

Walla Walla County Conservation District

325 North 13th Avenue – Walla Walla, WA 99362
Phone: (509) 522-6340, Ext. 3 – Fax: (509) 525-2811

Winter 2010

Published regularly to provide information to land users

Volume 12, Issue 4



In this issue:

WWCCD Annual Meeting
& Supervisor Election

Irrigation Water Manage-
ment through Telemetry

Reminder for Japanese
Knotweed Control

Opportunities for Water
Leasing

CURB 3-Year Report

Changes in Ag. Burn Fees

WANT TO VOTE ABSENTEE IN THE WWCCD SUPERVISOR ELECTION?

*An absentee ballot may be
picked up from the District
office at 325 N. 13th Ave.
in Walla Walla or by call-
ing 509-522-6340 Ext.
101. The deadline is Jan.
18th, 2011.*

2011 WWCCD ANNUAL MEETING & SUPERVISOR ELECTION

Thursday, January 27, 2011

8:00 to 2:30

Walla Walla Regional Airport Community Room

The Walla Walla County Conservation District will hold its 2010 Annual Meeting and Supervisor Election on Thursday, January 27th, 2011, at the Walla Walla Regional Airport in the Blue Mountain Community Meeting Room. Coffee and rolls will be available at registration beginning at 8:00 am. Chairman Todd Kimball will call the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. This year we have applied for 2 pesticide credits for the day's program. Jeff Schulke has accepted his nomination for re-election to our board for his first full 3-year term. Polls will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided.

Agenda (Subject to Change):

- 8:00 Sign in; Coffee & Rolls**
- 8:15 Welcome, Introductions & Opening of Polls: Todd Kimball, District Chair**
- 8:30 WWCCD Activities & Annual Report, Larry Hooker, Agricultural Projects Coordinator, WWCCD**
- 9:00 Environmental Market Opportunities: Don Stuart/Dennis Canty, American Farmland Trust**
- 10:00 Operation Safety On-field Electrical Concerns for Dryland & Irrigated Farming: Glen Hagfeldt, Columbia REA**
- 11:00 Ag. Burn Program: Kary Peterson, WA-DOE**
- 11:30 Natural Resources in the Classroom, Kara Kaebler, Education & Outreach Specialist, Franklin Conservation District**
- 12:00 Polls close—Hosted Luncheon**
- 12:30 Conservation Stewardship Program: Ed Teel, DC, USDA-NRCS Presentations: Dryland—Don Anderson
Irrigated Land—Chep & Drex Gauntt**
- 1:15 WSDA 2011 Pesticide Update: Lee Bariger, WSDA, Prosser**

IRRIGATION WATER MANAGEMENT THROUGH TELEMETRY—FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES!

Managing irrigation water through the use of telemetry is something water managers could only dream about only a few years ago. Now that some of the Walla Walla County Conservation District's (WWCCD's) large piping projects are hitting the ground and are operational, managing with telemetry is closer to becoming a reality.

With funding received from WWCCD's project partners such as Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Washington Department of Ecology (ECY) and Gardena Farms Irrigation District (GFID), some of the first telemetry capability is now operational in the Walla Walla valley and the potential for expanded use is nearly limitless. Essentially the output of any electronic device can be transmitted via a radio signal to a receiver that is connected to a data processing and display device. For the low power line-of-sight radio output from the field to reach the office requires one or more elevated "repeaters" mounted on 40-50 ft. towers.

While this radio based technology is not exactly new, it has only recently become practical for widespread application due to advances in miniaturized electronic components and modernization of manufacturing techniques. Small weather-proof radios that were unreliable and cost prohibitive custom built devices of a decade ago are now available from suppliers as stocked items that are more compact, reliable and cost a fraction of the custom built units.

WWCCD installed the first elements of a telemetry system infrastructure at the Hofer Dam and Touchet East Side/West Side pipeline projects which were completed in 2006-09. At the Hofer Dam and pipeline pump station, sensors are used to monitor water level in the sump, key pump operation parameters, and flow through the pipeline. At the Hofer Dam diversion sensors were placed on the traveling belt fish screens to ensure proper operation by comparing water surface elevation upstream and downstream of the screen. Sensor outputs are connected to miniature radio transmitters with unidirectional antennae aimed at a 40 ft. repeater tower which has an antenna aimed at the main receiver antenna located at the GFID office. The main receiver is connected to a computer server accessible via a password protected internet connection which allows real-time sensor outputs to be available at any time. Also, if sensor outputs fall outside of a defined range then provisions can be made for a device to automatically place a warning call to the cell phone of the district's maintenance manager.

In 2010 WWCCD erected three additional towers as part of the Bergevin-Williams and Old Lowden diversion upgrade project which is scheduled to consolidate them with the existing Garden City and Lowden 2 diversion in 2011. These towers greatly expand the telemetry coverage of the heavily irrigated portion of the Walla Walla Basin including the Gardena Farms Irrigation District. As a result of the added telemetry capability, the WWCCD was able to install 24 flow meters that automatically report on-farm water use on the GFID south Lateral. Here is a case where telemetry has made it possible for the GFID staff to monitor water delivery from the office which saves man-hours.

On the Bergevin-William and Old Lowden consolidation project, planned for construction in 2011-12, a modern diversion and a pipeline will replace the gravel push-up diversions and open ditches. Telemetry will be used to monitor the operation of two variable frequency drive pumps, fish screens and an air blast fish screen cleaning system as well as monitor flow diversion rates in the pipeline. This state-of-the-art system will also provide alarms when a critical component fails to operate properly. *By: Rick Jones, WWCCD District Manager & Greg Harting, Technical Service Provider*



REMINDER TO NON-COMPLIANT IRRIGATORS!

The WWCCD reminds all non-compliant irrigators that the screen program is still funded. Landowners may still enter the 85% cost-share program to obtain a legal fish-friendly screen for the irrigation pump.

2011 PHASE 1 OF THE MILL CREEK JAPANESE KNOTWEED REMOVAL PROJECT

This month (Dec. 2010) the Washington State Recreation & Conservation Office and the Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board will announce that the Walla Walla County Conservation District was awarded a \$17, 200.00 grant to start a three year project in partnership with the Walla Walla County Weed Board and the citizens and landowners along 5.65 miles of Mill Creek. The targeted section of Mill Creek runs from the Wickersham Bridge site down stream to just beyond the confluence with Blue Creek. This is the largest Japanese Knotweed population known in Walla Walla County. This **highly invasive** weed was introduced by folks that planted knotweed because of this plant's beauty in form and eye catching white flowers late in the summer. Please **do not** spread or transplant this weed onto your property.

We are planning on removing this Washington State designated Class A weed from the Mill Creek area in support of our many native trees, shrubs and property owners. This weed is spreading and its affect on our water, wildlife and native plant diversity is profound. It cannot be shaded out, burned out or cut out. It out-competes blackberry vines and all of our native plants. This plant will reduce a landowner's ability to access the shoreline and irrigation pump stations as well as greatly inhibit fishing opportunities.

Please **do not** pull, burn, mow or compost this plant when it is green. It only takes one ounce of viable root or stem in contact with the soil to create a vigorous new plant. Please help us stop this nasty invader by reporting any plants you know of or find to either Dave Maiden at the Walla Walla County Weed Board (509) 527-3246 or Mike Denny at the Walla Walla County Conservation District (509) 522-6340.

Please help us to help you to remove this weed from our county once and for all. Thank-you very much for your concern and assistance in removing this localized weed from your lands. *By: Mike Denny, WWCCD Riparian Restoration Coordinator.*

UPDATE ON USDA-NRCS CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs have continuous signups, but are closed at various times throughout the year. Program applications are evaluated and the highest ranked applications are chosen for funding.

WHIP—The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program is a cost sharing program that will pay up to 75% of the cost to install conservation practices that benefit wildlife. Please refer to the following link to learn about the Eastern Washington WHIP priorities. The last day to receive applications is January 7th, 2011.

http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/WHIP09?e_c_priority.html.

EQIP—Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program farmers, ranchers, non-industrial private landowners and operators may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land. Please refer to the following link to learn about the Snake River Team ranking and eligible practices. The last day to submit applications for the next funding round is August 13th, 2011. The link is <http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/FY10/index.html>.

CSP—The Conservation Stewardship Program encourages agriculture and forestry producers to address resource concerns by undertaking additional conservation practices and maintain and improve existing practices. Please refer to the following link to learn more about CSP. The last day to submit applications is January 7th, 2011. The CSP link is http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html.

NRCS also offers an Organic Special Initiative signup and the CRP Special Initiative signup. The last day to submit applications for these initiatives is March 4th, 2011. Please contact NRCS at the USDA Service Center, Walla Walla for details (509-522-6340). *By: Ed Teel, Snake River Team District Conservationist, USDA-NRCS.*

CREATING URBAN RIPARIAN BUFFERS—THREE YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

The Creating Urban Riparian Buffers (CURB) program has been working since 2007 with urban landowners on four streams within the Urban Growth Area of Walla Walla and College Place. The purpose is to improve water quality on the streams that run through properties within the area—both publicly and privately owned. The program provides technical support, volunteer assistance, and **native trees and shrubs to landowners who wish to plant riparian buffers along their backyard streams. Landowners commit to maintaining their buffers** for a period of ten years. Of the thirty buffer projects to be installed before July 2012, twenty-seven have been completed, two are in progress, and others are planned for upcoming months.



A 1-year old CURB native plant buffer

Also in 2010, participating landowners contributed over \$9,270 in in-kind match through their time spent working on their buffers and costs associated with their maintenance.

Reaching out to the communities of Walla Walla and College Place is an important component of the CURB program. Staff take landowners on tours of completed buffer projects, give presentations to local community groups, work with middle and high school students, and distribute educational materials at community outreach events.

The program is implemented by three primary partners: Walla Walla County Conservation District, Tri-State Steelheaders, and Kooskooskie Commons. Funding is provided by the WA Department of Ecology and the Community Salmon Fund. *By: Tara Patten, CURB Coordinator, Tri-State Steelheaders*

WANTED: WATER! WILL PAY TO LEASE

WWCCD is seeking to lease surface water rights in Walla Walla County. Qualified water rights are those permitted for withdrawal from the mainstem Walla Walla River or shallow wells at or near river mile 31 (Lowden 2/Garden City Dversion) during the months of March-May. There is a potential for multi-year leases at \$30/ per acre-foot.

Background: The Bergevin-Williams/Old Lowden Consolidated Diversion Project, scheduled for mid-2011 construction, proposes to move diversion of Old Lowden irrigation water to a point upstream. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has determined the proposed point of diversion change impacts stream flows in the fish- critical spring out-migration of listed salmonid juveniles and requires enhanced flows.

Interested water rights holders please contact Kay Mead at the District office for more information. Our number is 509-522-6340 ext. 3. *By: Kay Mead, Irrigation Efficiency Coordinator*

WINTER MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR FISH SCREENS & FLOW METERS

With irrigation season over and winter upon us, we remind all irrigators to “winterize” their fish screens and flow meters. Both screens and meters are expensive components in an irrigation system; a little care and maintenance over the off season will keep them operating for many seasons to come. Landowners are responsible for their screens for ten years, as specified in their Landowner Agreement.

Passive Cleaning Screen:

- Remove the screen from the stream, inspect the stainless steel mesh for any damage, Clean the screen with a stiff brush and hose, removing any debris and accumulated caked on algae and mud. Ensure the mesh is free from any plugged holes.
- Apply lubricating spray (i.e. WD 40) to the stainless steel mesh as well as the ring locks attached to frame and the internal aluminum baffle tube.
- Inspect the gaskets and spray with lubricant.
- Inspect the suction hose and clean any corroded fittings.
- Inspect the check valve if supplied and ensure it is clean and operational.
- Store in a dry covered location.

Active Cleaning Screen:

- Remove the screen completely from the stream; inspect the stainless steel mesh and entire framework as well as any external parts connected to the screen for damage,
- Clean the screen with a stiff brush and hose, removing any debris and accumulated caked on algae and mud. Inspect all spray nozzles for clogged orifices. Ensure the mesh is free from any plugged holes.
- Apply lubricating spray to the steel mesh as well as external stainless or aluminum parts, rubber gaskets and hose fittings. Inspect rubber and PVC hoses. Closely inspect all bearings and lube them as required.
- If you are using a lifting boom for installing and removing your screen, closely inspect the winch and steel cables. Pay particular attention to the condition of the cable eyes, looking for any chaffing or broken strands. Lubricate the portion of the purchase cable that remains attached to the screen during the irrigation season that will remain in the water. Lube as many eyes as possible and if necessary, replace any damaged cables. Grease the goose-neck attached to the mast.
- Store screen in a dry covered location.

Flow Meters:

2” Meters—Both electro- magnetic or mechanical meters should be pulled from service during the winter. Inspect and clean (flush) mechanical meters for internal debris accumulation. Check the mag meters for silt/algae build up on the 4 electrodes. Replace the magnetic meter batteries every spring before reinstalling meter.

4” and Larger Meters—Larger meters may be left attached to the discharge pipeline over the winter.

Be sure the discharge line is drained. Any water left in mechanical meters may freeze, causing damage to the moving parts. Magnetic meter electrodes will detect any water left in the meter chamber, causing the meter display to remain on and shorten the life of the battery.

The batteries should last 3 years minimally and should be replaced at the beginning of the irrigation service to avoid any lapse of monitoring.

If the pump is pulled, a blind flange should be used to seal off the meter.

It is recommended that the meter be covered during the winter.

Even a plastic tarp wrapped around the meter will provide over-winter protection. *By: Greg Kinsinger, Restoration Project Coordinator-Screens & Meters*

NEED A SPEAKER FOR YOUR MEETING?

As part of the WWCCD Outreach & Education effort, we are available to speak regarding who the Walla Walla County Conservation District is and what we do!

INCREASED BURN FEES TO BECOME EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2011

The Washington Department of Ecology (WA-DOE) recently revised agricultural burn fees will become effective on the first of 2011. The Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force determines the fees under a cap set by the legislature. The caps are \$3.75 per acre and \$1.00 per ton. The funds generated from permit fees help pay for Ecology's smoke management system, local permitting agencies, and fund research into alternatives to agricultural burning.

New Agricultural Burn Fees have been proposed as follows:

Field Permits

Old Fees:	Field up to 10 acres	\$25.00
	Field 11 acres+	\$2.25/acre
New Fees:	Field up to 10 acres	\$30.00
	Field 11 acres+	\$3.00/acre

Pile Burning Permits

Old Fees:	Pile up to 22 acres	\$50.00
	Pile 23 acres+	\$2.25/acre
New Fees:	Pile up to 100 tons	\$80.00

Frank Lane, WWCCD Agricultural Burn Technician, will again be assisting local producers process their permit applications. If you have questions, you may call Frank at (509) 522-6340 Ext. 117.

Walla Walla County Conservation District

Board of Supervisors

Todd Kimball, Chair
Guy McCaw, Vice Chair
Jeff Schulke, Treasurer
Pat McConnell, Secretary
Ed Chvatal, Member

District Staff

Rick Jones, District Manager
Marguerite Daltoso, Admin. Assistant
Audrey Ahmann, Grants Administrator
Greg Kinsinger, Restoration Project Coordinator
Frank Lane, Burn Permit Technician
Kay Mead, Irrigation Efficiency Coordinator
Mike Denny, Riparian Project Coordinator
Jeff Klundt, CREP Maintenance Technician
Larry Hooker, Ag. Projects Coordinator
Lisa Stearns, Civil Engineering Technician

NRCS Staff

Ed Teel, District Conservationist
Jessica Taylor, Soil Conservationist
Tracy Daily, Soil Conservation Tech.

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
Paid
99324
Permit #44

Walla Walla County
Conservation District
325 North 13th Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362