

**News Release**

Everett Public Schools  
January 25, 2007

For more information:

Mary Waggoner, 425-385-4049

Pilchuck Audubon Society, Laura Zalesky, 425-337-2479 or [plzalesky@richpoor.net](mailto:plzalesky@richpoor.net)

**Three Penny Creek teachers win Audubon Society awards**

Three Penny Creek Elementary teachers are among only eight teachers in Snohomish County to earn the Pilchuck Audubon Society's annual elementary teacher Classroom Conservation award. Along with the prestigious recognition, each teacher received \$250 to buy materials for activities to continue the work on classroom projects based upon conservation and education of others.

Wanda Hill's fourth-graders are creating a kid-friendly movie about what is okay to recycle and what is not. Students have been inventorying the school recycling bins and the garbage bins, taking pictures of what garbage was mistakenly recycled and what recyclable material was mistakenly tossed away. They will use those pictures in their movie to teach all of the other Penny Creek students about why it is important to recycle and how easily it can be done. Hill will use her Audubon award to take the students on a field trip to a local recycling plant so they can see the end result of their work and get more pictures for their movie. "These students will be stewards in our community while they educate their parents and others about the benefits to our environment through recycling," Hill says.

Kristina Kee's fifth-grade students learned about intertidal life, tide pools, beach erosion, marine organisms, and beach etiquette in a field-based conservation project. Some of the money from this award will help buy books about ocean and beach preservation for the Penny Creek library. Kee explains why she thinks books are important. "Technology is a part of education, but not all students at this age find researching on the Internet to be easy. I want to buy age-appropriate books about intertidal sea life, beach conservation and marine biology. By teaching my students about the interdependence of life and involving them in beach-conservation projects with the help of the Seattle Aquarium, they will be able to learn how organisms interact with their environment and each other. Perhaps most importantly, my students will help ensure that Washington beaches continue to exist for future generations."

Janice Northrop's fourth- and fifth-graders studied native plants — just as did the Lewis and Clark Expedition, which their experience was based upon. Students researched and learned about the same items the explorers documented and established a courtyard display of these native plants at Penny Creek. The completed garden will include cedar plaques identifying the plants and their significance today.

Northrop thanked the Audubon Society and welcomed the grant as allowing students to complete the good work begun a year ago. The award of this generous grant will allow our fourth- and fifth-grade classes to complete the second half of a project. Because of money constraints then, we were only able to complete half of our native plants in the Seeds of Learning garden. Now, thanks to the Pilchuck Audubon Society, students again have the chance to make a lasting contribution, not only to the beauty of our school's central courtyard, but also will have additional opportunities to experience hands-on learning about native plants and their connection with local history. The Audubon Society was particularly impressed with this project because it involved students and adults.

"Today's teachers go to extraordinary lengths to ensure that classroom experiences have meaning in "everyday life" and help students meet the state and national learning goals," notes Penny Creek Principal Shelley Petillo. "Sometimes we can focus too much on the tests and WASL readiness. However, these three teachers, with grants and their ambition, continue to create powerful science learning for students at the same time they emphasize the grade level expectations. In these projects, students recognized the real-life connections to science. The eyes of these young scientists are now open to explore new ways of beautifying their natural surroundings, as well as discovering a love for the protection and maintenance of our local ecosystems."

Teachers' projects were judged on how well classroom, conservation learning enriched students' environmental awareness. High marks were given to applications that demonstrated achievable and related wildlife and conservation goals, for demonstrating thoughtful planning, showing that all students in the classroom would be beneficiaries, and possibly how others in their school and community may be served.

Other Snohomish County classroom projects recognized were in the Stanwood, Snohomish and Monroe school districts.