

Walla Walla County Conservation District

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In this issue:

Goodbye to Marguerite Daltoso, Frank Lane, and Larry Hooker

Titus Creek Project

Joanna Cowles comes on board for CREP.

Burn Permits

If you need help with your burn permit(s), Jeff Klundt has taken over for Frank and is available to help Monday through Thursday or by appointment.

Goodbyes and Hellos

Marguerite Daltoso, who has welcomed everyone to the office for over 33 years, retired in August along with Larry Hooker and Frank Lane. These folks are going to be missed! It is practically impossible to list all of Marguerite's many contributions to the district over three decades of service. She came on at the district when there was only one other employee, and for many years she was the linchpin of a two-person office. She started before computers and recalled being excited when the office equipment was upgraded to a word-processing typewriter! Marguerite was the unofficial hostess at the office, but behind her warm smile was a very busy administrative assistant who did everything from bookkeeping and managing grants to organizing and distributing the rainfall data. Marguerite was a staunch supporter of youth programs and through her efforts and fund raising, hundreds of local students (*con. on pg.4*)

Frank Lane came out of retirement in 2002 for a "part-time/temporary" position to run the district Burn Permit program. At the height of the burn program, before wide adoption of low-disturbance tillage and baling, Frank found the definition of "part-time" could mean a very large part of one's time with over 20,000 acres being permitted in some seasons. Area producers and fellow employees could rely on Frank to bring un-failing good humor and a cheerful demeanor to the office, even when burning became a contentious issue, as it did on occasion.

Larry Hooker found it hard to stay on the sidelines for long when he retired from NRCS so when

the District asked him to come on as the ag. project coordinator, he readily agreed. He soon found his niche as our unofficial spokesman, writing district reports and the newsletter, organizing annual meetings, and representing area farmers and the district in the Lead Entity process. Larry brought an incredible wealth of experience and knowledge to the district although he steadfastly refused to attend board meetings after doing so for decades on behalf of the NRCS. Larry continues to be active in conservation and was recently appointed to represent our county on the Snake River Salmon Recovery Funding Board.



Titus Creek Project

TITUS CREEK DIVERSION FISH PASSAGE & SCREENING: The Titus Creek project is an ambitious and complex project that required a great deal of planning and coordination. Titus Creek is a distributary of Mill Creek originating from a Mill Creek side channel. This side-channel is excellent fish habitat and is used by endangered fish species for spawning and rearing. Prior to the project, a barrier diversion dam diverted water for irrigation from this side channel into Titus. The barrier inadvertently blocked the side channel from migrating fish and directed juveniles into Titus, not the side channel. When irrigation ended for the season, these juveniles were at risk for stranding. Property owners Kirk Klicker and Ken Harrison (Abeja winery) were very aware of the risks to endangered fish species and greatly appreciated help from the district in designing a solution that protected fish while allowing continued irrigation. Project manager Greg Kinsinger applied for and received a grant through the local lead entity, the Snake River Salmon Recovery Funding Board, to design and construct the project.



WDFW Yakima screen shop designed and built a fish screen to meet National Marine Fisheries specifications. District engineer Lance Horning, in consultation with WDFW and the Recreation Conservation Office, designed a series of rock-sills and a head gate system. The project also includes enhancement of the side channel, with large woody debris installed to provide shelter and pools to enhance fish habitat.

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**5 CFS Drum Screen
Operating at Capacity**

The end result: a screen prevents fish from entering Titus Creek and a step-pool fishway diverts them to the improved habitat on the Mill Creek side channel. A fish barrier prevents stranding by blocking fish from migrating up from lower Titus Creek. Fish are protected, habitat improved, and farmers can continue to irrigate, demonstrating again that engaging landowners as partners in conservation results in work on the ground to protect endangered species and natural resources.



**Restructured Mill Creek
Side Channel w/ Implanted
Large Wood & Rock Structures**

Blue Creek Fire Area Landowners

The District is currently collecting information on fire losses and damages relating to the Blue Creek Fire. We are looking for resources and funding to assist landowners in rehabilitation efforts. If you are one of those landowners, or know someone who is, please pass this message on to them. We also have a guide with other local agency contacts and information at the website: see Fire Response Help under the Programs tab. Feel free to contact Lisa Stearns at lisa.stearns@wwccd.net (509)522-6340 ext. 116, or talk to anyone at the District for help in fire recovery.



Welcome Joanna Cowles and Katy Walters, best of luck Heather Noel

The District would like to welcome Joanna Cowles to the CREP program. Joanna (right) comes to the office with a Master's Degree in Biology. In addition to assisting with the CREP program, Joanna is also in charge of the District's water quality monitoring work and is currently collecting data on temperature, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity from several area streams. In the future this data can be used to verify the benefits of the CREP program as continued monitoring shows improvements in water quality. Katy Walters (left) has

been hired by NRCS as a Program Support Specialist to assist in scheduling and with the occasional paperwork the programs require. Heather Noel said goodbye to the District to accept a position in North Dakota as a wetlands specialist for NRCS. The District wishes her the very best of luck there.



(continued from page 1) received scholarships to The Inland Empire Natural Resources Youth Camp. She helped organize soil testing trials for FFA students and in recent years she began the very popular Fourth Grade Foresters Program, which supplies local students with a tree to plant and information on the importance of trees on Arbor Day. Soon after beginning she helped organize district employees into an organization called WADE, which now boasts its own office and provides professional training and support to conservation districts statewide. She was very dedicated to making sure everyone felt welcome, both at the office and at the annual meetings where she was always busy organizing the meal, filing the pesticide credit paperwork, and running the elections. Everyone wishes Marguerite the very best in her retirement. She will be sorely missed.

Free Rain Gauges!

Rainfall Data available on-line

The new rainfall map showing the totals from the 2014-2015 season is posted at the District website at <http://www.wvccd.net/newsletters>. Many thanks to those who track rainfall for the District and for their fellow producers. The map shows where we need more help collecting data. Contact the District today for a **free rain gauge** and instructions on how you can help collect and report this vital and timely information.

Walla Walla County Conservation District

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