

January 14, 2013

**Re: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Wildlife Corridors**

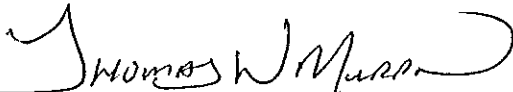
The Learn and Serve Environmental Anthropology Field (LEAF) School has partnered with Washington Department of Transportation, I-90 Wildlife Bridges Coalition, Conservation Northwest, Whidbey-Camano Land Trust, Snohomish County Public Works, and the Cities of Mukilteo and Marysville monitor the intersections of wildlife corridors and transportation infrastructure.

The LEAF School is an intensive service-learning program with field-based curriculum in human ecology and archaeology. Hosted at Edmonds CC, and serving students from both Edmonds and Everett CC, the LEAF School combines traditional knowledge with modern science in service-learning projects that help make our communities more sustainable. Modeled after indigenous ways of learning the LEAF School employs peer mentoring and service-learning as teaching strategies. Students study wildlife ecology alongside Coast Salish oral traditions with tribal elders and then use this traditional knowledge to help solve modern problems.

For the past six years students and staff from the LEAF School, along with other volunteers from Conservation Northwest and Wilderness Awareness School, have collected baseline data about wildlife movement along I-90 east of Snoqualmie Pass, a section of the interstate highway targeted for expansion. The baseline data, complemented by ongoing evaluation now that construction is underway, will help assess the effectiveness of a series of wildlife passage structures designed to facilitate animal movement under and over the freeway.

More recently, the LEAF School has targeted wildlife corridors closer to home for observation and analysis. Snohomish County Public Works built the Granite Falls Alternative Route to move gravel truck traffic outside of the City of Granite Falls, but the new Quarry Road bisected an important corridor between a wetland and the Stillaguamish River. The County built its first culvert specifically designed for wildlife and the LEAF School began its monitoring shortly before completion of the project in November 2011. Students from the LEAF School monitor wildlife movement at several other important locations in the region: wildlife benches in a bridge over Quilceda Creek in Marysville, at the proposed construction site for a cultural center for the Snoqualmie Tribe of Indians and in the Trillium Community Forest, recently acquired by a land trust on Whidbey Island.

Snohomish County has featured the LEAF School partnership in its nomination for the American Public Works Association National Project of the Year ([www.co.snohomish.wa.us/documents/.../Projects/GFARreportlo.pdf](http://www.co.snohomish.wa.us/documents/.../Projects/GFARreportlo.pdf)) and the project was selected for American Council of Engineering Companies Best in State 2012 Gold Award (<http://www.djc.com/special/ACEC2012/>).



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