

Walla Walla County Conservation District

325 North 13th Avenue – Walla Walla, WA 99362
Phone: (509) 522-6340, Ext. 3 – Fax: (509) 343-2791

Spring 2015

Published regularly to provide information to land users

Volume 17, Issue 1



In this issue:

WWCCD Board Reorganization—Officer changes

Mill Creek Pipeline
Temporary Fix

WA-DOE Watershed Surveys Underway

Reminder—Funding Available for Fish Screens & Meters

Winter/Spring 2015 Mini-Sessions Cancelled

REMEMBER:

If you need help with your burn permit(s), Frank is in on Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday as needed from 8:00 to 12:00 & from 1:00 to 4:00 BY APPOINTMENT at 509-522-6340.

WWCCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REORGANIZES

The annual reorganization of the Walla Walla County Conservation District Board of Supervisors is traditionally conducted following the District's annual meeting and supervisor election held in January of each year. Jim Kent, who was elected to serve as WWCCD supervisor in 2013, has been named Board Chair for 2015. Jim originally became a supervisor when he agreed to serve the remainder of Guy McCaw's term near the end of 2012.



Ed Chvatal, Board Supervisor since 2000, will soon be applying for his expiring appointed position on the Board. Conservation District boards in the State of Washington are made up of three elected positions and two appointed positions. The appointments offered by a local district go through the Washington State Conservation Commission who formally recommend the appointments to the Governor for approval.
By: Larry Hooker, WWCCD Agricultural Projects Coordinator

TODD KIMBALL – THANKS FOR YOUR SERVICE TO THE WWCCD

Todd Kimball, a veteran District supervisor, has elected to step down from his position after serving on the Board for nine years. During this time, Todd has moved through each of the officer positions on the board, participated in special business actions such as annual audits, and attended monthly board meetings and District annual meetings. Todd has been extremely valuable to the business operations due to his professional accounting skills.

Thanks, Todd, for your outstanding and dedicated service to the WWCCD.

TEMPORARY FIX NEEDED TO PROTECT MAINLINE



The past few years have seen many eroding banks on the dynamic stream and river systems in Walla Walla County. This year an emergency issue arose because of this phenomenon. On Mill Creek at about river mile # 2.1 over the last nine years, about 75 feet of the bank have disintegrated during high flows. This year the creek took out an additional 25 feet or so.

As a result of bank erosion, 12-inch pipeline that serves a dual purpose - irrigation and aquifer recharge - was exposed and threatened to collapse into the creek. A local farmer alerted the Walla Walla County Conservation District (WWCCD) to the problem and District staff immediately started to work on a remediation plan. We alerted the impacted landowners and

farm operators, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC), and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR). The first hurdle to cross was getting permission to do a small amount of instream work during a time the fish were moving. Approval was granted to install a temporary measure in order to minimize the disturbance. The next hurdle was getting the absentee landowner on board. Finally, and the most difficult obstacle, was finding some money to do the work. Because the District is grant funded, there is no pot of extra money for such things. Fortunately, one of our partner agencies found the needed funding.

The District called on various contactors for ideas and estimates and selected a company that had a lot of experience in river restoration. In the meantime, there was another high flow event that took out even more streambank and exposed more pipeline. The first repair ideas had to be revised and the materials planned for use were no long available. So the contractor brought in two rootwads (1-large and 1-smaller) as well as two trees without rootwads. These were placed along the bank where the new force of the creek was hitting with erosive force and then secured the large wood with ecology blocks (only a temporary measure) and rebar pins. The contractor then realigned the 12-inch pipeline about 10-15 feet further away from the bank edge.



The Mill Creek Pipeline Repair Project was finished in two and a half days and the pipeline that serves the Still-er Pond Aquifer Recharge site was able to resume pumping until the flow in Mill Creek became too low and necessitated a shut-down. *By: Lisa Stearns, WWCCD Civil Engineering Technician*

BURN PROGRAM - FRANK'S HOT SPOT!

REMEMBER: All permit holders who have completed their field burns need to complete their blue cards and mail them in to DOE. If desired, field burn completion can be reported via DOE's website as per the permit transmittal letter. If a permitted burn was not completed, be sure to turn in a "Request for Refund"! Please do not wait until December to do so.

WATERSHED SURVEYS UNDERWAY

The Washington Department of Ecology is looking at various stream systems in Eastern Washington as part of their watershed survey program. Watershed surveys are evaluation tools that help Ecology to assess the health of streams and identify sources of “non-point” pollution — the leading cause of water quality problems in Washington State.



In early February, Ecology held an “Agricultural Water Quality Stakeholder Meeting” at the Walla Walla County Regional Airport to announce its intent to conduct surveys in our area. Ecology staff is currently in the field this spring to evaluate livestock grazing impacts to streamside vegetation.

The surveys help identify water quality problems and needed work with landowners to fix water pollution problems. This spring’s field work focuses on five areas that have been selected because data shows water quality problems are present in these streams and rivers.

Focus areas include:

- Blue Mountain streams — Asotin, Alpowa, Deadman and Meadow Creeks
- Hangman Creek
- North and South Fork of the Palouse River
- Snake River tributaries in Whitman County
- Walla Walla River

Ecology uses the information gathered to prioritize where technical and financial assistance offers should be made and then follows up with local conservation districts and landowners.

Landowners can evaluate the impacts caused by grazing practices on their own property by looking for visual indicators of water pollution. Ecology developed [draft guidance](#) that describes how field staff evaluate streamside vegetation and document site conditions known to contribute to water pollution.

Even if you live in an area that Ecology staff is not evaluating, [local conservation districts](#) are an excellent resource and help landowners with state and federal funding programs to make on the ground improvements.

You can also learn more about the work on a recently published [Ecology webpage](#). It includes a timeline and links to resources for landowners.

STILL NEED A FISH SCREEN OR METER?

The WWCCD still has funding available for both NOAA compliant fish screen installations and metering. If you need either a fish screen or meter, it is important to get your name on the list! Call Greg Kinsinger at (509) 522-6340 Ext. 109 or Lisa Stearns at (509) 522-6340 Ext. 116.

WINTER/SPRING MINI-SESSIONS FOR 2015

CANCELLED

Normally, January and February is when the Conservation Partnership (FSA, NRCS & WWCCD) schedules mini-sessions. The purpose of these neighborhood meetings is to provide an informal and non-confrontational forum for meeting with farmers at rural sites around the county for the purpose of providing up-to-date information about the programs and opportunities available. We have been holding mini-sessions annually since the late 1970s and cancelled them only a handful of times over the past 35-36 years.

Unfortunately, 2015 is one of the rare years when we must cancel the meetings. Due to some rigid Farm Program deadlines in February, our federal partners were unable to commit to a satisfactory meeting schedule. While we could have tried holding the mini-sessions in early March, attendance has historically been poor for March meetings—farmers are starting to farm!



NRCS DC Ed Teel talks about NRCS program opportunities at a 2014 mini-session in Jeff Schulke's shop

To be sure, the WWCCD is committed to using mini-sessions as an important outreach tool. We will attempt to hold them February 2016. *By: Larry Hooker, WWCCD Agricultural Projects Coordinator*

Walla Walla County Conservation District

Board of Supervisors

Jim Kent, Chair
Pat McConnell, Vice Chair
Jeff Schulke, Secretary
Ed Chvatal, Treasurer
Vacant, Member

District Staff

Rick Jones, District Manager
Marguerite Daltoso, Admin. Assistant
Audrey Ahmann, Grants Administrator
Greg Kinsinger, Restoration Project Coordinator
Kay Mead, Irrigation Efficiency Coordinator
Jeff Klundt, Restoration Project Coordinator,
Frank Lane, Burn Permit Technician
Larry Hooker, Ag. Projects Coordinator
Lisa Stearns, Civil Engineering Technician
Travis Morrison, Civil Engineering CAD Tech.
Intern
Heather Noel, CREP Intern

NRCS Staff

Ed Teel, District Conservationist
Jessica Taylor, Soil Conservationist

WDFW Staff

Sean Taylor, Fish Passage & Screening Biologist



Printed on 100% recycled paper

Check out the updated WWCCD website at www.wwccd.net

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
Paid
99324
Permit #44

Walla Walla County
Conservation District
325 North 13th Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362