

Walla Walla County Conservation District

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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!

JEFF SCHULKE TO SERVE THREE YEAR TERM AS WWCCD SUPERVISOR

The Walla Walla County Conservation District held its 2011 Annual Meeting and Supervisor Election on Thursday, January 27th, 2011, at the Walla Walla Regional Airport in the Blue Mountain Community Meeting Room.

After serving out the remainder of the term vacated when Merrill Camp retired as supervisor in 2009, Jeff had filed to run for election to a full three year term. Since he ran unopposed and collected 25 valid county elector signatures, he was automatically elected in accordance with conservation district election guidelines.

The Washington State Conservation Commission will validate the election when they meet in May.

The Annual Meeting was enjoyed by nearly 100 people in attendance. A highlight of the meeting was a presentation of a framed "Certificate of Appreciation" to retiring WSU Extension Agent John Fouts in recognition of his assistance and support of the WWCCD.

WWCCD INCREASES EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION & OUTREACH

This past year, the Walla Walla County Conservation District has endeavored to put a much greater emphasis on education and outreach. While those involved in agriculture and managers of "working lands" know who the conservation district is and what we do, the vast percentage of folks in Walla Walla County do not. Therefore, the WWCCD staff has been actively seeking out opportunities to make the District more visible to the general public.

As in past years, the WWCCD still held its Annual Meeting and farmer-hosted mini-sessions. All these were well-attended and the WWCCD extends its thanks to featured speakers, participants and meeting hosts. Also, the District continues with the quarterly issue of this newsletter, periodic updates of our website www.wwccd.net and issuance of special reports when projects are completed.

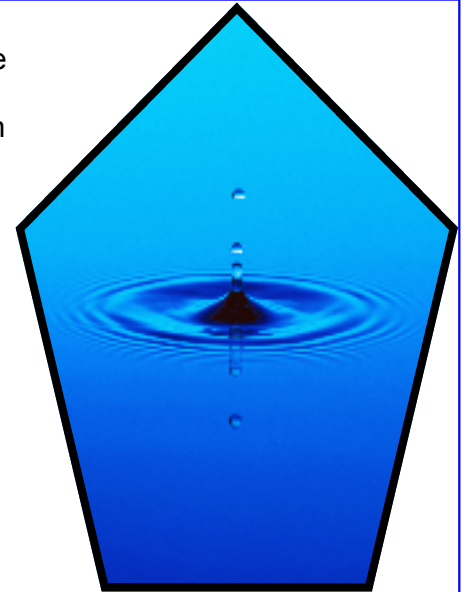
The area of special emphasis involves increasing the scope and breadth of our targeted audiences. To do this, staff has met with various groups and organizations including the County Commissioners, the Walla Walla Chamber of Commerce, Rotary and Exchange Club and has sought at opportunities to participate in television and radio interviews.

WALLA WALLA WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP PILOTING LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT

The Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership (Partnership) is leading the innovative effort underway in the Walla Walla valley to locally manage Washington water for the benefit of the people, farms and fish. With support from the Washington State Department of Ecology, the Partnership formed in 2009 as a local water management board under Chapter 90.92 RCW. Local leadership direct Partnership priorities, with Ed Chvatal (Walla Walla County Conservation District Board of Supervisors) serving as the current Chair of the Partnership. Ed is joined on the local Partnership Board by representatives of irrigated agriculture, environmental interests, tribes and local governments. The Partnership is advised by technical and policy committees featuring stakeholders, interest groups and agency representatives to ensure broad-based involvement.

The Partnership's unique authority provides for operation of a mitigation exchange for new exempt wells and local water planning for reach-scale flow enhancement. Another program area which has enjoyed eager adoption is the local water banking non-use agreement program, which allows water users to "bank" water rights without being subject to relinquishment. To date, 34 water banking non-use agreements have been executed with banked water rights totaling 2,651 acre-feet annually and up to 8.2 cubic feet per second basin-wide depending on the time of year.

The Partnership Board meets on the first Tuesday of every month, with the next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 5th, 2011 at 7 p.m. at the Walla Walla Community College Water & Environmental Center (500 Tausick Way, Walla Walla). Local landowners and community members are encouraged to attend Partnership meetings to learn more about water management programs and other conservation efforts led by basin partners. Meetings are open to the public and additional information about the program or upcoming meetings are available on the Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership website at www.wallawallawatershed.org or contact Cathy Schaeffer for more information at 509-524-5216.



HAVE YOU NOTICED?



As you drive around the county, have you noticed the gradual change that has been occurring over time? I'm referring to dry cropland erosion—or rather the lack of it! As I travel the county roads and state highways, I see less sheet and rill erosion, less concentrated flow or gully erosion, less mud on the roads, and streams that clear up faster after storm events. In a recent conversation with one long-term direct seeder, his comment was that he was amazed at how much direct seeding is being done these days. What used to be the exception is fast becoming the norm! The WWCCD salutes the great job done by farmers who have adopted the direct seed technology.

There are no excuses for excessive field erosion any more!
By: Larry Hooker, WWCCD Agricultural Projects Coordinator

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.

SALMON IN THE CLASSROOM

While state budget cuts have ended the popular Salmon in the Classroom program for many schools around Washington State, Salmon in the Classroom offered by the Franklin Conservation Districts is still alive and strong.

Currently, the FCD and its staff manage equipment and provide education to twenty-eight schools throughout eastern Washington in Franklin, Adams, Walla Walla, Whitman, Lincoln, Grant, and Spokane Counties. Schools participating in the program raise Chinook salmon, steelhead, or rainbow trout depending on their geographical location. Eggs are delivered to schools starting in January and then raised in fifty-five gallon tanks.



Students learn to care and maintain the fish through the remainder of the school year and release them into the river as fry in May. During the release students also attend an all-day educational event where they learn the multiple uses of river systems in Washington State as well as the importance of salmon as a natural resource.

During the school year, teachers have the option of having a salmon dissection performed in their classroom. Here, both a male and female carcass is brought into the classroom and students learn about their internal and external anatomy and then have a chance to hold and touch the various organs themselves.

The Franklin Conservation District also offers conservation education lessons to classrooms in eastern Washington through their Water on Wheels and Wheat Week Programs. Water on Wheels educates students, Kindergarten through 8th grade, how to conserve their natural resources through hands-on science lessons. Wheat Week is geared towards students in grades 4th through 7th and is a week-long conservation education program that teaches students conservation-minded science lessons while using wheat as the teaching tool. All education programs are aligned with state standards in science and are available for free to any classroom that requests a lesson. *By: Kara Kaebler, Education & Outreach Specialist, Franklin Conservation District*

WALLA WALLA FOURTH GRADERS ARBOR DAY PROJECT

This is the fourth year the Walla Walla County Conservation District has supported the National Fourth Grade Foresters Program in the local schools. On Arbor Day, April 13, 2011, a total of 605 fourth graders from Berney, Blue Ridge, Edison, Green Park, Sharpstein, Prospect Point, Rogers Adventist and Assumption Catholic Elementary Schools will all receive a tree to take home and plant. This year WWCCD is adding the Prescott, Waitsburg and Dixie Elementary Schools to the program.

With funding from the Clara & Art Bell Trust, the WWCCD covers the cost of each of the individually packaged evergreen trees, so there is no cost to students, teachers or schools. The trees are important because they take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and help clean the air everyone breathes. The trees are packaged in workshops that employ adults with disabilities through the Fourth Grade Foresters Program.

Marguerite Daltoso, who represents WWCCD said “We are delighted every year to support this fine program and to hear how the students and their parents enjoy planting their own tree, taking care of it and watching it grow.” She said our motto is ‘Leave a Legacy, Plant a Tree.’ As a result, the youngsters become members of the Fourth Grade Foresters of Washington State.

STILL WANTED: WATER! WILL PAY TO LEASE!

The following is a repeat from last quarter’s newsletter: WWCCD continues to seek 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 Diversion) 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*

SR-SRB Announces Opening of 12th Grant Round—Call for Projects

The Snake River Salmon Recovery Board (SR-SRB) recently announced the opening of the 12th grant round for salmon recovery projects in the Snake River Recovery Region. Projects in the Washington restoration area benefitting species listed as threatened or endangered by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) are eligible for consideration. What kinds and/or types of projects are being sought? Removal of barriers to



fish migration is always a good bet to receive funding as are fish habitat restoration projects in streams considered as important restoration reaches in major spawning areas. Perpetual conservation easements are also desirable if they are located adjacent to streams important to spawning and rearing.

The deadline to present project ideas in the form of a project pre-application is Tuesday, April 12, 2011 at 5 p.m. If you think you have a potential project or have questions, contact Larry Hooker, Agricultural Projects Coordinator at (509) 522-6340 Ext. 119.

Walla Walla County Conservation District

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at www.wwccd.net

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