

The Newsletter of WSU Snohomish County Extension

Sustainable Community Stewards



Volume IV, Issue 4
April 2018



2018 Earth Day – Focusing on Microplastics

When plastics break down due to exposure to water, sun or other elements they can break into tiny pieces – so tiny, most of them cannot be seen with the naked eye. These small plastic fragments are now everywhere. When you drink water, eat fish and seafood, or use salt, chances are you can also be ingesting tiny pieces of plastic.

Those particles – called microplastics – are a contaminant which is now present in the oceans, waterways, the soil and even in the food that we eat. Once plastic enters the bloodstream of an organism it will never be processed out. The plastic, and the toxins it has absorbed will bioaccumulate as they travel up the food chain to a top predator, often a human.

Some microplastics start out as large plastic pieces, slowly eroded by water or exposure to the sun and the elements; others start off as microplastics specifically produced for certain uses. Some are microbeads, created for use in skin care products. They are very tiny pieces of manufactured polyethylene plastic that are added as exfoliants to health and beauty products, such as some cleansers, toothpaste, facewash, soap and shower cream. *(Yet another reason to make your own green cleaning and personal products.)*

Others originate from plastic-based fabrics such as polyester and nylon that shed plastic fibers when washed. Several studies have shown synthetic fibers to make up the lion's share of microplastics found in oceans, rivers and lakes, and clothes made from synthetics (polyester, acrylic, nylon, etc.) are widely implicated as the source of that pollution.

As you can see, microplastics come from a variety of sources, including from larger plastic debris that breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces. Such litter should be controlled by better systems to collect, process and dispose of waste. You also might find it interesting to know that an important source of plastic pollution in the ocean is automobile tires.

Since “most plastic in the ocean is from beach plastics that break down, and improper disposal of trash” says Dr. Joel Baker, Science Director of the

Center for Urban Waters, if we can make a few behavioral changes we can severely limit plastic pollution.

The good news concerning microplastics is that there are many things you can do about the problem.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- 🌍 Pick up trash – especially plastics – whenever you see it, especially in ponds, streams, rivers and beaches, whenever possible.
- 🌍 Participate in organized clean-up activities as much as you can.
- 🌍 Choose products that have natural exfoliators instead of microplastics.
- 🌍 Consider changing the way you wash your clothing to reduce the number of microfibers that are released. There are also bags and other devices you can use in your washing machine to collect the fibers.
- 🌍 Consider purchasing items made of natural fibers, whenever possible.

[Found on www.earthday.org. Click for more]



The Official Anthem of Earth Day

Sung to the tune of
Beethoven's 9th Symphony
Ode to Joy

Let's all sing together:

Joyful joyful we adore our Earth in all its wonderment
Simple gifts of nature that all join into a paradise
Now we must resolve to protect her
Show her our love throughout all time
With our gentle hand and touch
We make our home a newborn world
Now we must resolve to protect her
Show her our love throughout all time
With our gentle hand and touch
We make our home a newborn world.



Sustainable Community Stewards News

From the WSU Snohomish County Extension

The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment,
not the other way around.

~ Gaylord Nelson, Earth Day Founder

SCSers! Sign up Now for these upcoming events

Repair Cafés 3200 Cedar Street in Everett

April 14, Sept 22, Nov 10

Earth Day Events April 20, 21 & 22

Green Cleaning at Snohomish County Campus or
Street Cleanup On the Street Where You Live

Master Gardener Annual Plant Sale

May 5th At McCollum Park

Edmonds Waterfront Festival June 1-3

Tell [Heather](#) you'll be there!

Volunteer for Adopt a Street Or Beach Walk

Do this on your own,
when the time's right for you!

In Everett, contact [Erika Frost](#)
for bags, picker-uppers, and full bag pickup support.

Or, anytime, anywhere,
on your next walk, take along a couple of plastic
bags and do your pick ups,
leaving the streets & beaches looking better
because you were there.



But how to
get dirty
plastic
debris to the
recyclers? ...

Terracycle!

Click [here](#) for
the How-To

In addition,
you'll find lots of other items to recycle here.

Things you thought had to go to
the landfill.



**Beachwatchers' efforts
go rewarded!**

**Where does the
retrieved,
recycled plastic go?**

A well known athletic shoe maker sold
over 1 million pairs of shoes made with
recovered marine plastics. Projected
sales in 2018 — over 5 million pairs.

Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer.

-Anonymous

Volunteering and Transactional Analysis

Or: My advice to volunteers — Don't fall
into this trap like I did.

The other day, I had really good
advice for a New Person I had just met.
But after the conversation was over, I
could've just kicked myself. I had fallen
into the "You could do this [with your
trash] game."

New Person says "I can't because ..."
Then I say, enthusiastically, "Oh — you
can do this about that!" New Person then
says "My neighbor tried that and it
didn't work." And I go "But you can do
this about that!" And they go "but I
can't because" and on it goes.

The whole conversation left me
frustrated, embarrassed, and chagrined
with myself for falling into that game.

Plus, New Person was probably feeling
so relieved, — and yes, glad — when I
finally shut up and left her alone.

The upshot of it was: this just wasn't
an area of recycling they would or could
do.

You probably haven't fallen into a
situation like that, but if you ever do, just
remember to keep your mouth shut after
you see it's going nowhere. ~ KB

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From the WSU Snohomish County Extension



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Bike repair with Dave, Allen glueing, Heather & Patricia, Super Sewer Barbara, Nancy with her broken frame, Brian kept busy all day, Robert telling SCS's story, Waiting area is SRO, Super Sewists hard at work.

Top 10 Unexpected Benefits of Volunteering



By Kathy Bowman

Ever notice that volunteering makes you feel fantastic afterward? We notice a subtle shift in ourselves when we volunteer. We feel more connected to others, and we become less absorbed in the normal stresses of our daily lives.

Sure, we know that volunteering makes us feel good. Yet, did you know that, when you volunteer, you are improving your life and even your health? Many studies have found that volunteering is one of the best things you can do for yourself. And here's the list:

10. Builds Community

You strengthen your community and your social network when you volunteer. You make connections with the people you are helping, and you cultivate friendships with other volunteers.

9. Increases Socializing

Socially, the benefits to volunteering show up quickly and have long-term effects. The benefits of consistent socializing include better brain function and lower risk for depression and anxiety.

8. Builds Bonds, Creates Friends

People build closer relationships, better connections, and more powerful attachments to people when they work together.

7. Develops Emotional Stability

When people with depression, PTSD or OCD volunteer, they feel more connected to others. They have an increased sense of purpose. Connection and meaning translate to decreased symptoms and improved social function.

6. Promotes Longevity

While everyone benefits from a little boost in physical health, long-term volunteers have longer lives, less disease, and better overall health. One report says that people who volunteer over 100 hours a year are some of the healthiest people in the U.S. (Is this a challenge!?)

5. Reduces Risk of Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's disease has become a frightening possibility for millions of people. However, some research has shown that people who volunteer may be at lower risk of dementia from 65 years of age, and onward.

4. Leads to Graceful Aging

Older volunteers benefit the most from getting out of the house, engaging with others, and moving physically. Purpose and collaboration result in mental health improvements and a better outlook on life.

3. Burns That Stubborn Belly Fat

With more people in traditional desk jobs, we live a more sedentary lifestyle than ever before. When we volunteer, even if it is not a physically demanding project, we still get up and get moving. And in the process, it improves our immune systems.

2. Provides Better Job Prospects

Many researchers have noticed that Millennials are some of the most civic-minded and socially aware employees. They choose jobs that reflect their values and then continue to donate their money, time and skills. In turn, their volunteer hours make them more competitive in the job market. But at any age, volunteering shows well on a resume.

1. Volunteering Adds Fun to Your Years

Volunteering and freely giving your time, energy, and resources to people and causes around the world can create change on a global scale. It is amazing to think that one person's efforts can change the life of someone else somewhere in the world. However, the best part, and one often overlooked — is that volunteering is just plain fun.



7 Best Reasons to Clean Green



By Kathy Bowman

The Sustainable Community Stewards Class of 2017 had several projects that included the Tire Pressure Project and Food Distribution. But the most compelling and long-lasting project turned out to be Green Cleaning.

The Green Cleaning group put out a very useful booklet filled with green solutions to everyday cleaning problems. Then they set about holding demonstrations and teaching sessions wherever they could. This is one of the most successful programs that have come out of SCS training.

The Green Cleaning booklet contains recipes for many household uses from kitchens to bathrooms. Since receiving this book, I've gone on to find websites with green fixes for just about anything you can imagine. There are toothpastes, deodorants, cosmetics and shampoos — all homemade from products you can trust not to ruin the environment, or yourself!

So here are my favorite reasons to Clean Green:

1. Saves money.

Most of the ingredients in these recipes are common, and shall we say cheap, products: Most start with vinegar or baking soda.

2. Keeps harmful chemicals out of Puget Sound.

Everything you put down the drain eventually ends up in Puget Sound. The Port Townsend Marine Center brought this to our attention. They actively promote the clean environment and safety for our marine animals in Puget Sound. Check them out at <https://ptmsc.org/>. By

refraining from using products with dangerous chemicals in them, you are saving the whales!

3. Reduces plastic bottles.

Let's face it — every plastic bottle you use stands the chance of ending up on the street and eventually in the ocean. Even if you yourself recycle, these things can pop loose in their journey to the recyclers. If you buy ready-made cleaners, you buy a new plastic bottle every time. When you make your own, you reuse your containers. Refuse is always better than refuse!

4. Healthier home environment.

By making your own cleaning products, you avoid breathing toxic fumes. Your pets and/or children will benefit from this too.

5. Healthier skin environment.

When you know the ingredients you use on your skin, you can rest assured you're not putting dangerous chemicals into your body. Everything you put on your skin gets absorbed into your body.

6. Saves time researching for microplastics.

And now that it's come to our attention that there are microplastics in so many of our household products, we need to research to make sure there are no beads in our toothpaste or other cleaners. How much easier it is to know what's in our products in the first place — because we made them ourselves.

7. Saves you the time of looking up big words.

Our laws have it that food has to be labeled. But cleaning products and cosmetics don't have to be labeled with all their ingredients. Plus how do you know what those chemicals actually do?

HERE ARE MY GO-TO WEBSITES when I need to research products or recipes:

www.ewg.org is a nonprofit that evaluates the dangers or safety of products for sale, by brand name, or by type. They show cleaners and cosmetics. I myself donate now and then to help fund this important work.

www.wellnessmama.com seems to have a homemade solution for just about anything you would need.

Finally, www.google.com is your friend. Look for your own favorite sites to help you get started with green cleaning.



Powerful Partnerships

With PUGET SOUND ENERGY

And what it means to Sustainable Community Stewards

PSE is partnering with 24 non-profit organizations across their service area to help families in need and protect the environment. By providing \$200,000 in support, they'll be working with these partner organizations to extend their reach to customers who need help staying safe and warm while continuing their commitment to the environment. Since 2017, Powerful Partnerships expanded from environmental preservation to human services—enhancing their community giving efforts.

Since we had a few questions as to how we fit into their program, we contacted Scott Harder in Customer Outreach at PSE. Here are the Q&A's of our exchange:

SCS Editor: How will Powerful Partnerships affect the programs we're running at SCS?

Harder: PSE has a large reach with our social, web and other marketing channels and can help the general population learn more about what you do and how it helps the communities they work and live in. We also have information to share with your supporters to help them take steps toward managing their energy usage.

SCS Editor: What would our part be in a successful partnership?

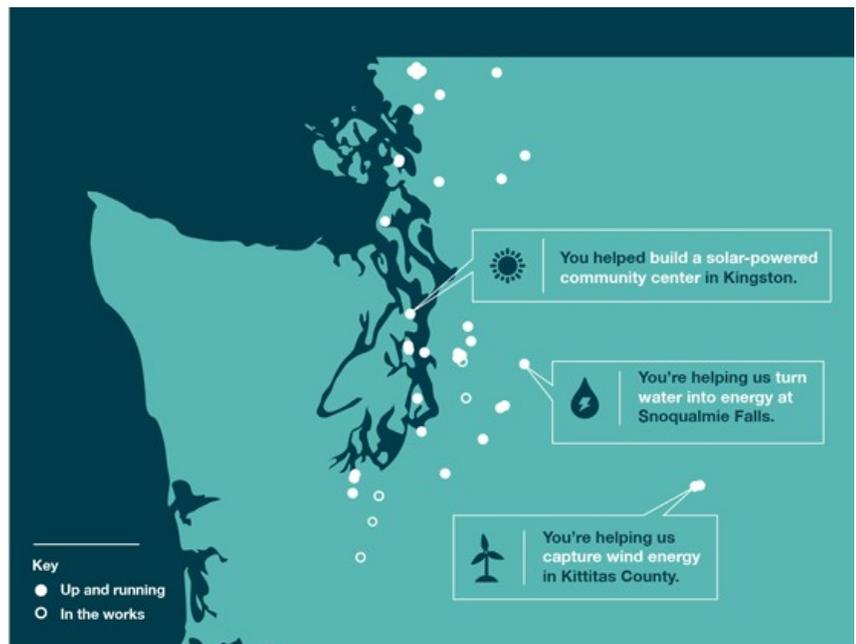
Harder: Partnering with WSU will help us broaden our reach. We share values with your supporters and members and together we can educate others about steps they can take to help improve our community.

SCS Editor: Would there be grant money for certain endeavors — if so, how would we qualify?

Harder: PSE's Foundation offers grants for safety and emergency preparedness projects. There are always options to apply for additional funds once your Powerful Partnership year has ended. Here's a link addressing grants: <https://pse.com/inyourcommunity/GivingBack/Pages/Corporate-Giving.aspx>

SCS Editor: How do we fit in with Powerful Partnerships, generally speaking?

Harder: We chose WSU SnoCo as a partner because your mission and work align with our objectives, and we successfully partnered with the Skagit branch last year. We love your programs and feel they make a positive difference on the environment and the people involved. The environment means a lot to us, which is why we recently launched our TOGETHER campaign. We plan on reducing our carbon footprint 50% by 2040. <https://pse.com/inyourcommunity/Together/Pages/default.aspx>



Looking for opportunities to get involved?
Start planning your 2018 volunteer days now!
Email [Heather](#) for fine details.

Don't Drip and Drive At Paine field

Watch your inbox for Dates and Times

Repair Cafes At 3200 Cedar Street in Everett

April 14 September 22 November 10

Green Cleaning Demo At Snohomish County

Campus April 20th, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Master Gardener Annual Plant Sale At McCollum Park

Saturday, May 5th

Edmonds Waterfront Festival

June 1-3

StyroCycle Saturdays

June 9 July 14 September 15 November 3 January 5 March 9

Arlington Street Fair

July 13-5

Stanwood/Camano fair

August 3-5

National Night Out At locations TBA

August 7th

Festival of the River

August 11 & 12

Taste of Edmonds

August 10-12

Evergreen State Fair

(late August/exact date TBA)

Mukilteo lighthouse festival

September 7-9

We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.

~ *Winston Churchill*

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From the WSU Snohomish County Extension

Coming Events & Volunteer Opportunities

Wednesday, April 11 — Drip Irrigation

1:00 to 3:30 pm -or- 6:00 to 8:30 pm.
-or- Monday, May 16; 1:00 to 3:30 pm -or- 6:00-8:30 pm
All at McCollum Park.

The course is designed to make a novice comfortable with all aspects of designing and implementing a low volume drip system. The instructor makes himself available at the class and later to answer individual questions. Cost is \$20 per person or \$30 for two people sharing materials. Each participant receives a 50+ page handout, which will serve as a text and reference. Local and mail order suppliers are referenced as well. Register now to secure your seat! To register,, or questions, contact Karie Christensen at (425) 357-6039, or e-mail at christensen4@wsu.edu.



Saturday, April 14 — Repair Café Event

10:00 to 2:00 pm 3200 Cedar, Everett

Come help out at the Repair Café. The Cafés do exactly what their name implies – they help folks to repair their used items, taking a stand against the idea that all things are disposable. We'll have some paid "fixer"

people and other volunteer craftspeople to make repairs. These are brand new, with some preliminary ideas formulated by the Class of 2017 project team focused on [this](#).

April SCS Meeting - TBD by you!

Lively discussions and continuing education on everything environmental. ... We'll talk some about the success of the Repair Café, and do a little more planning this month. Take the **Doodle poll** to let us know what works best for you!



Saturday, May 5 — Plant Sale - Snohomish County Master Gardener Foundation

7:00 am to 1:00 pm McCollum Park, Parking Lot

Lots of opportunities to volunteer – from entertaining the people waiting in line, to helping carry plants. Each year, our plant sale features an extensive selection of perennials, shrubs, trees, berries, and grasses. In addition, our sale is famous for an amazing selection ... <http://www.snmgf.org/plant-sale.html>

Got an Event? List it here.

Contact Heather at heather.teegarden@wsu.edu