

(EXAMPLE – Story media release)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# Media Release

## **Looking back on 32 years of conservation**

*Jim Armstrong retires from Spokane Conservation District*

SPOKANE – Jim Armstrong has defined conservation for Spokane County and developed programs that will protect and enhance natural resources for generations to come. After 32 years of employment at the Spokane Conservation District (SCD), he looks back on his work and prepares to retire.

Armstrong was the first full-time employee of the Spokane Conservation District. His initial achievement was in developing the forestry program. Armstrong created a firewood thinning program that helped landowners make their forested property healthier and more fire resistant through thinning. He cleverly utilized the firewood seeking public to help complete and pay for the work. Today, SCD implements forest thinning as part of a nationwide program called Firewise, but only licensed contractors complete the work.

After growing the forestry department, Armstrong turned his focus to water quality in 1987 with projects on Eloika Lake. The water resources department now employs five people and includes ongoing programs like Livestock & Land technical assistance and cost-share opportunities, and On-Site Septic System Financial Assistance Program.

The department that Armstrong has become most passionate about is Production Agriculture, and the Direct Seed Loan Program. Low interest loans are provided to qualifying farmers to purchase no-till or direct seed farming equipment. With these loans, farmers have reduced soil erosion to almost nil on an estimated 750,000 acres across 19 Washington counties and four counties in North Idaho. The best part is, the tax payers get the money back with interest. Armstrong has developed several radio and video productions to support the Direct Seed movement.

“The changes I have witnessed in the quantity and quality of natural resource conservation and advancements in environmental quality are quite impressive by any measure,” Armstrong said.

Aside from helping develop Armstrong has actively served on the Farm Forum Committee, AgriBusiness Council, Northwest Natural Resources Institute board, Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association Conference committee, and has written for various local publications.

Vicki Carter, SCD Director, stated “Jim was instrumental in the adoption of the assessment legislation back in 1991. Quite simply, our district wouldn’t have the capacity to do the scale of projects we do without Jim’s vision and hard work for stable funding. For that, SCD and 14 other districts across Washington will be forever indebted to him.”

What’s next? Armstrong retires to spend more time with his wife, children and grandchildren, and practice conservation in small farming and gardening.

To celebrate Armstrong’s 32 years of accomplishments, the Spokane Conservation District will hold an open house on November 12 from 3pm-5pm at the SCD office, 210 N Havana, Spokane WA 99202. For more information, call 509.535.7274 or email [erica-vannatta@sccd.org](mailto:erica-vannatta@sccd.org).

### **About Spokane Conservation District**

The mission of Spokane Conservation District is to promote the sustainable use of natural resources within Spokane County. We offer a range of voluntary services to help people responsibly and efficiently manage their land. To learn more, visit [www.sccd.org](http://www.sccd.org), or call us at 509.535.7274.

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