



Conservation in Washington: Powered by People



MAKING AN IMPACT:

- *Snohomish County proposed to Department of Ecology that two segments of Woods Creek be removed from 303(d) list.*
- *District planting 20 acres in riparian zone in next three years.*
- *Established network of community members willing to participate in efforts to shade Woods Creek and reduce water temperatures.*

SNOHOMISH CONSERVATION DISTRICT - WORKING WITH LANDOWNERS TO RESTORE WOODS CREEK

Woods Creek was listed as part of the Lower Snohomish River Tributaries TMDL (total maximum daily load) for fecal coliform in 2003. Agricultural practices were identified as one of the potential contributors to this pollution. The Snohomish Conservation District was enlisted by partners to work with agricultural landowners to responsibly manage manure and fence livestock from the stream.

FINDING A COMMON PATH The Snohomish Conservation District, Snohomish County, Department of Ecology, and several nonprofits put effort into addressing the sources of fecal contamination in the basin by working on a voluntary basis with private landowners. The watershed is zoned primarily rural residential with small farms being the focus of these efforts. Practices installed by the Conservation District included: over 25,000 feet of fencing; 90 acres of riparian planting; 66 waste storage/compost structures; and 57 heavy use areas for livestock.

RESULTS ON THE GROUND Due to this focused effort on manure management and control of fecal coliform contamination, the percent of time fecal counts exceed summer standards has reduced dramatically. As such, Snohomish County has proposed to the Department of Ecology that two segments of Woods Creek be removed from the 303(d) list (Britsch, personal communication, 2014). The Department of Ecology is now turning its focus from fecal contamination to high summer water temperatures and has encouraged the District to focus future efforts on planting the riparian zone. The District developed a Woods Creek Riparian Action Plan to identify priority areas for planting and received a \$250,000 grant from Ecology to plant 20 acres in the next three years.

Snohomish Conservation District learned the importance of building trust and positive relationships with private landowners within a watershed. Now a network of community members is willing to participate in the District's continuing efforts to shade the stream to reduce water temperatures.

“In 17 years having Woods Creek in our back yard, we have had stunningly supportive help...[to] reduce erosion, improve the riparian zone, and plant native trees and bushes,” said Joel Selling, Woods Creek landowner. “The result is not only better land values for us, but a sense of being truly good stewards of this valley. Thanks to the Conservation District and Surface Water Management for sharing our vision for our watershed.”

Woods Creek property before (left) and after Snohomish Conservation District helped landowner install fencing and plants (right)

