

An Update from 4-H'ers For Clean Water

by Lizzie Odegaard, Snohomish 4-H Member



Hi, I'm Lizzie Odegaard and I am a member of the Snohomish County 4-H'ers for Clean Water Advisory Committee. I joined this committee not only with the idea to help Horses for Clean Water develop their program for 4-H'ers for Clean Water but also to learn and gain more information about healthy horse keeping practices. I have really enjoyed being a part of this program and encourage everyone to become involved in it wherever they can.



The 4-H'ers for Clean Water program is intended to involve and advise 4-H members in the management aspect of their horse keeping. We learn about how to control mud and manure, how to grow healthy pastures and keep insects and pests down, while encouraging friendly wildlife.

The project is set up as a Merit Badge program where 4-H members can receive badges as they fulfill the various requirements and attend the necessary events. These badges can be achieved in

almost any order with the only specification being that the Project and then Trainer badges are last.

Below is a brief overview on all of the badges. For more details, visit the Snohomish 4-H Listserv and review the Merit Badge Guidelines.

The first component of the program is the **Written badge** in which the 4-H'er must complete the required number of activities in the *4-H'ers for Clean Water manual* and then complete the *4-H'ers for Clean Water checklist*. The manual is interesting and fun, with some hands-on activities to demonstrate some of the issues being taught.

The next element of the program is the **Field and Class badge**. To receive this, the 4-H member must attend workshops on mud, manure and pasture management and at least one farm tour. The farm tours allow you to visit farms that have implemented many of the healthy horse keeping concepts, and each in their own unique way. I have been to several tours now and every time I learn some new idea to use at my own place. The workshops (the "Class" portion of the badge) are put on throughout the year, either by Horses for Clean Water or by the Snohomish Conservation District. We are also lucky enough to have our own, condensed version of the workshops at the Equine-a-Rama. So, when you see those—DO them! Once you've attended a farm tour and the workshops, you have qualified for the Field and Class badge.

Upcoming workshops and farm tours are always published on the Snohomish County 4-H Listserv or you can also contact the



Snohomish Conservation District (Phone: 425-335-5634 extension 4 / Website: www.snohomishcd.org) or Horses for Clean Water (Phone: 425-432-6116 / Website: www.horsesforcleanwater.com)



Tara Gerde

To earn a **Project badge**, 4-H'ers must do a presentation in front of their 4-H club on a particular aspect of healthy horse keeping. You should talk with a Project Leader (also referred to as a Trainer) to find a topic that you are interested in and get some guidelines, if you need help. Check out the Listserv for a list of Project Leaders/ Trainers.

The final badge is the **Trainer badge** and to achieve this, the 4-H member must attend a Train-the-Trainer workshop. Here they learn how to teach the most important concepts of healthy horse keeping to their fellow 4-Hers and become a certified 4-H'ers for Clean Water Trainer. This badge is the only one that may be earned by parents and leaders. Members should be capable of acting in the role of a Trainer to take this class because they will then be asked to judge record books and assist others in selecting topics and giving advice on their projects. So, it would most likely be Seniors, and maybe some older Intermediates, who would be able to meet those requirements. The Trainer-the-

Trainer workshops will not be held very often, so if you are interested in doing this, it is a good idea to find out when the next class will be held – and sign up!

I would encourage any horse owner or horse enthusiast to become involved in this program because it is so incredibly educational and at the same time so important to healthy horse keeping. You might not own a horse or property right now, but maybe one day you will—and maybe you can even see ways to improve things where you ride now.

Healthy horse keeping will not only help to give you happier and healthier horses but also happier neighbors (no one likes living next to mud, flies and the smell of manure!) and you too will appreciate a more time and chore-efficient method of horse care. Also, you will learn how to get access to all sorts of useful information and help—such as in getting a farm planner from the Conservation District to come out and help you with how to make the best use of what you have. I think people don't realize that mud CAN be a thing of the past for them and their horses—even in Washington!



Lizzie Odegaard & Meagan Skinner