

Snohomish County Executive
AARON REARDON



Priorities in Action



Latest News & Upcoming Events

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 **County wetland banks take top state honors**

Snohomish County received top honors Wednesday from the Washington State Department of Ecology for its recently approved wetland mitigation banks, the first in the state to receive full local, state and federal accreditation.

Bill Lewallen, the county's airport deputy director, also was honored by Ecology for his leadership in completing the wetland-mitigation process during the past 10 years.

Specifically, Ecology awarded the county and Lewallen its Environmental Excellence Award, which is reserved for "individuals, businesses and organizations showing leadership, innovation or extraordinary service in protecting, improving or cleaning up the environment."

"This wetland bank is an environmental and economic achievement," County Executive Aaron Reardon said Wednesday. "It speaks to the effort Snohomish County is making toward balancing growth with environmental protection, and it shows that our county staff is among the best in the state."

The 60 acres of created and preserved wetlands on and near airport property can now be used by future county airport projects to offset wetland losses that cannot be avoided. State and federal laws prohibit the loss of most wetlands due to development.

Ten years ago, Snohomish County began developing a wetland mitigation bank with the help of Ecology, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Aviation Administration.

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The SnoStat system tracks how well the County is delivering services, the costs of those services, and the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

Simply visit our [SnoStat website](http://www.snoco.org/SnoStat).

In April, regulatory agencies determined two properties – the Swanson Wetland Mitigation Bank and the Narbeck Wetland Mitigation Bank – had matured enough to be made available for mitigation.

Officials from each agency gathered Wednesday to celebrate the final approval.

“These banks were only possible through the collaborative efforts of the federal and state agencies, Snohomish County and the airport nearly a decade ago,” said Col. Anthony Wright, commander of the Corps’ Seattle District.

Ecology is working with other private and public agencies across the state to create more wetland mitigation banks. Ecology officials said Wednesday that the Paine Field wetland banks are the state’s centerpiece for other projects.

“The future of wetland mitigation will look like the Paine Field bank,” said Jay Manning, Ecology’s director. “We can use this project as a model, applying the lessons learned from this banking approach to future projects throughout the state.”

EPA approval is a must for any wetland mitigation bank, and Washington state’s program is based on federal standards.

“Our region’s wetlands and small streams are not only home to salmon and other threatened and endangered wildlife, but they also prevent flooding and protect us from storm damage” said Elin Miller, EPA’s regional administrator in Seattle. “Our new wetland mitigation rule will help ensure ecological success, while providing greater consistency and predictability for property owners and developers.”

Snohomish County’s Narbeck wetlands also double as a passive recreational opportunity for thousands of residents and employees living in the area. The county provided public access to the Narbeck project with the help of the Friends of Narbeck Wetland Sanctuary. Trails intersperse the property along with interpretive signs for self-guided tours and passive recreation.

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Sincerely,



Aaron Reardon

Second annual Graffiti Paint Out deemed a success

A huge thank you to the nearly 100 volunteers who took a stand against graffiti this weekend by participating in the second annual Graffiti Paint Out.

Volunteers from neighborhood groups, Boy Scout troops and more worked Saturday, Sept. 20, to clean up a section of BNSF Railway that leads to Everett Station. More than 12,000 passengers ride through this gateway to the city each month on Amtrak and Sounder trains.

“For two consecutive years, we’ve stamped out graffiti in very centralized, very public areas,” said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon, whose office created the annual Graffiti Paint Out event. “We’re sending a message that graffiti is an eyesore and a crime, and we, as a community, won’t stand for it.”

Reardon has worked beside Snohomish County Sheriff John Lovick and County Councilman Brian Sullivan to increase code enforcement awareness and abatement. Both joined Reardon on Saturday.

Graffiti, which can signal gang territory, is one part of the county’s code enforcement division. As a result, areas often are retagged. County code-enforcement crews are working with the city of Everett and BNSF Railway to be sure this section remains clean.

Last year, Reardon and others removed graffiti from a well-known section of the Snohomish County Interurban Trail south of Everett. Tenacity by county crews has kept this area clean for more than a year.

Reardon has used the Graffiti Paint Out to raise awareness of the county’s fight against graffiti. Volunteers were encouraged to take home paint-out kits and to report graffiti on public and private property immediately for cleanup.

Sponsors for Saturday’s annual paint-out event include the city of Everett, Lowe’s Home Improvement Store, the Snohomish County-Camano Association of REALTORS, BNSF Railway, QFC, Starbucks and Sound Transit. Sponsors provided food, beverages, supplies and technical

assistance.

To view photos of the event, please [click here](#).

For more information, go to www.snoco.org and type “graffiti.”

 **County canola dryer creates step toward new crops, energy**

Snohomish County has started drying more than 400 acres of canola seed that local farmers will turn into biodiesel for county fleet vehicles.

County Executive Aaron Reardon launched the project Tuesday with local farmers at the county-owned seed dryer located at the county’s Cathcart Operations Center. The dryer is a double-boost to the county as it runs on methane gas given off by the Cathcart landfill, which is adjacent to the project site.

“We said we wanted to be part of the solution to lessening our dependence on foreign oil and to helping our farmers find renewed economic viability through new crops,” Reardon said. “Today, we once again put strong, positive actions behind those words.”

In 2005, local farmers approached Executive Reardon with hopes of developing markets for locally grown products while highlighting the importance of farming to Snohomish County residents. At the same time, the county was looking for ways to reduce its dependence on foreign oil as well as reduce petroleum-based diesel emissions.

Reardon immediately began efforts to protect and enhance the county’s diminishing agricultural foundation while researching better ways to fuel the county’s fleet.

Within months, county farmers had biodiesel seed crops growing in Snohomish County to test their viability here. With help from local, state and federal funding sources, Snohomish County also began building infrastructure to process canola and other crops locally.

Snohomish County initially provided funding worth about \$80,000 to develop the project and trial runs for canola

during a two-year period. Another \$410,000 was made available this year to purchase a seed dryer and to convert landfill gas into a fuel source for the dryer.

Federal appropriations worth \$344,400 also have helped the county secure the dryer, which is now at the Cathcart property.

“I am proud to have partnered with Snohomish County for this remarkable project that will help preserve farmland, reduce reliance on foreign oil and power their fleet of vehicles in a more environmentally friendly way,” said Sen. Patty Murray, who led the push for federal funding. “This project is an example of local leaders coming together with a common vision to find actual solutions to some of the challenges we face today.”

A crusher, purchased with \$500,000 in state Energy Freedom Funds, will be available by the end of the year. Seed crushing for this initial harvest will begin when the new crusher system is delivered.

“This is historic like the first light bulb,” said state Rep. Hans Dunshee, who helped secure the state funding. “Here is a new fuel for a new economy, and there’s nothing too wrong with that.”

The primary focus for the Cathcart investment is for canola as a new crop and biodiesel production, but farming of biofuels also will create a positive impact for farmers growing other grains. Local farmers now will have other crops to rotate in their existing and fallow fields, and other seed such as mustard can be sent to commodity markets after it is dried and crushed.

In addition seventy percent of the canola seeds will be become meal in the crushing process, and that meal will go to local livestock owners - a good alternative to using canola meal from Canada or corn from the Midwest in feed rations.

This year, approximately 400 acres of canola and mustard seed will be dried and crushed as part of this project. This fall, acreage is expected to increase to as much as 750 acres of canola and other seed, and an additional 200 acres should be planted next spring.

“Already, we’re seeing great interest from local farmers who need these new crops,” Reardon said. “I have no doubt we’ll reach our goal in terms of locally produced biofuel for our fleet.”

An estimated 1,000 to 1,200 acres of oilseeds would be sufficient to provide enough B20 biodiesel for the county’s entire diesel fleet.

By 2014, it’s estimated that as much as 4,000 acres of Snohomish County farmland will be planted in canola and other biofuel seed crops, giving Snohomish County farmers a new source of economic development, local government a home-grown fuel source and residents a cleaner environment.

Paine Field disaster drill proves emergency preparedness

Snohomish County Airport’s fire department successfully rescued about 70 “victims” Thursday at Paine Field as part of a federally required disaster exercise.

The Paine Field Fire Department collaborated with about 30 emergency and law-enforcement agencies to complete the drill during a steady downpour of rain.

Under the scenario, about 70 passengers – played by drama students from Kamiak High School – were aboard a large-frame aircraft when it overran the Paine Field runway, landing near a wetland less than a quarter-mile away.

Firefighters and rescue crews triaged patients escaping from a smoking cockpit and front-end of an actual 767, creating a high level of realism for emergency crews. At the same time, additional emergency personnel performed a water rescue of passengers from a pond near the debris field.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires the fire department to complete such a large-scale drill once every three years. Thursday’s drill has been deemed a success at local levels, but FAA officials will receive a full report within a month for review and feedback.

Ongoing training is an important part of the Paine Field Fire Department's regimen, and preparation requires strong ties with other agencies to provide support.

"We enjoy a positive relationship with our countywide emergency network and would not be able to provide this level of response without their cooperation and support," said Jeff Bohnet, public-safety manager at Paine Field Airport.

Among those participating Thursday were fire crews from Boeing, Everett, Fire District 1, Lynnwood, Edmonds, Mukilteo, Fire District #22, North County Fire and EMS, as well as law enforcement from the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office and the city of Everett, and ambulance services from Rural Metro and AMR. Community Transit provided buses for transporting victims to local area hospitals.

Other players included the American Red Cross, Snohomish County Emergency Management Department, SNOFAC, SNOCOM, RACES, CERT and all Paine Field support services. In all, more than 150 individuals responded in some capacity to Thursday's drill.

In a real emergency, all these agencies would be called upon to quickly rescue, assess and treat victims.

Paine Field officials will review comments from the FAA and incorporate suggested changes into their daily routines and emergency preparedness plans. They also will use feedback to create realistic training exercises in the future.

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