



The Role of Farmers & Forest Landowners in Protecting Water Quality



What are Conservation Districts?

- A local, non-regulatory, & voluntary approach to conservation
- We provide education, technical assistance, resources and funding to Thurston County residents



- Partner to support regulatory violations

Partner on
education and
incentive
programs

- Regulatory Agency
- Establish and implement regulations
- Investigate and issue code violations (ie planning, bldg and public health)
- Review project permits—forest conversions and farm conservation projects
- Oversee Voluntary Stewardship Program
- Administer Farm and Forest conservation incentive programs



Supporting Local Producers to be Good Water Stewards

- Access to technical information and planning services - via VSP or other
 - Whole farm planning including habitat, water quality concerns, and ag viability/productivity improvements
- Cost-Share
- Market and land access support
- Non-regulatory support for referral cases



Supporting Conservation Efforts

- Updated code provisions to support conservation projects
- Expanded land conservation incentive programs to reduce farmland conversion
- Updating forest conversion ordinance to align with development proposals and require replantings
- Grant to complete land cover analysis--creating baseline for monitoring forest canopy change

Small Forest Landowners



- Forest management plans
- Large-scale restoration on riparian sites of both farm and forest land
 - CREP
 - ASRP
 - Sustainable Farms and Fields

Monitoring Ag Impacts on Water Quality: Voluntary Stewardship Program

- Statewide alternative to regulating farmland with critical areas
- VSP Work Plan identifies goals and benchmarks for protecting and enhancing critical areas where they overlap with Ag activities.
- Preparing 5-year Monitoring Report to assess functions and values of critical areas at a watershed scale
- Preliminary analysis points to improved water quality functions on farmlands (smaller footprint and changes in farming practices)



Continued Collaboration



Th Co Ag
Committee



Questions?



NORA CARMAN-WHITE
nwhite@thurstoncd.com
360-999-3727



ASHLEY ARAI
ashley.arai@co.thurston.wa.us
360-280-9298