants from the Garden Tour, Marine Resources Committee, Periwinkle Press, and the SW Garden Club.

We're grateful to all our donors and volunteers who help us carry on the work of education, stewardship and research for the continued health of watersheds, wildlife and people on Whidbey Island. Your contributions are crucial!


If you haven't yet responded to our annual donation appeal, now would be a great time - just use the reply envelope included with this newsletter. Or go to our web site and click on "Donate Now" to make a credit card payment.

While salaries are the biggest cost in our budget, we keep our total administrative and fundraising costs around 15% which is considered excellent for an organization such as ours.

It's a tribute to the vision of our founders and the work of our past and present Board members and Advisors that we continue to work sustainably on behalf of our environment. Thanks for your help!

Support Whidbey Watershed Stewards

Contributions to WWS are tax deductible
Credit card donations are welcome online
at www.whidbeywatersheds.org.



Click on "Donate Now"

Or mail checks to Whidbey Watershed Stewards, P.O. Box 617, Langley, WA 98260

We are grateful to all our volunteers and our donors, large and small, for your contributions to this critical work.

Meaningful Moments at the Outdoor Classroom

We were fortunate last Fall to have the late Dr. Ric Prael as an Outdoor Classroom volunteer. As a Rotarian, he was a strong supporter of our work; as a teacher, he was a joy to work with and excellent with the students. The following anecdote from Classroom Coordinator Lori O'Brien recalls a special moment during his teaching.

Ric Prael, my former dentist, had his first day today and did a wonderful job. During the first lesson rotation, he was having the kids use their five senses to make observations.

"Close your eyes...what do you hear?" "Breathe in the air... what do you smell?" "Feel with your feet the forest floor..."

Just then, I heard some persistent tapping from above. It was a large Pileated Woodpecker with its distinct red slanted cap, perched on its favorite tree, digging for insects.

Pieces of tree bark and rotting wood started raining down all over us. The woodpecker gave its signature "laughing" call. Another one responded and they started a back-and-forth conversation.

The kids, although very polite and still listening to Ric, looked up with a true sense of wonder. The sun was shining through the golden alder leaves and the creek was babbling below.

It was one of those "tuck away memories" that the kids and I experienced that day; a moment that Ric and nature provided for those students.



You can have one of these special moments by becoming a teaching volunteer this Spring. Once again we have multiple classes coming down from Oak Harbor and need extra help. The lesson theme is the Forest Ecosystem: aquatic insects, water quality and native plants. You'll learn about these topics too!

Training is Weds, April 13 from 9:30 am – 2 pm at the Classroom. Sessions start April 26 and go to June 3 (Tues-Fridays). Volunteers are asked to teach one small-group session a week, morning or early afternoon. Contact Lori at 360-579-1272 or octeacher@whidbeywatersheds.org to sign up or find out more.

Volunteer Opportunities at WWS

We train and use volunteers in all of our programs, and we're always looking for people who want to help. Here are some of the current needs; let us know if one or more of them fits YOU! (see contact info box)

Outdoor Classroom Teachers

Help K-5 grades learn from nature! Small group sessions once a week April 26-June 3 and in Fall. Lessons and coaching provided. Training Weds, April 13.

Green Home Tour – April 2

Parking, ticket checking, site assistance needed. Take the tour the day before and work a shift on the day of tour.

Staffing display tables at events

Earth Day, Penn Cove Water Festival, Farm Tour, and more – we can't be at them all without help. We'll train you and provide materials and display – you greet people and talk about our work. Usually needed on weekends.

Smolt Count

Hip waders and agility required to get into stream and count young salmon in the trap, morning or evening. One shift/week during May.

Administrative Assistance

Newsletter mailing parties, publicity, special projects. Student interns welcome!

Habitat Stewards

Help maintain the properties under our stewardship. Learn about native plants, invasives, beaver activity, stream dynamics, and more. 1st and 3rd Friday mornings; Saturdays, March 26

and June 4; Earth Day service project April 16; and service-learning with students.

Remember that we offer two scholarships for graduating South Whidbey seniors pursuing environmental studies or work. We want to continue their involvement with ecology and conservation practices. The high school has application forms.



Whidbey Watershed Stewards

Board of Directors: John Worthington, President; John Lee, Vice President; Bob Gentz, Treasurer; Frederick Schram, Secretary; Nancy Stiefel Boyle, Lee Chavez, Candace Jordan, Patrick McDaniel, Linda Ade Ridder.

Staff: Jeanne Celeste, Bookkeeper; Robin Clark, Watershed Program Manager; Lori O'Brien, Outdoor Classroom Educator; Nancy Waddell, Administrator.

Advisory Committee/Key Volunteers: Robert Barnes, Gillian Beattie, Kim Bredensteiner, Sharon Emerson, Marge Maurer Gemkow, Greg Gilles, Janet Hall, John Hastings, Anne Hayden, Davide Kane, Diane Kaufman, Felix Kristanovich, Ann Linnea, Nicole Luce, Rene Neff, Yvonne Palka, Gregg Ridder, Michele Sakaguchi, Nat Scholz, Nancy Scoles, Mary Jo Sievers, Nancy Snow.

Prefer to get this newsletter via email?
Just let us know and we'll save paper!

WWS Contact Info

Mail: P.O. Box 617, Langley, WA 98260

Phone: 360-579-1272 (voice message)

Email: info@whidbeywatersheds.org

Website: www.whidbeywatersheds.org

Blog: <http://whidbeywatersheds.wordpress.com/>

Mission Statement: WWS promotes nearshore and watershed health by linking water, land, wildlife and people on Whidbey Island through education, research, and restoration.

Whidbey Watershed Stewards

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LANGLEY, WA 98260

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