



**CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**  
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**WALLA WALLA COUNTY**  
**CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
ESTABLISHED 1941

# Walla Walla County Conservation District



## Annual Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2027

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# Mission

*The Walla Walla County Conservation District works to conserve and enhance natural resources in the county through voluntary participation and education.*

## Natural Resource Priorities

Most of Walla Walla County land is in private ownership. As a result, WWCCD tends to work with primarily agricultural landowners. The Natural Resources Priorities described below have been identified as state, regional, and local priorities through various agencies. These agencies include but are not limited to Washington Dept. of Ecology, Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, NRCS Snake River Local Working Group, Walla Walla County, Snake River Salmon Recovery Office and area non-profit organizations. Priorities often overlap and are defined in detail in numerous TMDL reports, several geomorphic assessments on local waterways, the Walla Walla County VSP plan, Walla Walla Subbasin Plan, Walla Walla Watershed Plan, several USACE flood assessment plans, Walla Walla County Hazard Mitigation Plan, Walla Walla County Community Wildfire Protection Plan and other documents.

- Soil Health
  - Declining soil health—marked by nutrient loss, compaction, and low organic matter—is limiting crop productivity in Walla Walla County. This is exacerbated by dangerously low pH levels and a lack of baseline data. The WWCCD is collaborating with USDA-NRCS, WSU Extension, and OSU Extension to boost awareness and work towards addressing this concern.
- Air Quality
  - Nearly 94% of Walla Walla County acres are mapped as within a “moderate” to “very high” wind erosion potential which is more severe in the west portion of the county adjacent to the Columbia and Snake Rivers exceeding 10ppm of particulate matter. Walla Walla County, WA-Ecology, USDA NRCS and USDA FSA are working to address these concerns. Encouraging best management practices related to conservation cover and agricultural burning can reduce particulate matter and address air quality concerns.
- Water Quantity
  - Municipal and irrigation withdraws and changing climate conditions have resulted in declining aquifers and instream flows. Several waterways also have “gaining” or “losing” reaches making it challenging to identify the factor related to declining conditions. Installing irrigation efficiency projects, monitoring water use and collaborating with area partners are part of WWCCD’s strategy to address water quantity concerns.
- Water Quality
  - Numerous TMDL reports and the Salmon Limiting Factors Report have identified water quality concerns. Establishing and maintaining riparian buffers, facilitating improvements with livestock producers, reducing erosion and restoring waterways to their natural function are ways to protect and enhance water quality.
- Critical Areas and Wildlife Protection
  - This resource is described in the WWCCD 5-year plan as Fisheries, Upland Habitat & Range, Wetland Resources, and Forest Health. Critical areas in Walla Walla County include Fish and Wildlife Habitat, Wetlands, Frequently Flooded Areas, Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas, and Geologic Hazardous Areas. Components of each are described in other resource priorities, below.

# Program Areas

There are two program areas: natural resource programs and district programs.

- **Natural Resource Programs** are those intended to address specific, identified natural resource concerns in the district area.
- **District Programs** are those supporting basic district operations, education and outreach with landowners, engagement with other processes and entities to advance the work of the district, etc. Both program area activities relate to the district’s long-term goals as stated in the 5-year plan.

## Natural Resource Programs

### Soil Health

**Goal(s):** Increase soil health in Walla Walla County (pH, organic matter, carbon level, nutrients, etc).

**Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective:** Education of soil health will increase.

**Programmatic Measurable Result Objective:** Host 1 soil health focused workshops. Develop cost share opportunities focused on soil health practices.

**Funding Source(s):** State Conservation Commission, landowner fees

Activities for FY2027	Target Dates	Time (Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Promote soil testing and soil health practices	Ongoing	4	500	SCC Implementation
Coordinate rental of no-till drill (Dewdrop) with area producers	Ongoing	4	300	Fees

### Air Quality

**Goal(s):** Reduce air pollutants by processing Agricultural Burn Permit applications in Walla Walla County.

**Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective:** Agricultural burn related air quality particulates will be reduced over time.

**Programmatic Measurable Result Objective:** Landowners (25 to 70) will be guided through the agricultural burn permit Best Management Practices and permit applications resulting in a reduction of burn related air quality particulates.

**Funding Source(s):** State Conservation Commission, Washington Dept. of Ecology contract with Walla Walla County

Activities for FY2027	Target Dates	Time (Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
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Process agricultural burn permit applications. Attend Ag Burn Task Force meetings. Provide technical assistance in Best Management Practices regarding tillage and air quality.	Ongoing	80	25,000	Ecology/ Walla Walla County contract
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### *Water Quantity*

**Goal:** Assist with restoring flow in Walla Walla area waterways.

**Funding Source(s):** Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC), US Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), Ecology Office of Columbia River (OCR)

Activities for FY2027	Target Dates	Time (Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Assist landowners in developing on-farm irrigation efficiencies projects, flow meters, and variable frequency drives.	On-going	30	7,800	SCC Irrigation Efficiency, SCC VSP
Work with engineering firm to advance plans for the Gardena Farms District # 13 upper canal	Through June 2028	50	175,000	US Bureau of Reclamation
Work with the partners to improve water management (WW 2050 Basin Advisory Committee and others).	On-going	20	14,000	Ecology: Local Drought Preparedness Plan; SCC Implementation
Work with hired consultant to create a Drought Preparedness Plan	Through Nov. 2026	30	50,000	Ecology: Local Drought Preparedness Plan
Promote low water-use landscaping through the Heritage Garden Program.	Through June 2027	20	11,000	OCR

### *Water Quality*

**Goal(s):** Reduce pollutants to waters of Walla Walla

**Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective:** Install 5 acres or 1 mile of riparian buffer.

**Programmatic Measurable Result Objective:** Work with Walla Walla landowners and conservation partners to remove Walla Walla streams and rivers from the 303d list by planting and maintaining riparian forest buffers on eligible streambanks. This will be done by controlling invasive noxious weeds and restoring natural river function to area rivers and streams.

**Funding Source(s):** Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC), Walla Walla County, Dept. of Ecology, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), USDA Farm Service Agency & Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Washington State Dept. of Agriculture (WSDA)

Activities for FY2027	Target Dates	Time (Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Maintain and monitor current enrollment of ~450 acres and about 30 contracts.  Conduct mid-management reviews on 5 CREP contracts	On-going	150	108,000	SCC CREP TA and project costs
Develop and install two riparian forest buffers along the Walla Walla River (Swegle and McDonald)	Through June 2029	200	250,000	RCO: Riparian
Develop and install riparian forest buffers along waterways	Ongoing	90	700,000	NRI, Ecology THA, RGP
Coordinate with producers on water quality concerns. Address erosion to streams and fields from natural disasters which impact water quality.	Ongoing	20	5,000	NRI, SCC

### **Critical Areas & Wildlife Protection**

**Goal(s):** Increase stability of fish and wildlife populations and protect/enhance habitats

**Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective:** Remove one fish barrier/install one fish screen per year in Walla Walla County. Assess critical area function and needs within Walla Walla County.

**Programmatic Measurable Result Objective:** Design one fish related barrier removal or fish screen project annually. Develop farm plans at the request of landowners to address critical area concerns on their property.

**Funding Source(s):** Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC), Walla Walla County, WA State Dept. of Ecology, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO): Snake River Salmon Recovery Office, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), WA State Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR), US Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and private mitigation funds

Activities for FY2027	Target Dates	Time (Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Lead the Voluntary Stewardship Program including monitoring, providing TA and coordinate with landowners, and cost-share projects.	On-going	240	145,000	Walla Walla County contract
Advance design and bid documents for lower Mill Creek (Wallula Avenue to Bunchgrass Lane)	Through June 2029	80	75,000	ECY; Installation will be July-Sept 2027

Advance design and bid documents for Touchet River RM 33	Through Dec. 2027	15	80,000	ECY
Implement & monitor construction of the Touchet River RM 42 & Touchet RM 35 restoration projects	Through June 2027	80	2.4M	RCO, ECY, OCR; Installation will be July-Sept 2026
Seek funds for in-stream restoration and flood mitigation projects on the Touchet River, Walla Walla River, Mill Creek and tributaries.	Ongoing	70	35,000	SCC Implementation
Complete status reviews of CRP fields or CSP contracts	Through June 2027	50	7,000	NRCS Task Order
Coordinate on advancing the Touchet/Tucannon levee group	Through Dec. 2028	50	190,000	USBR

## District Programs

### *Education, Outreach, & Partner Development*

**Goal(s):** Continue providing technical assistance to the Walla Walla County community. Share progress on restoration efforts and participate in regional planning forums. Continue attending partner meetings.

**Programmatic Measurable Result Objective:**

Education and outreach program will include 1) maintaining publications including website, monthly newsletters and 2) conducting farmer mini-sessions, workshop and/or tours. Outreach will educate and/or engage 90 landowners annually.

**Funding Source(s):** Washington State Conservation Commission: Implementation; Snake River Salmon Recovery Office: Lead Entity (LE), other Conservation Districts, and non-profit funding.

Activities for FY2027	Target Dates	Days Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Meet statutory requirements of RCW 89.08: conduct audits, fiscal management, commission reporting, and management.	Ongoing	125	60,000	SCC Implementation
Maintain skills of WWCCD staff through trainings (WADE, SAO, NRCS, etc.)	Ongoing	2 to 5 each staff	40,000	SCC Implementation
Inform the public of the WWCCD mission through a monthly newsletter (650 subscribers), website, meetings, and/or tours.	Ongoing	50	20,000	SCC Implementation
Educate area youth and landowners through community events (Wheat Week, Conservation Conversations, Return-to-the-River Event)	On-going	40	40,000	SCC Implementation, LE, Wheat Week, THA, Growing Minds

Participate in local & regional activities and meetings.	On-going	45	10,000	LE, SCC
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# Budget

Fiscal Year 2027 (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027)

<u>Revenues</u>		
Project		Salary plus project cost share
SCC (Implementation, Basic, Sustainable Farms and Fields, Forest Health, Engineering)		131,264
SCC-CREP		108,000
SCC/Walla Walla Co.-Voluntary Stewardship Program		145,000
SCC (Irrigation Efficiencies and Natural Resource Investments)		39,500
Riparian Grant Program		659,876
Priority Projects (Drought Plan, Gardena, Touchet 42, Touchet 35, WW River Riparian, Touchet Levee Group, South Fork Russell Creek Post Burn Riparian Planting)		3,757,818
Snake River Salmon Recovery Board Lead Entity		4,950
Ecology/ Walla Walla Co. MOU for Burn Permit		25,000
Fees, Other CDs, NRCS (Task Orders), Education, THA		40,000
<b>Total Revenue:</b>		<b>4,882,597</b>
<u>Expenses and Other Uses</u>		
Description		FY27 Expenses
SCC and Priority Projects		4,106,212
Wages & Benefits: 6 FT employees		657,546
General Office Expenses		147,650
		<b>4,882,597</b>

