

Walla Walla County Conservation District

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Published regularly to provide information to land users

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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.*

INTRODUCING SEAN TAYLOR, WDFW FISH PASSAGE & SCREENING BIOLOGIST

The newest member of our co-located conservation partners at the Walla Walla USDA Service Center is Sean Taylor, Fish Passage & Screening Biologist for WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW). Sean was born and raised in Walla Walla, is married to Anna Taylor and has two boys—William (2 yrs.) and Lucas (10 mo.).

Sean is a 2002 graduate from WA-HI, received an AA degree from Walla Walla Community College in 2004 and graduated from Washington State University with a bachelor's degree in Wildlife Ecology in 2006. He later returned to school and earned a second BS degree in Fisheries Management from the University of Idaho.

In 2005, Sean worked for NOAA Fisheries pit tagging juvenile Chinook Salmon and Steelhead at Lower Monumental Dam as part of a survival study of the fish through Monumental and Ice Harbor Dams. During 2007-8 while working for the Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, he conducted electrofishing surveys for abundance of Red Band Trout in the Malheur River and Lake systems all the way down to Lakeview, OR near the CA border. He also conducted Coho Salmon spawning surveys out of Florence, OR on coastal river and lake systems.

Before starting his new position here in Walla Walla, Sean worked seasonal positions for WDFW out of Dayton with the Lower Snake River Compensation Program. From 2008 through the present, he conducted Steelhead and Chinook creel surveys from Port Kelly on the Columbia River all the way up the Snake River to Little Goose Dam and on the Touchet, Walla Walla, Tucannon and Grande Ronde Rivers. He also was a smolt trap operator during the spring months when smolt outmigration was occurring where he collected biological data on all fish and Pit tagged juvenile salmonids. He also conducted a radio telemetry project on Tucannon River Spring Chinook.

Sean is a welcome addition to our crew. He will be covering all of Southeast WA looking for opportunities to eliminate passage barriers and implement needed fish screen projects. *By: Larry Hooker, WWCCD Agricultural Projects Coordinator*



FENCING & OFF-STREAM WATERING OPTIONS FOR LIVESTOCK OWNERS

The Walla Walla Watershed begins with small creeks in the Blue Mountains, moving into larger waters such as the Mill Creek, Dry Creek, and Touchet River and ends when the Walla Walla River enters the Columbia River. The water starts in pristine condition and degrades as it moves downstream. While many entities in the region have several programs to improve water quality, there is still room for improvement.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a program administered by the Farm Service Agency and implemented by WWCCD. It is a good solution for improving degraded water quality. At no cost to the landowner, a buffer is installed and maintained for 5 years. This includes installation of native trees, shrubs and grasses and may also include fencing and off-stream watering for livestock. In addition, a rental payment is made to the owner or operator for use of the land over the 10-15 year life of the contract. The benefits of the program include higher water quality through reductions in sediment, temperature, nutrients and bacteria levels.



LIVESTOCK TRAMPLING DAMAGE ALONG A SMALL STREAM PLUS NOTABLE ABSENCE OF PROTECTIVE VEGETATION

CREP, however, has a limited scope and is not able to be implemented in all areas. WWCCD would like to provide a comprehensive solution to livestock management on all properties adjacent to streams, or ponds with direct connections to streams, as well as irrigation ditches with return flows to live streams. Solutions may include manure storage, use exclusion, bridges or culverts and/or off stream watering systems. The WWCCD is planning to implement a program that would provide 85% cost share on these types of projects (pending funding) and is seeking participants that may be interested in assistance.

If you are interested in either the CREP program or this new program, please contact either Heather Noel or Jeff Klundt at 509-522-6340 ext. 3. *By: Heather Noel, WWCCD CREP Intern*

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! Call us at (509) 522-6340 Ext. 1.

MEET THE WALLA WALLA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT STAFF

To help meet your conservation needs, the following identifies our WWCCD staff members and their area or areas of responsibility:



Rick Jones, District Manager; supervises day-to-day operations of the WWCCD staff, assigns & prioritizes tasks as directed by the Board of Supervisors



Marguerite Daltoso, Administrative Assistant; administrative & office support, arranges for CD & NRCS events/meetings & coordinates 4th grade forestry program



Audrey Ahmann, Grant Administrator & Accountant; tracks CD finances, issues payments to contractors and provides financial information for project reports; staff payroll



Greg Kinsinger, Restoration Project Coordinator—Screens & Meters; runs fish screen and meters programs, coordinates piping & aquifer recharge projects



Kay Mead, Irrigation Efficiency Coordinator; project manager for trust water piping projects, coordinates pipeline/pump station/outlet designs & implementation with landowners, contractors & agencies



Frank Lane, Burn Permit Technician; provides assistance to producers on obtaining agricultural burn permits. Also assists screens & meters programs billing of participants



Jeff Klundt, Restoration Project Coordinator & CREP Maintenance Technician; CREP maintenance, contract administration, IT support, grant writing, inter-agency coordination



Lisa Stearns, Civil Engineering Technician; works on screens, meters, pipelines & restoration projects. Does Auto-CAD, GIS mapping, intern training & construction inspection



Heather Noel, CREP Intern; works with landowners to plan & develop or renew CREP projects, GIS mapping, water quality monitoring, public outreach, and IT assistance to the staff



Travis Morrison, Civil Engineering CAD Technician Intern; serves as an Auto-CAD technician, works on fish screen and meter designs and cost estimates, & provides basic IT assistance to the staff

MEET THE WALLA WALLA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT STAFF—continued



Larry Hooker, *Agricultural Projects Coordinator*; plans—carries out CD outreach activities. Represents CD at Snake River Local Work Group and Snake River Salmon Recovery regional meetings, technical assistance to land users



Lance Horning, *Agricultural Engineer*; design engineer for pipelines, pumping stations, fish passage structures, and fish habitat restoration projects

MEET THE WWCCD's CO-LOCATED CONSERVATION PARTNERS

The USDA Service Center located in Walla Walla has two full-time Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees to help local landowners navigate through the many conservation-based programs available to protect and/or enhance natural resources. The Service Center also has a co-located WA Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) employee.



Ed Teel, *District Conservationist, Snake River Team, USDA-NRCS*; supervises and guides all NRCS conservation program activities in Asotin, Columbia, Franklin, Garfield & Walla Walla Counties



Jessica Taylor, *Soil Conservationist, Walla Walla Field Office, USDA-NRCS*; develops plans and contracts to assist landowners participating in USDA conservation programs



Sean Taylor, *SE WA Fish Passage & Screening Biologist, WDFW*; available to answer questions regarding fish passage or screens at any time. Call 509-406-0762



Jack Myrick, *Technical Coordinator—Irrigation Efficiencies, WA State Conservation Commission*; provides technical assistance to CDs on irrigation efficiency and piping projects

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.

NRCS TO CONDUCT 2014 CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE STATUS REVIEWS



The Natural Resources Conservation Service, as part of its responsibility in carrying out the conservation provisions of the Food Security Act, is again conducting status reviews of program participants. The list of tracts to be reviewed this fall includes a national random selection, as well as tracts on which a local variance was granted in year 2013.

If your Tract is selected for review this calendar year, the status review will consist of comparing the residue amounts listed in the Alternative Conservation System with the amount of measured residue on the ground after seeding. Even if growers burn their stubble and use low disturbance operations to seed the winter wheat crop, it doesn't mean residue levels will be met. Please contact your local NRCS office if you are not sure of the residue amounts required for your rainfall zone. *By: Ed Teel, NRCS District Conservationist, Snake River Team.*

SHOWN ABOVE IS A PARTICULARLY CLEAN STUBBLE BURN. PLANT CROWNS ALONE REMAINING AFTER SEEDING MAY NOT BE ADEQUATE TO MEET NEEDED COVER REQUIREMENTS

FISH SCREENS & METERS NEED WINTER MAINTENANCE

When the irrigation season is over and winter begins to set in, we remind irrigators of the need to “winterize” both screens and flow meters. These are expensive components in an irrigation system. A little care and maintenance over the off season will keep them operating as designed for many seasons. Owners/operators are responsible for these screens and meters for 10-years as specified in the “Landowner Agreement” signed with WWCCD.

There are several maintenance functions that need to be performed for both passive and active cleaning screens:

- ◆ Remove the screen from the stream—inspect the stainless steel mesh for any damage. Don't leave it on the river bank where it can be lost to flood waters or stolen.
- ◆ Clean the screen with a stiff brush and hose—remove any debris, mud and/or algae (unplug holes).
- ◆ Apply lubricating spray to the stainless steel mesh, the ring locks, the internal aluminum baffle tube and all bearings (if present).
- ◆ Inspect and lubricate gaskets, inspect and clean suction hose and fittings and check valve.
- ◆ Store in a dry, covered and secure location.

Meters also need fall maintenance. Small 2-inch meters should be pulled from service, cleaned and stored. Meters 4-inches and larger may be left attached to the discharge pipe. The discharge pipe needs to be drained to avoid freeze damage. Change the batteries at the end of 3-years to avoid any lapse in monitoring. If the pump is pulled, use a blind flange to seal off the meter. Cover the meter in the winter to protect it. For maintenance questions, call *Greg Kinsinger, WWCCD Restoration Project Coordinator—Screens & Meters.*

RAINFALL GAUGING STATIONS NEEDED

For about 65 years, the Walla Walla County Conservation District (WWCCD) has managed a county-wide precipitation database. Many dedicated volunteers across the county have religiously turned in their rainfall records to the District – some on a monthly basis and some once per year. This has allowed the District to maintain a very important rainfall record that has proved itself useful many times over. To those of you who contribute rainfall data, thank you for performing this service for the District and your neighbors!

There are, however, a few things you may not realize. Due to natural attrition from retirements, folks going out of business, or even death, the number of volunteers maintaining precipitation gauges across the county has dwindled down from almost 50 down to a mere 22 recording sites. There are now gaps in the county with little or almost no coverage. And coverage is needed!

Why? Whenever there is a drought severe enough to warrant crop insurance claims, almost the first place the insurance carrier comes to is the WWCCD to check on the precipitation records. So the better coverage we have, the more solid the basis for crop loss claims due to drought. And this is just one use. Average annual precipitation is also used for determining conservation compliance residue requirements, for sizing structure capacities for handling projected runoff, for selecting adapted plants for conservation plantings, and for much more. It is often the first question asked by prospective land buyers, especially for dry cropland operations.

It is important to continue development of this much needed database. But we cannot maintain it in a useful form unless we have a broader base of participation. Many of you already keep track of rainfall and record it for your own use. With a little extra effort, you could be a big help to the District by sharing your data with us. Or if you haven't been keeping track of rainfall but would like to, let us know. We'll even furnish you with a rain gauge.

If you would like to participate or know someone who would, give the District a call at 509-522-6340 Ext. 101 and talk to Marguerite Daltoso. *By: Larry Hooker, WWCCD Agricultural Projects Coordinator*

Walla Walla County Conservation District

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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 &
Screenng Biologist



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