

Robert Beebe Elected as Supervisor

Sequim-area resident Robert Beebe was recently elected to the Clallam Conservation District Board of Supervisors.

Robert took over operations of the Olympic Game Farm in 2008, following a career with the Navy. Robert grew up in the Marysville area but spent most weekends at the farm founded by his grandparents, helping care for the farm's indigenous and exotic animals like bear, cougar, lion, zebra and bison.

Olympic Game Farm started out as a dairy farm operated by Lloyd Beebe, Robert's grandfather. Lloyd's love of wildlife, photography and filming were blended when he converted the dairy into a facility to house and train wildlife used in Disney Studios film productions. Eventually the farm was opened to the public and continues to be a popular destination for both locals and tourists wanting a close encounter with a variety of wildlife. Lloyd and his wife Catherine both passed away in 2011, but the family-run business continues with Robert's uncle, brother and their wives all working together at this Sequim landmark.



Robert carries on his grandfather's animal training work, training bear, cougar and other animals for occasional use in films and commercials. The farm has also bred animals as part of a species survival program to help ensure the survival of animals that are in danger of becoming extinct in the wild.

The Olympic Game Farm has a long history of working with the Conservation District to protect the water quality of the Dungeness River and three tributaries, all of which are located on the farm. Robert's interest in the good work done by the Conservation District, as well as a desire to learn more, inspired him to run for a position on the Board.

Five positions comprise the board of supervisors; three elected and two appointed by the State Conservation Commission. Each serves a three-year term of office without compensation. The board determines local conservation needs and goals and oversees program implementation.

Tips for Conservation Around the Yard

- Mow lawn high (2 ½ inches or higher). Taller turf shades the soil and promotes deeper roots that can access more moisture from the soil.
- Leave grass clippings on lawn to add nutrients back to the soil as they decompose.
- Allow your lawn to go dormant. One inch of water for each dry month is sufficient to allow it to bounce back when the fall rains come.
- If you irrigate, do so with deep, infrequent watering to encourage deeper roots. Sandy, gravelly soil requires more frequent irrigation and less water per application.
- Mulch to conserve soil moisture, inhibit weeds, and increase soil organic matter and nutrients.



For more information on natural lawn and garden care check out the following Seattle Public Utilities website: <http://www.seattle.gov/util/EnvironmentConservation/MyLawnGarden/index.htm>.

Sustainable Landscaping: You can do it, too!

Twenty-five years ago we held our very first natural landscaping workshop. During this past quarter century, over 2,000 Clallam County residents have taken part in our sustainable landscaping courses, presentations, and workshops.

As impressive as those numbers may sound, we've never really known how much impact these efforts were having out on the land. So this spring we enlisted the help of Sequim High School student Mesa Maddox to survey participants in the 2010 through 2012 natural landscaping courses.

In addition to conducting phone surveys of several people, Mesa summarized the results we received from an email survey. We're pleased with what we learned from the 42 people survey respondents.

When asked to identify the things they have done in their landscapes as a result of the course, over 97% said they have incorporated native plants into their landscaping and 90% use mulches. Over 73% said they use irrigation water more efficiently or not at all, and 71% compost grass clippings and leaves or use them as mulch. And, 56% said they have improved their landscape for wildlife habitat.

All survey respondents were over 40 years of age, with 79% over 60, and 95% stated they have an education level beyond high school (college or technical school). Over half the respondents have lived in Clallam County less than ten years, 81% on parcels of at least 1 ¼ acre in size. Physical and time limitations were identified as the most significant factors preventing people from doing more to create a more sustainable landscape. Over half reported an annual household income of less than \$70,000.

We know we have plenty of work yet to do, but based on these survey results, it appears we're making a difference in helping Clallam County homeowners landscape in a more sustainable way.

In related news, this May we held our first Natural Landscaping Course for Real Estate Agents. A small group of Sequim-area real estate agents served as the guinea pigs for what we hope will be an ongoing course to provide real estate agents with landscaping knowledge and tools to better advise their clients, particularly those who may be facing challenges with mandated water use restrictions.

Don't Go Topless by Jim Poffel (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service)

Many homeowners like to top their trees; however, in many cases tree topping, also known as hat racking, is not a beneficial practice.

- Topping opens up the tree to invasion by insects and diseases, weakening the tree and leading to a shorter lifespan or death.
- Photosynthesis, thus food production is reduced and increased sunlight on the lower branches may cause sun scald.
- Tree topping stimulates aggressive re-growth of vertical shoots, especially on deciduous trees, leading to higher maintenance in the long run. The benefit of shortened tree height is short lived due to rapid shoot growth (see picture at right).
- Weakly attached new growth will also occur. This can lead to trees becoming safety hazards, possibly resulting in property damage.



Before going topless research alternatives to topping, such as crown cleaning, crown thinning, crown raising (removing lower limbs), and tree removal and replacement. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources publication "Protect Your Investment!" is a good place to start your research and can be accessed at: <http://www.ci.mukilteo.wa.us/files/doc-DNRbrochure.pdf>

HAY-BUYING TIPS: What to Look for & What to Avoid



How much hay do your animals need? As a general rule of thumb most livestock require 2% -3% of their body weight in feed each day for maintenance. A 1,000-pound horse would need roughly 20-30 pounds of quality feed per day. If hay is poor quality (not much leaf blade, weedy), animals will need more hay to meet their needs and may even require supplemental feed, like grain. If you are trying to finish livestock (put on weight), have bred animals, young animals, or older animals that cannot efficiently digest feed, more hay may be required.

When buying hay directly out of a field, try to look at the field before it is cut to get a better idea of what's growing in the field. Look close at the types of grasses and weeds to be sure that the feed will not only meet your animals' nutritional needs, but that you won't be importing any noxious or toxic weed seeds onto your property.

Good quality grass hay should consist mostly of grass plants, not broadleaf plants like fern, daisy, thistle, etc., and should contain mostly dried leaf blades rather than stems and seed heads.

Avoid bales along the perimeter of the field, as these bales are more likely to contain weedy plants. If you are purchasing hay that has already been stacked ask the farmer to open a few, randomly selected bales so you can look for toxic weeds and mold.

Purchasing local hay reduces the risk of introducing foreign weed species on your land; however, if you do order hay from out of the area ask the seller if they know where the hay is from and if the fields are known to contain any poisonous and/or noxious weeds. It's also helpful to ask the seller for local references/ customers that you can talk to. Open a few bales and look for weeds.

Feed hay in one area on your property and diligently observe the feeding area to ensure that weeds are not spreading. Many weed seeds can pass through the gut of an animal and be viable in manure. This is especially true of horses. So even if you control weeds in the feeding area the seeds can still spread in the manure. Using best management practices, like rotational grazing, will encourage grass growth and decrease weeds in your pastures. Contact the Conservation District for more information on good pasture management.

POISONOUS WEED WATCH

Tansy Ragwort

- ◆ Invasive, biennial weed found in pastures, roadsides, vacant land.
- ◆ 1st year plant has rosette of lacy (ruffled), bright green leaves (top picture) and 2nd year plant sends up a flower head with multiple spikelets of bright yellow flowers.
- ◆ Mature plant grows 1-4 feet.
- ◆ Toxic to livestock both in pasture and dried in hay.



Poison Hemlock

- ◆ Invasive, biennial weed found in poorly drained soils in pastures, streamsides or ditch banks. A member of the carrot family.
- ◆ 1st year plant has rosette of leaves and the 2nd year plant sends up a tall flowering stem with white flowers in umbrella-shaped heads.
- ◆ Mature plant grows 4-10 feet tall.
- ◆ Stems are branched and hairless, mottled with purple or red spots.
- ◆ All parts of the plant are poisonous to humans and livestock. Toxins are still present in dried plants.



Call Clallam County Noxious Weed Control at 360-417-2442 for more assistance in identifying and controlling these as well as other weeds.

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Clallam Conservation District is a sub-division of state government created to promote the stewardship and conservation of natural resources in Clallam County. Public meetings are held at 3:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the Clallam Conservation District office, 228 W First St., Suite H in Port Angeles.

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- ⇐ Sustainable Landscaping over the Years
- ⇐ Tips for Buying Hay for Horses & Livestock
- ⇐ Poisonous Weed Watch

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