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The VSP Voice



New Foundation Seeking Landowners for Conservation Tree Planting

The *Carbon Capture Foundation* (CCF) is currently seeking landowners who are interested in planting native trees along riparian corridors throughout Cowlitz County.

CCF was recently awarded nonprofit status, and is the brainchild of Norm Dick, a retired attorney from Longview, his wife, Valdeane and son, Larsen. Norm and his family are dedicated to helping address Climate Change at the local level by helping to provide native trees to local landowners for conservation plantings.

CCF's goal is to plant thousands of trees to help sequester carbon from the atmosphere through the natural process of **photosynthesis**. Photosynthesis is the chemical process where plants utilize the energy from the sunlight to break apart molecules from water that is drawn up from the roots and carbon dioxide gas entering into the leaves from the atmosphere to form a new molecular chain and a breathable gas. The resulting end products of photosynthesis are sugar molecules and oxygen – providing air and carbohydrates needed by most biological life forms on planet Earth.

In addition to producing oxygen and carbohydrates, another benefit from photosynthesis is large amounts of carbon removed from the atmosphere and stored as wood in trees for up to hundreds of years.

Recently, CCF donated \$1,000 to purchase native tree seedlings for volunteers to plant to



where Hemlock creek flows through the Hagen Beef Farm in Toutle, Washington.

Hemlock creek has been documented as a Coho Salmon spawning reach by Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW). WDFW provides Technical Support for Washington State's Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP), a program formed to help Washington farms stay viable, working lands while protecting water quality and enhancing habitat for native fish, wildlife,

and pollinator species.

CCF recently became a Cowlitz County VSP conservation partner, and is dedicated to providing local landowners the opportunity to plant native trees along streams where mature tree cover is lacking.

And while CCF's goal is to help reduce the levels of carbon dioxide, riparian tree plantings provide additional benefits to fish and farmers, alike. Riparian plantings along streams can help prevent farm loss due to collapsing, unprotected streambanks by producing branching root systems that hold soil in place during heavy flows from stormwater events.

As riparian plantings mature, they contribute to reduction of soil erosion, and improve water quality in local streams.

Severe soil erosion can murk up the waters and potentially cover recent salmon spawning redds. Stable streambanks prevent fine sediments, such as silt and clay, from entering streams – thus protecting future generations of ESA-listed salmonids. In addition, mature tree canopy along streams, provides shade that keep waters cold, in and increased dissolved oxygen for native fish.

If you're interested in native trees for conservation planting on your land, contact Cowlitz County VSP staff, and we'll introduce you to the Carbon Capture Foundation.

Are you interested in Conservation Farming?
Sign up for the VSP today!
Contact: Mark Taylor
taylorm@co.cowlitz.wa.us
or call: (360) 577-3042, Ext. 1-6660

DVSP Volunteer Opportunities: Learn New Skills or Share Your Skills

Do you have a secret talent that you're just aching to put to good use? Are you looking for a way to learn new skills? Skills that just might open a pathway to a new career field or lead to advancement in the career field you are currently in? Are you looking for an outlet where your dedication, special skills, and hard work will be greatly appreciated? Or are you just looking for a way to meet like-minded individuals, have some fun, and possibly make new friends.

If so, VSP Volunteer Opportunities may be just the thing to help you accomplish your own goals, while educating others, and making a real difference for local farms, schools, and communities in return.

When you volunteer with Cowlitz County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP), you'll have the opportunity to meet lots of people, of all ages – working side by side with others who believe that the best way to strengthen local communities is to give freely of your time and skills.

VSP volunteers will have opportunities to receive special training in areas like:

- Watershed Stewardship
- Conservation Farming
- Fish/Wildlife Habitat Enhancement
- Native Pollinator Gardens
- Small Scale Farm Planning
- Education and Outreach
- Social Media and Marketing
- Value-added Product Development
- Resolving Agricultural Issues
- Increasing Agricultural Viability
- Volunteer Recruitment/Retention
- Grant Writing Skills

Of course, if you already possess skills in these areas that you can share with others, your involvement will help others gain

knowledge, learn new skills, and provide you with the knowledge that you helped bring someone else to a higher level.

Whether you seek new experiences or wish to share your knowledge and skills with others, you'll walk away knowing that you helped to strengthen local communities, and the feeling that you really made a difference.

VSP Volunteer Opportunities are a pathway to self-improvement. Dedicated, enthusiastic volunteers will gain technical knowledge, leadership skills, a feeling of personal accomplishment & well-being and a desire to learn even more.

VSP Sub-committees need you!



Interested stakeholders can participate in one or more of the following sub-committees:

- Agricultural Viability
- Water Quality/Quantity and Habitat
- Physical Safety – Floodplains & Geohazards

Conservation Farming Field Days

For those who love to work with their hands outside, local farms can use volunteer manual labor as a local in-kind match when applying for grant funding from state and federal sources.

Social Media

- Write an article for our newsletter
- Make a video about conservation or farming
- Send quality photos for social media sites

Curriculum Development

Elementary, middle school and high school educators are needed to develop Watershed Stewardship and Conservation Farming lessons for local schools, with age-appropriate lessons that teach new concepts to inner-city and rural youth with fun lessons and activities they can take home to share with their friends and families.

Special Event Planning

It takes a lot of hard work to plan and successfully organize special community events. Strong organizational skills, along with the ability to work individually, between meetings, or as part of a well-functioning team is an important part of event planning.

Hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm go a long way towards motivating others and keeping fellow volunteers coming back for more.

Farmers Market Booth

Volunteer to staff the VSP Educational Booth at the Cowlitz Community Farmers Market and you'll get the opportunity to spend a couple of hours talking people who visit our booth.

VSP Farm Recruitment

Your acquaintance with local neighboring farms can help spread the word about VSP programs and conservation farming practices. The best way to sell any new program is through word of mouth.

Sharing the knowledge that you learn with farmers you know can really make a difference to increase participation in VSP Conservation Farming.

Interested In Volunteering?
Contact VSP Staff at:
(360) 577-3042, Ext. 6660 or,
taylorlorm@co.cowlitz.wa.us

Volunteers Can Help Local Farms Improve Water Quality & Fish Habitat

Are you dedicated to supporting local agriculture and protecting and enhancing the environment? Would you like to help increase the economic viability of local production agriculture, allowing nearby families access to locally grown, farm-fresh eggs, fruits, vegetables, and meat? Would you like to improve native habitat for wild salmon recovery? If you answered yes, Cowlitz County VSP needs you and you can sign up as a VSP Volunteer!

How Can I Help?

You don't have to be a farmer or a landowner to help make a difference for local farms & native fish populations! Outdoor enthusiasts, local youth and anglers – all can help make a difference.

Did you know that many small-scale farms would love to put conservation farming practices on their farms that help reduce soil erosion and collapsing stream banks, protect water quality, and enhance natural habitat needed for migrating fish, wildlife, & native pollinators?

But one of the biggest hurdles local farms face today is that governmental grant programs don't always include the funding to hire the labor force needed to plant hundreds of native trees seedlings along local creeks, by hand.

Sometimes funding can be found for native tree seedlings and wildlife-friendly fencing to limit the access of livestock while the tree seedlings become established, but dozens of volunteers are needed for riparian tree planting projects.

When you volunteer, you'll learn about watershed stewardship, conservation farming, and practices used to enhance habitat for native fish and wildlife in your local watershed(s).

Healthy watersheds are an exciting and dynamic system of chemical, physical, and biological processes, all naturally interacting with each other as part of the Water Cycle. Water evaporates from the Pacific Ocean and forms clouds to transport precipitation in the form of rain, sleet, fog, ice, or snow as water-laden clouds. Precipitation is released as heavy clouds attempt to pass over the Cascade mountain range en route to eastern Washington State. The cloud formations drop most of their liquid treasure to drain down hills into creeks as the water follows gravity, and flows back to the Pacific Ocean to start

the complex process all over again.

So, if you'd like to help one local farm protect the water quality in Hemlock Creek (and also Silver Lake) call your VSP staff and sign up. You'll learn all about the importance of native trees and the function they provide to local watersheds, and even learn how to put up riparian fencing for seasonal livestock access for limited grazing. In addition, you and your family will have a great time. You'll get some exercise in the great outdoors, meet some friendly

farmers, and might even make some new friends.

Students: earn Community Service Hrs. towards Graduation!

Washington State high school students are required to complete Community Service hours as a graduation requirement. If you love the outdoors, support local farms, and would like to help future generations of native fish recover to sustainable populations, contact your school counselor, or teacher to sign-up. And then prepare to get your hands dirty and embrace your inner farmer!

Cowlitz County VSP and Hagen Beef Farm would like to extend a special invitation to the neighbors along Hemlock Creek and other farmers interested in conservation farming. To schedule a visit, call Hal or Judy Hagen at: (360) 200-0545



Mark Nord & Hal Hagen of Hagen Beef Farm with Manlo & Scott Edwards of Watershed Garden Works Farm & Nursery in Longview, WA
Photo credit: VSP Staff, Mark Taylor

Community Events

VSP Conservation Farming Educational Booth

Cowlitz Community Farmers Market: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month, May 8, 2021 – October 23, 2021

VSP Ag. Viability Committee Meeting

Tuesdays, May 4th & 18th, 2021 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (PDT)

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/636446813>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: +1 (872) 240-3311 Access Code: 636-446-813

Silver Lake Watershed Advisory Council Mtg.

Tuesday, May 11, 2021 – 1:30 pm

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS, or Android:

<https://wsu.zoom.us/j/7756056320?pwd=RzVxbTl0dXpyUjJlSDdsWnJlUkxkdz09>

Meeting ID: 775 605 6320

Password: 12345

Phone Call: +1 253 215 8782

+12532158782..7756056320#

Cowlitz County Conservation Call-to-Action

The success of any conservation program is dependent upon willing landowners and interested stakeholders throughout local watersheds.

If you'd like to help protect water quality for fish, forests, farms, and families, please contact VSP staff for your free farm consultation.

taylorl@co.cowlitz.wa.us or call: (360) 577-3042, Ext. 6660

Cowlitz County Voluntary Stewardship Program
 Building and Planning
 207 Fourth Avenue North, Rm. 119
 Kelso, WA 98626-4124
www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/vsp



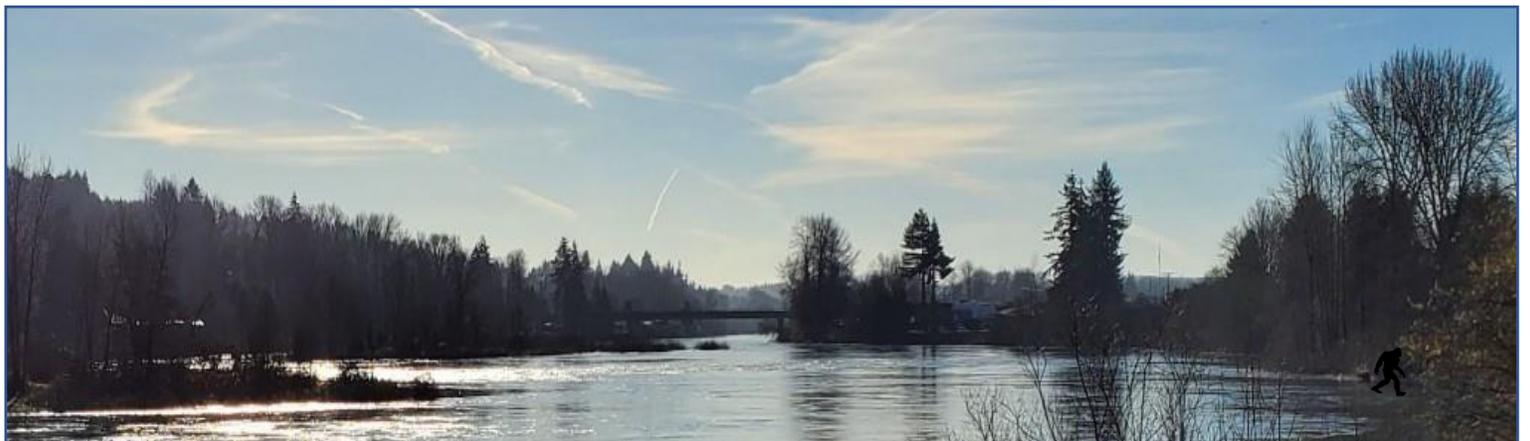
April 2021 issue!

Notice: We have a new phone number: (360) 577-3042, Extension 6660

Cowlitz County VSP

Dedicated to strengthening agriculture viability through conservation farming practices that protect water quality and enhance environmentally critical areas, and to the promotion of productive farmland(s) so that future generations can choose to farm.

Conservation Partners... and participating local landowners!



Conservation Farming: Clean water, thriving farms, healthy communities.