

WSU PUYALLUP HIGHLIGHT

April 21, 2005

Jon Johnson's Riparian Buffer Project Western Washington Potato Workshop in Skagit County

The Capital Press featured Jon Johnson's presentation on his Skagit County project on Riparian Buffers: Function, Management, and Economic Implications for Agriculture, at the Western Washington Potato Workshop in Mount Vernon. This project studies the economic impacts of the buffers have on a variety of west side farming operations. The project incorporates 3-5 case studies on potato, dairy, raspberry and blueberry farms. For each case, different sized buffers are inserted into the standard farm budget based economic model to show how buffers affect net income to farmers in the Skagit Valley.



Riparian buffers are designed to allow water to infiltrate into the ground rather than run off into the streams. The vegetation slows storm water flow and makes it possible for plants to stop pollutants from entering the water and also reduces erosion and flooding. Farmers with streams running through their fields are being asked to plant and maintain riparian buffers on both sides of the stream. Sizes of the buffer requirements vary between 50-150 feet on either side of the stream depending on what area the farm is in. The buffers are not only designed to contribute to water quality and fish habitats, they can also provide an economic return to farmers.

Weekly Highlights provided by the people and programs of WSU Puyallup. To include a highlight in an upcoming announcement, please contact either Heather Schriver, hschriv@wsu.edu, 253-445-4504, or Jon Newkirk, jnewkirk@wsu.edu, 253-445-4568

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