

# Walla Walla County Conservation District

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of Supervisors

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## Burn Program!

*ATTN: County growers that have applied for and received WA-DOE Field Burn Permits – Do not forget to report the acres burned! Report your completed burns with either your “Blue Cards” or through WA-DOE’s Web-site. This is required.*

## Merrill Camp Leaves WWCCD Board after serving 35 years

After serving in almost every capacity as a conservation district supervisor, Merrill Camp resigned his position on the Walla Walla Board after over 35 years of service. Merrill was first elected to the Board of Supervisors in 1974 representing dryland farmers in the Sudbury area where he still farms. Through the years, Merrill served in various capacities on the Board and served as Chairman in 1985, 1990, 1995, 1998, 2003 and 2008. From 1984 to 1985, Merrill held the position of President of the Washington State Association of Conservation Districts. In 1989, Merrill was named to serve on the WA State Conservation Commission. He served as Commission Vice-Chair in 1990-91 and was Commission Chair from 1992-93 and continued to serve through 1994. He did all this while remaining an active supervisor of the WWCCD Board. In addition, Merrill has served on numerous other local boards and committees through the years.



Jeff Schulke, who also farms in the Sudbury area, and was the 2007 Washington State Wildlife Farmer of the Year, was appointed by the WWCCD Board of Supervisors to serve out the remainder of Merrill’s term. We welcome Jeff to the Board and look forward to working with him in the future. Todd Kimball was re-elected for another 3-year term and Ed Chvatal was recommended for another 3-year appointment.

# WWCCD Programs and Progress

Occasionally, it is good to stop and take stock of what programs the District has on line and what progress has been made to date. This helps everyone visualize where we've been and where we are going.



***Passive fish screen***



***New metered pumping station***



***New notched cross-channel vanes on Mill Creek***



***Piping Eastside delivery system***

- **Irrigation Diversion Screening Program:** Screening irrigation intakes on Walla Walla County streams has been the centerpiece of the voluntary effort by basin irrigators to avoid incidents of “take” of ESA listed fish species. Through the District’s aggressive cost-share program, ***over 350 projects have been completed.*** Of these, over 30 were large projects - each with over one cubic foot per second capacity. Screen program funding for the current grant will be exhausted this coming July. WWCCD staff has also assisted Benton County with 10 pilot fish screen projects
- **Metering Program:** According to WA state water law, all irrigation water withdrawals from the shallow aquifer and from surface streams/canals/ditches must be metered. Flow meters will allow WA-DOE to monitor compliance with irrigation laws, but will also allow irrigators to document water use and protect water rights from relinquishment. 85% cost-share funding has been made available from WA-DOE through WWCCD and to date ***over 345 meters have been installed.***
- **Fish Passage:** Removal of passage barriers has been a high priority for action because of the obvious impact to salmonid migration. To date, the following fish passage barriers have been removed:
  - Hofer Dam – new concrete fish ladder constructed
  - Gose Street – new concrete fish ladder and two cross-channel weirs constructed
  - Church Dam – 6 rock vortex weir step-ups installed
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Street Dam – 6 rock vortex weir step-ups installed
  - Spring Creek – remediation of two passage barriers are now being designed
  - Smith-Nelson push up dam – remediated
  - Stiller Ditch push up dam – remediated
- **Irrigation Efficiency/Piping:** Funding for this program is administered through the Washington State Conservation Commission and involves some of the most complex and extensive projects yet undertaken by the WWCCD. The goal of this program is to improve irrigation delivery systems and increase stream flows. Progress to date includes:
  - Touchet Westside/Eastside Gravity Pipeline
  - Touchet Westside/Eastside Pumping Station
  - Touchet Westside Irrigation District pipeline – approximately 37,000 ft. of pipeline serving about 1,200 acres
  - Touchet Eastside Irrigation District pipeline – approximately 35,500 ft. of pipeline serving about 800 acres
  - Old Lowden/Bergevin-Williams pipeline consolidation – under design
  - Garden City diversion/pipeline – under design
  - Gardena Farms Irrigation District – North & South Laterals – under design
  - Gardena-Riggs Road Lateral

## *WWCCD Programs and Progress—Continued from Page 2*



***Proposed wetland mitigation***



***Doan Creek Restoration***



***Riparian Forest Buffer***



***Urban riparian buffer***

- **Priority Projects – Wetland Restoration:** The WWCCD is a member of the Priority Projects Group (PPG) whose mission is to identify potential projects and leverage available funds and technical assistance to get those projects implemented. One such project is assistance to Washington State Dept. of Transportation to help them meet mitigation requirements resulting from rerouting of Highway 12 in Walla Walla County. The PPG has located a suitable wetland site and is working with the land owner to put the acreage in a conservation easement and implement a wetland enhancement plan on 20 acres. The enhancement plan is being designed by Ducks Unlimited.

- **Fish Habitat Improvement & Stream Restoration:** All along Walla Walla perennial streams, there are places where stream corridors and associated instream fish habitat have been damaged by flooding. Over time agriculture impacts as well as urban encroachment have resulted in limitations to proper stream functions. WWCCD actively works with landowners and aggressively pursues funding to help solve these often complex problems. Projects underway at this time are:

- Touchet River Fish Habitat Improvement project above Bolles Bridge – assessment and designs completed – construction scheduled
- Upper Mill Creek Assessment – funding approved
- Walla Walla River Assessment (Mojonnier to Last Chance Road – funding approved
- Lower Coppei Creek Assessment – funding approved

- **Buffer Programs:** Walla Walla County has one of the most active buffer programs in the state.

- **CREP:** Working with our partners, the Farm Services Agency (FSA) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), almost 30% of all of Washington's riparian forest (CREP) buffers are found in Walla Walla County. This accounts for:
  - 165 long term contracts
  - Over 3,500 acres under contract
  - 191 miles of stream bank vegetated
  - Over 1,500,000 native shrubs and trees planted
- **CURB:** This program, Creating Urban Riparian Buffers, is the newest program opportunity offered by WWCCD. Financial and technical assistance is provided urban landowners to install buffers on their urban streams. To date, there are:
  - 11 sites developed in the Walla Walla urban area.
  - 1 site planted at Garrison Middle School

# *Mini-Sessions Completed for 2009*

During the months of February and March, a total of nine mini-sessions were held at various locations across the District. In spite of efforts to hold sessions earlier in the year to encourage better participation, numbers of attendees were slightly below the long term average. Nevertheless, these farmer-hosted “local” meetings are thought to be a valuable outreach tool and will be continued with some modifications in 2010.

Historically, some sessions have better attendance than others. Those held in the Clyde/Pleasant View area, the Sudbury area, the Prescott/Pettyjohn area, and the Waitsburg area always seem to have outstanding attendance. Other areas have had disappointing numbers of farmers participating and those held for irrigators had the most dismal turnouts. This year, some areas were not offered a session because nobody was willing to host the meeting.

So what is on tap for 2010? First and foremost, we will be combining some areas in order to bolster attendance. We already do this for some areas of the county and made even broader combinations for the irrigated communities this year. Additionally, the Mini-Session Team featuring representatives from the Farm Services Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the WWCCD will try to develop their list of discussion topics early on so an agenda can be sent out with announcement letters.

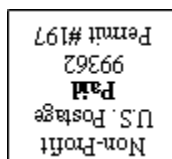
A special thanks is extended to the 2009 mini-session hosts: Glen Smith, Ed Chvatal, Greg Ferrel, Allen Ford, Todd Kimball, Merrill Camp, Steve Hair (with help from Brad and Brent Tompkins), and Jack & Guy McCaw. These folks opened up their homes, shops, or offices to the agency representatives and to their farmer neighbors, often providing coffee, donuts or other goodies. We recognize this as an important service to their respective communities and we appreciate their efforts.

## **Walla Walla County Conservation District**

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

Rick Jones, District Manager  
Marguerite Daltoso, Admin. Assistant  
Audrey Ahmann, Grants Administrator  
Alison Bower, Urban Buffer Proj. Coordinator  
Greg Kinsinger, Restoration Proj. Coordinator  
Frank Lane, Burn Permit Technician  
Kay Mead, Irrigation Efficiency Coordinator  
Mike Denny, CREP Coordinator  
Jeff Klundt, CREP Maintenance Technician  
Larry Hooker, Ag. Programs Coordinator

NRCS:  
Ed Teel, District Conservationist  
Jessica Taylor, Soil Conservationist



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