

# Walla Walla County Conservation District

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

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## TODD KIMBALL TO CHAIR WALLA WALLA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT FOR 2010



### **In this issue:**

Progress on GFID #13  
South Lateral

In-stream fish habitat pro-  
ject on the ground

Solar panels power for  
livestock water

### **ANNOUNCING THE HERITAGE BARN CONFERENCE**

The Washington Trust for  
Historic Preservation, in  
association with the Na-  
tional Barn Alliance, is  
hosting the Heritage Barn  
Conference at the Marcus  
Whitman Hotel & Confer-  
ence Center in Walla  
Walla on May 6-7, 2010.  
For more information, go  
to [-www.barnalliance.org](http://www.barnalliance.org)  
or [www.wa-trust.org](http://www.wa-trust.org).

Todd Kimball, past Treasurer and member of the WWCCD Board of Supervisors for the last six years, has been selected to serve as its Chair for 2010. Other board members include: Guy McCaw, Vice-Chair; Pat McConnell, Secretary; Jeff Schulke, Treasurer; and Ed Chvatal, Member-at-large. Pat agreed to serve an additional three-year term as one of the two supervisors appointed by the Washington State Conservation Commission.

At the November meeting of the Southeastern Area Association of Conservation Districts, Todd was named the Association's "Supervisor of the Year" in recognition of his work as the WWCCD Treasurer and outstanding participation in the District's audits.

Jeff Klundt, WWCCD CREP Maintenance Technician was also recognized in November as the Association's "Employee of the Year".

## **2010 MINI-SESSION WRAP-UP**

The WWCCD recently wrapped up the 2010 round of mini-sessions for Walla Walla County. During the months of February and early March, a total of eight mini-sessions were held at various locations across the District. The conservation partnership, including Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation District, WSU Extension and the District, was pleased and surprised that this year's attendance exceeded expectations. The session average participation of 11 per session was significantly higher than our historical average of eight.

A special thanks is extended to the 2010 mini-session hosts who provided this important service to their respective farming communities and their neighbors. This year, hosts included: Scott Ford, Guy McCaw, Jon Walters, Todd Kimball, Greg Ferrel, Ed Chvatal, and Brad & Brent Tompkins. These folks opened up their homes, shops, or offices to the agency representatives and to their farmer neighbors, often providing coffee, do-nuts or other goodies. Without their cooperation, this important information-sharing opportunity would not have happened.

The final session was held at the USDA Service Center in early March.

# **GARDENA FARMS IRRIGATION DISTRICT #13** **SOUTH LATERAL PIPING PROJECT NEARING** **COMPLETION**

Gardena Farms Irrigation District #13 (GFID) is one of the oldest such organizations in Washington with construction of the original canal started in 1892. Diverting water from the Walla Walla River at river mile 36.9 to serve approximately 7,000 acres of cropland within its district, GFID was officially incorporated in 1928.

For a number of years, managers and irrigators of the GFID have envisioned some needed up-upgrades to their open canal delivery system. This need was finally pushed to the forefront in 2000 when the Interim Settlement Agreement with the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) called for increased flows in the Walla Walla River.

The need for improvement was evident. According to irrigation water delivery efficiency studies conducted by Economic & Engineering Services (ESS) in 2004, fully 1/3 of the diverted water was lost to seepage. The study identified piping the delivery system as one of the alternatives available.

In 2009, the Walla Walla County Conservation District was contacted by the GFID directors to take over their planned piping projects beginning with the South Lateral—a 5.5 mile line open canal. Funding had already been secured through Bonneville Power Administration. Mainline designs had been developed in early 2009 by IRZ Consulting. The WWCCD staff assisted by Washington State Conservation Commission engineers designed the laterals and pumping stations. After passing the required Cultural Resources reviews, Premier Excavation began project installation in mid-December.

So what has been accomplished? The South Lateral canal will have been converted to 4.55 miles (24,050 ft.) of pressured piped delivery system serving 27,437 ft. of lateral distribution lines and 23 pumping stations. The new system will serve 2,250 acres and result in a water savings of 4.5 cubic feet per second (cfs). The saved water will be placed in a water trust. *By: Larry Hooker, Agricultural Projects Coordinator, 509-522-6340 Ext. 119.*



***Gardena Farms Irrigation District #13's south lateral under construction. Pipe was stationed and ready for installation beginning in mid-January 2010.***



***GFID #13 pumping station #19 near completion in mid-March.***

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPIRING CRP ACRES**

For producers that have CRP contracts expiring in September, now is a great time to look at Continuous CRP options. It is doubtful that 100% of the expiring acreage will get re-enrolled under the next highly competitive general CRP sign-up. Continuous CRP offers a non-competitive way to enroll the nastiest portions of a farm. If you have questions and want to know more, come in and visit us.

# **MIDDLE TOUCHET RIVER FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PROJECT IS NOW ON THE GROUND**



***WWCCD Riparian Restoration Coordinator Mike Denny inspects instream work recently completed on the Dozier Project.***



***New riparian forest buffer planting will in time protect shade to the Touchet River and new fish habitat structures.***

Since the devastating floods of 1996, Perry Dozier has been concerned about the loss of land and trees upstream from his home and farm buildings along the Middle Touchet River about 2 miles west of Waitsburg, WA. Several times over the years, Perry has shown his area of concern to representatives of local agencies including the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Walla Walla County Conservation District. Each year, doing something was put off due to the lack of available funding. And each year, Perry lost a little more ground to the dynamically changing Touchet.

It wasn't until a geomorphic assessment funded by the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board (SR-SRB) was conducted in the winter of 2008-2009 that these dynamics were clearly understood. The assessment showed why the river was becoming "unraveled" below the Waitsburg flood control dike system and showed where flood waters would likely run if an event like that in 1996 were to reoccur. This convinced Perry he could no longer wait to take action.

When funding provided by the SR-SRB and supplemented by the Confederated Tribe of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CRUIR) proved inadequate to install the total design provided by the assessment, the project stalled.

Then, Perry struck out on his own. Working with Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) biologists and engineers, critical portions of the instream portion of the project were installed.

WWCCD had been asked to take over this project when the original sponsor became unavailable to assist. After some conversations with the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) that administers funding provided by the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board, it was agreed that pending a field review by the RCO contracting officer and WDFW Engineer Bruce Heiner, installation costs would be covered. In addition, WWCCD Riparian Restoration Coordinator Mike Denny obtained RCO approval to use some of the remaining SR-SRB funds to clean up the site, prepare seedbeds, and develop new riparian forest buffers to compliment the installation of the new instream project. It took some doing, but the project turned out to be a "win-win" for everyone involved. *By: Larry Hooker, Agricultural Projects Coordinator, 509-522-6340 Ext. 119.*

# SOLAR PANELS PROVIDE POWER FOR LIVESTOCK WELL

When Mark Zoller of ZMI Joint Venture found he was ineligible for NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) last fall, he was referred to the WWCCD for help on his solar panel project. Mark had a pretty good livestock well but no way to pump the water without bringing in power from several miles away.

Working with the WWCCD staff and with NRCS technical assistance, ZMI Ranches now has a "state of the art" solar powered pumping station filling nearby stock water tanks. The District was able to provide ZMI with some funding from its Implementation Grant that allowed the project to proceed. The District provided approximately \$5,500 or about 50% of the project costs. *By: Larry*

*Hooker, Agricultural Projects Coordinator, 509-522-6340 Ext. 119.*



## 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

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