

Walla Walla County Conservation District

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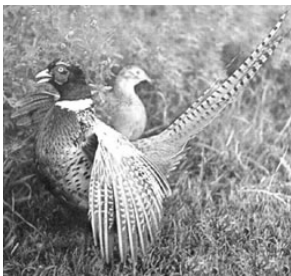


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Our Vision: WWCCD believes that many complex environmental problems can be solved through voluntary cooperation rather than by regulatory mandates. We will do this by creating and then implementing proactive programs that respect both the needs of the landowners and the natural resources of the County.

2007 ANNUAL MEETING and ELECTION

January 31, 2007

9:00 to 2:15

Walla Walla Regional Airport Community Room

The Walla Walla County Conservation District will hold its 2007 Annual Meeting and supervisor election on Wednesday, January 31, 2007, at the Walla Walla Regional Airport Community Meeting Room. Coffee and rolls will be available at 8:30 am. Chairman Guy McCaw will call the meeting to order at 9:00 am. This year we are offering two pesticide credits. Guy McCaw has accepted his nomination to continue serving on our board. Polls will be open from 9:00 to 12:00 am.

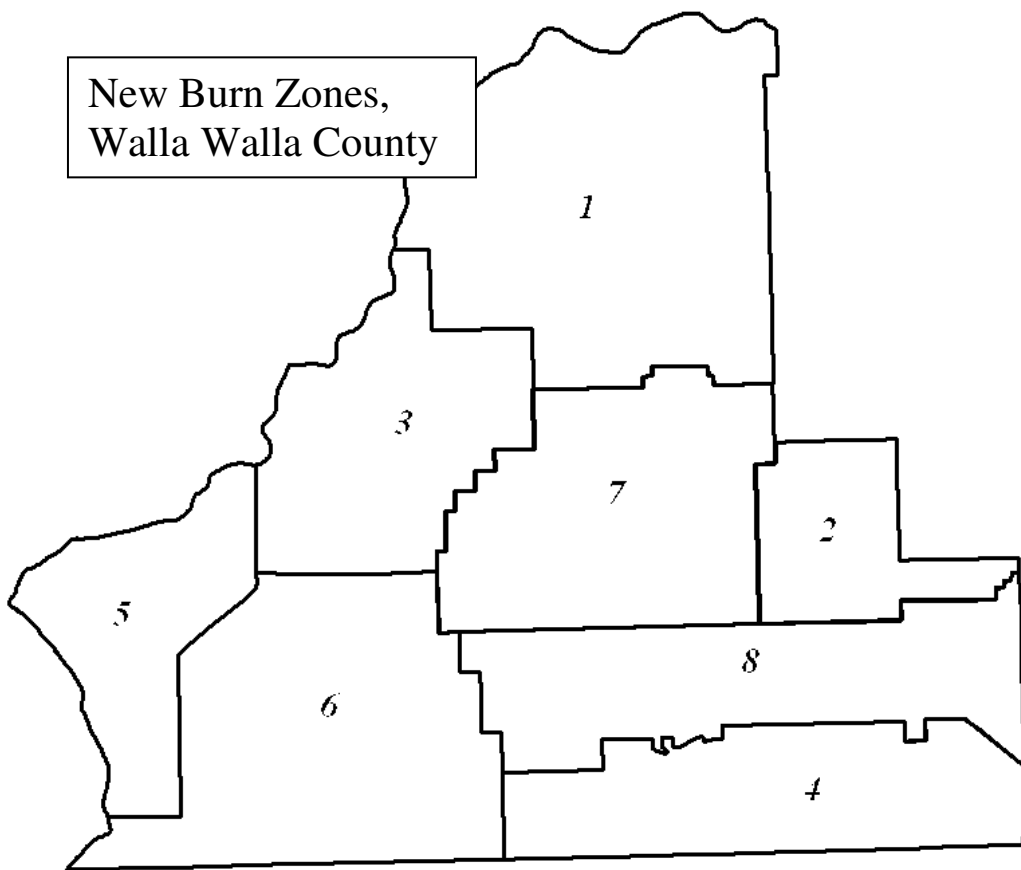
Agenda:

- 8:50 Welcome and Introductions: Guy McCaw, District Chair**
- 9:00 District Accomplishments, Rick Jones, District Manager**
- 9:15 Nutrient Management in Grazing CRP: John Fouts, WSU Ag Extension**
- 9:45 Advanced Pest Management Alternatives: Growers Experience with GPS Systems, Don Anderson**
- 10:15 Break; Poster Session**
- 10:30 Agricultural Pesticide Compliance Updates, Lee Barigar, WSDA**
- 11:00 Pest Management Technology: The Weedseeker Project, Sandy Halstad, EPA**
- 11:45 Hosted Luncheon**
- 12:15 Pest and Nutrient Management in the Republic of Georgia, John Fouts, WSU Ag Extension**
- 1:00 Taking the Water Issue into Your Own Hands: The Walla Walla Initiative, Ken Schuster, DOE**
- 1:30 Livestock and Water Quality Issue, Chad Atkins, DOE**
- 2:00 Walla Walla County Noxious Weed Update, Butch Bosley**
- 2:15 Burning Issues, Kary Peterson, DOE**

Burning Issues

In response to grower input, the County and Ecology have set new burn zone boundaries. The original boundaries were developed according to prevailing winds, the location of population centers, and major roads as landmarks. Problems arose because some burn zones included a portion of several fire districts. When a fire district imposed a burning ban on their district, they shut down burning for the entire burn zone. The new burn zones are based on fire district boundaries. Growers need to know these boundaries, since it is now possible for a grower to have one field in two different burn zones. These new boundaries were developed at the request of growers. With this change, we can avoid the situation experienced in fall 2005.

Most growers have already heard about the latest change in burn regulations, implemented last fall. This rule allows Ecology to impose a fine if a grower fails to report completion of a burn. This rule is state-wide and is not a direct reflection on Walla Walla County growers. Additional changes are being considered at the county level. Every burn applicant received a copy of the proposed changes with their permit in 2006. These proposed changes (below) would require more restrictive fire safety standards, especially when conditions are so good for burning that fire control becomes a problem. These proposed changes will be discussed at 2:15 after the Annual meeting on January 31st.



Proposed Changes

General Ag. Burning:

1. Bare earth or other natural barrier of 20' during spring burns, 30' during fall burns, with 95% of burnable material removed.
2. Tractor with disc on site prior to igniting burn
3. At least one person on site designated to patrol the perimeter for breakouts, and have the capability to extinguish fires that have escaped barriers.
4. Mobile water supply tank on site (small slip tank will meet the intent of this item.)



Restricted Ag. Burning

(Ag. Burning exception during burn ban):

1. Bare earth or other natural barrier shall be 45' wide with 95% of combustible material removed.
2. At least two tractors with discs on site prior to igniting burn; grower responsible for bringing additional equipment for larger burns.
3. Adequate personnel on site to maintain visual contact with the entire perimeter at all times; these personnel shall have the capability to extinguish fires that have escaped the barrier.
4. All on-site personnel shall be able to communicate with each other via radio or cell phones.
5. Local fire district chief has to be contacted prior to each burn.

Walla Walla County Conservation District

Wildlife Farmer of the Year: *Mark Sherry*

Walla Walla County Conservation District is pleased to announce Mark Sherry as our Wildlife Farmer of the Year for 2006. Mark is responsible for the daily operations on eight upland, non-irrigated wheat farms in Washington and Oregon. Collectively, he has dedicated over five thousand acres to conservation. In Walla Walla County alone he has dedicated 3,096 acres to CRP and 54 acres to CCRP grass buffer strips. The Sherry family's overall conservation goal is to propagate and maintain healthy populations of ground nesting birds on their farms. Towards this goal they built an aviary and each year they rear and release 500 pheasant. This is a demanding undertaking. For example, upon arrival each chick's head must be dipped in water or they will die of dehydration. Birds must be moved in and out of rearing pens, fed, and watered up to three times a day. In talking with Debbie Sherry it is obvious that this is a labor of love and the whole family gets involved. The cost of the facility and rearing the chicks is entirely covered by the Sherry family. To maintain healthy populations of birds after release, Mark has enhanced habitat by planting native grasses and shrubs wherever possible. Although their main interest is upland birds, Mark also maintains habitat for approximately 200 Rocky Mountain Elk. The growth in the populations of birds, elk and deer is a good testament to the quality of habitat provided on Mark Sherry's farms. Mark does not farm near any rivers or streams, yet his application of mulch-till, cross slope, and stubble mulch is estimated to reduce sheet and rill erosion from 10 to 28 tons/acre/year. Mark has invested heavily in mulch-till farming. He keeps abreast of the latest technology and machinery from Canada, as well as information available here at home. Grass buffer strips have been installed on run-off ditches to further reduce erosion. Together these practices have done much to improve water quality for fish, wildlife and people alike.



Low-disturbance tillage

Livestock Relocation Project: Ken Maxon

In 2006 the Walla Walla County Conservation District assisted Ken Maxon and his daughter Mickie with the design and relocation of a cross fenced paddock on Cold Creek. The six horses there were fenced into the riparian area of Cold Creek. Due to the steep bank slope and lack of vegetative cover, sediment and animal waste were entering the creek. The Maxons were concerned as they knew the area was a source for pollution of Cold Creek and likely in violation of the Clean Water Act. In addition, the paddock was between two of Maxon's stream restoration projects, thus reducing the habitat and water quality benefits of these two projects.

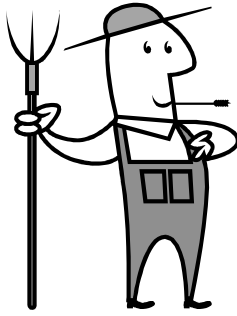
The Conservation District obtained funds to help the Maxons relocate the paddock to a field on the north side of Cold Creek behind an established CREP buffer. Cost-share included fencing and frost-free water troughs for the new paddocks. The old paddock was disassembled and a culvert removed along with other in-stream improvements. A 35-foot buffer consisting of native trees, shrubs and grasses will be established this spring. The new buffer will mitigate a significant point source of pollution on Cold Creek, as well as link 2.43 stream miles (39 acres) of contiguous riparian habitat.



Funding for Maxon's project was provided by the Conservation Commission's Implementation Water Quality Program. Planning is underway for future projects; if you have a water quality concern on your property, contact the District right away.

Other Meetings of Note

Wilbur-Ellis Company
Agronomy Day
January 26, 2007
8:00 to 3:00
SE WA Fairgrounds



Walla Walla Farmers Co-op
February 6, 2007
8:00 to 12:00
Elks Club

WSU/Walla Walla County
Cereal Grains Seminar
January 24, Elks Club
For information, contact
John Fouts, Ag. Extension,
527-3260

MINI-SESSIONS TO RETURN

Remember the farmer hosted mini-sessions that were held around the county until the mid-1990's? At the request of the WWCCD Board of Supervisors, these highly successful meetings will once again be used to open the lines of communication. As in the past, agency representatives from NRCS, FSA and the Conservation District will travel out into the communities to selected meeting sites hosted by volunteers. Agency reps will share information about programs available to land owners and operators. Mini-session participants will be asked to provide input to the Conservation District on types of assistance needed to solve natural resource problems. The plan is for mini-sessions to be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays through February and March.

Walla Walla County Conservation District Personnel

Guy McCaw, Chair
Pat McConnell, Vice Chair
Merrill Camp, Secretary
Ed Chvatal, Treasurer
Todd Kimball, Member

Rick Jones, District Manager
Marguerite Daltoso, Admin. Asst
Alison Bower, Project Coordinator.
Audrey Ahmann, Grants Admin
Greg Kinsinger, Project Coordinator
Frank Lane, Burn Program
Kay Mead, Engineer Technician
Larry Hooker, Ag. Project Coordinator

NRCS:
Ed Teel, District Conservationist
Jim Loiland, Soil Con., NRCS

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Walla Walla County
Conservation District
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