

Walla Walla County Conservation District

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BURN REPORTING REMINDER

*Don't forget to report your
burn acres after completing
spring burning! You can
either mail in your "Blue
Card" or report electronical-
ly through the WA-DOE
website (see your permit).*

*If you didn't burn, you still
need to report—and don't
forget to apply for a refund.*

RIBBON CUTTING CELEBRATES COMPLETION OF GFID#13's SOUTH LATERAL PIPELINE

The Walla Walla County Conservation District and a number of our conservation partners met recently to celebrate the completion of the Gardena Farm Irrigation District No. 13 South Lateral Piping Project with a ribbon cutting event. It was appropriate that the event was held at one of Mark Wagoner's pumping stations since Mark is the current chair of the GFID Board of Directors.

The WWCCD was the contracting organization with construction funding being provided from Bonneville Power Administration and WA Department of Ecology for the \$2.157 million project.

Speaking at the ceremony were Mark Wagoner, Project Manager Greg Kinsinger, WWCCD, Hedia Adelsman, WA-DOE and Sarah Branum, BPA. Also speaking representing the Confederated Tribe of the Umatilla Indian Reservation were Chris Williams, Vice Chair of the CTUIR Fish & Wildlife Committee and Gary James, CTUIR Fisheries Program Manager. The CTUIR is a key partner in helping to direct funding to Walla Walla Basin irrigation efficiency projects.

The piping of the south lateral was truly a historic undertaking that is considered a win-win for fish, farmers, the tribe, and regulatory agencies that deal with water quality, water quantity and Endangered Species Act listed fish.

Take a look at the numbers. The 5.5 mile long earthen canal system was converted to a 4.5 mile long pipeline. This 23,577 feet of pipeline, along with 17,971 feet of lateral pipelines serve 2,250 acres through 21 pumping stations. Due to the efficiencies achieved by the pipelines, 3.99 cubic feet per second will remain in the Walla Walla River for fish—or approximately 1,740 acre-feet per year. When operated at 40 pounds/square inch (psi), the system will deliver 12,150 gallons per minute to South Lateral irrigators. *(continued on next page)*



**MARK WAGONER, CHAIR,
GFID#13**



**GFID# 13 SOUTH LATERAL RIBBON CUTTERS—(L TO R)
 HEDIA ADELSMAN, WA-DOE, MARK WAGONER, GFID, JACK
 MYRICK, WA CONSERVATION COMMISSION, CHRIS WILLIAMS,
 CTUIR, & SARAH BRANUM, BPA.**

In addition to the big water savings numbers, all the pumping stations are connected by telemetry to the computer at the GFID office. This allows real-time monitoring and management of the system in a far more efficient manner. And water isn't the only thing being saved.

Due to in-line pressure on the gravity delivery system, irrigators are seeing pumping costs reduced by as much as 20%.

At the ceremony, there were five “ribbon cutters” representing each of the five major partners. Representing the WWCCD was Jack Myrick, Irrigation Efficiencies Coordinator with the WA Conservation Commission. Jack has been a major contributor to all the WWCCD piping projects and without his help, the WWCCD could not have accomplished nearly so much. The Walla Walla Basin owes Jack a big thanks.

As a final nice touch to the ceremony, Mark had Ed Burlingame, Great Grandson of the original engineer of the canal system, hit the switch to turn on the pumps. *By: Larry Hooker, Agricultural Projects Coordinator.*

TECHNOLOGY IS CHANGING FOR SPRING SEEDBED PREPARATION



The field above experienced runoff even though there was a lot of surface residue due to poor soil structure from over-tillage. The direct seeded field to the right acted like a sponge and had no runoff. Superior soil structure and worm-castings no doubt. *By: Larry Hooker, Agricultural Projects Coordinator*

While some producers still insist on over-working the ground to prepare for spring seeding, others have been adopting new direct seed technology—and without burning. After several days of above normal rainfall in the Blue Mountain foothills, the fields tell the story of what works—and what doesn't.



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 their irrigation pump.

IT'S OFFICIAL: WELCOME JEFF SCHULKE AS SUPERVISOR ON THE WWCCD BOARD

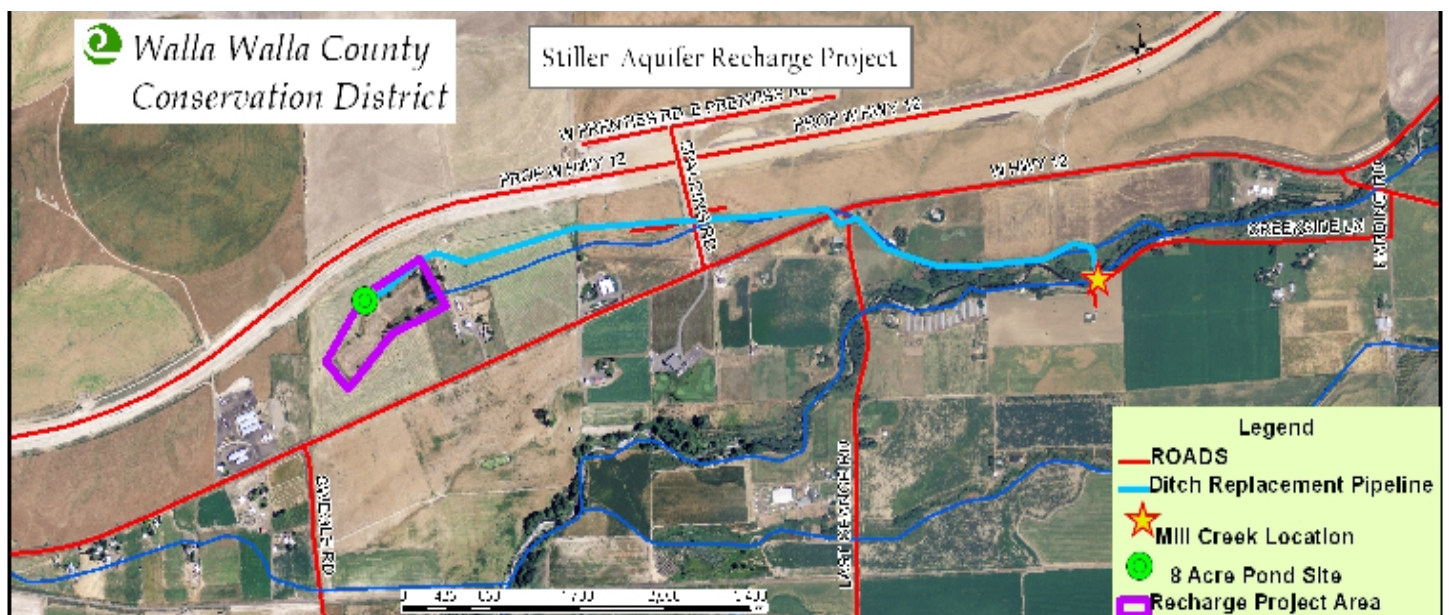
On May 19th, 2011, the Washington State Conservation Commission officially certified conservation district elections and announced the official winners of those elections. Citizens elected to the office of Conservation District Supervisor become municipal officers of the conservation district as soon as the Conservation Commission announces the official results. New and re-elected supervisors assume their full duties when they take office at the next regular or special meeting of the conservation district. A conservation district supervisor term of office is three years.

As a result of the Walla Walla County Conservation District election held in January 2011, Jeff Schulke was elected to a three year term. He had previously been appointed by the WWCCD Board to serve out the remainder of retired supervisor Merrill Camp's vacated term of office. *By: Marguerite Daltoso, WWCCD Administrative Assistant*

STILLER POND RECHARGE PROJECT

In May, 2011, a WWCCD sponsored Local Water Plan (LWP) to construct a shallow aquifer recharge (SAR) project was approved by the *Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership Board* and *Washington Dept. of Ecology*. On behalf of local landowner Quentin Schwenke and farm operator Joel Huesby, the WWCCD partnered with the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council and hydro-geologist Dr. Kevin Lindsey of GSI Water Solutions, Inc. to develop a pilot recharge project on Mill Creek at an old irrigation storage pond known locally as the Stiller Pond.

The goal of this project is to enhance base flow conditions in a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) identified critical reach area for Steelhead, Spring Chinook and Bull Trout. The LWP proposes to change an existing water right by introducing aquifer recharge for flow enhancement as a purpose of use and change the season of use from summer to winter/spring. Summer water normally used for irrigation during this time will be left in Mill Creek for base flow enhancement for fish. The intent of the SAR pilot project is to divert 32 acre/feet of Mill Creek water to the pond in winter months; it will seep down to the alluvial aquifer, increasing ground water which has hydrologic continuity with Mill Creek and the Walla Walla River. Studies indicate ground water will move SW through the alluvial aquifer, back toward Mill Creek and the Walla Walla River. It is expected that during summer, stored water will move through the aquifer to the streams and re-enter near their confluence. There are no known impairments to downstream water rights or in-stream flows nor is there any enhancement to the water right.



The Stiller Pond site is located approximately 1 mile ENE of the confluence of Mill Creek and the Walla Walla River, between Old Highway 12 and the new Highway 12. For many years, water was diverted from Mill Creek by a push-up dam at a site below the Wallula Road junction. The water was delivered 1.1 miles to the pond via an open, unlined ditch. The 8 acre pond would fill to a level of 5 feet and drain in just a few days when water was no longer diverted down the ditch. Historical use testimony and preliminary studies of the substrate under the pond indicate that the location is ideally suited for a recharge project.

In 2004, the WWCCD developed a Dept. of Ecology (WDOE) Irrigation Efficiencies Project which eliminated the use of the ditch. A 12" gravity-fed pipeline was buried down the ditch's entire length and terminated at a newly installed center pivot. Significant water loss was prevented as ditch seepage and evaporation were eliminated and less water was required for irrigation through the pivot. Additionally, a lift pump was installed at Mill Creek, discharging directly into the pipeline and eliminated the need for push up dams. Saved water realized by the Efficiency Project was placed into the state Trust Water Rights Program for in-stream flows.

Most of the necessary pumping and pipeline infrastructure is already in place to convey 4 cfs of water and hydrological study indicates very real recharge potential at this location. It is hoped that this pilot may result in a significantly larger shallow aquifer recharge project, benefitting in-stream flows and ground water replenishment. *By: Greg Kinsinger, Restoration Project Coordinator*

WWCCD RECEIVES VERLE KAISER CONSERVATION ENDOWMENT AWARD

The WWCCD recently applied for and was awarded a small grant in support of the District's education and outreach program. The funding will be used for outreach activities K through University levels.

Walla Walla County Conservation District

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NRCS Staff

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

Check out the
 WWCCD website
 at www.wwccd.net

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