

Media Advisory – Aug. 26, 2009

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County litter program honored by local forest district

Snohomish County’s Solid Waste Division was honored Wednesday by the Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest’s Darrington Ranger District for an innovative litter program that began nearly 10 years ago.

In 2000, following studies showing increasing problems with illegal dumping, the county’s Solid Waste Division rolled out the Environmental Cleanup crew. Equipped with a backhoe, crew cab and dump truck, members of the division have become well acquainted with other people’s trash. Responding to phone complaints and routine checkups, they scour the highways, byways and cul-de-sacs looking for illegally dumped trash.

One of their target areas has been national forest lands. The Environmental Cleanup crew, with the help of work-release inmates, has cleaned national forest areas, making them safe and pleasant for hikers and campers. They have hauled out abandoned cars, drug lab remnants, scrap appliances, tires, bullet-ridden televisions and bags upon bags of garbage.

“We value their service,” said Peter Forbes, district ranger for the Darrington Ranger District. “They hauled out 30 tons of illegally dumped trash in 2007 and 18 tons of illegally dumped trash in 2008. At this time of budget cuts, their service means a lot to us.”

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon also lauded the group for its efforts in keeping the county clean.

“Nobody likes to see trash on the sides of the roads, especially in more pristine areas such as the national forests,” Reardon said. “These are the types of services that have added value for our community and are appreciated by people whether they live here or not.”

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