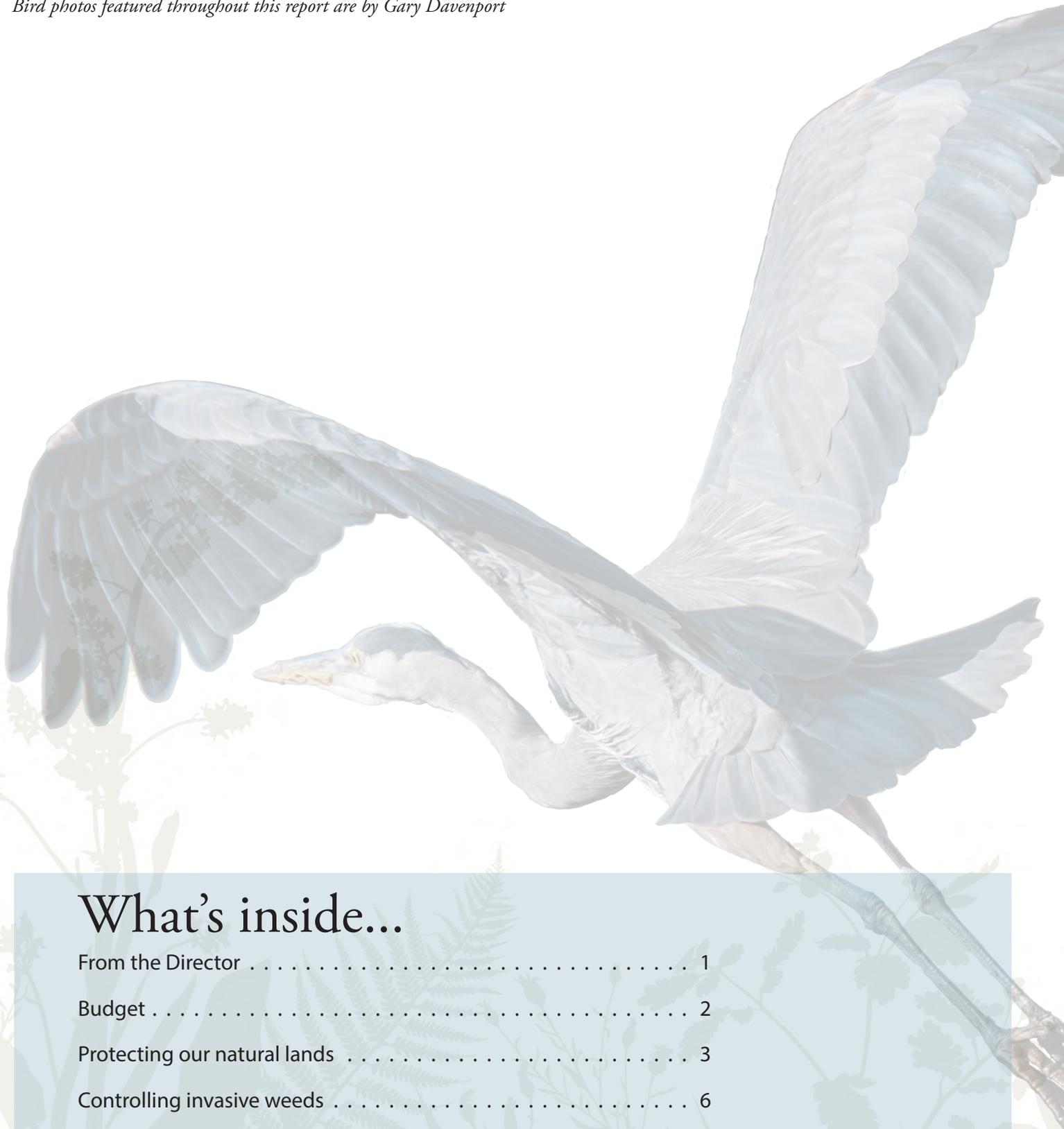


A Great Egret is captured in mid-flight, its long neck extended forward and its wings fully spread. The bird's feathers are a mix of light grey and dark blue, with the dark blue being particularly prominent on the wings. The background is a soft-focus wetland with tall grasses and water. A semi-transparent teal box is overlaid on the upper right portion of the image, containing the text '2014 Annual Report'.

2014
Annual
Report

Clark County
Environmental Services

Great blue heron - front, back and inside cover pages
Bird photos featured throughout this report are by Gary Davenport



What's inside...

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From the Director...



Don Benton, Director

Major department functions:

- Clean Water & Stormwater Management
- Environmental Permitting
- Legacy Lands (county-owned critical habitat lands)
- Solid Waste & Recycling
- Education & Outreach
- Vegetation Management

Independent advisory commissions supporting operations:

- Clean Water Commission
- Noxious Weed Board
- Solid Waste Advisory Commission



2014 marked another stellar year of progress and accomplishments by the Department of Environmental Services (DES) to preserve, enhance and protect our natural environment.

After a challenging year of adjustment and refocus in 2013, I turned my attention in 2014 to stabilizing funding for our Clean Water Program and strengthening our community partnerships. In June, the Board of County Councilors approved my recommendation for a small increase of less than \$1 per month in the clean water fee. The increase is the first since the program began 15 years ago. Coupled with a conscious reduction in non-required expenditures, the increase allows us to focus our efforts on complying with state and federal law and avoid future costly law suits. I am happy to report the county is compliant with all state and federal clean water laws for the first time in many years without being forced to under a court order. Even after the small rate increase, we maintain the lowest clean water fee of any similar size jurisdiction in Washington.

In 2014, our revenue-generating Sustainable Forestry Program expanded to county owned property on Green Mountain. Our staff developed a forest stewardship plan and attained certification under the Forest Stewardship Council. Our efforts make the forest healthier while generating a significant number of local jobs. Additional revenue for the county from sustainable timber harvest also helps to curb the increase in property taxes.

The department's Resource Enhancement and Permitting Division completed permitting requirements and managed construction of a stream restoration project on the East Fork Lewis River. The project provides significant benefit not only to salmon but also to the city of Ridgefield.

Our Policy and Planning Division submitted a required five-year update of the county's stormwater manual and related development codes to the Department of Ecology. The division also began work on a watershed plan for Whipple Creek and completed work on the Thomas Wetland East stormwater facility to better manage runoff from the East Minnehaha neighborhood.

The Solid Waste Education and Outreach Division tripled participation at our community household hazardous waste collection events, in part due to a new marketing strategy using broadcast media. This effort kept tons of hazardous waste out of the landfill. In addition, Clark County now has more certified Green Schools than any other county in the state as a result of a DES stormwater fee reduction program linked to the Green Schools program. We are very grateful to our school district partners for helping make Clark County's Green Schools program the best in the state in 2014.

We have accomplished so much more this year and spent significantly less taxpayer dollars to do it. The county council approved the first full biennial budget I submitted, which represents eight million dollars less in taxpayer expenditures than the 2013-2014 DES budget. As I complete my second year as director of the Department of Environmental Services, I am proud of our outstanding team of professionals dedicated to protecting and improving Clark County's natural resources, cutting costs and strengthening our community partnerships!

I welcome public contact and input on any issue – my door is always open and you are always welcome. Or, you can call me directly at (360) 397-2121 ext. 5358.

Sincerely,

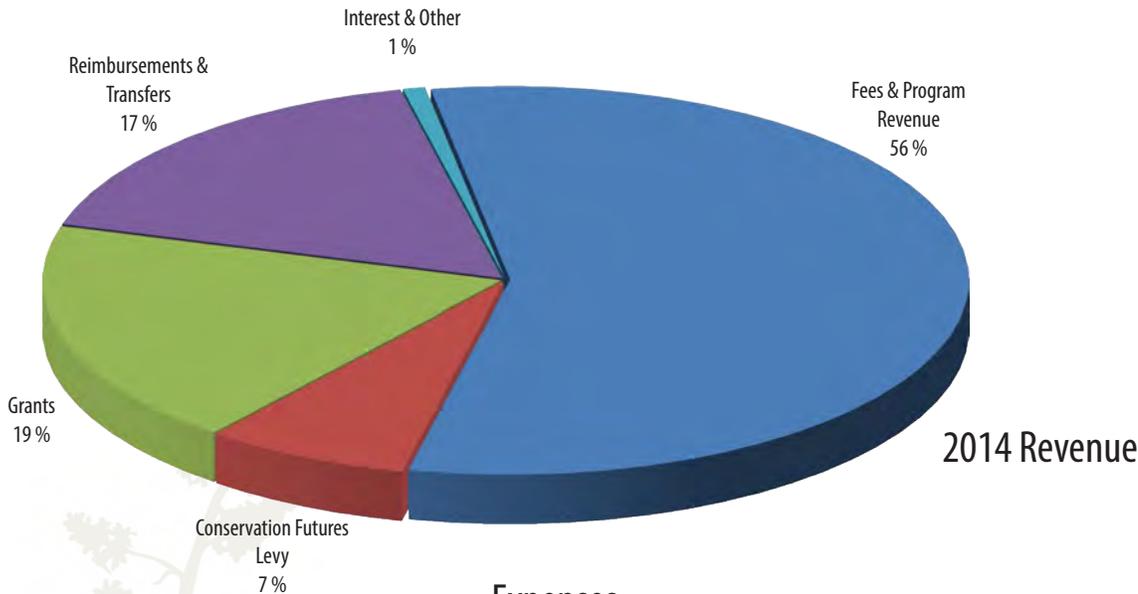
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Don Benton".

Don Benton, Environmental Services Director

Budget

Revenue

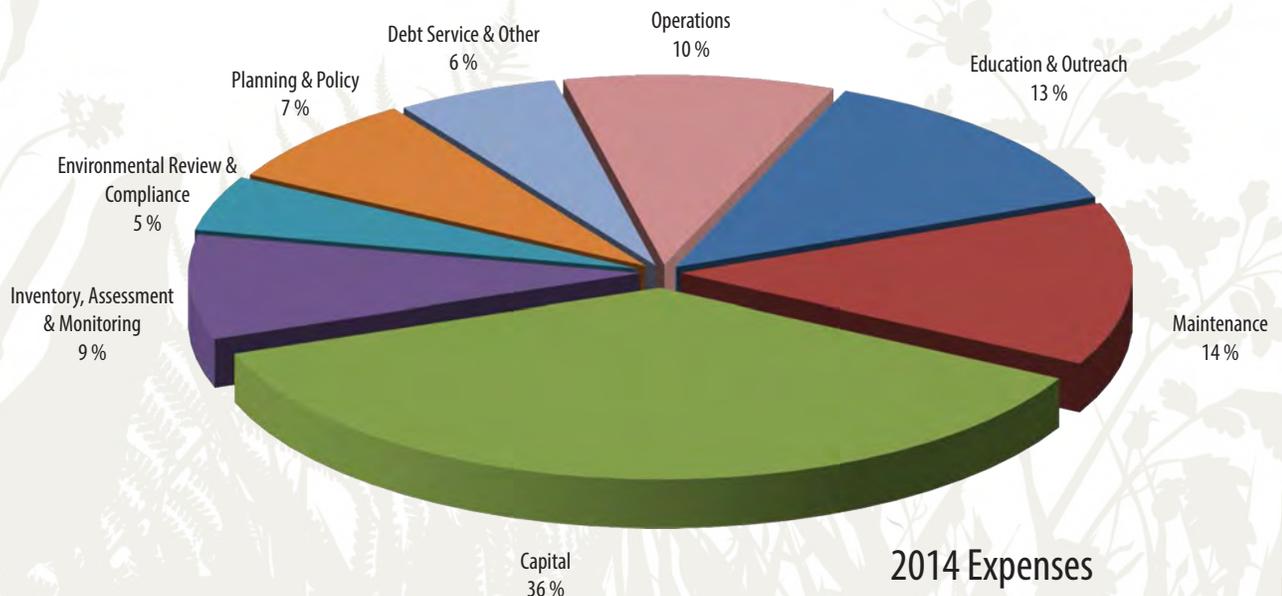
Funding for Environmental Services' programs and services comes from several sources. Revenues totaled almost \$21 million in 2014, with 63 percent coming from three dedicated funding sources: the Conservation Futures Levy, Clean Water fees from the Clean Water program and fees from the Solid Waste programs. State and federal grants account for 19 percent of total revenues. Reimbursements and other internal transfers for work completed for other county departments account for approximately 17 percent.



Expenses

Due to program efficiencies implemented during the biennium, work for the 2013-2014 biennium was completed by expending only 82 percent of the budget. This allowed for submission of a 2015-2016 budget eight million dollars less than the previous budget.

Capital project spending and maintenance activities consumed 36 percent of all expenditures in 2014. Examples of capital projects include stormwater facility repairs, construction projects, and environmental enhancements such as habitat improvements.



Protecting our natural lands

664 loads of timber
\$905,000
net revenue

Environmental Services is committed to enhancing and preserving our precious natural areas. Our services include sustainable timber management on county-owned lands, controlling invasive weeds that threaten habitat, and ensuring county codes and permitting protect sensitive habitat while meeting customer needs.

Sustainable forestry practices protect our forests & generate jobs

Environmental Services' Sustainable Forestry program helps to keep county-owned forests healthy and generates revenue and local jobs.

The thinning program at Camp Bonneville grossed \$1.3 million with a net revenue of \$905,000. More than 650 loads of commercial timber were shipped from the camp to local mills. Payroll back into the community from thinning operations was \$498,000 with up to 18 workers on site during the year. Revenue was used to rebuild and resurface 5.6 miles of forest roads, replace an old bridge, roof camp buildings, and purchase maintenance equipment.

In 2014, Green Mountain Legacy Lands properties were added to the Sustainable Forestry Program. A forest stewardship plan was developed for the properties and 360 acres were certified under the Forest Stewardship Council.

Thinning operations began within one of the forest management units during the fall of 2014. More than one million board feet, about 30 percent of the stand, were thinned from this first unit, generating \$370,000 in revenue. Many years ago, Green Mountain was thickly reforested with predominately Douglas fir trees. This lack of diversity makes the forest susceptible to disease and natural disaster. A major component of the forest stewardship plan is to thin these dense stands to improve forest health, increase timber productivity and encourage forest diversity. Moving forward, activities at Green Mountain include additional thinning operations, noxious weed control, replanting, and other measures to improve wildlife habitat.

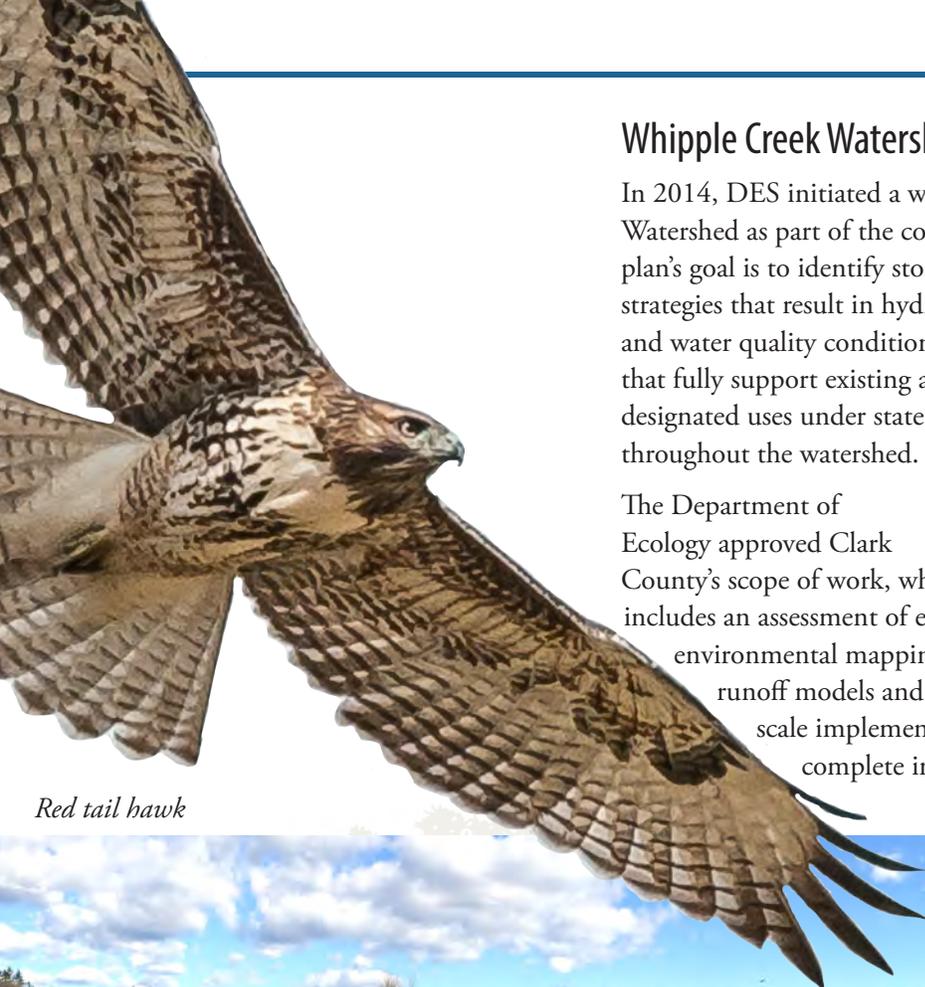
Stream enhancement project improves Lewis River habitat

Environmental Services finalized the permitting requirements and oversaw completion of construction for the EF-20 Upper Daybreak Side-Channel stream restoration project on the East Fork Lewis River. The project was completed as a mitigation project for the City of Ridgefield to obtain water rights for its Junction Well, an important new water source for the community.

EF-20 was one of 13 projects selected for conceptual design during development of the Lower East Fork Lewis River Aquatic Habitat Restoration Plan adopted by the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board in 2009. The project involved diversifying in-stream habitat, primarily to benefit salmon. Trees were felled in the vicinity of the project area and placed across the 1,500 foot side channel to increase in-stream habitat, provide safe areas for young fish and improve flooding processes on the East Fork. No heavy equipment was used in the project footprint. Approximately 30 trees were cut and placed in the side channel using only chain saws and a logging yarder fitted with a cable and pulley system.

Nuthatch



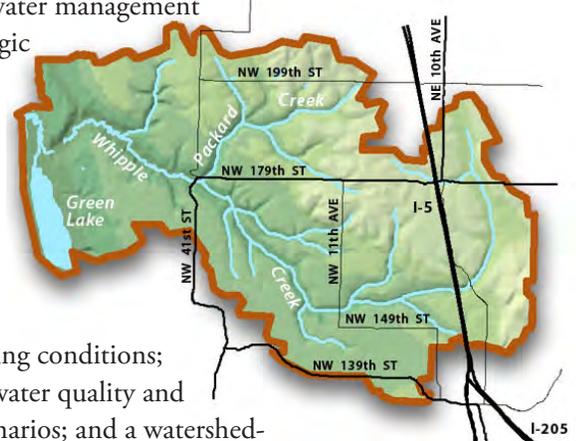


Red tail hawk

Whipple Creek Watershed-scale stormwater planning

In 2014, DES initiated a watershed planning process for the Whipple Creek Watershed as part of the county's stormwater permit from the state. The plan's goal is to identify stormwater management strategies that result in hydrologic and water quality conditions that fully support existing and designated uses under state law throughout the watershed.

The Department of Ecology approved Clark County's scope of work, which includes an assessment of existing conditions; environmental mapping; water quality and runoff models and scenarios; and a watershed-scale implementation plan and schedule. The project will be complete in early 2016.



Thomas Wetland East stormwater facility

Thomas Wetland East Stormwater Facility construction

Clark County Public Works and Environmental Services constructed a new stormwater retention wetland to better manage polluted stormwater runoff from roads, roofs and other surfaces in the East Minnehaha neighborhood.

Without proper stormwater management, runoff picks up oil, fertilizers, pesticides, pet waste and other contaminants and carries that pollution into streams and waterways, where it can harm fish and other aquatic life. The project creates a new stormwater retention area outside of existing facilities to improve water quality treatment and reduce high flows from rainstorms into the Lower Burnt Bridge Creek sub-watershed. The expanded facility, which is about 360 feet long by 460 feet wide, can hold 3.63 million gallons, enough water to fill more than five Olympic-size pools.

The final restoration included planting more than 4,000 native trees, shrubs and wetland plants. A nature trail and interpretive signage circle the wetland and connect to the existing neighborhood and the DC Fisher Neighborhood Park.

4,000 new
trees, shrubs &
native plants

Quick takes:

Legislative success

In 2014, the governor signed a law that allows the state Department of Transportation's clean water fee payments to be used at the county's discretion within the stormwater system. Championed through the legislature by DES Director, Don Benton, this change in state law actually helps keep property owners clean water fees lower. The money collected can now help maintain the entire system rather than just the few facilities used by the Department of Transportation.

Environmental permits on the increase

Environmental permits received in 2014 continue to increase over the low levels seen in 2010 through 2012.

County codes related to stormwater, critical areas, and natural resource protection guide many DES activities. In 2014, staff worked with input from the public to update these codes to improve customer service, simplify permitting processes, and ensure the county's compliance with state and federal requirements.

Wetland protection ordinance updates improve customer service

DES staff updated Clark County's Wetland Protection Ordinance in 2014 in response to new state requirements.

The Washington Department of Ecology revised the Washington State Wetland Rating System, requiring the new system to be used starting January 2015. This requirement led to a necessary update to the Clark County's Wetland Protection Ordinance (Chapter 40.450) which relies heavily on the state wetland rating system.

Staff also proposed additional revisions to the Habitat Conservation Ordinance in Chapter 40.440. The changes improve customer service and permitting flexibility by increasing exemptions for replacing and expanding existing homes and allowing county biologists to issue simplified permits over the counter.

Permit Applications Received								
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Wetland	99	84	84	46	37	37	64	71
Habitat	211	127	93	51	35	45	81	83
Forestry	96	47	20	23	20	20	54	73
Open space	NA	52	103	33	35	15	23	2
SEPA's - Private	35	10	16	11	12	6	2	9
Total	441	320	306	164	139	123	224	238

Stormwater manual and code update project

Clark County has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit required by the federal Clean Water Act and issued by the Washington Department of Ecology for stormwater management. This five-year permit specifies regulations for managing the quantity and quality of stormwater discharged from the county's stormwater system through 2018.

To comply with the permit, the county began the complex process of updating applicable development codes such as Chapter 40.385 Stormwater and Erosion Control and the stormwater manual. In updating the manual, the county hosted over 70 meetings to gain input and feedback on the potential updates. Included were meetings with a citizen-focused Technical Advisory Committee and a Stakeholder Advisory Committee.

Clark County submitted the updated draft stormwater code and manual to the Washington Department of Ecology in June 2014. Ecology's review will be issued in spring 2015 and Clark County will update a final version for adoption by the end of 2015.

Kingfisher



Controlling invasive weeds

1608 miles
466 acres
of right-of-way
treated

816 acres treated
in county parks
& Legacy Lands
properties

19 acres planted
with native
vegetation

Grant helps control invasive plants along Lewis River

Early in 2014, Vegetation Management applied for and received a \$20,000 grant from the Department of Natural Resources to survey and control noxious weeds on state-owned aquatic lands on the East Fork Lewis River. Survey efforts focused on outbreaks of yellow-flag iris and purple loosestrife. Both of these invasive plants displace native vegetation and degrade shoreline habitat, particularly in off-channel habitat important for fish spawning, rearing or refuge.

Yellow-flag iris was found and controlled at 78 different locations along the East Fork, totaling 30 acres of actual control work. Purple loosestrife was found and controlled at six different locations, totaling five acres of actual control work.



Purple loosestrife

Local partnership helps fund research

Clark County's noxious weed control program, managed by Vegetation Management, entered into an agreement with the Washington State University Extension Integrated Weed Control Project to fund on-going development of biological control agents used for noxious weed control. The agreement was pursued through a partnership with Clark County Public Works, Conservation Futures and Clark Public Utilities to each provide \$500 to the program for a total of \$2,000.

Postcards help land owners join the fight against noxious weeds

When noxious weeds are found on a property, the owner is sent a post card notification with information describing the weed and how to get help eradicating it. The post cards have proven extremely successful with a compliance rate of 86 percent among land owners. Out of 890 noxious weed reports in 2014, only one required enforcement action and 14 percent needed follow up letters.

New staffing plan increases program efficiency

To increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness, the Vegetation Management program negotiated an agreement with the Washington Conservation Corps for nine weeks of crew services starting in 2015. In order to hire two seasonal field technicians, Vegetation Management also converted portions of their temporary services budget to salaries and benefits as part of the 2015-2016 budget adoption process. These changes were pursued to manage heavy turnover in temporary labor, reduce overall labor costs, and expand productivity.

Supporting our economy

An appealing
development

1200 projected
jobs

Healthy communities need a healthy environment to thrive and that includes businesses that bring jobs and dollars into our local economy. Clark County is currently working on a master plan for the old Leichner landfill that will turn the old garbage dump and surrounding properties into an asset for the environment and our economy.

Planning for the future - Leichner Landfill master plan

In 2014, Environmental Services began the master planning process to guide decisions about the future use of county-owned property at 9411 N.E. 94th Ave. The county agreed to purchase the 120-acre site from private owners in December 2012 intending to encourage job creation on the 35-acre Leichner Campus parcel, which is zoned for light industrial development. A 74-acre portion of the property, which encompasses the closed Leichner Landfill, is part of the master plan, but redevelopment options will be limited for at least five to ten years due to environmental regulatory constraints.

A \$200,000 Integrated Planning Grant from the Washington Department of Ecology also allowed the county to evaluate the extent of contamination of the adjacent Fleischer property, and integrate the 9.5 acre property into the overall master planning area.

A market analysis conducted in 2014 projects the potential of more than 1,200 new jobs resulting from redevelopment of the closed Leichner landfill site and adjacent properties. The analysis, commissioned by Clark County DES, evaluated a wide range of potential light industrial, mixed use development, recreation and open space use options for the site and offered six development options for consideration.

Leichner Landfill history

The Leichner Landfill began receiving garbage and other waste in the late 1930s. Garbage was burned or buried for almost 50 years until environmental studies found that decaying wastes from the unlined landfill had contaminated groundwater. In 1987, the Department of Ecology issued a consent order that

required the landfill owners to stop further groundwater contamination and clean up the site. The landfill closed completely in 1991. Clark County and the city of Vancouver joined the property owners in the cleanup effort, with an eye toward the future purchase of the site for beneficial public reuse.

The cleanup included covering the 74-acre landfill with a layer of soil, followed by a thick membrane liner and a second layer of dirt to keep additional precipitation out of the landfill. This process is called “capping” the landfill. Years of monitoring indicates methane gas production and groundwater contamination from decomposing garbage have decreased significantly over time.



Leichner Landfill received garbage from the 1930s until it closed in 1991.

Engaging the community

Collected at events in 2014	Tons
HHW	63
Woody yard debris	38
E-waste	29.5
Tires	20.5
Scrap metal	20
Shredded paper	13.5
Freon appliances	9
Block foam	2*
Total	175

*Figure includes 1,000 lbs collected at a special block foam event in January 2014.

New marketing strategy almost triples participation in Recycling Day Events

After many years of successful collection events, DES piloted a new approach in 2014 using broadcast media to market new Green Neighbors Recycling Day events. Thirty-second commercials promoting the events broadcast via Comcast, KATU-Channel 2 and on the web almost tripled participation over 2013 levels.

The events also added hard-to-recycle materials to the regular household hazardous waste (HHW) roundup. In addition to HHW, e-waste, and block foam, Clark County residents were able to dispose of old appliances, scrap metal, yard debris, and tires. Paper shredding was also offered at most events.

The nine events held throughout the county collected 175 tons of materials and reached more than 2,900 participants. Compared to 2013, the number of residents dropping off HHW increased 123 percent and pounds collected increased 113 percent. Participation for block foam and e-waste also increased significantly over 2013.

2014 Recycle Day collection increases over 2013	Participants			Pounds collected		
	2013	2014	Increase	2013	2014	Increase
Household hazardous waste	621	1,383	123%	59,200	126,187	113%
Block foam	386	724	88%	1,485	3,020	103%
E-waste	462	753	63%	31,138	58,920	89%

Note: This table only compares participants and pounds collected for HHW, block foam, and e-waste as these materials were collected in both 2013 and 2014. See table to the left for pounds of all materials collected.

Recycled Arts Festival receives Game Changer award

2014 marks the second year in a row the ever popular Recycled Arts Festival (RAF) earned Vancouver's Downtown Association Game Changer Award as the people's choice for favorite event. The two-day festival, held annually the last weekend in June, attracts 25,000 visitors to downtown Vancouver's Esther Short Park and features art created from recycled materials by more than 120 artists.

Presented and sponsored by DES, the festival is also a public forum for local environmental outreach. All art offered by vendors is made of recycled materials and artists serve as educators for the weekend, interacting and sharing their "green lifestyles" with the public. Festival-goers can shop for a variety of treasures ranging from metal sculptures and yard art to clothing and belts from repurposed bike tires.

Music, family activities and a festival atmosphere make learning fun, easy and inspire people to come spend the day.

Credit for much of the festival's success goes to DES environmental educator, Sally Fisher, who completed her ninth year organizing this award-winning event. In addition to DES staff, 90 volunteers contributed 360 hours to make the festival a summer highlight.



Eartha the Clown is a favorite at the Recycled Arts Festival



Quick takes:

Solid waste contract extended through 2021 - improvements made to transfer stations

DES Director, Don Benton, extended the Recycling, Transfer, Transport, and Out-Of County Disposal contract with Columbia Resource Company (CRC) to December 31, 2021.

Under the agreement, CRC installed scales at Central Transfer and Recovery in 2014. They also constructed traffic flow improvements and a construction & demolition sort line at West Van Materials Recovery Center.



DES staff accepts an award from Washington Green Schools. From left - Rob Guttridge, Pete DuBois and Director Don Benton.



Clark County Green Schools number one in state

With 30 Washington Green School certifications in 2014, Clark County now has more certified Green Schools than any other county in the state and the only school, Image Elementary, to achieve Level Six certification. To become certified, schools must complete requirements in at least one of six environmental categories, which cover energy, healthy buildings, transportation, waste and recycling, water and school grounds. School green teams tackle a project to make lasting changes and include completing assessments and measuring results.

In 2014, DES developed a stormwater fee reduction program linked to the State Green Schools program. As a result of this incentive-based program, local schools reduced their 2014 stormwater fees by almost \$39,000. This money stays with the schools where it can be used for teachers and student materials. Furthermore, Clark County benefits from a successful school-based environmental education program with tremendous outreach.

While state law allows local jurisdictions to create a stormwater fee reduction program for local schools, many jurisdictions do not offer this discretionary program. Clark County's stormwater fee reduction program for schools is a leader in achieving educational outreach, serving as a model for other jurisdictions within the State of Washington.

School programs help students learn and care about our natural environment.





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For other formats, contact the Clark County ADA Office: **Voice** (360) 397-2322;
Relay 711 or (800) 833-6388; **Fax** (360) 397-6165; **E-mail** ADA@clark.wa.gov.