

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Conserving today for resources tomorrow



Washington State
Conservation
Commission



CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
OF WASHINGTON STATE

your window to healthy lands

Contents

Message from our leaders..... 1

FY16 snapshot.....2

Introduction.....3-4

PROGRESS REPORT

 Clean water and habitat.....5-8

 Healthy, viable landscapes.....9-12

 Natural disaster preparedness and recovery.....13-16

 Education, outreach, and expertise..... 17-20

Agency FY16 operations.....21-24

Conservation district feature accomplishments..... .25-71

Thank you to our partners.....72

Commission members.....73-74

Our staff.....75-76

Acronyms.....77

OUR MISSION:

To conserve natural resources on all lands in Washington State, in collaboration with conservation districts and other partners.



Message from our leaders

Dear Friends,

When you envision the land and people of Washington years down the road, what do you want to see? This question is a driving force behind the achievements of the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) and our state's 45 conservation districts featured in this 2016 Annual Report. Our work benefits the people and land of today, and it ensures a healthy Washington for future generations, which gets to the heart of our report theme — *conserving today for resources tomorrow*.

2016 Highlights:

We want future generations to inherit a strong natural resource legacy, including clean water to support our shellfish heritage. In fiscal year 2016, conservation districts used SCC Shellfish Grants to help 46 landowners install 62 practices that benefit water quality in shellfish growing areas.

We believe Washington communities can prosper in a sustainable landscape that supports our population and viable farmland. The SCC worked with 27 counties to administer the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) — a new process allowing counties and local stakeholders to work collaboratively on a plan to ensure healthy landscapes and strong farms for the future.

We envision landowners and agricultural operators having the help they need to prepare for and recover from wildfire. The SCC developed a Fire Recovery program that enables conservation districts to help landowners recover losses from the 2014-16 wildfires. And, we worked with the Okanogan Conservation District, Department of Ecology, and others to supply emergency livestock feed to support livestock producers who lost hay and pasture in the 2015 wildfires.

We see every person in this state having access to local, high-quality technical expertise that empowers them to care for natural resources. This year the SCC and conservation districts expanded our Center for Technical Development and laid the foundation to provide certification trainings for conservation district staff in dairy nutrient management, farm planning, and riparian planning. These trainings will even better equip district staff to provide unmatched, technical natural resource skills and expertise to local landowners.

On behalf of the SCC, we thank all the conservation districts, landowners, and other partners who help make these and other wishes for Washington's future a reality. We look forward to building on our successes with you.



Lynn Brown, Chair



Mark Clark, Executive Director

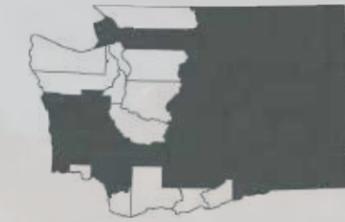
Fiscal Year

2016 SNAPSHOT



22,137

feet of livestock exclusion fence installed through our Shellfish Grant Program



27

of Washington's 39 counties are using the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) to protect critical areas and maintain viable farmland as they manage growth



76

in-stream salmon habitat structures installed using Natural Resource Investment Grants



69

livestock producers impacted by devastating wildfires received support with the purchase and transport of hay through the Emergency Livestock Feed Program

115



average width (in feet) of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program forested buffers



283

people attended nine public meetings and listening sessions hosted by Grays Harbor, Lewis County, and Thurston Conservation Districts, giving residents a chance to engage with and inform the Chehalis Basin Strategy



8,184

acres of farmland included in agricultural conservation easements sponsored by the SCC Office of Farmland Preservation in partnership with Eastern Klickitat Conservation District



21,660

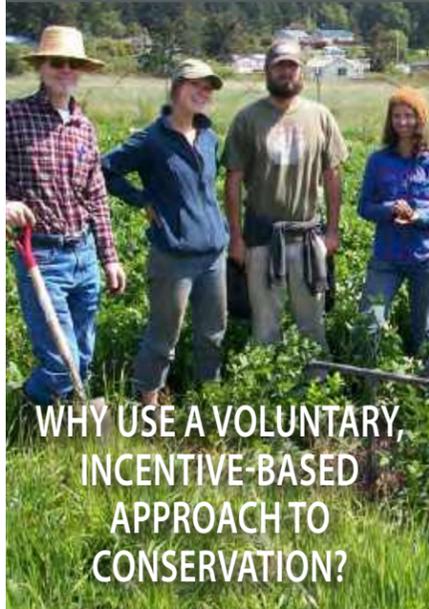
K-6 students received hands-on lessons through the Water on Wheels education program developed by Franklin Conservation District and taught in 15 conservation districts



62

people attended conservation district-led trainings on ArcGIS (geographic imaging system) organized by the SCC Center for Technical Development

INTRODUCTION



Meet the Washington State Conservation Commission

Washington has unique conservation and land use challenges. We also have a growing population that includes citizens who are willing and even enthusiastic about natural resource stewardship. At the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC), our goal is for every person in this state to have the knowledge, tools, and capacity they need to voluntarily conserve today to ensure healthy resources for tomorrow.

How we do this:

- Provide financial and operational support to conservation districts.
- Administer voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs.
- Facilitate collaborative natural resource and land use solutions.

It engages landowners as partners in stewardship.

- Incentives spark participation, rather than conflict.
- Many landowners become spokespeople for conservation following good experiences.

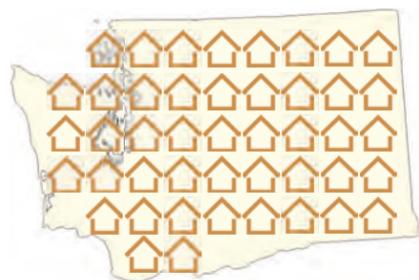
It's farm-friendly, which is good for the economy and the environment.

- Incentives provide a business opportunity, rather than a risk.
- Farmers are involved in conservation planning and implementation, ensuring that solutions keep their operation in business and take care of the environment.

It's effective.

- 1,500 acres of shellfish harvest area was recently upgraded in Dungeness Bay as a result of voluntary conservation.
- The US Fish and Wildlife Service determined that ESA-listing of Greater Sage grouse is unwarranted, largely due to progress made through voluntary efforts.

SCC AND CONSERVATION DISTRICT RELATIONSHIP AND STRUCTURE



45 Conservation Districts

- Provide voluntary conservation services tailored to the needs of local communities.
- Work on-the-ground with willing, local landowners to help them responsibly and efficiently manage their land.

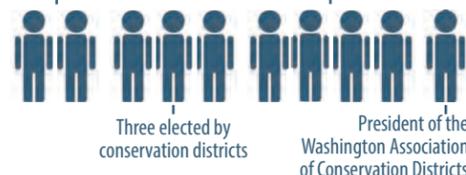


21 SCC Agency Staff

- Fund, coordinate, and promote conservation district services; provide operational oversight.
- Work with conservation districts and partners to administer feasible and effective voluntary conservation solutions.

Two Governor-appointed (represent tribal and environmental stakeholders)

Four state partners (represent Ecology, Agriculture, DNR, and WWSU)



10 Commission Members

- Board that governs the SCC.
- Enacts collaborative solutions and direction to meet state and local natural resource and land use needs.

Meet the conservation districts

For more than 75 years, conservation districts have served as trusted, non-regulatory partners helping people care for natural resources. Each of our 39 counties is represented by at least one conservation district. They provide a range of voluntary services tailored to the local community and landscape, and offer cost-share programs to incentivize conservation practices and make them more affordable.

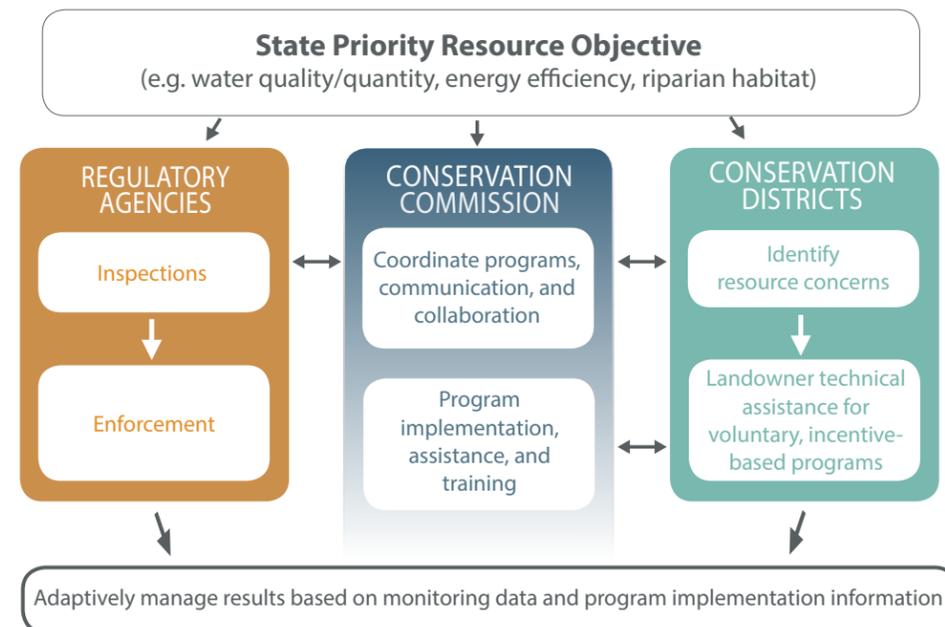
Some examples of conservation district areas of service include:

- Livestock and nutrient management
- Habitat restoration and enhancement
- Natural disaster preparedness and recovery
- Water quality and quantity improvement
- Soil, forest, and rangeland health
- Stormwater management

WHAT IS COST-SHARE?

Cost-share means a landowner only pays a portion of a project's total cost — the remaining portion is paid by a project sponsor. Using state funds from the SCC, conservation districts offer cost-share to landowners who install eligible conservation practices.

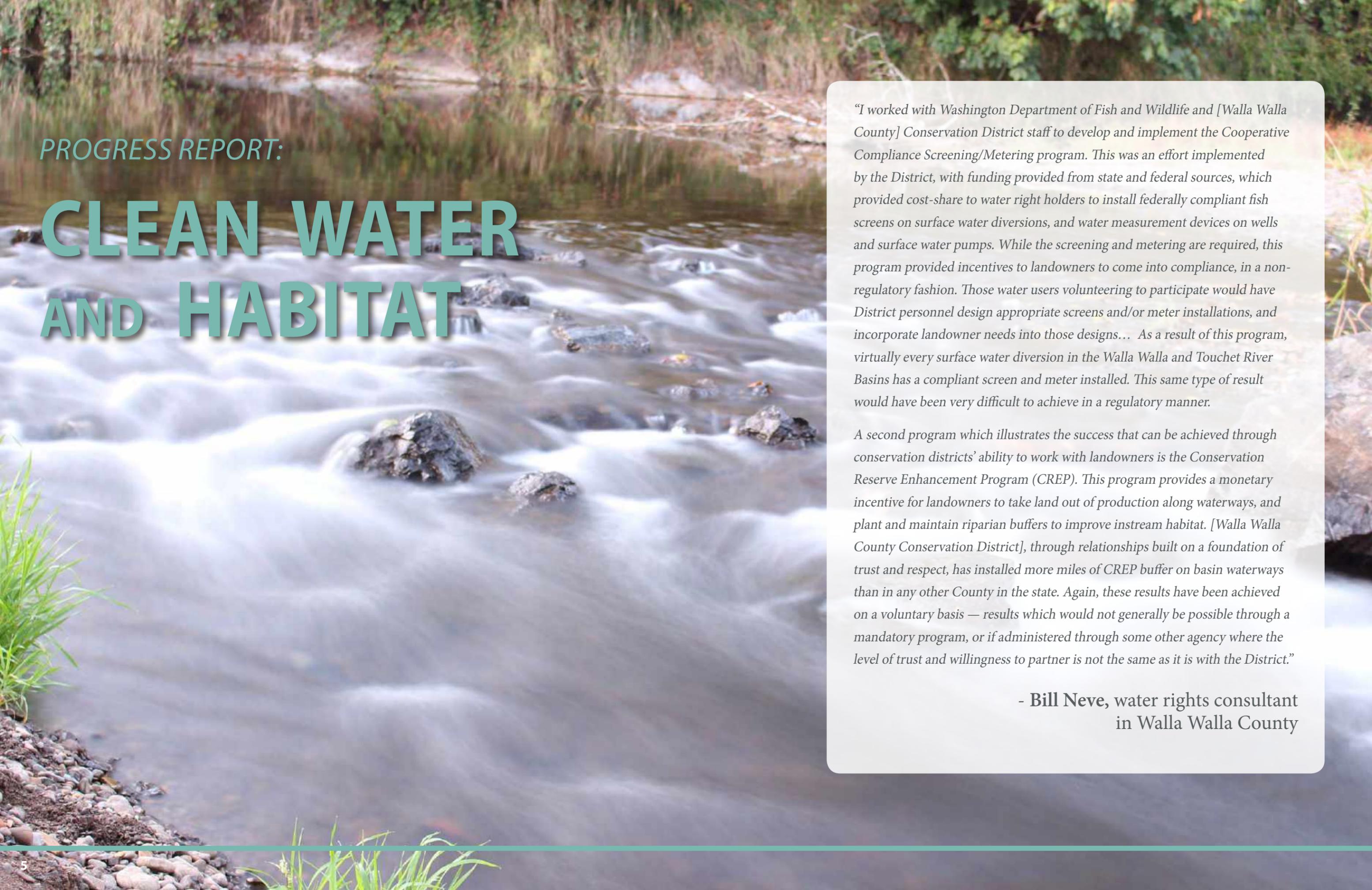
WASHINGTON'S APPROACH TO NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION:



“Voluntary conservation services and programs offered by the State Conservation Commission and conservation districts are essential to both large and small private landowners throughout the state... I want to do the right thing because it benefits natural resources as well as my own agricultural operation. Without voluntary conservation services and programs, I would not have had the opportunity to maintain the baseline and work towards improvements on my land.”

Jack Field
Cattle rancher and Executive Vice President of the Washington Cattlemen's Association

- About the Washington State Conservation Commission: scc.wa.gov/about-the-commission
- What are conservation districts? scc.wa.gov/about_conservationdistricts
- District map and directory: scc.wa.gov/conservation-district-map



PROGRESS REPORT:

CLEAN WATER AND HABITAT

“I worked with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and [Walla Walla County] Conservation District staff to develop and implement the Cooperative Compliance Screening/Metering program. This was an effort implemented by the District, with funding provided from state and federal sources, which provided cost-share to water right holders to install federally compliant fish screens on surface water diversions, and water measurement devices on wells and surface water pumps. While the screening and metering are required, this program provided incentives to landowners to come into compliance, in a non-regulatory fashion. Those water users volunteering to participate would have District personnel design appropriate screens and/or meter installations, and incorporate landowner needs into those designs... As a result of this program, virtually every surface water diversion in the Walla Walla and Touchet River Basins has a compliant screen and meter installed. This same type of result would have been very difficult to achieve in a regulatory manner.

A second program which illustrates the success that can be achieved through conservation districts’ ability to work with landowners is the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). This program provides a monetary incentive for landowners to take land out of production along waterways, and plant and maintain riparian buffers to improve instream habitat. [Walla Walla County Conservation District], through relationships built on a foundation of trust and respect, has installed more miles of CREP buffer on basin waterways than in any other County in the state. Again, these results have been achieved on a voluntary basis — results which would not generally be possible through a mandatory program, or if administered through some other agency where the level of trust and willingness to partner is not the same as it is with the District.”

**- Bill Neve, water rights consultant
in Walla Walla County**

FY16 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



22,137

feet of livestock exclusion fence installed through our Shellfish Grant Program

115



average width (in feet) of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program forested buffers



76

in-stream salmon habitat structures installed using Natural Resource Investment Grants

CHALLENGE: Salmon recovery plans call for restoration and enhancement of stream habitat that borders agricultural land, but taking cropland out of production may threaten farm viability.



OUR SOLUTION: The SCC and conservation districts administered the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), which pays farmers to plant “buffers” on streamside areas of their property. This enhances salmon habitat and helps farmers meet their bottom line. Districts enrolled 34 new CREP contracts and re-enrolled 145 in federal FY16.

CHALLENGE: When conservation projects are spread across a large geographic area, such as Puget Sound, it’s hard to link actions to natural resource results.



OUR SOLUTION: The SCC began administering the Puget Sound Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) using a targeted approach (see figure lower right) to fund water quality projects that are located in select, priority watersheds that flow into Puget Sound. Working at the watershed-scale will allow us to better track and measure results.

CHALLENGE: Water quality and fish habitat issues exist in many bodies of water across the state, but the landscapes and land uses are too diverse for a “one-size-fits-all” solution.



OUR SOLUTION: Conservation districts used SCC Natural Resource Investment Grants to help landowners install site-specific water quality projects that incorporate scientific data and landowners’ knowledge of the local landscape. Objectives range from reducing erosion to improving fish habitat, including installation of 76 in-stream salmon habitat structures.

CHALLENGE: Using more efficient irrigation systems saves water and increases streamflow for fish, but irrigators risk losing part of their water right if they under-use it for five successive years.



OUR SOLUTION: The SCC expanded the Irrigation Efficiencies Program (IEP), providing financial incentives to landowners who voluntarily install irrigation systems that save water. The water saved is returned to drought-prone streams with ESA-listed fish, without risk of relinquishing water rights. To date, IEP saves nearly 16,000 acre feet of water per year.

CHALLENGE: Agricultural runoff and failing septic systems can degrade water quality for shellfish, but these issues can be difficult and expensive to fix.



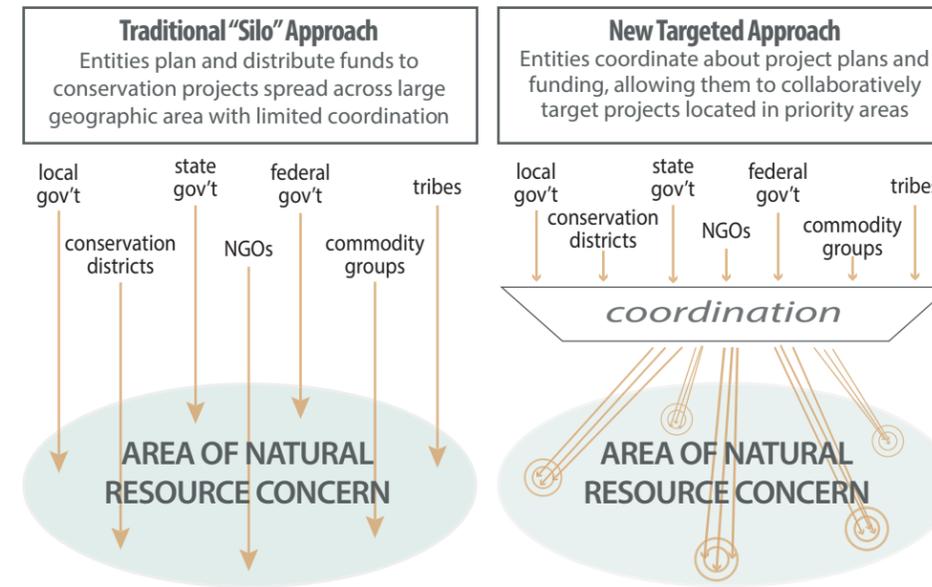
OUR SOLUTION: Conservation districts used SCC Shellfish Grants to offer incentives to landowners within targeted areas who voluntarily install practices that improve water quality in shellfish growing areas. Over 22,000 feet of livestock exclusion fencing has been installed using Shellfish Grants, along with several other best management practices.



“Implementing multi-benefit programs to support salmon recovery, reduce flooding, and preserve agriculture are significant challenges to Puget Sound recovery. Meaningful engagement of private landowners, particularly agricultural producers, is essential to the success of recovery efforts. The Washington State Conservation Commission and the local conservation district staff are ideally suited to facilitate this kind of engagement.”

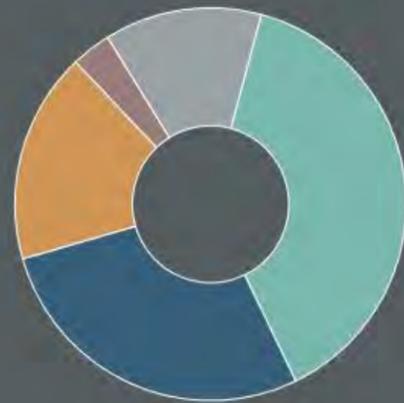
Dan Calvert, PhD
Ecosystem Recovery Coordinator
Puget Sound Partnership

USING A TARGETED APPROACH TO CONSERVATION



- CREP: scc.wa.gov/conservation-reserve-enhancement-program
- Puget Sound Regional Conservation and Partnership Program (RCPP): scc.wa.gov/pugetsound-rcpp
- Shellfish Grant Program: scc.wa.gov/shellfish
- Natural Resource Investment (non-shellfish) Grants: scc.wa.gov/wq-nonshellfish
- Irrigation Efficiencies Program: scc.wa.gov/iegp

FY16 EXPENDITURES: CLEAN WATER AND HABITAT - \$4,410,793



- CREP - \$1,705,408
- Natural resource investments: Nonshellfish - \$1,220,659
- Natural resource investments: Shellfish - \$766,455
- RCPP state match - \$145,482
- Irrigation efficiencies (via Ecology) - \$572,789

PROGRESS REPORT:

HEALTHY, VIABLE LANDSCAPES

“Prior to working with the Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District (PRLCD), I was having trouble coming up with financing solutions for various new minimum till practices. I have been trying different methods for a few years now, and the conservation district (Dan) approached me on the street in town to compliment me on what I was trying to do. He told me the district had some cost-share programs in place that would help offset some of costs of minimum tillage. “I should come in and talk with him” he said. This first meeting has led to a very good working relationship with Dan and the district.

We don’t have too many options for help in this farm area... however, the PRLCD is local, friendly, knowledgeable, and helpful in matters of conservation. As I stated previously, it’s not a question of my choice to work with the district; this conservation district has made the choice to work with me.

The conservation district has provided guidance on minimum till practices for me, helped fund a no-till drill, and provides financial incentives to continue using best management practices on my farm.

The word I would use to describe the district is: Approachable.”

- Doug Schuster, farmer in the Kamiak subwatershed in Whitman County

FY16 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



27

of Washington's 39 counties are using the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) to protect critical areas and maintain viable farmland as they manage growth



8,184

acres of farmland included in agricultural conservation easements sponsored by the SCC Office of Farmland Preservation in partnership with Eastern Klickitat Conservation District

CHALLENGE: As Washington's population increases, counties need to develop plans to manage growth that both protect critical natural resource areas and maintain viable agriculture.



OUR SOLUTION: The SCC continued full state administration of the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP), a process allowing counties and local stakeholders to work collaboratively on a plan to ensure healthy landscapes and strong farms for the future. Twenty-seven of 39 counties are using this approach that relies on voluntary, incentive based tools.

SUPPORTERS OF THE VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (VSP)



VSP helps communities maintain viable agriculture and protect critical areas, such as this prairie habitat in Thurston County.

CHALLENGE: Conservation tillage, a method of soil cultivation that leaves residue from previous crops on fields, is a successful way to reduce erosion. But, it requires specialized seeding equipment that will work across diverse landscapes.



OUR SOLUTION: Franklin Conservation District was awarded a grant through the SCC to complete the first phase of bringing a deep furrow conservation drill to the manufacturing level. This will enable producers to move from traditional tillage to conservation tillage and has the potential to reduce wind erosion on 3.5 million acres in the Pacific Northwest.

CHALLENGE: Washington lost 400,000 acres of farmland between 2005-2015 (USDA report). More needs to be done to help farmers maintain the agricultural and conservation values of their land.



OUR SOLUTION: The SCC Office of Farmland Preservation (OFP) partnered with Eastern Klickitat Conservation District to sponsor three agricultural conservation easements on 8,184 acres of farmland in 2016. In addition to other easements under contract through OFP partnerships, this could result in the protection of a total of 27,184 acres of farmland.

WHAT ARE AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENTS?



Agricultural conservation easements are voluntary agreements that give landowners the option to sell their right to develop their agricultural property to an entity (e.g. conservation district or land trust). The agreement adds a permanent restriction on development and subdivision to the property title, and it provides a plan to protect the conservation values of the land. Landowners are paid the portion of the property value that the development right represents and retain all other property rights.

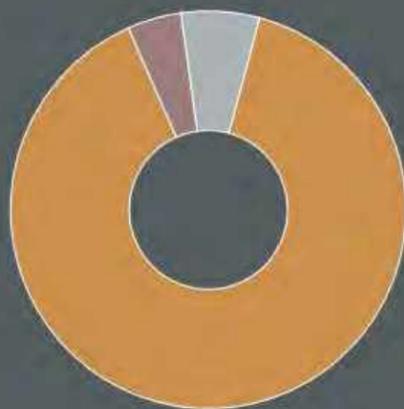


"[Eastern Klickitat Conservation District] has an interest in keeping working lands operating, and as an agricultural producer that is very important to me. I like working with the local district staff because they are passionate about their job, involved in projects, think outside the box to find solutions to problems, and are not just there to collect a paycheck. Without conservation districts, our natural resources would not be able to be conserved and managed as effectively as they are today."

Jason Blain

Klickitat County farmer who is working with Eastern Klickitat Conservation District to attain an agricultural conservation easement

FY16 EXPENDITURES: HEALTHY, VIABLE LANDSCAPES - \$1,047,434



- Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) - \$934,458
- Agricultural conservation easements - \$46,182
- R&D deep furrow conservation drill - \$66,794



- Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP): scc.wa.gov/vsp
- SCC Office of Farmland Preservation (OFP): ofp.scc.wa.gov
- OFP Agricultural Conservation Easements: ofp.scc.wa.gov/linksnresources/easements

PROGRESS REPORT:

NATURAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RECOVERY

“We have a little farm on Benson Creek in the Methow Valley about seven miles south of Twisp. We bought it in 2012, and settled down to raise chickens, prune the orchard, plant a garden, and start a little herd of cows. On August 5, 2014, the Carlton Complex Fire overran our property, burning down the homes of several near neighbors. Our buildings were spared, but most of the fences and half of our forest land was completely destroyed. On August 21, we experienced a huge downpour of rain from a thunderstorm. It funneled water down both branches of Benson Creek in a flash flood that converged 12-feet deep on our lower pasture carrying whole trees, fencing, mud, ash, boulders, fish, an occupied Chevy Suburban, and thousands of cubic yards of sand. We were left with a battered property, destroyed irrigation and pasture, no fences, and a huge load of sand and flood mud, and a winter coming on.

It was around that time that we first met the Okanogan Conservation District. They came to us. They offered to build a protective berm of stone that would surround the house and deflect any subsequent flood events, as well as replace the inadequate culvert with a recycled railcar bridge. It is certainly true that ‘hope floats.’ We started to feel hopeful for our chances of recovery for the first time in months. We survived the subsequent winter and spring without any further serious events, and then the conservation district showed up with a contractor and lots of heavy equipment, as promised. We were overjoyed. As the digging and building progressed, we felt a load lift off our hearts and realized for the first time how much suppressed fear we had been living with since the fire swept over us. Even after the digging stopped, the contact with Okanogan Conservation District did not. We continued to move forward with their advice and assistance. This year they helped us plant native plants in the riparian areas surrounding the creek, which are still liable to extensive erosion.

Restoring our property is going to need the work of a decade, and we take comfort knowing that the conservation district is in our corner fighting for us to finish the job successfully.”

**- Michael and Valerie Sarratt,
owners of a small ranch in the Methow Valley**

FY16 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



69 livestock producers impacted by devastating wildfires received support with the purchase and transport of hay through the Emergency Livestock Feed Program



283 people attended nine public meetings and listening sessions hosted by Grays Harbor, Lewis County, and Thurston Conservation Districts, giving residents a chance to engage with and inform the Chehalis Basin Strategy

CHALLENGE: 2014-15 wildfires burned more than 1,000 square miles in Okanogan County, including grazing areas. The combination of lost hay, pasture, and other fire damage made the road to recovery particularly hard for livestock producers.



OUR SOLUTION: The SCC and Department of Ecology provided funding to the Okanogan Conservation District to launch a \$500,000 Emergency Livestock Feed Program for Okanogan County livestock producers who were impacted by fires. This funding helped 69 producers purchase and transport hay for their livestock.

CHALLENGE: Natural resources on private lands and agricultural operations struggle to recover from devastating wildfire seasons — over 373,000 acres of private land burned in eastern Washington in 2015, and the Carlton Complex (2014) burned 98,700 acres.



OUR SOLUTION: The SCC developed a Fire Recovery program, enabling conservation districts to help private landowners recover wildfire losses. Funding has been allocated to over 110 cost-share projects so far through the program, which fully launches in FY17. Projects will protect water quality, stabilize soil, prevent crop damage, and replace fencing.



Thousands of miles of livestock fencing has burned in recent wildfires in our state. SCC Fire Recovery Program funding can be used to help livestock producers repair fencing, which is crucial to keeping their operations in business and for restoring healthy grazing land and habitat.

CHALLENGE: The state developed the Chehalis Basin Strategy to address severe flooding and habitat degradation, but they needed a trusted local partner who could engage willing landowners in the effort and assess project needs.



OUR SOLUTION: Supported by the state and SCC, local conservation districts (Grays Harbor, Lewis County, and Thurston) became a bridge for willing landowners to engage with and inform the Chehalis Basin Strategy. They hosted nine public meetings (283 attendees), assessed landowner interests and needs, and will help with voluntary project implementation.

CHALLENGE: Some of the difficulty our state experienced while responding to the 2015 drought could have been alleviated with better preparation at the state-level and clearer understanding of how to provide locally relevant information to communities and citizens.



OUR SOLUTION: The SCC helped facilitate funds for three conservation districts to complete local drought planning efforts, and helped administer grants for districts to aid landowners and the Department of Fish and Wildlife with drought-related efforts. Our agency also participates in the State Drought Contingency planning effort.



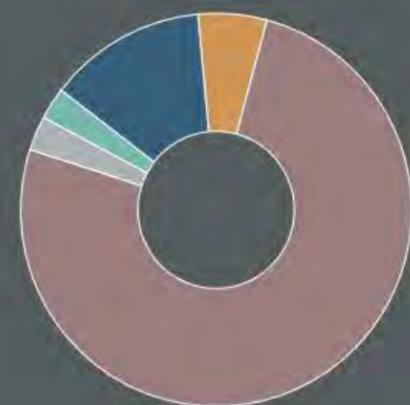
Conservation districts worked hard to address challenges caused by the 2015 drought. Low water levels triggered explosive aquatic plant growth in the Yakima River, creating physical barriers to salmon migration and smothering habitat. Benton Conservation District recruited and trained Washington Conservation Corps members and volunteers to remove 40 tons of aquatic plants from traditional spawning areas. ([learn more on page 29](#))



“The Conservation Commission provides funding and leadership to 45 conservation districts across Washington. With their assistance we have been able to provide non-regulatory technical and financial assistance to landowners. They were especially helpful to our district as we reached out to landowners in the Chehalis River Basin to implement projects to protect, restore, and enhance natural resources, and to provide natural disaster relief in areas like ours that are vulnerable to flooding.”

Bob Amrine
Manager of the Lewis County Conservation District

FY16 EXPENDITURES: NATURAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RECOVERY - \$659,591



- Emergency hay funding (via Ecology) - \$500,000
- Fire recovery - \$18,623
- Farm pads (via RCO) - \$17,410
- Lewis flood (via RCO) - \$86,354
- Drought technical assistance (via Ecology) - \$37,204



- SCC Fire Recovery funding guidelines: scc.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Fire-Recovery-Funding-Guidelines-Revised-7-21-16.pdf
- Chehalis Basin Strategy: chehalisbasinstrategy.com

PROGRESS REPORT:

EDUCATION, OUTREACH, AND EXPERTISE

“The Entiat Ranger District strongly supports Cascadia Conservation District’s efforts in the Kids in the Creek education program. This program is a ‘hands-on and minds-open,’ award-winning educational program that uniquely combines classroom and outdoor experience, while focusing on watershed functions...

The program’s curriculum guides students in learning vocabulary and introduces concepts on aquatic ecosystems with a focus on water quality and quantity, habitat, fish health, macroinvertebrates, and watershed planning.

The Kids in the Creek program connects classroom to nature with a field day where students put on waders, get wet, and use a variety of tools to explore aquatic ecosystems. They work with local resource professionals to sample and classify aquatic insects, test water samples, measure stream flow and fish habitat features, investigate riparian plants, and explore fish health.

We hope that this program can continue, and Entiat Ranger District is committed to helping with the program while supporting Cascadia Conservation District’s efforts in education and outreach.”

- Elka Missal, Entiat Ranger District

FY16 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



62

people attended conservation district-led trainings on ArcGIS (geographic imaging system) organized by the SCC Center for Technical Development



21,660

K-6 students received hands-on lessons through the Water on Wheels education program developed by Franklin Conservation District and taught in 15 conservation districts

CHALLENGE: Many conservation construction projects are required to be designed and overseen by a licensed engineer, but hiring private engineering consultants is time and cost-prohibitive.



OUR SOLUTION: The SCC Professional Engineering Grants Program funds nine regional staff engineers that oversee projects for all 45 conservation districts. This expertise enables districts to complete on-the-ground conservation projects that address state priorities, such as removing fish barriers and installing in-stream salmon habitat.

CHALLENGE: Few programs exist to help members of Washington's 600,000 veteran population transition from the military into viable agricultural careers, despite a need to recruit new farmers for the future.



OUR SOLUTION: Spokane Conservation District grew their Vets on the Farm (VOTF) program that offers veterans opportunities for education and employment in conservation-based agricultural industries. And, conservation districts across the state began exploring how to launch local VOTF programs. (supported in part by SCC Implementation funds)



CHALLENGE: Agricultural landowners depend on resource management plans to sustain their operation and comply with regulations, so they need to know technicians who write and help implement plans are trained and experienced.



OUR SOLUTION: The SCC Center for Technical Development (CTD) developed certification trainings (launching FY17) to ensure staff have the skills to write dairy, farm, and riparian plans. CTD also hosted five ArcGIS trainings (62 attendees), two Basic Conservation Planner courses, and one Comprehensive Nutrient Management course.

CHALLENGE: State learning standards stress the importance of engaging students in science and engineering using local resource issues in their community, but many teachers lack time and resources to develop place-based lessons.



OUR SOLUTION: Conservation districts can use SCC Implementation Grants to develop locally relevant science lessons for teachers and students. The Water on Wheels and Wheat Week programs (developed by Franklin Conservation District) are implemented across the state, and each reached over 20,000 students in the 15-16 school year.

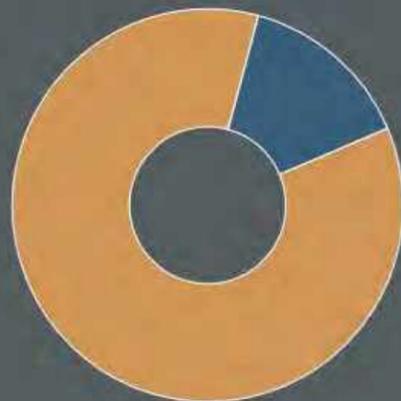


"Oh, working with the conservation district helped us so much. All these plants, I would never have known about. I would not have known about the sources of where to get them. I would not have known where they were. I would not have known how to place them. There's ones that I hadn't worked with at all before. I was used to lawn grass and the typical plants. So it was an invaluable resource to us... I could not have done this without them. I could not have figured this out on my own. They made it possible for us to do it, and it's been such a joy for us..."

Reg Utnerseher

Private landowner on the help received from Benton Conservation District with building a native "Heritage Garden"

FY16 EXPENDITURES: EDUCATION, OUTREACH, AND EXPERTISE - \$4,534,349



- Engineering - \$654,350
- Implementation Grants (covers district operations and program administration, Center for Technical Development) - \$3,879,999

"After seeing this instruction for several years, I think it has just become better and more focused each year. Vocabulary, visuals, hands-on experiences, discussion, and collaboration make this so exciting and engaging."

- Beth Austin, 4th grade teacher (Livingston Elementary), on the Wheat Week education program developed by Franklin Conservation District. With 16 educators across the state, Wheat Week is available to any school in Washington.



- Professional Engineering: scc.wa.gov/professional-engineering
- Center for Technical Development: www.tpdw.org
- Vets on the Farm: www.sccd.org/programs/vets-on-the-farms
- Regional / statewide conservation district education programs developed by Franklin Conservation District (e.g. Wheat Week, Water on Wheels): franklincd.org/education.aspx

AGENCY FY16 OPERATIONS



Accountability

The SCC and conservation districts are committed to accountability and delivering results for the people of Washington.

In fiscal year 2016, we took several steps to ensure that we're using public funds responsibly, employing transparent performance measures, and providing reliable and timely service.

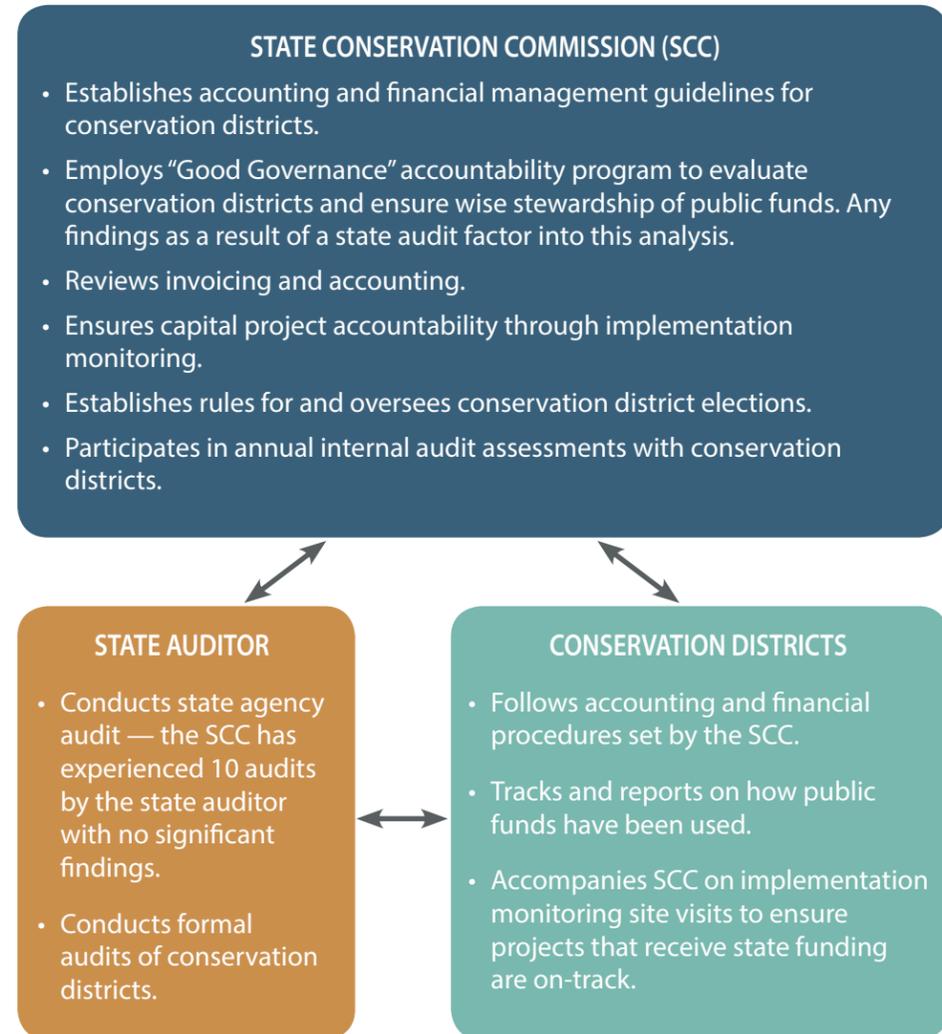
WORKING WITH THE STATE AUDITOR

The SCC continues to work closely with the Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO). Our relationship with the SAO (detailed in figure below) helps maintain agency and conservation district transparency and compliance with state, federal, and local laws.

Improving data collection and monitoring

We believe in making decisions about strategy and funding based on a combination of state and local priorities and sound data. In 2016 we began the process of upgrading our Conservation Practice Data System so the SCC and conservation districts can more efficiently and effectively track and monitor conservation projects.

This process included hosting meetings with conservation district staff to make sure our system updates meet the needs of the people who do the work and enter the data.



LEAN GOVERNMENT

Staff applied Lean concepts to increase efficiency of the SCC Shellfish Grant Program. Initially, conservation districts waited an average of 90 days for a funding decision on grant requests. After identifying the causes for delay and undergoing a Lean process improvement, we reduced the wait time by 66 percent to just 30 days!

RESULTS WASHINGTON

The SCC leads two indicators under the Results Washington state performance management system with objectives to: 1) Increase the number of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) sites to improve habitat for salmon, and 2) Increase the number of implemented agricultural management practices that improve water quality for shellfish. We participate on a third indicator led by the Department of Agriculture to preserve farmland.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

The SCC employs a "Good Governance" accountability system that evaluates conservation districts on a set of 25 performance measures covering fiscal and operational responsibilities. If a district is found deficient in one or more of the measures, this results in 1) SCC staff working with the district to make improvements, and/or 2) a reduction in budget allocation in the next fiscal year, subject to the decision of the SCC Board of Commissioners. In 2016, 29 conservation districts met or exceeded all 25 performance measures. SCC staff are working with 16 districts on opportunities for improvement. No conservation districts had deficiencies that warranted a reduction in budget allocation.



Consistent, high-quality service

Landowners and partners depend on conservation districts for quality, on-the-ground service. It's essential that district staff have the expertise to consistently plan and implement conservation programs.

That's why the SCC supported the expansion of the Center for Technical Development (CTD). CTD ensures that districts remain a dependable resource by providing certification trainings for district staff, streamlining district work, and increasing districts' ability to provide timely service.

Washington State Conservation Commission
2016-21 STRATEGIC PLAN

FOUNDATION FOR OUR WORK:

- Our Mission:** To ensure natural resources and land in Washington State, particularly with conservation districts and other partners.
- Our Vision:** Our state shall have healthy soils, water, air and ecosystems, and sustainable human populations with thriving, including wildlife, agriculture and forestry. The State Conservation Commission and conservation districts are recognized as trusted partners who bring voluntary stewardship and stewardship value to resource users.
- Our Values:**
 - SUSTAINABILITY:** We envision a future with healthy, vibrant lands and thriving, sustainable working lands, underpinned by sustainable natural resource conservation.
 - RELATIONSHIPS:** We foster strong and trusting relationships with our stakeholders and maintain open communication and transparency to build trust.
 - KNOWLEDGE:** We value local knowledge, diverse cultures and ideas. We strive to offer industry, collaborative solutions that reflect state, local and community objectives.
 - ACCOUNTABILITY:** We employ clear policies, procedures, and performance measures that support effective, efficient use of public resources.
 - RESPECT:** We exhibit personal and institutional integrity for agency resources and staff, conservation districts, and our partners.

STRATEGIC AREAS AND GOALS:

- Commission Operations:**
 - Develop a clear, effective process for capturing feedback and reducing our work.
 - Clear and follow a process that helps us determine our strategy and risk posture.
 - Engage our leaders and staff with the appropriate skills and ongoing to produce the best work.
- Financial Credibility:**
 - Develop and employ a management process that helps preserve funding needs based on highest return.
 - Develop and implement a natural resource resilience plan.
 - Engage our staff in an agreed upon program.
- Resource Issue Facilitation:**
 - Provide resources and training to conservation districts, government, and agencies that support us to resolve our business practices, and facilitate operations.
 - Engage our partners of our knowledge in working with agencies, business.
- Public Outreach and Marketing:**
 - Develop a marketing plan / strategy and employ effective communication tools.
 - Support the Conservation Partnership Building and Outreach Committee.
 - Engage leadership and partners to support the natural resource funding.
 - Support district outreach and education efforts.
- Sustainable Funding:**
 - Protect our way and accomplishments in natural resource funding.
 - Develop partnerships and build support among a diversity of partners.
 - Communicate how we leverage funding and work with partners to provide public services.
- Grant Operations:**
 - The Good Governance rules to ensure timely response.
 - Develop process to ensure funding decisions in timely manner.
 - Deliver on our obligations for staff and equipment before process for funding with transparent behavior.
- Compliance Program Delivery:**
 - Ensure the necessary level of care of our work and effectiveness of regulatory approach.
 - Ensure our program effectiveness by providing with meaningful data.
 - Ensure effectiveness of existing resources and report the results of our program.
 - Engage financial management leading results.
- Policy Leadership:**
 - Get district input on the natural resource policy area where they have the knowledge.
 - Support district engagement with interagency resource planning and implementation.
 - Assign necessary capacity to engage in key policy decisions.
 - Engage our staff in their and their government.
- Partnership:**
 - Define, support, and support our agency role and the role of our partners.
 - Maximize relationships and their own potential.
 - Provide a clear picture to our partners of the role of natural resource programs.
- Technical Capacity:**
 - Support staff through the Conservation Technical Development, through training, skills, provide support and education.
 - Engage leadership and partners to support the natural resource funding.
 - Engage leadership in policy decisions and responses.
 - Clarify training with our partners.

The SCC updated their five-year strategic plan in May 2016. View a larger version of the 2016-21 SCC Strategic Plan Summary on our website: scc.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/SCC_StratPlan_Sept2016.pdf

AGENCY FY16 OPERATIONS



Empowering districts with tools and technology

In May, SCC staff organized a QuickBooks (accounting software) training in partnership with South Puget Sound Community College for conservation districts. Twenty-six staff from 23 districts attended the training. We also paid for all districts to upgrade to the latest 2016 QuickBooks software platform.

Making state dollars go farther



On average, every one dollar of state funding invested in conservation districts is leveraged four times through grants and additional fund sources.

Financial stewardship and efficiency

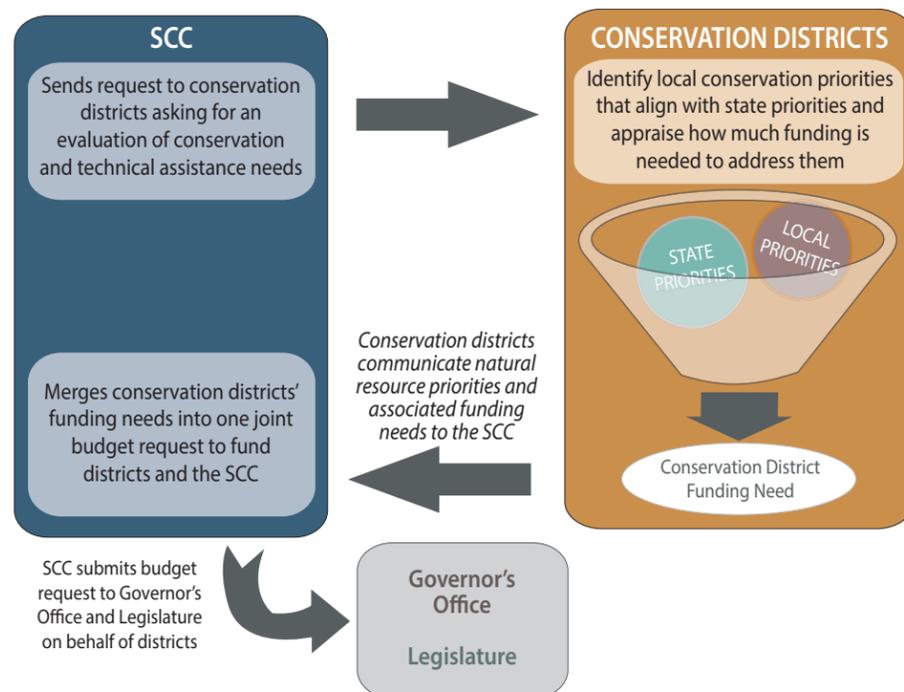
The SCC and conservation districts take pride in getting the most out of every dollar we spend. By offering cost-share programs to landowners, we leverage state funds and help landowners maximize their personal investment in conservation practices.

Conservation districts also use some of their funding from the SCC as match to secure grants from other partners. In fact, every dollar the SCC invests in conservation districts is leveraged an average of four times!

In 2016, SCC financial staff decreased the time it takes to process conservation district vouchers by nearly 30 percent, despite an increase in total vouchers and payment amounts!

VOUCHER PROCESSING	2016	2015
Vouchers processed	1,992	1,960
Payments (total)	\$17.2M	\$12.4M
Days to process (average)	2.24	2.9

HOW WE BUILD OUR BUDGET



Our 2015-17 biennial budget

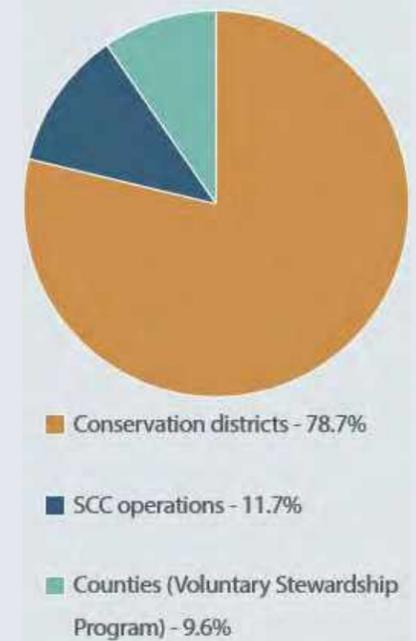
The SCC launched several new programs and approaches in FY16. We move from program planning and development to full program implementation in FY17. The majority of our remaining budget for the biennium has been awarded, and we're on-track to fully expend our allotted budget.

STATE OPERATING BUDGET		15-17
Operations and expenses - FY1	SCC administration; basic conservation district operations and program development;	6,764,000
Operations and expenses - FY2	Implementation Grants; Engineering Grants; Center for Technical Development	6,784,000
Food Policy Forum		50,000
Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)	Statewide program administration	7,600,000
State toxics control	Toxics reduction activities	1,000,000
Fire recovery		6,800,000
Firewise		1,000,000
Total operating budget		29,998,000

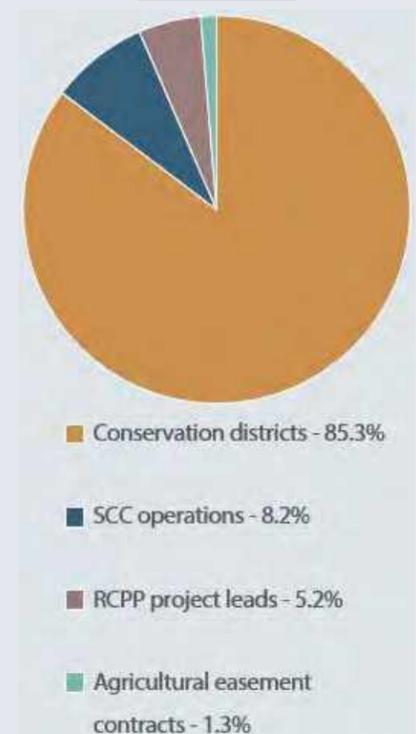
STATE CAPITAL BUDGET		15-17
Natural Resource Investments: Shellfish	Improve shellfish growing areas	4,000,000
Natural Resource Investments: Nonshellfish	Water quality / resource improvements (nonshellfish)	4,000,000
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	Cost share (state match), contract funding, PIP loans	4,981,000
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) - state match		5,000,000
Dairy Nutrient Low Interest Loan Program		5,000,000
Agricultural conservation easements	Lust Family Farm and Ranch, Imrie Ranch Rock Creek, Kelley Ranches, Dungeness Watershed Farmland	9,192,000
R&D grant - deep furrow conservation drill		350,000
Total capital budget		32,523,000

FY16 FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

Operating Funds



Capital Funds



CONSERVATION DISTRICT FEATURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS





Adams Conservation District

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Board Chair: Curtis Hennings

State Legislative District #9
Congressional District #4

Other Accomplishments



Local 5th graders learn about soil, worms, weeds, wildlife, and weather at Adams Conservation District's annual field day.



Winners of the 6th grade essay contest read their papers on "the Benefits of Cover Crops" at the district's annual meeting.



Adams Conservation District hosts FFA Land Judging competition for 230 students from 20 schools.

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Installing livestock management practices to protect Steptoe Creek



New corral in foreground, cattle along creek in background

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Some of the streams within local watersheds do not meet water quality standards for dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, and fecal coliform. Adams Conservation District has been providing assistance to operators to install better management practices that improve riparian (streamside) areas and minimize surface water contamination. Practices that limit livestock access to degraded streambanks and support riparian re-vegetation help reduce turbidity, filter run-off, and provide shade and habitat.

Practices that limit livestock access to degraded streambanks and support riparian re-vegetation help reduce turbidity, filter run-off, and provide shade and habitat.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

A livestock feedlot was relocated away from Steptoe Creek in order to improve the riparian zone and protect water quality. Adams Conservation District helped the landowner install heavy use/winter feeding areas, 5,200 feet of fencing, and off-stream watering facilities. Relocating the feedlot away from the creek will reduce fecal contamination and soil erosion. It also will allow vegetation to re-establish, which helps to stabilize the bank, filter run-off, and provide shade and habitat. The landowner will plant approximately 1.5 miles of riparian buffer along both sides of the creek. As vegetation develops, water quality parameters should improve.



New feeding area away from creek

KEY PARTNERS: Washington State Department of Ecology; Washington State Conservation Commission; Palouse Conservation District

More work to do!

- Provide operators with assistance to implement reduced tillage practices and install livestock watering facilities.
- Work with landowners and partners to improve riparian and wetland habitat.
- Expand outreach efforts to educate and support our community and operators' needs.

Asotin County Conservation District

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Board Chair: Keith Ausman



State Legislative District #9
Congressional District #5

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Wildfire damage assessment helps streamline recovery assistance



The Gilmore Gulch Fire moved rapidly due to wind conditions and burned extremely hot with 100 foot flames.

Credit: Blue Mountain Fire District #1

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

During the summer of 2015, Asotin County suffered multiple fires that burned approximately 10,000 acres of range, riparian, and cropland. Fires destroyed and damaged conservation projects, fences, crops, riparian vegetation, and range grass. The Asotin County Conservation District and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) worked with landowners to assess and inventory the fire damage and identify the actions needed to address impacted natural resources.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Information from these site evaluations and damage assessments has resulted in 11 landowners receiving over \$1 million in funding from the Farm Service Agency, Washington State Conservation Commission, NRCS, and Bonneville Power Administration for projects that address natural resource concerns. This includes tree and rangeland plantings, and construction of fencing and livestock water developments. This coordination and partnership between local, state, and federal agencies makes it possible for landowners to implement projects that protect and restore natural resources that were impacted by the fires.



Approximately 10,000 acres of rangeland, riparian zones, and cropland was burned in Asotin County in the summer of 2015.

Credit: Blue Mountain Fire District #1

KEY PARTNERS: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; USDA Farm Service Agency; Washington State Conservation Commission; Bonneville Power Administration

More work to do!

- Headgate Dam Notching Project will result in the removal of a juvenile fish passage barrier.
- Completion of the Voluntary Stewardship Program planning process and Geomorphic Assessment will provide direction for future projects and priorities.
- Re-enroll eight Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contracts that will expire in 2018. Continued conservation efforts on these riparian corridors and streams is critical for endangered salmon and steelhead.

Other Accomplishments



Feed and waste pads are installed to improve manure management in livestock feeding areas.



Riparian planting project completed in conjunction with the Asotin Creek Intensively Monitored Watershed Program.



Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) stream and buffer project that will be re-enrolled in October 2016.



Benton Conservation District

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Board Chair: Jack Clark

State Legislative District #8, 16
Congressional District #4

Other Accomplishments



Fifty-eight landowners participated in two workshops designed to educate small farm operators about a variety of natural resource topics.
Photo: Erin Hightower, BCD



Landowners Reg and Sheila said of their BCD-certified Heritage Garden, "I feel really good about the fact that we have beauty with so much less water."
Photo: Rachel Little, BCD



BCD, in partnership with Moon Farms, is conducting a stripper header demonstration project designed to reduce erosion and increase soil moisture.
Photo: Rachel Little, BCD

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Relieving state drought concern with local solutions and projects



Washington Conservation Corps member removes water stargrass.
Photo: Rachel Little, BCD

RESOURCE CHALLENGE The state drought caused many challenges. Water rationing forced landowners to selectively irrigate, and plants were lost. Low water levels allowed for explosive aquatic plant growth in the Yakima River, closing the salmon fishery, creating physical barriers to salmon migration, and smothering spawning habitat. During the warmest weather, aquatic plants consumed so much oxygen in the Yakima River that oxygen levels temporarily dropped below state water quality standards, almost to levels lethal to most aquatic organisms.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Benton Conservation District (BCD) helped landowners reduce outdoor water use by providing demonstrations, online resources, five presentations, a tour, and 22 site visits. The Governor's drought declaration released Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crews for drought relief, so the BCD recruited, trained, and supervised WCC crews and volunteers in the removal of 40 tons of aquatic plants from traditional salmon spawning areas. The harvested material was composted and marketed to agriculture producers for mulch and soil enrichment. BCD also developed a Master Streamkeeper Program, through which they recruited and trained volunteers to conduct water quality and aquatic plant monitoring.



Amy Fishburn, Master Streamkeeper Volunteer, tests water quality. Photo: Karen Sowers, Tapteal Greenway

KEY PARTNERS: State Conservation Commission; Columbia Basin Chapter of the WA Native Plant Society; WCC; State Departments of Ecology and Fish and Wildlife; Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group; Richland Rod & Gun Club; US Fish & Wildlife Service; Yakama Nation Fisheries; Benton PUD; S. Yakima Conservation District; Battelle/PNW National Laboratory; Kennewick, Richland, Prosser, Finley, and Sunnyside School Districts; Tapteal Greenway

More work to do!

- Continue implementation of a groundwater characterization project.
- Participate in the Benton County Voluntary Stewardship Program Workgroup and provide technical support.
- Partner with the City of Kennewick to establish a 19,250 square foot Heritage Garden at Hansen Park.

Cascadia Conservation District

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Board Chair: Josh Koempel



State Legislative District #12
Congressional District #8

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Firewise home assessments and fuels reduction



Crews process material the landowners trim and stack as part of Cascadia's free chipping program. The chips are being spread on the ground for mulch.

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Wildfire threatens every citizen in Chelan County in some way, whether they are directly in harm's way, within range of wind-driven embers, choked by the smoke, or affected by loss of work, resources, or economic vitality in areas ranging from agriculture to tourism. Forest health and the related wildfire, flood, erosion, and water quality concerns are a top priority for Cascadia Conservation District. As funding has become available, Cascadia has increased its efforts to help local landowners prepare and respond.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

To reduce wildfire risks, Cascadia conducted 150 home risk assessments last year. With a better understanding of defensible space and resilient landscapes, landowners can remove hazardous or flammable materials from around their homes, as well as trim and limb perimeter trees and clear brush. Free chipping events helped 170 landowners manage and remove fuels, representing more than 126 acres of treated land. Cascadia's cost-share program also made several larger-scale projects possible, matching grant funds with landowner contributions and sweat equity to treat about 73 acres of forest land.



Fuels reduction/forest health projects help landowners proactively manage natural resources and improve the defensible space around their homes.

KEY PARTNERS: Private landowners of Chelan County; Firewise Communities; Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition; Chelan County Fire Districts; Washington State Conservation Commission; Washington Department of Natural Resources; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

More work to do!

- Landowner assistance, including technical assistance, conservation planning, cost-share, more home assessments and chipping events, developing Firewise Communities, and urban conservation.
- Watershed planning, coordination, and project development for water quality, water quantity, and both in-stream and upland habitat restoration and enhancement.
- Education and outreach programs and community events for all ages.

Other Accomplishments



Multiple riparian restoration projects, followed by essential watering and weed management, are another element of Cascadia's ongoing work.



AmeriCorps intern McKenzie Selden conducts a lesson during Water on Wheels, one of Cascadia's many education and outreach programs.



Fire recovery assistance continues to be important, helping people with tasks such as home flood protection, weed control, and restoring working lands.



Central Klickitat Conservation District

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Board Chair: Dan McCarty

State Legislative District #14
Congressional District #3

Other Accomplishments



Planting project along the Little Klickitat River, implemented in coordination with the City of Goldendale and the Washington Conservation Corps.



CKCD provided cost-share for a livestock Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) project to reduce livestock waste and sediment runoff entering a tributary to Swale Creek.

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Little Klickitat Subbasin water temperature study



Bank stabilization on the Little Klickitat River

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

The Department of Ecology declared the Little Klickitat River as water-quality-impaired in 1996 due to elevated dry season maximum water temperatures. A Total Maximum Daily Load (maximum pollutant level) was established for the river in 2003. Central Klickitat Conservation District (CKCD) initiated water temperature monitoring in the Little Klickitat Sub-

basin in 1996, and continues to actively monitor streamflow, air temperature, and water temperature, and implement water quality improvement practices.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

CKCD has completed a variety of best management practices to address high water temperatures over the past 20 years, and recently identified potential cooling trends for maximum water temperatures over the period of monitoring for several streams in the watershed. The district acquired a grant to statistically analyze the data for trends in water temperature in relationship to stream flow, air temperature, and location and timing of riparian projects. Results indicate that six stations showed statistically significant declining maximum water temperature over time (Aspect Consulting, 2015. Little Klickitat Subbasin Water Temperature).

KEY PARTNERS: Eastern Klickitat Conservation District; Department of Ecology; Aspect Consulting; All landowners who have allowed monitoring access to property; Klickitat County Natural Resources



The Washington Conservation Corps installs riparian plants to increase buffer width from 10 to 70 feet along the Little Klickitat River

More work to do!

- Farmland preservation and agroforestry production
- Continuation of water quality monitoring and implementation of water quality improvement projects
- Rangeland, forest, and habitat management
- Wildfire prevention

Clallam Conservation District

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Board Chair: Joe Murray



State Legislative District #24
Congressional District #6

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Onsite septic system repair cost-share program

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Clallam County has nearly 20,000 onsite septic systems treating human waste. Improperly functioning septic systems pose a threat to public health and are a significant source of water pollution impacting shellfish growing areas. State law requires regular inspections of septic systems to ensure they function properly. However, the vast majority of homeowners don't comply with this regulation, many in fear of discovering a need for costly repairs that may exceed \$25,000.



Installation of new septic tank



Glendon biofilter for septic treatment

Ongoing water pollution in Dungeness Bay led Clallam Conservation District to develop an incentive program to help homeowners repair or replace failing onsite septic systems. The incentive program was modeled after our cost-share program for implementing agricultural conservation practices. Homeowners with failing septic systems that impact water quality and who need financial assistance for the necessary repairs are referred to the conservation district by Clallam County. To date, seven homeowners have received financial assistance to replace their failing systems, including five near Dungeness Bay, resulting in an upgrade of 272 acres of shellfish beds in 2016.

KEY PARTNERS: Washington State Conservation Commission; Clallam County Environmental Health

More work to do!

- Implement irrigation efficiency projects with Dungeness Irrigation District, Agnew Irrigation District, and Sequim Prairie-Tri Irrigation Association.
- Implement aquifer recharge projects with Agnew Irrigation District and Sequim Prairie-Tri Irrigation Association.
- Implement Pollution Identification and Correction project in Golden Sands and Meadowbrook sub-basins.

Other Accomplishments



One of two aquifer recharge projects under construction to store water in the shallow aquifer.



Conceptual design for a 1,500-acre-foot off-channel reservoir in the Dungeness watershed in the planning stages.



Installation of over a mile of irrigation pipeline to replace open irrigation ditch and conserve Dungeness River water.



Clark Conservation District

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Board Chair: Dean Longrie, Ph.D.

State Legislative District #14, 17, 18, 20, 49
Congressional District #3

Other Accomplishments



Provide technical and financial assistance for riparian restoration and habitat enhancement



Support farms with mobile poultry processing equipment and land use activities



Provide technical assistance for natural disasters, flooding, and storm events

2016 Feature Accomplishment A focus on urban communities



Walking tour of Vancouver's Burnt Bridge Creek

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Clark Conservation District reaches out and provides assistance to landowners and homeowners in the cities and urban areas of Clark County. This year the district worked with partners to conduct over 10 urban and neighborhood workshops and watershed tours focused on water quality, habitat, and stormwater management for homeowners in the City of Vancouver. They also developed relationships with new partners to support urban farms and food production, and created an Urban Livestock Handbook for landowners on small lots who want to have animals. The district also assisted schools with curriculum about farms and water quality.

KEY PARTNERS: Vancouver Watersheds Alliance; Washington Department of Ecology; Washington State Conservation Commission

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Clark County is the fastest growing community in the state with over 9,000 people moving into the county every year. The expanding population, residential and commercial development, and expansive urban growth areas are putting ever increasing pressure on our natural resources. It's essential that people living in cities and urban areas understand their impacts and the roles they can have in the health and conservation of our natural resources.



New rain garden

More work to do!

- Create an urban food and farming network to support farming and increase access to local food.
- Assist farms in becoming Salmon-Safe certified.
- Provide financial assistance for urban stormwater management.
- Develop a long-term, stable funding source.

Columbia Conservation District

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Board Chair: Clay Hutchens



State Legislative District #16
Congressional District #5

2016 Feature Accomplishment Tucannon River salmon habitat recovery - Project Area 24



Top: Pre-construction levee area illustrating the lack of floodplain connectivity and habitat complexity. Bottom: Following levee removal, a perennial flow path was reconnected, and a LWD bar apex jam was constructed to aid in splitting flows.

Photos: Kris Buelow, Tucannon Programmatic Coordinator

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Columbia Conservation District designed and installed Project Area 24 (PA-24) on the Tucannon River to increase floodplain capacity and channel complexity. PA-24 is located within the active channel and floodplain of the Tucannon River, from river mile 28.25-27.5. A tier 1 project in the Tucannon Conceptual Restoration Plan, PA-24 was sighted for isolated habitats and low Large Woody Debris (LWD) compared to goals in the Salmon Recovery Plan for southeast Washington (2011). The project site was confined by levees and riprap and lacked pool-forming LWD.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

PA-24 has positively impacted two regional recovery goals. Installation of 24 LWDs and 20 single rootwad tree structures has increased instream habitat complexity, juvenile fish refuge, and pool development. The project also increased floodplain capacity by modifying/removing two existing levees, enhancing and creating 0.64 miles of side channel habitat, and reconnecting 5.04 acres of low-lying floodplain. In total, the project improved nearly one mile of habitat and floodplain for winter/summer rearing for ESA-listed spring Chinook and steelhead, and winter rearing for bull trout.

KEY PARTNERS: Howard Family Ranch LLC; Bonneville Power Administration; Salmon Recovery Funding Board; USFS-Pomeroy Range District; Anchor QEA LLC; Roys Hydroseeding & Excavation

More work to do!

- Re-enroll expiring Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) sites to maintain environmental gains.
- Continue soil health improvements through application of calcium carbonate.
- Continue implementing salmon habitat recovery projects in the Tucannon River.
- Develop the Touchet River Conceptual Design Plan for ESA-listed salmon habitat recovery.

Other Accomplishments



Dormant riparian planting at Tucannon River Project Area 15 following installation of a salmon habitat enhancement project. Photo: Justin Pearson, CCD Planner/Tech



Demonstration of advancing drone technology benefits for use in production agriculture at the district's Spring Producer Tour. Photo: Justin Pearson, CCD Planner/Tech



Application of Calcium Carbonate to raise pH in the soil shows greater root and larger plant development demonstrating potential for increased yields. Photo: Gary Wegner, Columbia River Carbonates



Cowlitz Conservation District

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Board Chair: Jim Scott

State Legislative District #19, 20
Congressional District #3

Other Accomplishments

- Completed two other restoration projects, similar to our feature project, in the Coweeman River Community Watershed.
- Completed third treatment of knotweed within the Coweeman River Community Watershed. This work encompasses the entire watershed and results in treatment of knotweed along 40 miles of stream.
- Constructed one restoration project and designed another in the Arkansas Creek Community Watershed (before and after project photos below).



2016 Feature Accomplishment Coweeman River restoration project

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Cowlitz Conservation District is working with landowners in the Coweeman River Watershed to address resource concerns using a Community Watershed Approach. Resource concerns identified by the community include salmon recovery, water quality, property protection (streambank erosion and flood damages), invasive weeds, and garbage dumping. The emphasis of the project is to address stream temperature concerns arising from splash dams operating in the watershed at the turn of the century.



Typical river reach - bedrock dominated, wide and shallow



Post project photo - note sediment along margin and downstream of structure

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Major resource impacts often require major restoration efforts to address the damage. Splash damming scoured the channel down to bedrock and created a wide, shallow channel geometry. Bedload (sediment) in the watershed moves through the system like marbles on a sidewalk. Cowlitz Conservation District is working with landowners to anchor wood in bedrock reaches to narrow and deepen the channel and trap sediment to insulate the bedrock. These structures have effectively achieved these objectives. The district intends to use the project site as a demonstration area for others with bedrock-dominated channels.

KEY PARTNERS: Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board; Washington State Conservation Commission; Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Army Corps of Engineers; landowner; Fowler Contracting; Campbell Contracting

More work to do!

- Implement a stream restoration project in the Arkansas Creek Community Watershed.
- Implement a stream restoration project in the Abernathy Creek Community Watershed.
- Design two projects for construction in 2017 in the Germany Creek Community Watershed.



Eastern Klickitat Conservation District

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Board Chair: Rhon Raschko

State Legislative District #14, 15
Congressional District #3, 4

2016 Feature Accomplishment Agricultural conservation easements in Rock Creek Watershed



Wildlife corridor in the Rock Creek Basin

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Preserving Klickitat County's rangeland and cropland is vital for the future of local livestock and agriculture industries. As development pressures and financial challenges increase, farmers and ranchers are turning to agricultural conservation easements (ACE), which allow them to sell their right to develop their property. They're paid the portion of the property value that the development right represents. This keeps working lands intact and affordable for future generations of farmers and ranchers. Eastern Klickitat Conservation District (EKCD) was approached by a local rancher for help with the ACE process, which led to neighboring ranchers pursuing easements as well.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

More than 21,600 acres of high-quality rangeland and wildlife habitat in Klickitat County is transitioning into conservation-preserved lands. This is thanks to two ranchers (currently in negotiations) pursuing easements with EKCD, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife recently purchasing timber land that will be co-managed by Eastern and Central Klickitat conservation districts. These properties represent a unique region of transition between three biological communities: Ponderosa pine, the eastern extent of Oregon white oak habitat, and interior shrub steppe/grassland.



Spring development, fence maintenance, and pasture enhancement implemented to maximize forage production and utilization for wildlife and cattle

KEY PARTNERS: Central Klickitat Conservation District; Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Landowners; Washington State Conservation Commission; Office of Farmland Preservation; Klickitat County Commissioners

More work to do!

- Farmland preservation
- Water quality
- Rangeland, forest, and habitat management
- Wildfire prevention

Other Accomplishments



Survey of Eurasian watermilfoil in Rock Creek is complete. This year we'll finalize a control plan and apply for funding to implement it.



District staff worked with students in Bickleton to design and install a restoration project using native plants.



Staff performed post-wildfire site evaluations, recommended restoration strategies, and applied for emergency cost-share funding.



State Legislative District #7
Congressional District #5

Ferry Conservation District

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Other Accomplishments

- Cooperated in conducting a Range Management Tour, which highlighted good land management practices.
- Helped two landowners improve pasture management with cross fencing and water source development.
- Helped two other landowners plan, permit, and install 1/2 mile each of riparian restoration and bank stabilization.
- Resumed a water quality monitoring program to measure the effectiveness of our best management practice installations.

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Sanpoil River riparian restoration: A new piece to the puzzle

RESOURCE CHALLENGE The Sanpoil River is one of the major watersheds in Ferry Conservation District. Our major environmental concern for the watershed is high water temperatures. A major cause of this is excessive sedimentation. Landowners also face the issue of losing agricultural land to erosion. In 2010, a landowner contacted us for help with their erosion problem. We could help them meet their needs and also meet our goals of sediment reduction and overall water quality improvement in the Sanpoil Watershed.



Top: Steep high banks are prone to crumbling into the stream, unleashing tons of sediment. Bottom: Banks have been re-sloped, and the toes protected with woody material. The banks will be revegetated, and protective fencing installed.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

The project was a good match for our Department of Ecology Centennial Clean Water Fund grant, Sanpoil Cooperative Implementation Project. The district also received financial assistance from a State Conservation Commission capital grant (non-shellfish). The project is meeting grant requirements and helping the landowner, making it a win-win for everyone.

The project involved building in-stream log barbs that shifted the current away from vulnerable banks. The banks are also re-sloped to make them less susceptible to being undercut. The final steps are to fence a riparian buffer and replant the disturbed stream banks.

KEY PARTNERS: Washington Department of Ecology; Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Washington State Conservation Commission

More work to do!

- With local school districts and WSU Ferry County Extension, we will place a greenhouse on Ferry Conservation District property. It will be the centerpiece of an inter-district agricultural education program.
- Continue to work with Ferry County officials to implement the county's Voluntary Stewardship Program.
- Cooperate with state agencies to build a trail to connect Curlew Lake State Park to the Ferry County Rail Trail, which will run through Ferry Conservation District's nature reserve property.



State Legislative District #12
Congressional District #4

Foster Creek Conservation District

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2016 Feature Accomplishment

Direct Seed Program improves agricultural management practices



Wheat

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Foster Creek Conservation District (FCCD) received a water quality grant from the Washington Department of Ecology to implement a Direct Seed Program. Direct seed refers to a tillage system that allows farmers to fertilize and plant fields in one pass. This limits soil disturbance and retains residue from previous crops, resulting in reduced water and wind erosion. The FCCD Direct Seed Program provides cost-share assistance to dryland producers in Douglas County and adjoining counties, enabling them to either rent direct seed equipment or have their parcel custom seeded. After signing up for the program, which runs 2016-18, 12 producers have started direct seeding on over 2,500 acres.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

A second water quality grant from Ecology, confirmed for 2017-19, will increase the number of direct seed operators in the program from 12 to 24 participants. Each program includes a water quality monitoring component and a cost/benefit analysis report for participating producers. FCCD will introduce a soil testing and monitoring component with the second grant that enables the district and producers to see any changes in the soil relating to direct seed. Multiple intended benefits include reduced soil loss, improved water quality, improved soil health, and reduced fuel and labor costs.

KEY PARTNERS:

Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association



Sagebrush bluebells, *Mertensia oblongifolia*

More work to do!

- Biological weed control
- "Farmed Smart" certifications
- Voluntary natural resources conservation plans

Other Accomplishments

Foster Creek Conservation District is coordinating the Douglas County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) workgroup:

- VSP is a voluntary, incentive-based program representing an alternative approach for counties to meet state Growth Management Act requirements.
- VSP uses a watershed-based process to protect five types of critical habitat areas, including fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, wetlands, frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, and critical aquifer recharge areas used for potable water.
- FCCD is developing a workgroup to establish the goals and benchmarks towards VSP implementation within Douglas County.



Franklin Conservation District

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State Legislative District #9, 16
Congressional District #4

Other Accomplishments



Wheat Week is entering its 10th year! Last school year 22,147 students and 969 teachers were reached. Photo: Kara Kaelber



State Conservation Commission funds allowed for the conversion of a 45-acre rill irrigated field to sprinkler irrigation providing a water savings of 75-acre feet. Photo: Heather Wendt



SCC Engineering Grants supported the design and installation of many projects, including this orchard drip irrigation system. Photo: Heather Wendt

2016 Feature Accomplishment Science education for Washington teachers



At a three-day Natural Resources Workshop teachers participate in a Project Learning Tree activity called Tree Factory where they learn about systems. Photo: Kara Kaelber

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Franklin Conservation District's Education Director, Kara Kaelber, has been hosting teacher workshops since 2007 in conjunction with the Northwest Natural Resource Institute (NNRI). Washington teachers are often expected to teach science having little to no background in the subject matter. These educator workshops help provide teachers with knowledge and skills needed to feel comfortable teaching their students about natural resource conservation.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Franklin Conservation District and NNRI delivered eight workshops across Eastern Washington and one workshop in Western Washington. These workshops reached 186 teachers, and each teacher reaches approximately 25 students, meaning a total of 4,650 students were reached. Using nationally recognized curriculum guides — Project WET, Project WILD, and Project Learning Tree — the workshops disseminate useful and effective science and conservation-based lessons to the teachers. The primary goal is for the teachers to use this knowledge and share it with their students. The workshops are educational, hands-on, engaging, and fun!

KEY PARTNERS: Washington State Conservation Commission; Washington Grain Commission; Northwest Natural Resource Institute; Pacific Education Institute; Washington Potato Commission



Teachers participate in a Sum of the Parts Project WET lesson at a workshop in Olympia. The lesson focuses on point and non-point source pollution. Photo: Kara Kaelber

More work to do!

- Oversee the testing of two Deep Furrow Conservation Drill prototypes this fall.
- Coordinate the Voluntary Stewardship Program Workgroup in Franklin County.
- Oversee the implementation of 18 EQIP Irrigation Water Management contracts, in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Grant County Conservation District

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State Legislative District #9, 12, 13
Congressional District #4

2016 Feature Accomplishment Moses Lake shoreline stabilization



Permits were obtained and cultural resources review completed so that work could be started while the lake level was low. Photo: Lyle Stoltman

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Competition for water resources is fierce. Clean water is needed for drinking and hygiene. Water is also important for wildlife, aquatic life, irrigation, recreation, fire control, and industry. It benefits all to implement best management practices (BMPs) to improve water quality. Shoreline stabilization is a BMP that can prevent sedimentation, improve habitat, and protect shorelines. The Grant County Conservation District provided financial and technical resources to a project to stabilize part of the Moses Lake shoreline.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Changing water levels and recreational uses are eroding shorelines. Riprap and armor isn't the main choice of stabilizing anymore — a "softer" approach is now preferred. This project was engineered using thousands of compost-filled bags stacked in a terrace. The bags were anchored with special staples. The site was hydroseeded to get grasses growing quickly. A tackifier in the mulch helped with erosion control. Trees and shrubs were planted and nesting boxes put up. The landowner is pleased with the outcome and insists on letting politicians and the public see the alternatives available to protect the banks of Moses Lake.



Almost finished with the project — trees were planted later and waterfowl nesting boxes put back up. Photo: Lyle Stoltman

KEY PARTNERS: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; City of Moses Lake; Grant County; Moses Lake Irrigation District; US Bureau of Reclamation; Washington State Conservation Commission

Other Accomplishments

- Several lined lagoons to maintain nutrients and protection of ground water.
- Polyacrylamide to reduce soil dislodgement and erosion applied through irrigation system.
- Forty-two-foot Agipump for manure transfer and treatment.
- Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) pumps for more efficient irrigation and energy savings.
- Buried outlet pipe to protect erosion on slope.
- Two shoreline restoration projects to protect shoreline erosion and degradation and enhance wildlife.
- Direct Seed Workshop, Othello Sandhill Crane Festival, and Eco-Gardening Symposium.
- Lead Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP).

More work to do!

- Soil health: Prevent erosion, increase organic matter, and conserve moisture through cost-share, technical assistance and educational field days.
- Water quality and quantity: Maintain water quality by minimizing contaminants through cost-share, technical assistance, and educational field days.
- Wildlife and plant habitat: Improve through cost-share, technical assistance, and educational field days.



Grays Harbor Conservation District

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State Legislative District #19,24,35
Congressional District #6

Other Accomplishments



GHCD Service Forester wrote 21 forest management plans covering 1,361 acres and provided 32 producers technical assistance for 2,134 acres. Photo: Dave Houk GHCD



GHCD fully supports the oyster industry in Grays Harbor. Education and outreach are crucial for shellfish farmers to solve resource needs. Photo: Jesse Adams



GHCD assisted 18 producers with 28 projects related to agriculture. Photo: Jesse Adams

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Chehalis Basin restoration project



Eroding stream banks within the Chehalis Basin are causing land loss and environmental degradation.

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Within the last few decades, communities along the Chehalis River and its tributaries have experienced unprecedented changes to the river system, including an increased frequency and severity of flooding. Flooding, along with its impacts of severe bank erosion and rapid migration of the river channel, have led to costly infrastructure damage, loss of agriculture and forest lands and assets, degraded aquatic species habitat and fish population declines, and degraded water quality.

agriculture and forest lands and assets, degraded aquatic species habitat and fish population declines, and degraded water quality.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Grays Harbor Conservation District (GHCD) is participating on the Chehalis Basin Strategy, a multi-agency partnership that formed to reduce flood risk to communities, property, and infrastructure, while improving aquatic habitat in the Chehalis Basin. The project seeks to achieve this by restoring natural river processes that slow river velocity, increasing natural flood storage, improving riverbank conditions, and restoring aquatic habitat. The project will use a variety of strategies and techniques such as reconnecting floodplains, stabilizing riverbanks, and restoring in-stream and off-channel habitat.



Climate change and land management practices throughout the watershed are causing a regular rise of water levels.

KEY PARTNERS: Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife; Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority; Washington State Conservation Commission; Chehalis Basin Lead Entity; Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force; Lewis County Conservation District; Thurston Conservation District

More work to do!

- Complete two fish passable bridges in the Satsop River Basin.
- Continue to plan and implement Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) projects.
- Work with small forest landowners to ensure management plans are received and up to date.

Jefferson County Conservation District

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State Legislative District #24
Congressional District #6

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Chimacum Creek watershed protection and restoration plan



Chimacum Creek summer flooding from invasive reed canarygrass clogging the waterway.

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Most Chimacum Valley soils are prime agricultural soils. In order to keep them viable for agriculture, it is essential to maintain drainage. Riparian restoration projects can have negative impacts on the drainage of ag lands. For example, while wooded riparian buffers improve fish habitat and, in time, mitigate negative impacts of invasive reed canarygrass, they create beaver habitat that often results in dams and flooding of adjacent agricultural lands.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

This planning project will enhance ongoing protection and restoration efforts in the Chimacum by allowing conservation planners to understand the barriers or motivators of landowners in order to garner increased support for and participation in those efforts. Project elements include: A hydrologic assessment to prioritize protection and restoration efforts; adaptive riparian and beaver management plans that act as tools to assist landowners in making land management decisions; and, a social marketing strategy to engage landowners to participate in those efforts.



Local agricultural producer shares the complex challenges of pasture management on land that floods from beaver activity and invasive aquatic weeds.

KEY PARTNERS: North Olympic Salmon Coalition; Jefferson Land Trust; WSU Jefferson County Extension; Jefferson County Noxious Weed Control Board. Funding for this project is provided by the National Estuaries Program, through a grant administered by the Washington State Department of Ecology.

More work to do!

- Conduct a watershed-scale livestock risk assessment to prioritize resource protection efforts and continue long-term water quality monitoring program in the Chimacum Watershed.
- Facilitate a streamlined process for landowners to manage the Chimacum Creek drainage, including permitting, adaptive beaver management, and watershed-scale management of invasive reed canarygrass.
- Integrate farm planning into local Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) update.

Other Accomplishments

- Completed planning, design, and some implementation of water quality and salmon habitat improvement projects including: gutters and downspouts for barns, rainwater catchment systems, stream channel enhancements, off-channel watering facilities, livestock exclusion fencing, and native buffer plantings.
- Conducted water quality monitoring on 31 stations along Chimacum Creek in partnership with Jefferson County Environmental Health and stream temperature monitoring in Chimacum, Salmon, and Snow Creeks.
- Assisted more than 70 landowners with soil fertility testing and amendment recommendations.



King Conservation District

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State Legislative District #1,5,11,30,31,
32, 33,34,36,37,39,41,43,45,46,47,48
Congressional District #1, 7, 8, 9

Other Accomplishments



Partnered with Rob Beresford, of the Carrie Lewith Home in Lake Forest Park, to restore 32,000 square feet of creek shoreline.

Photo: Melissa Tatro



Continued partnering with King County to bring 75 new acres into production and increase productivity on over 400 acres through improved drainage.

Photo: Mark Musick



Worked with six cities to provide technical assistance or launch programs to expand urban canopy cover.

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Launching the Regional Food System Program

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Although King County residents spend \$6 billion per year on food, just two percent of those dollars go toward local farmers. Increasing that number to 10 percent would bring resources, jobs, and regional resilience to our county.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

The King Conservation District (KCD) Regional Food System Program is based on the King County Local Food Initiative and the Puget Sound Regional Food Policy Council.



KCD's Regional Food System Program supports local farmers through increased access to markets and other efforts. Photo: Mark Musick

The program funds food system projects with demonstrated public benefit and a link to improving working lands in King County. The program is designed to support projects that contribute to the economic viability of local farmers, encourage new farmers, expand acreage in food production, improve food access, and increase demand for King County farm products. Eligible applicants include farmers, producer networks, marketing co-ops, farmers markets, businesses, schools, non-governmental organizations, tribes, and others.

KEY PARTNERS: Cascadia Cooperative Farms; Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment; Northwest Agriculture Business Center; Highline College; SnoValley Tilth; King County Agriculture Program; Snoqualmie Valley Preservation Alliance; WSU Extension; HumanLinks Foundation / 21 Acres; Seattle Tilth; Public Health Seattle and King County; Washington State Department of Agriculture; Health Care Without Harm



The Van Erem family debuted KCD's new small-scaled poultry processor, part of the new Regional Food System Program. Photo: Melissa Tatro

More work to do!

- Continue expanding partnerships with King County and municipal partners to bring more food growing to the urban landscape.
- Increase canopy cover in dense urban areas and improve the forest stands in rural King County through innovative partnerships and approaches.
- Address the need for more local food by expanding work with farmers to improve drainage and bring more land into production.

Kitsap Conservation District

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State Legislative District #23,26,35
Congressional District #6

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Clear Creek floodplain restoration planting

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Clear Creek is a major stream system in Dyes Inlet. It was historically a productive salmon stream but now the natural floodplain has been severely constrained by retail development, road culverts, and agriculture. This activity resulted in removal of streamside vegetation, channelization of the main creek, and erosion from uncontrolled stormwater.

The east and west forks have been especially manipulated, resulting in severely degraded stream function and habitat for salmon.



West fork floodplain before planting

Photo: Jenny Morgan



Newly created channel for Clear Creek west fork

Photo: Jenny Morgan

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Restoring floodplains is one of the most important things to recover salmon populations and reduce the risk of flooding downstream properties. Many partners participated in this project that has nearly a \$4 million price tag. The role of the Kitsap Conservation District (KCD) is to implement the planting on 15 of the 30 acres. The original engineers' 60 percent cost estimate for planting and labor was \$961,000. With help from KCD, and

using Plant Materials Center stock, KCD will plant the project for \$215,000, a tremendous savings of public funds. Nearly 80,000 plants will be placed by staff, Washington Conservation Corps crews, and Department of Corrections crews in the fall of 2016.

KEY PARTNERS: Kitsap County Public Works Stormwater and Roads; WA Department of Ecology; WA Department of Corrections - Mission Creek Crew; WA Conservation Corps; project neighbors; trail users; Clear Creek Trail volunteers; The Suquamish Tribe; WA Department of Fish and Wildlife; Natural Systems Design; WA Association of Conservation Districts Plant Materials Center

More work to do!

- KCD makes further use of social media as it ramps up outreach to landowners. This has been very successful to date with two Facebook sites garnering nearly 50,000 hits in the last year.
- Firewise is coming to Bainbridge Island with the help of funding from the Washington State Conservation Commission and State Legislature.
- Partnering with Kitsap cities is a new priority as negotiation continues with the cities of Bremerton and Poulsbo.

Other Accomplishments



This little guy is ready for action during a recent 'fish-out' at the Clear Creek project.

Photo: Pat Kirschbaum



Rain Garden "Diggin' Day" in progress. KCD removes an implementation 'barrier' by providing excavation of the rain garden site to the homeowner.

Photo: Kelly Stroh



Agriculture work continues to be a focus in Kitsap County with its numerous horse boarding facilities. This paddock arrangement allows for rotational turnout.

Photo: Helen Jones



Kittitas County Conservation District

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Board Chair: Mark Moore

State Legislative District #13
Congressional District #8

Other Accomplishments



KCCD's Small Project Cost-Share Program assists between four and eight landowners each year with water conservation and water quality projects.



In cooperation with KCCD, the Kittitas County Fire District #7 crew operates a roving chipper in more than a dozen communities in the county.



KCCD facilitates a Technical Work Group meeting for development of the design for removal of the last fish passage barrier on Manastash Creek.

2016 Feature Accomplishment Ellensburg Water Company at Coleman Creek intersection



Construction of the siphon occurred over the winter. The 96-inch pipe was installed so that the creek bed and fish passage could be restored.

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Assisting landowners and water purveyors with the removal of fish passage barriers and the installation of fish screens is a high priority in the Kittitas Valley. The Ellensburg Water Company (EWC) at Coleman Creek Project is one in a series with EWC to screen their irrigation diversions to keep fish out of the canal and to remove barriers to upstream migration. The project addresses safe fish passage and regulatory liability for EWC, who provides water for 10,000 acres of irrigated cropland.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD) secured funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board in 2008 to complete project designs that included replacing the concrete diversion dam and headgate with a new structure with a fish screen and a fishway for upstream passage and constructing a siphon to pass the canal under the Coleman Creek. The siphon is a 96-inch diameter pipe that allows the creek bed to be day-lighted and restored at the intersection with the canal. KCCD then spent the next five years securing the \$1 million in construction funds through five grants from four agencies. Construction was completed in May 2016.



The EWC Canal's siphon intake is in the center of the photo and Coleman Creek is flowing right to left over the newly installed siphon.

KEY PARTNERS: Ellensburg Water Company; Kittitas County Public Works; Department of Ecology; Bonneville Power Administration; Salmon Recovery Funding Board; Washington Resource Conservation and Development Council; Yakima Tributary Access Habitat Program; Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

More work to do!

- Implement three sprinkler conversion projects using Natural Resource Investments (non-shellfish) funds from the State Conservation Commission on 187 acres, benefiting both water quality and quantity.
- Remove a fish passage barrier on Manastash Creek opening up more than 20 miles of habitat for Mid-Columbia Summer Steelhead, a "threatened" species under the Endangered Species Act.
- Help three communities achieve Firewise USA status and 15 existing communities maintain Firewise USA status.



Lewis County Conservation District

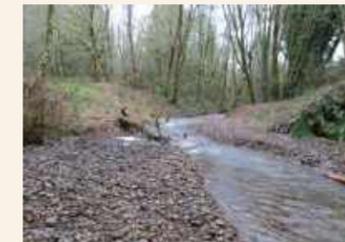
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State Legislative District #19, 20
Congressional District #3

Other Accomplishments



Fish passage barrier removal project on South Fork Olequa Creek



Fish passage correction restored 5.2 miles of stream for spawning and rearing of salmon



Installation of underground mainline for better distribution of dairy liquid manure
Photo: Nikki Atkins

2016 Feature Accomplishment Irrigation Water Management Education grant

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Irrigation efficiencies have been addressed in other areas of the state but not in the Chehalis River Basin. Summer low flows and high temperatures are problems that correspond with the primary irrigation season. The Lewis County Conservation District received grants from the Rose Foundation, Department of Ecology, and US Fish and Wildlife Service to hold educational meetings and complete irrigation plans.



Southwest Washington Fair booth
Photo: Kelly Verd

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Irrigation meetings covered how to put water rights into trust, protect water rights, irrigate in drought, use moisture meters, and use Agweather.net. Staff participated in the Southwest Washington Fair, and the Chehalis Watershed Festival to advertise the program. Three plexiglass boxes filled with flowering plants were used to show different irrigation scenarios: over watered, under watered, and correctly watered. Currently there are 19 farms that have irrigation plans and have been provided with moisture meters. Problems identified are old inefficient equipment and improper fish screens.



This farmer wants to replace old leaky pipe with an underground mainline.

KEY PARTNERS: State Conservation Commission staff, Jon Culp and Jack Myrick, are a major reason for the success of this project. Jon wrote a letter of support for the grant applications and helped with the presentations. Jack provided training for staff and was a presenter at two educational events. Troy Peters Ph.D., an associate professor at WSU, has provided technical assistance and was a workshop presenter. As a direct result of this educational effort, US Fish and Wildlife and the Rose Foundation has provided funding for a K-Line irrigation demonstration project and fish screens.

More work to do!

- Water quality and quantity: Install a K-line irrigation demonstration project and continue with irrigation water management education.
- Flood damage reduction: Planning to construct more livestock/equipment pads for flood protection on farms.
- Salmon recovery: Continue removing fish passage barriers. We also plan to install fish screens on irrigation intakes.



Lincoln County Conservation District

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State Legislative District #13
Congressional District #5

Other Accomplishments



Completed channel reconstruction and tree planting project on Rock Creek.



Four informational signs installed at Reardan Audubon Lake North Trail as part of our Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account grant.



District staff replanting juniper trees following last year's living snowfence fire.

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Soil health tour and in-class experiment for fourth-graders

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Soil health is a major concern for producers in Lincoln County and beyond. Although they may live quite close to working farms, many school-age children who live in town may not have had the opportunity to get hands-on experience seeing exactly how a farm operates. Lincoln County Conservation District wanted to provide this opportunity to help foster an interest and passion for conservation in the areas close to where they call home.



Davenport fourth grade class, producer Hal Johnson, Lincoln County Conservation District staff, and direct seed drill



In-class demonstration on the effect of soil cover on soil loss

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Davenport Elementary School fourth-graders got a unique opportunity to learn about conservation farming practices both in the classroom and in the field. Funded by the Verle Kaiser Conservation Endowment, the two-day program included a hands-on demonstration in the classroom followed by a visit to local producer Hal Johnson's field, to see direct seeding in action. Seeing equipment in use and being able to ask questions was a big highlight for students. Hal explained what he was seeding, the benefits he has seen from switching to direct seed, and why he works hard to conserve soil.

KEY PARTNERS: Washington State University; Davenport School District; Lincoln County producer Hal Johnson

More work to do!

- Firewise outreach campaign, home assessments, community recognition, and fuels reduction.
- Sage-grouse habitat roadside fuel (vegetation) breaks.
- Davenport Community Garden fundraising and renovation for waterwise gardening.

Mason Conservation District

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State Legislative District #35
Congressional District #6, 10

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Shore Friendly Mason



A marine shoreline with failing bulkhead that will be removed using Shore Friendly Mason funding.

Photo: Karin Strelloff

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Shore Friendly Mason (SFM) connects Mason County waterfront residents with the technical support and resources to make informed, cost-effective, and environmentally-friendly decisions about shoreline management. The negative ecological impact of shoreline armoring, combined with a substantial increase in local demand for site-specific technical guidance and accessible information, underlies this initiative. Funding is provided by the US EPA through the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Mason Conservation District (MCD) received 98 responses to the SFM program, completed 112 site visits, and has three bulkhead removal projects nearing permitting submission. MCD is coordinating a nearshore technical assistance capacity development training for other Puget Sound conservation districts, to be led by a geologist and nearshore ecologist. Attendees will represent Thurston, Pierce, Kitsap, Snohomish, King, San Juan Islands, and Jefferson Conservation Districts.

KEY PARTNERS: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (US Environmental Protection Agency - funding); Qwg Applied Geology; King Conservation District; Snohomish Conservation District; Greenbelt Consulting; International Society of Arborists, WA Chapter; WSU Extension Mason County; Marine Ecological Consulting Services, LLC



Other Accomplishments



Waste storage structure built with State Conservation Commission Shellfish Grant funding. This structure is located above Oakland Bay and will protect important shellfish areas.

Photo: Katrinka Hibler



Phase 2 of the Skokomish South Fork Large Woody Debris installation.

Photo: Rodney Tennison

More work to do!

- Shore Friendly Mason, Phase 2: Support capacity development for Mason, Pierce, and Thurston Conservation District staff to provide shoreline assistance in South Puget Sound; continue Mason's technical assistance program for marine shoreline landowners; complete bulkhead removal and shoreline restoration projects.
- South Fork of the Skokomish River Large Woody Debris installation and other projects funded through the Army Corps of Engineers.



North Yakima Conservation District

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2016 Feature Accomplishment Lust and Stevenson Farms water quality project on Cowiche Creek

Other Accomplishments



Aerial view of a portion of the Ahtanum Creek Riparian Enhancement Project area, which is part of the Yakama Nation RCPP-funded Floodplain Project.

Photo: Mike Tobin



State Conservation Commission-funded riparian fencing and planting project with Gus Olson on Cowiche Creek.

Photo: Brian Schmidt



Post Assisted Willow Structures (PAWS) functioning during high flows on Wenas Creek. Note how the series of in-stream structures deflect high water.

Photo: Brian Schmidt



Typical project riparian buffer area along Cowiche Creek. Note the lack of shading on the southside of the stream.

Photo: Mike Tobin

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Cowiche Creek is impacted by water quality issues related to high water temperatures, bacteria, and sedimentation. Cowiche Creek is also a key watershed for salmon recovery in the Yakima River Basin. This water quality project will correct the temperature, bacteria, and sedimentation problems associated with this stream reach and is part of a strategic process to complement other on-going water quality and salmon recovery projects that have been implemented by the North Yakima Conservation District (NYCD) within the Cowiche Watershed.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

The project encompasses 3,402 feet of stream and 715 feet of a spring feeding the creek. NYCD and landowners evaluated the natural resource needs and land use practices and decided that re-creating and enhancing the riparian buffers, fencing the buffers, and constructing off-stream watering facilities would be the best alternatives to implement. The landowner and NYCD partnership also recognized that the project would enhance previously implemented fish passage and in-stream flow enhancement projects on Cowiche Creek. Piecing these actions together, NYCD is addressing the overall natural resource needs of the watershed.

KEY PARTNERS: Washington State Department of Ecology; Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson; Lust Family Farms



NYCD's Washington Conservation Corp Crew planting riparian plants along buffered area of Project. Note fencing also constructed by the Washington Conservation Corps crew.

Photo: Mike Tobin

More work to do!

- Continue to implement and expand the North Yakima Conservation District's successful Firewise Program to other needed areas.
- Implement our Farmland Preservation Program and partner with the Washington State Conservation Commission's Office of Farmland Preservation.
- Begin looking at implementation strategies that will complement the Yakima County Voluntary Stewardship Plan in high priority watersheds.

Okanogan Conservation District

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Board Chair: Ivan Oberg



State Legislative District #7, 12
Congressional District #4

2016 Feature Accomplishment 2015 Okanogan County fires



Eric Choker, Spokane Conservation District Soil Scientist, conducting a field test for soil burn severity after the 2015 Okanogan Complex Fires.

Photo: Andrew Phay

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Following the single largest fire in state history in 2014, Okanogan County was besieged by multiple large fires in 2015. In two years, over 750,000 acres have burned in Okanogan County. Approximately 2,000 miles of livestock fencing have been lost, dozens of irrigators have lost portions of irrigation systems, thousands of acres of steep slopes risk catastrophic erosion, and flash flooding on hydrophobic soils threatens dozens of homes and public infrastructure.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS The Okanogan Conservation District provided leadership assisting private landowners with technical assistance for post-fire risks, recovery guidelines and information, and providing cost-share funds for reseeding highly erosive areas, livestock fencing repair, and irrigation system repairs. The district led recovery with a state and private

lands interagency Burned Area Emergency Recovery evaluation, distributed \$500,000 in cost-share to livestock producers for emergency feed, and are currently working to distribute more than \$1 million in cost-share for fence repair and replacement, weed control, irrigation system repairs, re-seeding, and more.

KEY PARTNERS: Washington State Conservation Commission; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; USDA Farm Service Agency; USDA Forest Service; USDI Bureau of Land Management; Colville Confederated Tribes; Okanogan Co. Emergency Management; Colville Reservation Conservation District; Methow Conservancy; Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation; Okanogan Co. Long Term Recovery Group



Okanogan Conservation District staff, Zach Day, Terri Williams, and Amy Martin surveying burned area damage.

Other Accomplishments



Firewise-ready home. The district conducted several dozen property assessments for landowners and are continuing this important program. Photo: Kirsten Cook



The district is working with landowners from the Tunk Watershed to develop conservation plans focused on improving wildlife habitat.



NRCs Plant Material Center's Allen Casey works with conservation district soil health intern Stacie Powers to collect data for our soil health cover crop project. Photo: Leslie Michel

More work to do!

- The Okanogan Conservation District will continue to focus much of its energy on helping with wildfire recovery efforts. Additionally, we will work on water quality work that ranges from reducing soil erosion to reducing agricultural based impacts. The district will continue to implement programs to prepare landowners, their properties, and businesses with disaster preparedness.



Pacific Conservation District

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State Legislative District #19
Congressional District #3

Other Accomplishments



The first of three phases of the Naselle River restoration project, restoring 1.2 miles of the Naselle main stem. This site was a beginning lynch pin.



Barber Creek Family Forest Fish Passage Program correction that improved access to 1.14 miles of habitat for chum, coho, steelhead, and searun cutthroat.



PCD staff inspect new chemigation units for a cranberry producer.

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Johnson culvert replacement project

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

There were four fish passage barriers on this property, and the condition of the riparian corridor along the stream was very poor. Water quality was a concern for Pacific Conservation District (PCD) and the landowner. This project benefited coho, chum, steelhead, and cutthroat trout by removing a barrier, improving water quality, and providing a respite area for salmon stocks continuing up the Naselle River or the new passable stream.



Pre-construction: Conditions of old culvert created a barrier to fish



After construction: New culvert meets criteria for fish passage

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

The Johnson Culvert project is located on a tributary that flows into the Naselle River in Pacific County. This project restored fish passage through four barriers located on the tributary stream by replacing two of the barriers with two large arched culverts and removed the two other barriers leaving open channels. PCD restored the outflow of the tributary into its natural channel, planted riparian vegetation, added large woody debris, and placed livestock exclusion fencing outside riparian plantings. The PCD completed a farm plan for the landowner and will work on more fencing and nutrient management projects in the future.

KEY PARTNERS: Washington State Recreation Conservation Office/Salmon Recovery Funding Board; Willapa Bay Water Resource Inventory Area #24; Washington State Conservation Commission

More work to do!

- Completion of the Rue Creek Washington Coastal Restoration Initiative project, opening up 16.9 square miles of salmon habitat.
- Correcting and improving the tow of the Grayland Drainage Ditch for water quality, residential home, and cranberry bog protection.
- Assisting with the creation of the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP).

Palouse Conservation District

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State Legislative District #9
Congressional District #5

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Palouse watershed Regional Conservation Partnership Program

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Resource challenges within the Palouse watershed include loss of native wildlife habitat, poor soil health, and water quality degraded by high temperatures, nutrients, and sediments. These issues are a concern for local wildlife and aquatic species as well as listed anadromous fish species of the Snake River. The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) was formed to work across the watershed to more effectively address these issues, and provide landowners with multiple funding options to implement conservation practices.



Monitoring team evaluates changes in water quality, soil health, and wildlife habitat associated with voluntary conservation practices



Palouse watershed producers meet with RCPP conservation planners to discuss implementation of conservation tillage and riparian buffers

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS In the first year, the RCPP has implemented 7,500 acres of direct seed/conservation tillage and over 150 acres of riparian buffers. We maintained over 16 riparian buffers and wetlands, and implemented 22 acres of conservation easement protecting Palouse prairie and the federally threatened Spalding's catchfly. We also helped 14 producers become "Farmed Smart" certified, covering approximately 48,000 acres and 20 miles of stream protection.

Partners have collectively contributed over \$2 million in the Palouse watershed to improve soil health, water quality, and habitat during year one of RCPP.

KEY PARTNERS: Palouse Rock Lake, Whitman, Pine Creek, Lincoln, Adams, and Spokane Conservation Districts; Latah Soil and Water Conservation District; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Washington State Conservation Commission; Dept of Ecology; Palouse Land Trust; Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Assn.; Dept of Fish and Wildlife; Idaho Dept of Fish and Wildlife; WSU; University of Idaho; Nez Perce Tribe; Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute

More work to do!

- Assist growers who are sustainably producing crops while protecting water and air quality, building soil health, and promoting wildlife habitat to become "Farmed Smart" certified.
- Initiate the Palouse Watershed Enhanced Riparian Buffer Program by providing landowner-identified, watershed-specific incentives designed to maximize voluntary participation and resource benefits.
- Implement listed species recovery projects.

Other Accomplishments



Relocation of this livestock facility uphill and out of the riparian area will improve the landowner's operation while improving water quality.



Establishing trees and shrubs along the South Fork Palouse River helps this landowner achieve wildlife goals while improving water quality and habitat.



Volunteers work with private landowners to install native plants to restore upland habitat and create wildlife corridors.



Palouse Rock Lake Conservation District

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State Legislative District #9
Congressional District #5

Other Accomplishments



Planting along Palouse River between St. John and Endicott. A total of 12,000 plants were planted along watersheds in 2016.



State Representative Mary Dye capturing the crowd from a drill at the Direct Seed Demonstration hosted by Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District.



A drill in action at the PRLCD Direct Seed Demonstration. For a bird's eye view of the drill demonstration, see the drone videos at www.prlcd.org

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Improving water quality in Kamiak Creek watershed

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Soil erosion is the highest resource concern in the Palouse Rock Lake Conservation District (PRLCD). Loss of productive soil decreases farm income, negatively impacts water quality, and decreases wildlife habitat. Reduction of erosion through increased utilization of direct seed systems and creek buffers will dramatically reduce soil erosion and improve water quality. Live monitoring of Kamiak Creek will quantify water quality improvements as a result of the implementation of best management practices.



Direct Seed field being harvested.
Photo: James Schierman



Aerial drone image of Kamiak Creek. View video footage from this and other flights: www.prlcd.org
Photo: James Schierman

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Through the Palouse Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and with additional funding from the Department of Ecology and State Conservation Commission, PRLCD partnered with nine producers who are direct seeding 5,068 acres of the 12,185-acre Kamiak Watershed to improve water quality in Kamiak Creek. This partnership provides additional cost-share incentives for producers, enhanced wildlife habitat, and cleaner conditions for salmon spawning downstream. It also limits fertilizers and herbicides from entering the stream because these practices decrease and filter soil erosion. An influx of producers implemented direct seed practices with more expected to join soon.

KEY PARTNERS: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association; Kamiak Watershed Producers; Lincoln County Conservation District; Washington State Conservation Commission; Washington State Department of Ecology

More work to do!

- Install 3.36 miles of fence and 12,400 plants along Goose Creek.
- Plant over 50,000 plants for Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) cost-shares.
- Increase direct seeded acres from 45 percent to 70 percent of the cropland acres.
- Increase acres of riparian buffer strips from 15 percent to 40 percent of eligible riparian acres.
- Enhance off-site watering facilities for livestock away from the streams and rivers.



Pend Oreille Conservation District

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State Legislative District #7
Congressional District #5

Other Accomplishments

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Wetland restoration project - Boy Scouts of America



Planting list: Woods Rose, Coyote Willow, Red Osier Dogwood, Snowberry, Thimbleberry, Quaken Aspen, Chokecherry, Blue Elder Berry, and Douglas Spirea

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Before developing a wetland restoration plan, the Boy Scouts of America faced the challenge of eliminating just over 16 acres of noxious weeds from the wetlands that border Diamond Lake. Invasive species pose a concern in that they often outcompete native species, eliminating habitat and vegetation for local wildlife. Additionally, when poorly managed, noxious weeds have negative impacts on local agriculture as invasive species proliferate and make their way into crops.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

The Pend Oreille Conservation District (POCD) developed a restoration plan with long-term natural resource goals in mind. To re-establish native vegetation, POCD cost-shared on the installation of 6,280 native trees and shrubs. Once these native species are established, the plantings will provide long-term natural resource solutions by outcompeting the invasive weeds for sunlight and other resources. Future work includes monitoring the planting to identify the most "successful" species. Information gained through monitoring will be used in the development of future planting and maintenance plans.



Osprey overlooking the Boy Scout's planting from a raptor pole.
Photo: David Marcell

KEY PARTNERS: The Boy Scouts of America; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Wildwood Forestry (Newport, WA)

- Developed riparian restoration plans for two landowners in the Little Spokane River Watershed. POCD will implement these projects with Department of Ecology centennial funds later in the year.
- Received State Conservation Commission Natural Resource Investments (non-shellfish) funds to install 2,500 feet of livestock exclusion fencing and 750 native plants.
- Re-established partnership with local utility district to provide technical assistance on riparian planting projects associated with utility district mitigation contracts.

More work to do!

- Hire a part-time Office Assistant/Outreach Coordinator.
- Generate a list of landowners interested in free Firewise home assessments by hosting Firewise workshops and attending local homeowner association meetings.
- Increase district marketing efforts by developing press releases, updating the POCD website, and re-establishing a presence on social media.



Pierce Conservation District

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State Legislative District #2,25,26,27,28,29,31
Congressional District #6,8,9,10

Other Accomplishments



With support from a USDA grant, the district led a Pierce County Farmers Market Promotional Program, helping promote 11 Pierce County markets.



The district engaged 1,549 people in our educational workshops for farm, habitat, and water quality.



Last year our Harvest Pierce County program donated over 70,000 pounds of fresh, locally grown food to those in need.

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Meeker Creek riparian and stream restoration project

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Meeker Creek did not meet water quality standards for temperature or dissolved oxygen and had elevated levels of sediment. Pierce Conservation District partnered with the City of Puyallup to support requirements imposed by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Permit and to restore a vital salmon-bearing stream. The restoration project and riparian planting contributed to an increase in dissolved oxygen levels in the creek, reduced in-stream temperature through riparian cover, and restored salmon spawning and refuge habitat.



Meeker Creek before restoration planting but after the meanders had been installed



Meeker Creek today - a thriving habitat for salmon and other wildlife

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

The project, located in the City of Puyallup, just prior to the confluence of Meeker and Clarks Creeks, removed 1,000 linear feet of the 4,385-foot stream length from a trapezoidal ditch and placed it in a natural, meandering stream channel. Pierce Conservation District then led a series of five volunteer planting events, leveraging the engagement of hundreds of volunteers to install almost 10,000 trees and shrubs. This project restored over 100,000 square feet of riparian area while creating floodplain storage. In the fall of 2015, with restoration efforts not yet complete, volunteers got to witness salmon return to spawn in the creek!

KEY PARTNERS: City of Puyallup; Forterra; dedicated volunteers from across Pierce County

More work to do!

- Rural Renewable Energy Initiative: Help farmers and rural business owners save money with renewable energy and energy efficiency upgrades.
- Green Shorelines Program: Work to establish a program to help coastal property owners install best management practices.
- Diversity outreach: Focus efforts on breaking down language barriers and reaching a broader audience that's more in-line with Pierce County demographics.

Pine Creek Conservation District

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State Legislative District #9
Congressional District #5

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Technology aids in rapid planning for local landowners

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Very few general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts were renewed in Pine Creek Conservation District (PCCD) during the most recent federal general CRP signup. This potentially could result in thousands of acres of highly erodible and environmentally sensitive land being returned to production. Many landowners contacted PCCD asking for assistance and options for farming this land again. In addition to those who contacted the PCCD, we reached out to other landowners whose CRP contract was not renewed and offered them assistance also.



An existing filter strip protecting water quality

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Using simple Geographic Information System (GIS) commands of buffering, intersection, drawing, and overlays, the district was able to rapidly develop scenarios where some of the most environmentally sensitive land on the expiring contracts could be enrolled in the continuous CRP practices of filter strips and grass buffers. We delivered maps illustrating the eligible land, acre amounts, and potential land rental payments from the USDA Farm Service Agency. We developed two scenarios for each field, one with the maximum allowed acres and the other showing the minimum amount of acres required to enter the program. We then presented the information to the landowners.



An existing general CRP field at risk of not being protected by a grass cover crop in the future

KEY PARTNERS: USDA Farm Service Agency; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Landowners

Other Accomplishments

- Promoted and provided technical assistance to landowners for direct seeding.
- Participated in local land judging and Envirothon for local youth.
- Contacted and presented scenarios to landowners whose land may be eligible for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).
- Worked with other conservation districts on the new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP).
- Provided GIS maps and on-the-ground GPS surveys to local landowners.

More work to do!

- Work with landowners to develop new best management practice (BMP) cost-share proposals.
- Continue to improve water quality through the promotion and implementation of more direct seeded acres, grass buffer areas, and filter strips.
- Continue to build partnerships with other districts and entities.



Pomeroy Conservation District

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State Legislative District #9
Congressional District #5

Other Accomplishments

- The Pomeroy Conservation District was identified as the lead for the Garfield County Voluntary Stewardship Program by the Garfield County Commissioners. Our district has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Palouse Conservation District for the services of Brad Johnson to assist in the writing of a county plan to address critical areas in the county and to maintain the viability of agriculture.
- Pomeroy Conservation District is working with other conservation districts in the southeast area to demonstrate the rainfall simulator at county fairs, schools, agriculture conferences, and other groups that are interested in residue management.

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Alpowa and Pataha Creeks instream restoration projects



One of 202 post-assisted log jams placed in Alpowa Creek for steelhead habitat
Photo: Brad Johnson

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

The Alpowa and Pataha Creek watersheds have been implementing upland and riparian best management practices through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and other grants for decades. However, Alpowa Creek lacked pool habitat and instream woody material for summer steelhead. The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife stated that improving instream habitat will allow for better juvenile survival during freshwater life stage. Pataha Creek has low flows and high stream temperatures, which jeopardizes rearing habitat for summer steelhead.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

With funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Pomeroy Conservation District worked with the Asotin County Public Utilities Department and Palouse Conservation District to install 202 post-assisted log structures for instream habitat in the Alpowa for steelhead. With funding from the Department of Ecology, over 1,560 feet of streambank protection using soft bio-engineering with trees was completed. In the Pataha Creek Watershed, eight beaver dam analogues were constructed to test the effectiveness of these structures at increasing habitat diversity, reducing incision, and reconnecting floodplain habitat in the lower reaches. This will restore stream processes promoted by beavers.



Aerial view of one of eight beaver dam analogues on lower Pataha Creek as test sites
Photo credit: Duane Bartels

KEY PARTNERS: Palouse Conservation District; Asotin County Public Utility District; Salmon Recovery Funding Board; US Forest Service - Pomeroy Ranger District; Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife; Eco Logical Research; Washington Conservation Corps; Archer Farms; Sam Ledgerwood

More work to do!

- Continue to work with producers to implement additional acres of direct seeding and reduced tillage.
- Continue to construct beaver dam analogues, post-assisted log structures, and stream bank stabilization structures on streams to demonstrate the benefits of beaver dam analogues and other structures in increasing aggradation, reducing sediment and erosion, and increasing habitat diversity, and their cost-effectiveness of improving water quality.



San Juan Islands Conservation District

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State Legislative District #40
Congressional District #2

Other Accomplishments



"We're realizing our dream and building our dairy!" Bart and Stephanie Fowler with contractors at Fowler's Dairy, Lopez Island
Photo: Bruce Gregory



Multi use structure: winter feeding, heavy use area, and compost facility at Willis Woodside Farm, Orcas Island.
Photo: Bruce Gregory



Kathy Morris and Bruce Gregory checking out a water catchment system at West Beach Farm, Orcas Island. Photo: Kelsey Green

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Restoring a watershed



Winter 2016 flooding on Bailer Hill Road and adjacent False Bay Creek Farm

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

False Bay Watershed is the largest basin on San Juan Island. The historic wetlands and salmon bearing streams, including False Bay Creek, have been significantly altered for agricultural use and residential development over the past 100 years. The primary issues of concern for fish, agriculture, roads, and residential use is loss of habitat function and modification to the hydrologic flow (flooding in the winter and dry stream beds in the summer).

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

San Juan Islands Conservation District completed the first riparian restoration project and is gathering data to develop a watershed model. The model will assist us in developing a clear plan of action to restore hydrologic flow and habitat function, characterize stream flows and water rights, determine hydrologic needs, and identify potential restoration and infrastructure projects. Long-term restoration and infrastructure goals include: improving instream and riparian zone conditions; restoring salmonid habitat; reducing winter flooding; and improving irrigation and livestock watering infrastructure to address seasonal drought.



Riparian restoration project with exclusion fencing, planting, and tree tube protection
Photo: Bruce Gregory

KEY PARTNERS: Department of Ecology; San Juan Preservation Trust; San Juan County Public Works; San Juan County Land Bank; San Juan County Water Resources Management Committee; Washington Water Trust; Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; University of Washington Friday Harbor Labs

More work to do!

- Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP): We are working with the county and the VSP Work Group to complete the VSP work plan.
- False Bay Watershed Hydrologic Model: Data collection is underway, and we anticipate completion of the watershed model.
- Firewise: We will provide cost-share funding to forest landowners to improve forest health and reduce fire risk. We also will conduct community outreach to increase Firewise awareness.



Skagit Conservation District

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2016 Feature Accomplishment Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



Before photo: The very first CREP project in Skagit County was installed in the Childs Creek Watershed 16 years ago

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

According to the 2016 State of Our Watersheds report by the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, we are losing salmon habitat faster than we are creating it. In Skagit County, we are reversing that trend. The Skagit Conservation District uses CREP to restore riparian forest buffers (streamside vegetation) adjacent to salmon-bearing streams on agricultural land. In turn for enrolling

in CREP, landowners are paid an annual rental rate for the amount of acres enrolled. The district has been providing technical assistance and program guidance for CREP in Skagit County since 2000. Although the program has been quite successful in Skagit County, it can be a difficult decision for producers to take farmland out of production when signing a 10-15 year contract. As an incentive to enroll in the program, CREP offers to pay the producer twice the soil rental rate that they might receive if they were to rent the land to a different producer.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Over the past 16 years, the Skagit Conservation District has assisted in implementing 98 CREP projects, 684 acres of buffer (vegetation), 43 miles of stream bank treated, and 81,120 feet of fencing. This includes planting 312,068 trees and shrubs.

KEY PARTNERS: Washington State Conservation Commission; USDA Farm Service Agency; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service



Photo after 15 years: A well-established buffer, and the cooperator has re-enrolled in CREP for another 15-year contract

Other Accomplishments



Installation of a livestock solar water pump system.



Skagit Watershed Masters field day at Padilla Bay. 510 participants have graduated from the program and have volunteered over 46,700 hours.



NRCs Soils Station at the annual Skagit Conservation Youth Tour. Between 750 and 800 students attend each year.

More work to do!

- Continue with the Samish/Padilla Bay Pollution Identification and Correction program to increase participation and accelerate implementation of best management practices (BMPs) to protect shellfish resources.
- Implement Firewise projects in Skagit County.
- Continue work to protect and enhance natural resources through the development of farm plans and implementation of BMPs.
- Increase the number of CREP participants.



Snohomish Conservation District

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2016 Feature Accomplishment Stillaguamish projects keep farms sustainable and the river clean

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Snohomish Conservation District completed projects to improve management of nutrients with four dairies, four horse farms, and a composting facility in the Stillaguamish watershed to prevent pollution. The area — home to dairies, farms, poultry facilities, livestock processing, and compost businesses — is focused on proactive projects. The district implemented two bedding recovery systems as one way to improve nutrient management in the watershed. An anaerobic digester also is being considered, which would turn the organic waste from the animals into sustainable, renewable power while reducing the environmental impact.



Before: Large manure and bedding pile from a stable is currently being moved to a commercial compost facility to alleviate run-off



After: Concrete waste holding structure has curbs to prevent run-off and will allow the stable to house bins for manure holding until haul-off.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

The district worked with farmers to better manage nutrient loading in the watershed. For dairies, this meant reducing the amount of input/costs (e.g. sawdust) to the dairy by reusing bedding on-site and increasing liquid storage capacity. This system increases options for nutrient management and reduces potential surface water contamination by improving holding capacity, which can result in more timely application on cropland. Both equine and dairy facilities should see increased waste storage capacity. Future plans include an anaerobic digester, continued nutrient recovery technology, and on-farm technical support.

KEY PARTNERS: Washington State Department of Health; Washington State Department of Ecology; Snohomish Co. Surface Water Management; Washington State Department of Agriculture; Stillaguamish River Clean Water District Advisory Board; City of Stanwood; Stillaguamish Tribe; Stillaguamish Flood Control District; Snohomish Health District

More work to do!

- Actively engage the natural resources community (agriculture, fisheries, and forestry) in the conversations and activities surrounding salmon and Puget Sound recovery.
- Implement the Regional Conservation Partnership Program.
- Implement and promote the creation of a Puget Sound Stormwater Action Team, the Better Ground Initiative, and Sound Horsekeeping Program Puget Sound-wide.

Other Accomplishments



2016 Plant Sale shoppers had the option to donate money for schoolyard projects. Three schools planted 194 plants for restoration and beautification.



The district worked with Whatcom Conservation District to remove pavement at Yeager's Sporting Goods, which will become a rain garden that filters stormwater and provides habitat.



253 students spent two days planting 500 trees, placing 1,200 tree protectors, and learning about water quality at Aldergrove Meadows.



South Douglas Conservation District

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State Legislative District #12
Congressional District #4

Other Accomplishments

- Through a Bureau of Land Management grant, we were able to provide each fire district in the county with two GPS units for use during fire emergencies. These units will help communications between fire personnel and help map fire locations.
- Provided cost-share to a young orchardist converting from impact to micro sprinklers.
- Continued to develop the Firewise program in Douglas County through education and assessments.
- Established a website with current information and news of the district.

2016 Feature Accomplishment Range fencing replacement

RESOURCE CHALLENGE After a summer wildfire destroyed all the fencing and habitat on their property, a local landowner contacted South Douglas Conservation District for help designing and implementing recovery projects.

A landowner needed to install fences before their cows could be put back on the range. Fencing would allow them to manage livestock foraging, giving plants time to re-establish and become strong enough to sustain livestock once again in the spring. However, the fire that destroyed the landowner's rangeland was started by a neighbor's combine, and insurance would not pay to replace the fencing.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS South Douglas Conservation District used our cost-share program to help the landowner cover 75 percent of the fire recovery project costs. The landowner followed best management practices set by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and was able to replace the fencing, meeting standards higher than the original structure. Defining the boundaries of the rangeland will help the rancher manage his range to maximize benefit to both the cattle and habitat.

KEY PARTNERS: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service



Before: Habitat and fencing is destroyed by fire, leaving the landowner with a great loss and expense



After: With the fencing replaced, the landowner has management tools to help rangeland and habitat recover

More work to do!

- Implement a Firewise program for Douglas County and increase awareness of fire risks and prevention.
- Create a cost-share program for cooperators implementing best management practices.
- Promote natural resource conservation through education for all citizens, urban and rural.



South Yakima Conservation District

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State Legislative District #14, 15
Congressional District #4

Other Accomplishments

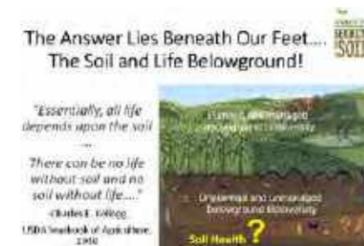
2016 Feature Accomplishment Voluntary manure application workshop

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Throughout history, agriculture producers have used manure as a fertilizer to grow crops. When managed improperly manure may cause degradation to water quality. Today, agriculture producers are under increased scrutiny of land application of manure. Recently, the Lower Yakima River Valley was designated as a groundwater management area within the boundaries of the South Yakima Conservation District (SYCD). With new regulations and requirements, applying the right best management practices for environmentally sound use of manure is a must.



Dairy and agricultural producers listen as experts describe best management practices, rules and regulations, and required records to protect water quality.

Photo: Steve George



Workshop presentations included: soil health, irrigation water management, soil moisture monitoring, nutrient management, and soil testing.

Photo: NRCS

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS SYCD partnered with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide a voluntary four-hour manure management workshop for Yakima Valley dairy producers, farmers, farm managers, and local agriculture consultants to learn necessary tools to implement best management practices that protect surface and groundwater. In Yakima County, 28,878 dairy acres, as reflected in soil test levels, reduced from 11.9 percent needing attention in 2014 to 6.6 percent in need of attention in 2016. SYCD will continue to work with all dairies and agriculture producers and assist with nutrient management training, irrigation water management, on-site field work, and soil monitoring as new technology evolves.

KEY PARTNERS: Washington State Department of Agriculture; Washington State Conservation Commission; President-Organix, Inc.; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services; Northwest Agricultural Consultant Labs

More work to do!

- Participate in the Voluntary Stewardship Program to enhance sustainable agricultural while protecting critical areas.
- Conduct educational workshops for dairies and local growers focusing on nutrient and irrigation water management.
- Increase funds for technical and financial assistance to apply best management practices to improve water quality.
- Remain a member of the Groundwater Advisory Committee to identify solutions to groundwater contamination.



SYCD hosted a tour for state partners that showcased the diverse landscapes and land uses of the area.



State Conservation Commission funding was used to convert 19 acres of flood irrigated pasture. This lush pasture is home to 26 grazing beef cows.



2,500 students participated in hands-on activities through the Water on Wheels, Wheat Week, and Salmon in the Classroom education programs.

Photos: South Yakima Conservation District



Spokane Conservation District

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(509) 535-7274 | info@sccd.org | www.sccd.org
Board Chair: Jerry Scheele

State Legislative District #3,4,6,7,9
Congressional District #5

Other Accomplishments



We are providing long-term pasture solutions to small acreage landowners with our new custom spray, direct seed, and mow operation.



Vets on the Farm program is proud to have a learning farm just south of Spokane to host educational events and provide practical experience for interns.



We will install 9-1-1 official address signs as part of Firewise Homesite Assessments. This makes properties safer for firefighters to find.

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Farmed Smart provides certainty for farmers and Ecology

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Regulating producers to take land out of production without compensation for the benefit of clean water has been a point of contention in farm communities of eastern Washington for years. Conservation district programs are voluntary, but potential cooperators want a guarantee that their investment in conservation will be honored by regulators. Spokane Conservation District worked with Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association to create and maintain a program that fosters trust, certainty, and results to all parties.



Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association President Douglas Poole and Department of Ecology Director Maia Bellon sign the Farmed Smart agreement.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Farmed Smart certified 14 farms, and over 35 more are awaiting certification. This represents 110,000 acres of cropland. The certification evaluates producers on how their practices help protect and improve water, air, soil health and quality, economic viability, wildlife habitat, and energy conservation. Certified farms receive a letter of Environmental Compliance from the Department of Ecology stating that they meet water quality standards. Farmed Smart has Spokane Conservation District (SCD) staff members on contract to perform third party certifications. Farmed Smart labeling also allows consumers to choose food products that are made with sustainable Farmed Smart ingredients.

KEY PARTNERS: Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association; Washington Department of Ecology; Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District; Foster Creek Conservation District; Washington State University; producers from eastern Washington

More work to do!

- Lead the Voluntary Stewardship Program to develop a plan to enhance the viability of agriculture and protect critical areas in our county.
- Implement new \$47,000 grant to build an urban agricultural network and increase conservation in urban agriculture.
- Implement 120,000 acres of conservation tillage and the innovative commodity buffer that compensates producers for the crop value in a buffer in the Spokane River Watershed Regional Conservation Partnership Program.



Stevens County Conservation District

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(509) 685-0937 x3 | SCCD@co.stevens.wa.us | www.co.stevens.wa.us/cons_district
Board Chair: Andy Kroiss

State Legislative District #7
Congressional District #5

2016 Feature Accomplishment

County wildfire preparedness



RESOURCE CHALLENGE

2015 was the worst wildfire year in the recent history of Stevens County. Many lessons were learned on how to help landowners be prepared, reduce the impacts, and speed up the restoration time when dealing with the natural resources. Everyone wanted to help, but it was soon evident that there was a lot of overlap and some missed areas to help landowners.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

The Stevens County Conservation District worked with Stevens County Emergency Management Director and Stevens County Washington State University Extension to develop and present a series of workshops to help the landowners of Stevens County be better prepared in the event of wildfire or other common natural disasters. Eight community workshops were held throughout the county in February 2016 to explain the different roles of the local agencies and answer questions. 257 local citizens and landowners attended the workshops. Many got information for their neighbors and followed up with questions later.

KEY PARTNERS:

Stevens County Commissioners; eight fire districts; two city fire departments; Department of Natural Resources; Stevens County Sheriff; Red Cross; The North East Washington Incident Command Center



Carpenter Road fire heat split the rock

Other Accomplishments



"BioBlitz-ing": getting youth outdoors to discover and explore nature with trained "ologists" on hand to answer questions they come up with.



Eight months after the fire there are signs of life but a lot more work is needed to make the land healthy and productive again.



Crew planting 13,000 ponderosa pines on steep slope overlooking Lake Spokane.

More work to do!

- Assist landowners with wildfire rehabilitation of their properties.
- Work with other county and regional natural resource agencies in natural disaster preparedness and be able to provide better and quicker assistance to landowners.
- Participate in the Voluntary Stewardship Program to develop the county plan and assist individuals with stewardship plans to protect critical areas while fully utilizing their property.



Thurston Conservation District

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Board Chair: Eric Johnson

State Legislative District #2,20,22,35
Congressional District #3,10

Other Accomplishments



A 100-foot section of riparian buffer fence installed on a small farm along McLane Creek in the Eld Inlet Watershed.
Photo: Robin Buckingham



South Sound GREEN students engage in water quality testing, plankton sampling, GPS/radiotelemetry, and adaptation assessments of marine plants and animals. Photo: Kathleen Whalen



The South Sound GREEN program coordinated more than 15 partner agencies and 40 volunteers to bring over 1,000 youth to the beaches of Puget Sound.
Photo: Stephanie Bishop

2016 Feature Accomplishment Skookumchuck River restoration

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Located along a half mile of the Skookumchuck River, this property offers critical habitat value for wildlife. Since purchasing the land, landowners Geoff and Lorna Mueller have been working to improve wildlife value. By participating in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), they elected to install native trees and shrubs along the river bank to improve habitat conditions for fish, birds, small mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. This native plant buffer will improve habitat and water quality throughout the watershed.



CREP planting along the Skookumchuck River in Thurston County
Photo: Sarah Moorehead



Landowner Geoff Mueller and CREP Coordinator Kathleen Berger discuss plant health and maintenance
Photo: Sarah Moorehead

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

To meet landowner needs and increase salmon habitat, Thurston Conservation District installed a native buffer through CREP at the maximum width of 180 feet, covering 2,362 linear feet of the Skookumchuck River! 3,700 trees and shrubs, covering 9.2 acres on both sides of the river were planted on the Mueller's property. Over the next several decades, this planting will grow into a thick, diverse riparian buffer that will provide food, shelter, water and

space for wildlife. This buffer will reduce surface run-off into the river and help stabilize the streambanks to reduce erosion.

KEY PARTNERS: Geoff and Lorna Mueller - Skookumchuck River Landowners; Nikki Atkins - Lewis County Conservation District

More work to do!

- Develop site-specific, incentive-based Voluntary Stewardship Program plans for protecting critical areas on agricultural lands.
- Support new and beginning farmers, along with the transition of farmland from retiring farmers to the next generation, through operation of the South Sound FarmLink.
- Collaborate with landowners and stakeholders in the Chehalis River Basin to reduce flooding and improve salmon habitat.

Underwood Conservation District

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Board Chair: Paul Newell



State Legislative District #14
Congressional District #3

2016 Feature Accomplishment Wind River tributary fish passage project

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

A small tributary to the Wind River had two culverts under Cannavina Road and the Wind River Highway that posed barriers to fish passage. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has designated the Wind River watershed as a wild steelhead gene bank, and even small seasonal tributaries are important for fish spawning, rearing, and refuge from high flows or warm stream temperatures on the mainstem of the Wind River. More than two miles of fish habitat are available upstream of the culverts.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

The Wind River watershed is valuable for multiple human uses, such as fishing and boating, and also as habitat for many species, including salmon and steelhead. One important fish in the watershed is the wild native steelhead. The Wind River and its tributary streams provide important habitat for steelhead fish returning from the ocean to spawn new generations.

Complete replacement of these road culverts was cost-prohibitive. To correct the barriers most cost-effectively, the streambed immediately downstream of both road crossings was built up in elevation, which backwatered the culverts, slowing and deepening flows and enabling fish passage.



Looking at upper (left) and lower (right) culverts and constructed riffles designed to provide fish passage at county road crossing. Photos: Tova Tillinghast

KEY PARTNERS:

Skamania County Public Works; Inter-Fluve, Inc.; Tenneson Engineering Corporation; Kysar & Koistinen, Inc.; Bonneville Power Administration's Fish and Wildlife Division; US Fish and Wildlife Service National Fish Passage Program; Clark-Skamania Flyfishers; private landowners

Other Accomplishments

- Provided ongoing free mobile chipper service to more than 150 homeowners improving defensible space.
- Provided cost-share for conservation practices and Firewise projects, helping landowners implement best management practices as well as reduce their risk to wildfire.
- Completed design and permitting for Mill Creek fish passage project, to be constructed summer 2016, in the White Salmon River basin.
- Conducted successful Annual Native Plant Sale, using online sales platform.
- Carried out successful long range planning public meetings and 75th anniversary events throughout the district.

More work to do!

- Successfully complete construction of Mill Creek fish passage project.
- Continue to plan and implement livestock management projects, water quality improvements, and watershed restoration work with cooperating landowners throughout the district.
- Pursue funding for and provide educational opportunities and technical assistance for livestock, forest, horticulture, and natural resource management.



Wahkiakum Conservation District

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Board Chair: Joe Florek, Jr.

State Legislative District #19
Congressional District #3

Other Accomplishments

- Completed the second year of knotweed treatment in the Skamokawa Creek Community Watershed.
- Completed two restoration projects in the Elochoman River Community Watershed.
- Applied for funding for three projects in the Elochoman River Community Watershed and three projects in the Skamokawa Creek Community Watershed.

2016 Feature Accomplishment Skamokawa Creek community watershed restoration project

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Wahkiakum Conservation District (WCD) collaborated with landowners in the Skamokawa Creek Watershed to address resource concerns including salmon recovery, water quality, loss of property due to erosion, economic viability, and invasive weeds. WCD attempts to implement two, design two, fund two, and initiate planning for two projects each year. To date, there are restoration projects implemented encompassing about 70 percent of Middle Valley, and 40 percent of East Valley of the Skamokawa Creek Watershed.



Top: Before project implementation, car body armor in the stream bank.
Bottom: After implementation, debris jam in place of car body armor
Photo: Wahkiakum Conservation District

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

WCD installed wood-based structures within the East Valley of the Skamokawa Creek Watershed to promote instream habitat, improve water quality, and to protect actively eroding stream banks. A forested riparian buffer was planted to continue to provide long term habitat, water quality, and stream bank stability. The structures met these objectives through the 2015 - 2016 winter storm events.

The previous property owner decided to sell the property. And, the new landowners are delighted with the project and continue to collaborate on buffer maintenance and a plan to maintain one instream structure.

KEY PARTNERS: Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board; Washington State Conservation Commission; Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife; Army Corps of Engineers; Richards Excavation; RK Reforestation, Inc.

More work to do!

- Working on Conservation Reserve Enhanced Program contracts in cooperation with four landowners encompassing about 60 acres of forest riparian buffer.
- Designing and permitting two project sites, one in the Skamokawa Creek Community Watershed and one in the Grays River Watershed.
- Successfully solicit project funding for up to six project opportunities.



Walla Walla County Conservation District

Renee M. Hadley, District Manager
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Board Chair: Pat McConnell

State Legislative District #16
Congressional District #5

2016 Feature Accomplishment Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Water quality and high temperatures affect endangered species and are impacted by the lack of woody vegetation (shade) along stream-banks. Hundreds of miles of streams have been impacted by activities such as farming, livestock use, urban development, and natural events. In 1998, our state initiated buffer restoration projects using the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to address these issues. Today, Walla Walla County accounts for over 25 percent of the state's riparian forest buffers enrolled in CREP.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS The Walla Walla County Conservation District continues to coordinate with agencies, landowners, and contractors to install CREP riparian buffers throughout the county. Between July 2015 and June 2016, the district helped treat approximately 42,909 feet of stream bank length and planted 89 acres of riparian buffer, 3.6 acres of wetland, and 6 acres of grass buffer. This is in addition to the over 171 miles of treated stream bank and 3,365 acres of riparian forest buffer established through Walla Walla County Conservation District efforts since 1998. Looking ahead, the district will reach out to remaining landowners to install buffers on unprotected stream reaches.

KEY PARTNERS: CREP is a federal USDA Farm Service Agency program. It's administered at the state-level by the Washington State Conservation Commission with technical assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Completed installation of CREP riparian buffer on Mud Creek with livestock fencing

More work to do!

- Continue installing fish screens on irrigation diversions.
- Tackle bank stability issues and the lack of woody debris in streams.
- Broaden our outreach and education to area landowners, cattlemen, and future farmers.

Other Accomplishments



Titus Creek Fish Passage and Screening project before construction.
Photo: Greg Kinsinger



Titus Creek Fish Passage and Screening project after construction. Reduced ESA listed fish mortality from irrigation diversion and stranding.
Photo: Greg Kinsinger



New meter for irrigation diversion with solar power. Renewable energy holds many possibilities.



Whatcom Conservation District

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Board Chair: Larry Helm

State Legislative District # 40, 42
Congressional District #1, 2

Other Accomplishments



WCD installed 26 CREP projects improving 95,347 feet of stream bank with 93,130 native plants, while maintaining and supporting 117 existing projects.



WCD hosted the first Annual Small Farm Expo in March. Over 220 small farmers joined 22 local organizations for a day of education, demos, and networking.



A place-based mobile education tool, with topographic lid and flowing water, was built to increase ecological literacy in schools and community groups.

2016 Feature Accomplishment

“Application Risk Management” helps farmers protect water quality



Over 100 local producers in Whatcom County learn about water quality and ARM at an annual Manure Nutrient Management Training in 2016

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Impacted and poorly managed agriculture has been advanced as a leading contributor to surface and ground water pollution in the Puget Sound, particularly as it relates to manure nutrient management. Landowners are given a nutrient management plan that outlines how they should manage nutrients using the “4Rs” (right: timing, rate, source, placement). But, without dynamic tools to help make informed decisions real-time, the plan will never be fully functional and protective.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Whatcom Conservation District (WCD) completed a five-year project in 2016 that developed an Application Risk Management (ARM) System providing site-specific, real-time decision making tools targeting manure transport via runoff and leaching. A Manure Spreading Advisory, developed for all of Western Washington, provides a three-day runoff risk forecast. An ARM Worksheet (based on four years of field data) provides a field level risk analysis and dynamic application setback distances. Field risk maps provide support information. Using these tools, producers are able to utilize manure more effectively while reducing their potential for a runoff or leaching event.



Producers use the Manure Spreading Advisory to choose the best time to spread manure to avoid a water quality issue. Learn more: www.wadairyplan.org/msa.

KEY PARTNERS: US Environmental Protection Agency; US Geological Survey; Washington State Department of Agriculture; Puget Sound Conservation Districts; Washington State Dairy Federation; dairy producers in Whatcom County

More work to do!

- Shellfish: Education, technical assistance, and cost-share for implementation of best management practices through Pollution Identification and Correction.
- Habitat: Along with the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), WCD will work to improve salmon habitat by replacing culverts and constructing log jams using funding provided from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program.
- Edge of field monitoring: Provide demonstration and effectiveness monitoring of conservation practices through on-farm surface water quality monitoring.



Whidbey Island Conservation District

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Board Chair: Wendi Hilborn

State Legislative District #10
Congressional District #2

2016 Feature Accomplishment

User-friendly forest plan format for landowners

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Whidbey Island Conservation District (WICD) has limited staff time and resources to maintain productive forestlands on Whidbey Island. To address this issue, while continuing to assist in forest conservation planning, WICD developed a user-friendly, expedited plan format for landowners to write their own forest conservation plans with minimal coaching. It has proven to effectively meet deadlines for completed plans, foster ownership in the planning process and plan, and educate landowners in the basic silviculture (growing and cultivation) of their forests.



97 percent of Whidbey's private forestland is estimated at risk of conversion. WICD's new plan format is a valuable tool to maintain productive forest land.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

In 2016, the Gartley family purchased several large forest parcels and quickly needed updated forest plans to retain designated forest land status. Laurie Gartley contacted WICD, and using the expedited forest plan format and limited coaching, Laurie was able to write the initial draft of the plan, which WICD later edited for final submission.



Members of the Gartley family involved in the inventory of one of the parcels.

During the forest inventory, the family assisted with stand descriptions, stated their objectives, and made management decisions. WICD was able to provide efficient, timely assistance while meeting the landowner's expectations and sparking their continued interest in forest education.

KEY PARTNERS: The Gartley family and neighboring landowners; Island County Commissioners; Island County Assessor

More work to do!

- Collaborate with the Central Whidbey Fire and Rescue District and Department of Natural Resources to launch a FY17 Firewise program targeting communities on the dry, windward bluff areas of Whidbey Island with urban/wildland interface.
- Partner for a United States Department of Agriculture Beginning Farmer and Rancher grant project, providing linkage between new farmers and retiring farmers.
- Continue conservation planning and implementation for forest, farm, and urban residents.

Other Accomplishments



Following his WICD forest management plan, a forest landowner reforested his clear-cut acreage with fir trees purchased from the WICD's plant sale.



WICD worked with a 170-head registered Angus beef operation to provide conservation planning, design, and cost-share for a waste storage facility.



WICD staff provided watershed model education to Coupeville Elementary fifth grade students at their Cornet Bay environmental learning camp.



Whitman Conservation District

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Board Chair: Cory Aeschliman

State Legislative District #9
Congressional District #5

Other Accomplishments



Precision agriculture equipment installed on spray machine and tractor regulated the amount of herbicides and pesticides applied to fields.



Direct seeding winter wheat into field after 10-year-old Conservation Reserve Program grass stand was sprayed. Filter strip left to help with erosion control.



Regrowth of cover crop plants after grazing.

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Variable rate fertilizer map project



Equipment being pulled across the stubble field collecting data for map building

RESOURCE CHALLENGE

The goal of this project was to acquire accurate soil data to determine management zones, soil sampling, and accurately apply the correct quantity of nutrients according to the yield potential of the land. When the correct amount of nutrients are applied the potential for leaching or run off is greatly reduced. The Whitman Conservation District got involved to assist the producer and to learn about how the variable rate fertilizer mapping system worked. This project will help improve water quality and soil health.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Utilizing an electrical conductivity machine to create variable rate fertilizer maps allows the producer to accurately apply the correct quantity of nutrients according to the yield potential of the land.

Three to five fertilizer zones were created and the fertilizer machine automatically changes nutrient rates applied as it travels across each zone throughout the field. Yields are increased because the land is not over fertilized or under fertilized. The total dollars spent on fertilizer are allocated to the greatest economic and agronomic potential of the land. The district contributed cost-share funds for this project to be implemented.



Close up of the equipment that collects the data

All photos by Nancy Hoobler

More work to do!

- Continue with cover crop/livestock project by writing management plans, collecting soil samples, and analyzing soil moisture, soil organic matter, and livestock weight gains when grazing fields are planted with a cover crop.
- Assist livestock producers to reach workable resolutions when addressing water quality issues and implementing water sampling and photo monitoring sites.
- Host shop talks in three watersheds in the district.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!

The SCC is proud to recognize the following partner agencies and organizations represented on our Board of Commissioners in 2016. Thank you for your leadership and collaboration!

- Jefferson Land Trust
- Tulalip Tribes
- Washington Association of Conservation Districts
- Washington Soil Health Committee
- Washington State Department of Agriculture
- Washington State Department of Ecology
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources
- Washington State University – Extension

We also want to acknowledge the following agencies for serving in an advisory role at our Commission meetings — we value your contributions and partnership!

- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- US Environmental Protection Agency – Region 10

Partners are the key to developing feasible conservation solutions and implementing efficient and effective natural resource projects on the ground. The work of the SCC and conservation districts would not be possible without the help of many, many partners, including landowners, tribes, local government, state agencies, federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

Thank you for your support!



Lynn Brown, Chair

Commissioner Lynn Brown serves as the Conservation District Central Representative on the Commission. Commissioner Brown also serves on the Kittitas County Conservation District Board.

Lynn graduated from the University of Wyoming with a B.S. and M.S. in Civil Engineering and from Harvard with a Masters in Public Administration. He spent 18 years as the Washington State Conservationist and was instrumental in coordinating recovery resources following the eruption of Mount St. Helens. He also led the effort to transfer the plant material center from the Natural Resources Conservation Service to the Washington Association of Conservation Districts.



Jim Kropf, Vice-chair

Jim Kropf joined the Commission in 2010, representing Washington State University (WSU) Extension. Jim has been a faculty member of WSU Extension since 1979, serving

as an Extension educator on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Stevens County, Douglas, and Chelan Counties, and Pierce and King Counties. He served as the Western District Director for WSU Extension from 1999 through 2010 and currently serves as the Extension Natural Resources Program Director. His Extension work primarily has focused on the production of agronomic and horticultural crops, agricultural marketing, and water quality. A Washington native, Jim grew up in Pierce County and has a B.S. and M.S. in Agronomy from Washington State University.



Lynn Bahrych

Commissioner Lynn Bahrych was appointed by Governor Gary Locke in January of 2004. She graduated with Honors in Humanities from Stanford University and

received a Masters Degree in English Education from the University of Texas. Lynn received a Ph.D. in Medieval and Renaissance Literature and a law degree from the U.W. Law School. Lynn practiced Maritime and Admiralty law in Seattle for ten years before focusing exclusively on land use and environmental law. She is currently Co-Chair of the Washington State Soil Health Committee. Lynn's term expired in July 2016.



Perry Beale

Commissioner Perry Beale joined the Commission in 2014 representing the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Perry is the Agricultural

Land Use Lead and Eastern WA supervisor for the WSDA Natural Resources Assessment Section. His primary duty is coordinating crop mapping activities within the state. Perry was raised on a wheat and cattle ranch in southeastern Washington and is the Vice President of the family farm. He graduated from Washington State University with a degree in Agronomy. Perry is also a graduate of the Ag Forestry Leadership program.



Larry Cochran

Commissioner Larry Cochran was elected to serve as the Conservation District Eastern Representative on the Conservation Commission in December

2015. He is also chair of the Palouse Conservation District. He's a third generation farmer and runs Cochran Farms in Colfax.



Mark Craven

Commissioner Mark Craven is President of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts and chair of the Snohomish Conservation District. He also runs Craven Farm in Snohomish, Washington, which has been in his family since 1949.



Dean Longrie

Commissioner Longrie serves as the Conservation District Western Representative on the Commission. He also serves on the Board of Supervisors at Clark Conservation District.



Sarah Spaeth

Commissioner Spaeth was appointed by Governor Jay Inslee in July 2016. She has been involved with conservation work for over 20 years and is currently Director of Conservation and Strategic Partnerships at Jefferson

Land Trust. In her 20 years with the Land Trust, she has conducted delicate and complex easement negotiations with landowner partners, has written more than \$6 million worth of successful land preservation funding proposals and worked with organizations and agencies in creative conservation partnerships. She earned degrees in biology from Western Washington University and a Masters degree in coastal zone management from the University of Washington. Prior to working for Jefferson Land Trust, she worked as a consultant on marine resources issues and as a fisheries biologist in Alaska.



Kelly Susewind

Commissioner Kelly Susewind joined the Commission in 2013 and represents the Director of the Washington State Department of Ecology, Maia Bellon.



Todd Welker

Commissioner Todd Welker joined the Commission in 2014 and represents the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Commissioner Welker serves as manager of DNR's Southeast Region.



Daryl Williams

Governor Jay Inslee appointed Daryl Williams to serve on the Commission in 2015. Commissioner Williams is the Environmental Liaison for the Tulalip Tribes.



Mark Clark
Executive Director

Mark Clark has been the Executive Director of the Washington State Conservation Commission since December 2002 after serving as the agency's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) coordinator and field operation manager for Puget Sound districts. Mark is a native of Thurston County and has a B.S. degree in Agricultural Engineering from Washington State University. He has been involved with the horticulture wholesale industry for over 18 years. Prior to that, he was a research engineer for the Food and Agriculture Section of Battelle Pacific Laboratories. He and his wife also own and operate Bush Prairie Farms in Tumwater.

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Eleanor Dovey
Fiscal Manager

Eleanor has been the Fiscal Manager since June 2016. She has many years of financial management experience, including auditing governmental entities, contract management, financial policy development, and general accounting. Eleanor began state service as a financial examiner with the Office of the Insurance Commissioner, subsequently acting as financial services manager with the Office of the Secretary of State and accounting manager with the Department of Natural Resources prior to joining SCC. She is responsible for overall agency fiscal matters, including budget management and financial reporting.

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Ray Ledgerwood
Regional Manager
Coordinator / Program
Facilitator

Ray Ledgerwood has been the Program Facilitator since 2003. He is a native of Eastern Washington and graduate of WSU. Ray has worked with districts and their associations since 1979. Ray currently provides service and support to Asotin County, Columbia, Palouse, Palouse Rock Lake, Pine Creek, Pomeroy, and Whitman Conservation Districts along with managing the Regional Manager staff.

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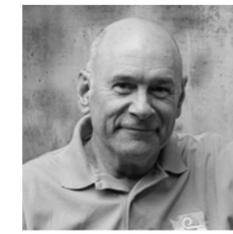
Ron Shultz
Director of Policy and
Intergovernmental
Relations

Ron Shultz joined the SCC in 2007. He represents the agency in a variety of policy forums including the Puget Sound State Caucus. Ron was formerly the Director of Programs and the Acting Executive Director at the Puget Sound Partnership and was the Natural Resources Advisor to Governor Gary Locke. He was also Policy Director for Audubon Washington from 1995 to 2001. Ron is an attorney and a fourth generation Washingtonian.

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Mike Baden
NC / NE Regional
Manager



Larry Brewer
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Brian Cochran
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Water Resources
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Jess Davenport
SC / SE Regional
Manager



Bill Eller
Voluntary
Stewardship
Program Coordinator



Jillian Fishburn
Fiscal Specialist



Josh Giuntoli
Office of Farmland
Preservation Coordinator



Lori Gonzalez
Executive Assistant



Sarah Groth
Fiscal Analyst



Karla Heinitz
Management Analyst



Laura Johnson
Communications
Coordinator



Shana Joy
Puget Sound Regional
Manager / Policy Assistant



Alicia McClendon
Administrative
Assistant



Jack Myrick
Irrigation Efficiencies
Technical Coordinator



Stu Trefry
SW Regional Manager /
Development and Capacity
Coordinator



Melissa Vander Linden
Program Specialist



Courtney Woods
Program Specialist

Acronyms

BMP Best Management Practice	PIC Pollution Identification and Correction
BPA Bonneville Power Administration	RCO Recreation and Conservation Office
CD Conservation district	RCPP Regional Conservation Partnership Program
CNMP Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan	RCW Revised Code of Washington
CREP Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program	SCC State Conservation Commission
CRM Coordinated Resource Management	SRFB Salmon Recovery Funding Board
DNR Washington Department of Natural Resources	TMDL Total Maximum Daily Load
DOE Washington Department of Ecology	TSP Technical Service Providers
EPA US Environmental Protection Agency	USDA US Department of Agriculture
EQIP Environmental Quality Incentives Program	USFS US Forest Service
ESA Endangered Species Act	USFW US Fish and Wildlife
FFFPP Family Forest Fish Passage Program	USGS US Geological Services
FSA USDA Farm Services Agency	VSP Voluntary Stewardship Program
IEP Irrigation Efficiencies Program	WACD Washington Association of Conservation Districts
IWM Irrigation Water Management	WADE Washington Association of District Employees
LID Low Impact Development	WCC Washington Conservation Corps
NFWF National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	WDFW Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
NRCS USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	WSU Washington State University
ONP Office of Farmland Preservation	WRIA Water Resource Inventory Area

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