

Walla Walla County Conservation District NEWSLETTER

Fall 2021
Volume 23, Issue 2

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Save the Dates

Participate in our board meetings to get the latest information!

Next Meeting:

Monday Nov. 8th at 5 p.m.
Call **509-353-2327** to join in.

Contact Renee 509-956-3756
or renee.hadley@wwccd.net
for meeting links or details.

New Projects:

Touchet River and Coppei Creek - A segment of the Touchet River near Prescott and a segment of Coppei Creek near the confluence of the forks were identified by the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board's 3-Year Work Plan. With funds from the SRSRB, the district will develop engineered designs for salmonid habitat restoration projects.

Walla Walla River Restoration at Rivermile 35.5 is a half mile project that includes placing large woody debris structures in the stream channel and installing riparian plantings. Construction phase will begin in Summer 2022.

Mill Creek – The [Floodplains by Design](#) project is intended to reduce flood impacts. An engineering firm has been hired to develop designs and landowners are being contacted to help guide the work. Contact Alison Crowley at 509-956-3777 for details.

The Snake River Salmon Recovery Funding Board provided funds to work on a two-mile segment of Lower Mill Creek. The funds will be used to develop engineered designs for habitat restoration. The project area begins just above the Wallula Ave bridge and ends downstream at the bridge on Last Chance Rd.

Office Updates

No one expected Covid-19 restriction to continue into the fall but here we are! The conservation district office is co-located with federal agencies, so the office building is governed by federal procedures, not state guidelines. Please bear with us as we continue working under the following restrictions. These are subject to change without notice.

- ♦ Only a limited number of staff can be in the building at a time. Staff are encouraged to work remotely.
- ♦ Burn permit forms are available on our [website](#) and can be dropped off, submitted via email or post. Please plan ahead as it may take up to 7 days to process applications.
- ♦ WWCCD staff can meet in the parking lot. **Please call ahead for appointments.**
- ♦ Masks are required.
- ♦ The public are welcome to attend the monthly district board meetings via phone conference. Contact Renee or Audrey at 509-956-3777 to receive info about [board meetings](#).

Thanks for adapting to ever-changing conditions. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Touchet River Riparian Rehabilitation

Walla Walla County Conservation District staff are busy this fall planting a variety of native tree and shrub species along a stretch of the Touchet River with the help of a Washington Conservation Corps crew. The project is funded by a grant awarded to the District in 2019 by the Department of Ecology with a goal of addressing high water temperature. High temperatures have been recorded all along the Touchet River and create unfavorable conditions that stress salmonids and other aquatic species. One way to better regulate water temperature is to provide shade along the river. Unfortunately, invasive false indigo dominates much of the Touchet River below Lyons Ferry Rd. A relatively small shrub, false indigo typically reaches a height of only 8-10ft at maturity and does not provide adequate shade. It also forms dense thickets that severely limit the potential of other shade producing species to establish. As part of the grant, this invasive shrub was successfully removed along the project reach during the summer of 2020 and native trees and shrubs are being planted in its place. With time they will mature and provide much needed shade. If the project is successful the District hopes to secure future funding to address other sections of the river.



In June of 2021, Walla Walla County Conservation District staff assisted Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and Washington State University (WSU) soil scientists with gathering soil data in Walla Walla County to establish a baseline assessment of soil health. This information joins with data collected by other Washington counties and their conservation districts in order to direct future research and education regarding soil health and to identify the most effective soil health management practices.

Soil samples were taken from 7 sites throughout the county and we are expecting results to share with producers by the end of December.

Some of the different soil types found in Walla Walla County.



STAFF CHANGES

New Faces at the District!

We had two new staff join the Walla Walla County Conservation District this Summer.
Welcome, Alison Crowley and Grant Traynor!

Alison just wrapped up her Masters of Natural Resources through the University of Idaho at McCall Outdoor School of Science (MOSS). She has worked in Hawaii for the Koolau Mountains Watershed Partnership and more recently with the Palouse Conservation District. She has dabbled in management of invasive species, riparian plantings, podcasts, marketing, and grant writing.

In her free time, you can find her on the dusty gravel roads near Walla Walla riding her bike or running the local trails.

Alison, Program Manager: all things Mill Creek!
[Floodplain by Design, National Water Quality Initiative, and lower Mill Creek design.](#)



Alison Crowley



Grant Traynor

Grant has an Environmental Studies-Biology degree from Whitman College with experience in agriculture from working on the family farm (olive orchard) in California. He's done fish studies in Ecuador where he also perfected his Spanish. He has a good grasp of the connections between conservation and agriculture and has an interest in issues such as agricultural burning, water use, and drought.

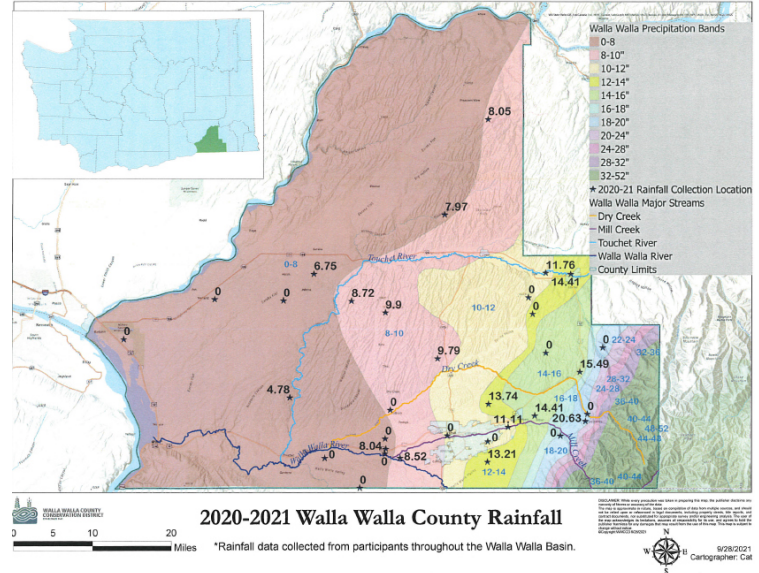
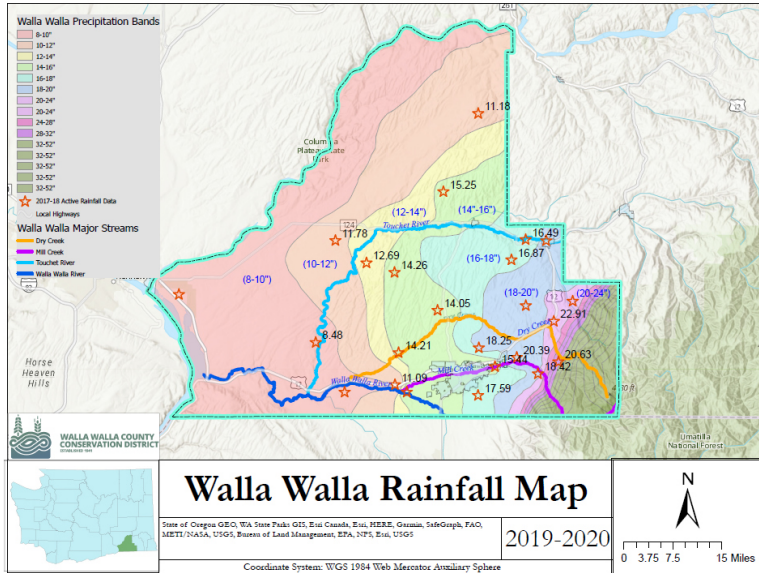
Grant is our [Voluntary Stewardship Program](#) Coordinator. He provides technical and financial assistance to producers and landowners help to advance the conservation and agricultural goals of producers in the region.

In his free time, Grant likes to explore the outdoors by hiking, backpacking, and camping.

Grant, Conservation Scientist: [VSP program](#) lead and the Touchet River design restoration projects (MS-1 & Coppei Creek).

2021 Drought and Rainfall Collection Data

Thanks to the efforts of our dedicated rainfall data gatherers throughout the Walla Walla Basin, WWCCD has logged over 40 years of [rainfall data](#). Each year we create a map to visualize the different precipitation zones in Walla Walla County. This year's map highlights how little rain we received in 2020-2021. If you are interested in becoming a rainfall gatherer and live within Walla Walla County, contact Cat Garza (509-956-3758).



Walla Walla County Conservation District

District Staff

Renee Hadley, District Manager
Audrey Ahmann, Assistant Manager: Finance
Jeff Klundt, Burn Permit Coordinator
Joanna Cowles Cleveland, CREP Scientist
Lynda Oosterhuis, Conservation Technician
Cat Garza, Conservation Technician
Grant Traynor, VSP Program Coordinator
Alison Crowley, Mill Creek Program Manager

Board of Supervisors

Annie Byerley
Pat McConnell
Alyson Buckley
Jim Kent
Jeff Schulke

www.wwccd.net

Our USDA SERVICE CENTER partners

NRCS Staff

Tracy Hanger, District Conservationist Snake River Team
Bryce Krueger, WW area Resource Conservationist
Cassie Jacobson, WW area Soil Conservationist
Katy Walters, Snake River Team Program Support

FSA Staff

Kelley Betts, County Executive Director for WW & Columbia
Nicole Armijo, Program Technician
Norma Colunga, Program Technician
Jill Monetta, Program Technician

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