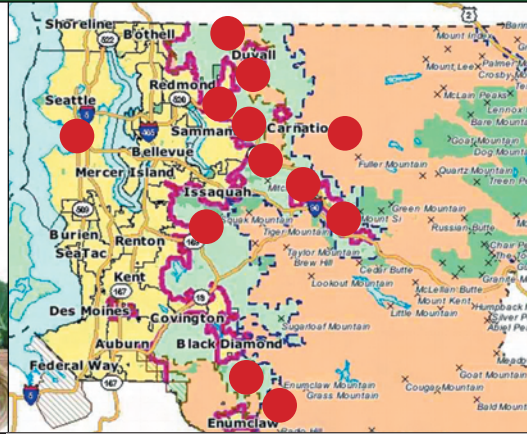


URBAN RURAL CONNECTIONS – A WHOLE KING COUNTY



Stewardship Partners' Eco-Ag Labeling

Natural Food Shoppers, Seattle Metro Area

Urban consumers are going to their neighborhood farmers markets and natural foods stores, such as PCC Natural Markets and Madison Market Coop, in an effort to find fresh, healthy, local and organic produce. However, with growth of the natural foods market, informed urbanites are increasingly concerned about what it truly means to be organic and/or local and if these two qualifiers always reflect the values that are important to them: open space, clean water, healthy fish and wildlife habitat, and sustainable practices.

In the Pacific Northwest, salmon are an iconic symbol of a healthy environment. Stewardship Partners, a Seattle-based non-profit conservation group, is working with farmers and urban communities to implement a regional eco-label called Salmon-Safe. The labeling program helps consumers identify local farms, many of which are also certified organic, that protect water quality, restore salmon habitat, implement environmental practices, and preserve biodiversity. Salmon-Safe certification is an effective tool to connect urban consumers to local farms that not only provide quality food, but also deliver environmental benefits. Consumers learn about the label at local markets, hear promotions on the radio, and see clever ads on the side of Seattle Metro buses.

This urban-rural connection helps protect local watersheds and habitat, supports a vibrant agricultural economy and urban access to fresh local food, and maintains valuable farmland and open space which contributes to the quality of life of all King County residents.

Salmon-Safe Farms, King County

An increasing number of farms that sell products in the Seattle area have been awarded Salmon-Safe certification. Many of these farms are located in the Snoqualmie Valley, a beautiful and productive farm landscape on the outskirts of Seattle, which provides local food for Seattle area residents as well as important fish and wildlife habitat, particularly for wild salmon populations.

The Salmon-Safe label helps local farms communicate their environmental commitment and market their products (produce, milk, eggs, fruit, etc.) to concerned consumers. Salmon-Safe farms follow a rigorous set of standards to ensure that their practices do not harm the health of the watershed or the ability of native salmon to thrive. They are restoring their streams, controlling erosion, using natural methods of weed and pest control, and using water efficiently. Stewardship Partners is helping these farms restore salmon habitat; planting native trees along the stream banks, restoring wetlands, and implementing environmental practices that protect water quality and encourage native biodiversity.

The Salmon-Safe program shows that environmental protection and economically viable farming are mutually supportive goals. The label provides a unique way to help farms tell the story to consumers of how they are contributing to a healthy environment which sustains us all.

