

Walla Walla County Conservation District

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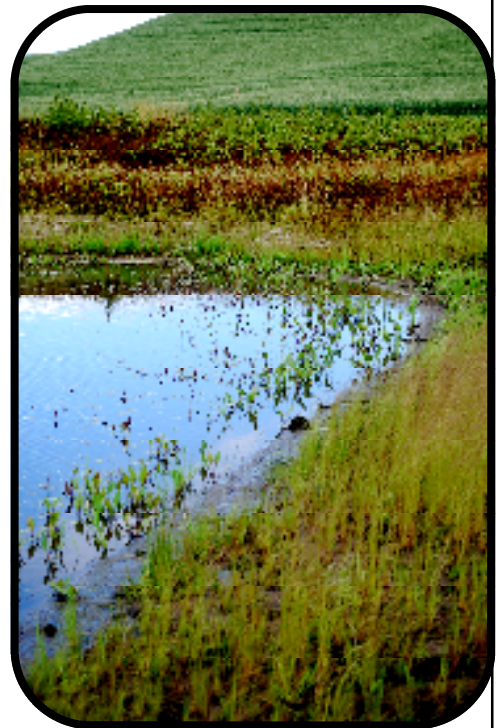
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RAPID CHANGES AT THE BREWER WETLAND

In October 2010 three small lakes were excavated at the headwaters of south Reser Creek by Ducks Unlimited for the Priority Projects Group (PPG) which is a five member wild lands conservation consortium made up of the Blue Mountain Land Trust, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Tri-state Steelheaders and the Walla Walla County Conservation District. This dynamic group set a huge precedent in how Washington State agencies meet mitigation requirements with in-lieu-fee agreements with groups like the PPG. These three pools are located in a 23 acre wetland conservation easement that is part of the required mitigation from WSDOT for the widening of HWY 12, phase 6 and the loss of 0.5 acres of wetland.



Less than a year ago these three pools were bare pits with no vegetation and a lot of exposed mud. About one week after excavations were completed, a good number of seeps and springs

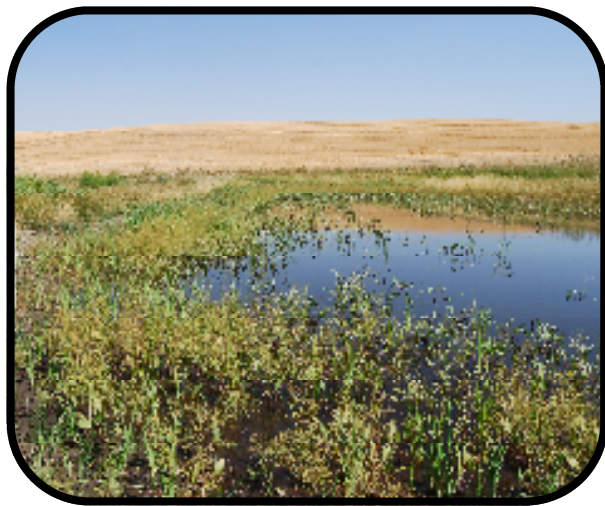
emerging from the bed of two of the south pools were noted. The southernmost pool is 12 feet higher in elevation than the northern pool. By December 17th, 2010, all three pools were full of water, the southernmost pool was overflowing into the middle pool and the northernmost pool was filling fast. In November 2010, Ducks Unlimited seeded the northern and central pools with native aquatic plants. In March 2011, over 30 Red Osier Dogwood and willow whips were planted by the Blue Mountain Land Trust. Then in May 2011 Natural Reclamation Services seeded the uplands with a native grass seed mix. By June 2011 weeds were popping into flower and many native plants were also appearing after the prolonged cool, wet spring. It seemed our eight months of winter was over at last. *(continued on next page)*

**YOUNG ARROWROOT PLANTS BE-
GINNING TO EMERGE FROM THE
MIDDLE POND**

BURN PERMIT FILL-IN FORMS NOW AVAILABLE

*New burn permit forms are
now available for down-
loading to your computer.
These fillable MS Word doc-
uments are posted at the
WWCCD website:*

*www.wvccd.net. These
forms can be saved for fu-
ture use making filling out
field detail sheets easier
than ever.*



A DIVERSE PLANT COMMUNITY IN THE EARLY STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT AT THE LOWER POND

On a warm late July afternoon, a site visit to these wetlands revealed a rapidly emerging eco-system that was astounding. There were hundreds of young Wapato plants (arrowroot), hard stem bull rush, cattails, rushes, black cottonwoods and willows. This flush of young native plants was eye popping. There were hundreds of native coyote willows mixed with some peach leaf willow. In one year these plants will be three feet tall or more. Many young willows found were over a foot in height already.

Then there were the frogs, hundreds of adult Pacific Chorus Frogs popping out of the cracks in the mud higher up the exposed shoreline. The shoreline mud was peppered with thousands of tracks from many species of native mammals. The air above these ponds was full of thousands of damselflies, dragonflies and a few midges. These pools are attracting a highly diverse developing community of native plants and animals that will act as indicators of the health of this wetland and of our valley. To see this huge change from pure mud and not a stitch of anything living in October 2010 to a vibrant humming-

with-life wetland July 2011 is indeed exciting and points to the fact that if given a chance to recover, nature will always give 110% and do it right.

This fall, the Tri-state Steelheaders under the able leadership of Brian Burns, will be planting additional trees and shrubs on this site to meet the agreements with WSDOT. *By: Mike Denny, WWCCD Riparian Project*

PROGRESS REPORTS—WWCCD’S WEED CONTROL PROJECTS

False Indigo Bush Herbicide Treatment Test

Three application timings have been made to date: May 16th; June 14th July 12th.

The first timing was at late bud with about ½ to 1 inch of leaf exposure. An evaluation showed that timing was too early and no effect was seen on the Indigo Bush at the 30 day evaluation.

The second timing was at full bloom. An evaluation at 30 days post treatment found 70% to 80% of the treated plants were defoliated. At 60 days post application, this timing had 60% to 70% control.

The third timing was at post bloom. Evaluation at 30 days post treatment was made in mid-August. The 30 day post evaluation of this treatment timing had 100% control of the treated plants. *By: Jeff Klundt, WWCCD CREP Maintenance Technician*

Japanese Knotweed Removal

Starting in early July 2011 as the result of a successful grant application to the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board, the Japanese Knotweed Removal project got underway for the first season of a three-year effort to reduce and eventually eliminate the population of this highly invasive introduced weed along Mill Creek in Walla Walla County. To launch this knotweed removal project, the WWCCD partnered with the Walla Walla County Weed Board and the Washington State Dept. of Agriculture. *(continued on next page)*



PROMISING HERBICIDE CONTROL OF FALSE INDIGO BUSH NEXT TO UNTREATED PLANTS



**JAPANESE KNOTWEED ALONG MILL CREEK
PRIOR TO BEING SPRAYED SUMMER OF 2011**



**JAPANESE KNOTWEED SHOWING THE EFFECTS OF
HERBICIDE TREATMENT IN LATE AUGUST 2011**

This project is important as this highly invasive plant is now growing out into the primary channel of Mill Creek, host to the largest known population of Japanese Knotweed in Walla Walla County. After contacting 44 landowners along Mill Creek and getting access agreements signed, an herbicide treatment program was launched. All spraying was done by a certified aquatic applicator. In 28 days, the entire core area had been treated to a quarter mile downstream of the Blue Creek confluence with Mill Creek.

In late August 2011, control efforts on Japanese Knotweed were evaluated. The evaluation showed that 30% of the treated plants were dead. Of the remaining treated plants, 65% were highly stressed and had lost from 50% to 80% of their leaves -- these plants were slowly dying. The program will start up again next August and plants that survived this season's assault will again be sprayed

If you have any Japanese Knotweed on your land, please let call Mike Denny at 522-6340, xt.114 or contact Dave Maiden at the Walla Walla County Weed Board. Our intent is to hit this weed hard again in 2012. *By: Mike Denny, WWCCD Riparian Project Coordinator*

NEW WWCCD PROJECTS COMING ON LINE

Summer is almost over and the WWCCD is looking forward to the upcoming winter construction season. Even while previous projects were under construction, District staffers were working hard to secure funding for other projects on the long list of work needing to be done. What can Walla Walla County landowners look forward to in terms of new projects over the next 12 to 18 months? At this point, there are a number of efforts underway for which funding has been secured:

- ◆ Gardena Farms Irrigation District #13 North Lateral Piping project: \$187,500 from Bonneville Power Administration; \$1,000,000 from USDI Bureau of Reclamation; \$1,145,000 from WA Dept. of Ecology—scheduled for construction in 2012
- ◆ Gardena Farms Irrigation District #13 Upper Canal Piping project: \$1,135,000 from WA Dept. of Ecology— scheduled for construction in 2013
- ◆ Old Lowden /Bergevin-Williams Diversion Consolidation project: \$1,100,000 from Bonneville Power Administration—scheduled for construction in 2012
- ◆ Old Lowden/Bergevin-Williams Piping project: \$1,400,000 from WA Dept. of Ecology; \$800,000 from Bonneville Power Administration—scheduled for construction in 2012

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- ◆ Irrigation Metering project: \$400,000 awarded from WA-Dept. of Ecology to cover 2012-2013
- ◆ Stiller Shallow Aquifer Recharge project: \$67,000 awarded from Bonneville Power Administration— scheduled for construction in late 2011/early 2012
- ◆ McCaw Fish Habitat Restoration project: \$133,312 expected to be awarded from WA Salmon Recovery Funding Board—scheduled for construction in 2012
- ◆ Jones Ditch Passage & Habitat Project Assessment: \$94,297 expected from WA Salmon Recovery Funding Board—assessment and design to be completed in 2012
- ◆ Smith Sediment Retention project: \$19,000 from Community Salmon Fund— scheduled for 2011

So looking at the WWCCD workload as a whole, there are quite a few great projects scheduled for implementation that will be beneficial to landowners as well as the Walla Walla County natural resource base. *By Larry Hooker, WWCCD Agricultural Projects Coordinator*

WWCCD HOST DISTRICT FOR WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AND TOUR

In mid-September, the WWCCD hosted a meeting of the Washington State Conservation Commission. At the request of the Commission, an afternoon was set aside for touring a cross-section of conservation projects implemented by the District in recent years. This was seen as a great opportunity since only two or three of the 10-member commission had previously visited Walla Walla County.

Since it was obvious that there simply would not be enough time to view all the District Projects, eight were selected representing the wide diversity and complexity of projects undertaken by the WWCCD. They were:



Schulke Riparian Forest Buffers—Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP): A look at the Schulke Family's adoption of CREP along their farmland on Dry Creek. Since 2003, they have enrolled 207 acres along 8 miles of stream bank and planted over 105,000 native shrubs and trees bordered by an adapted native grass mix.



Stiller Pond Shallow Aquifer Recharge: Historically, Stiller Pond was used as regulatory pond for irrigation water on the old Ed Stiller Farm now owned by Quentin Schwenke. After a 2004 WWCCD piping project was installed bringing pressurized on-demand flows from Mill Creek, the pond was no longer needed. However, it was viewed as an excellent opportunity to enhance base flow conditions critical to migrating salmonids in Mill Creek.



Old Lowden/Bergevin-Williams Diversion Consolidation & Piping: Scheduled for construction in 2012, this project exemplifies the cooperative and collaborative efforts of the private sectors and both state and federal agencies. The project will eliminate two "push-up" dams that often obstruct fish passage as well as enhance in-stream flows due to water savings by improved conveyance efficiencies.

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Gardena Farms Irrigation District #13—South Lateral Piping: This irrigation district is one of the oldest such organizations in Washington. In 2009 at the request of the GFID Board of Directors, WWCCD undertook the piping of the 5.5 mile long earthen irrigation canal. The result was 4.25 miles of pipeline, 23,577 ft. of delivery pipeline, 17,971 ft. of lateral pipelines, 21 new or modified pumping stations serving 2,250 acres and a savings of 3.99 cfs of water.



Hofer-Eastside-Westside Complex: This project is called the “Complex” because it is actually a series of projects that were started in 2004 and completed in 2009. The project included design and construction of a new fish ladder at Hofer Dam (a channel-spanning fish barrier for salmonids), installation of a new high tech automated self-cleaning belt fish screen, design and construction of a new Eastside/Westside pumping plant, and piping of both the Eastside and Westside delivery systems with over 72,500 feet of pipe. The project put 3,134 acre-feet of saved water into trust.

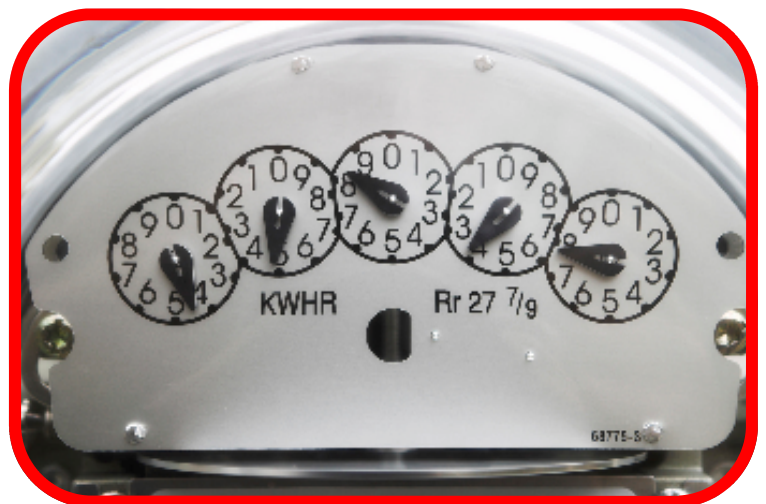


Dozier Instream Fish Habitat Restoration: Flooding in 1996 heavily damaged the Touchet River corridor downstream of the City of Waitsburg’s flood control dike system. The results were long riffle-runs with little large woody debris, no structure, high eroding banks and a degrading channel. A cooperative effort with WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife and the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board resulted in the treatment of 2,100 ft of stream banks with 5 rock barbs, 5 root wads, 3 sweeper logs, 1.2 acres of grass seeding and 3,260 native plants planted on 2.9 acres of riparian zone.

IRRIGATION ENERGY EFFICIENCY: UTILITY INCENTIVES

As anyone on the planet with a computer knows, the internet is an incredible source of information and research. For instance, there is almost no limit to the information that can be found using “Google.” So, it doesn’t take a leap of imagination to expect that one could find out anything they’d want to know about energy efficiency as well – right?

For instance if an irrigator wanted to know what he/she could expect to save by installing a new sprinkler, pressure regulator, boot gasket, a drop tube or goose neck – that irrigator ought to be able to get accurate, trust worthy information from the internet—right? *(continued on next page)*



Well, maybe! The problem is there is so much information, how does one filter out the good from the bad? Distinguish the trustworthy from the untrustworthy? The answer: Check with your local electric utility.

All electric utilities have information programs. Most utilities have energy efficiency programs. Why? Doing so is in their self-interest! They have everything to gain to ensure that accurate energy efficiency information gets to you. In most cases they will also have cash incentive or rebate programs to help offset the cost of installed measures.

If you make better decisions about energy end-use, the utility can do a better job of managing power supply (purchase and delivery) to you. If they invest in your energy management at the end-user level (energy efficiency), that can be much less costly than constructing new power plants and transmission facilities. Utilities love high "load factor" meaning at least 70% of their capacity is being utilized on a consistent basis with low peak demand differentials. Not unlike the tortoise and the hare, slow and steady is better than fast and intermittent. In an economy like the one we're in, we all pay more for our decisions. Doesn't it make sense that we make the best decisions possible based on the best information to minimize the cost of power to us individually?

Go to your electric utility! Use their expertise. They're an excellent filter to separate the good from the bad when it comes to claims of energy efficiency and what works. If you need a contact number, check your monthly utility billing statement. Or, if you're an irrigator, contact Blue Mountain Resource Conservation and Development Council in Waitsburg, WA at 509-337-8968. They're working with conservation districts and electric cooperative utilities like Inland Power & Light Company to assist them and their members within Garfield and Walla Walla Counties. *By: Jim Su'euga, JMS E³ Consulting (under contract to Blue Mtn. Resource Conservation & Development*

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