

Walla Walla County Conservation District NEWSLETTER

Spring 2023
Volume 25, Issue 1

325 North 13th Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362
PHONE: (509) 956-3777



Unsubscribe? Contact information@wwccd.net

In This Issue

Program Updates:

- Program Updates
- Hiring
- Tree of Heaven
- WA Soil Health Initiative
- Outreach Efforts and Events
- Wheat Week
- Recruitment

The District would like to extend our utmost gratitude and well wishes for both Lynda Oosterhuis and Kayla Peterson. Lynda has been with the District for almost 7 years. Lynda's work with fish screens, flow meters, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), beneficial insects research on vineyards, and riparian plantings have been invaluable. The staff at the District have benefited from Lynda's extensive knowledge of riparian ecosystems. Kayla has been with the district for a year now. In that amount of time Kayla has enhanced the District's reach for soil sampling through the WA Soil Health Initiative. In addition, she worked with invasive species surveys, public outreach, farm planning, and riparian plantings within the county. The district is grateful to have worked with these two and wish them a promising future.

Hiring:

The Walla Walla County Conservation District is hiring. We have been blessed with years of expertise from various employees. A few employees are transitioning to other adventures. Job Openings include: **Bookkeeper, Riparian Scientist, and Summer Interns**. The District has a talented team of passionate and committed people who are mission-driven and care deeply about serving and improving our community. Our dynamic organization is comprised of volunteer board members and paid staff members who help landowners implement "on the ground conservation". The incumbent in this position will work closely with local landowners, coworkers, and conservation partners within Walla Walla County. Email renee.hadley@wwccd.net resume and cover letters.

Bookkeeper:

Bookkeeper is responsible for administering grants, payroll, maintaining financial records, and communicating financial status, trends, etc. to the District Manager and Board of Supervisors and general office management duties. The WWCCD operates cash basis accounting and is funded by rotating government grants.

Required Knowledge & Skills:

- 2-year degree finance, accounting, business management or related field plus 3 years' experience in an office setting. An equivalent substitution of education and experience may be considered.
- Ability to import data, analyze data sets, and other graphic depictions of plans using combination of Microsoft WORD and EXCEL. Training on the financial software SPRINGBROOK will be provided.
- Must have great verbal/written communication skills. Must maintain accurate records, be self-motivated, and work positively in groups and independently.

Riparian Scientist:

Riparian Scientist will include assisting the WWCCD team in the following:

- Field work including tree, grass, and/or noxious weed identification 50% assessing, design and manage riparian buffers, compiling data presence, absence, or abundance of noxious weeds in Walla Walla County
- Landowner/agency communication 10-25% face to face and virtual landowner meetings and partner agency meetings
- Paperwork including contracts, field assessment forms, & grant writing 25-40% preparing or assisting with accurate project reporting, drafting grant applications and other documents, and coordinate multiple projects and timelines with flexible scheduling.

Seasonal Intern:

Seasonal interns aid our programs including: in-stream restoration projects, riparian buffer projects, and landowner outreach & field assessments.

Requirements:

- Ability to communicate with farmers and ranchers effectively,
- Ability to work outdoors, traverse on uneven ground in varied weather conditions & carry 30 lbs.
- Strong knowledge of GIS, biology or agriculture.

Tree of Heaven- (*Ailanthus altissima*)



There is a new invasive species that residents should be aware of. This plant is called “Tree of Heaven”, an invasive, fast-growing tree that can reach up to 65 feet. Bark is smooth and gray and can have a shallow diamond-shaped pattern. It is comparable to cantaloupe skin. It smells like rancid peanut butter or popcorn when crushed. Flowers are small, yellow-green, and in clusters.

Look a likes are Smooth Sumac and Staghorn Sumac. They are large shrubs with many stems. Leaflets have toothed edges lacking glands at base. If you see this plant or have it on your property you can report the plant on the WSDA website. You can also contact the Noxious Weed Board of WA for assistance with the plant, <https://www.nwcb.wa.gov/weeds/tree-of-heaven>.

Washington Soil Health Initiative

Walla Walla County Conservation District will be participating in the Washington Soil Health Initiative. We will be sampling 10 different fields throughout the county this year! Our district supports this project with funds through the [Voluntary Stewardship Program](#) that works to protect and enhance critical areas while promoting agricultural viability. This is part of a multi-year project that has collected over 700 samples over the past few years.

The Washington Soil Health Initiative is a partnership between the Washington State Department of Agriculture, Washington State University, and the State Conservation Commission, this collaboration works to expand soil health knowledge in Washington. Through soil sampling the district is establishing a baseline for soil health in Walla Walla County. This baseline data offers insight to enhance research on the relationship between climate, crop type, and management practices impact soil health.

How does this help farmers and the rest of Walla Walla County? Maintaining and improving soil health is the key to continuing agricultural productivity and supporting the health of rural economies. The baseline data assists researchers in discovering key indicators, like water holding capacity and diversity of biological activity. These indicators will help define healthy soil in Washington, giving producers insight for management choices.

If you are interested in participating in soil sampling next year, please reach out to info@wwccd.net or call (509)-956-3777!

Riparian Restoration Volunteer Events

This spring the District kicked off volunteer events by working to restore and enhance the stream bank along Caldwell Creek. The District held two very successful events where a total of 320 native plant species were planted. Big thank you to all of our volunteers especially the WSU Extension Master Gardeners of Walla Walla, Girl Scout Troup 2033, Whitman Stream Team, and Walla Walla Hoops for being amazing stewards of the land.

The District will be holding future volunteer opportunities. Contact alison.crowley@wwccd.net for any volunteer questions. You can sign up for events using the Blue Mountain Volunteer Corps. Site. Look out for opportunities on our website as well.



Return to the River Salmon Festival

Come celebrate our natural resources!

SATURDAY, MAY 13TH | 11AM - 3PM

Walla Walla Community College
By the ballfields along Tausick Way
(Parking available on campus)

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Salmon releases at Noon, 1pm, and 2pm
- Lamprey and native fish on display
- Hands-on activities, fish printing, relay races, obstacle course, demonstrations, displays, equipment to explore, free face painting, & more!

WWCC's Wine Country Culinary
Institute food truck on site!



Follow us @wwccwec for more info!



Presented by:



Envirothon 2023

A very BIG shout out and congratulations to the WaHi Envirothon Team who won 1st place out of 5 teams at the SE WA Regional Envirothon on 4/12. They took home the 1st place plaque, and had top scores in all the categories. Best of luck at the WA state competition, on May 24/25 at Soundview Camp and Retreat Center in the Key Peninsula.





WWCCD has been working with the Walla Walla Public School's offering a week-long program funded by the Washington Grain Commission called Wheat Week. The program creates hands on opportunities for students to learn about soil health, growing wheat, water cycle, wheat DNA, and energy. This program is open to all 4th-5th grade classes within Walla Walla County, including homeschool, private, and public classes. All materials are provided by WWCCD. If you are interested in signing up for this free program contact alison.crowley@wwccd.net



Recruitment

Walla Walla County's Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is seeking agricultural producers to join the VSP Work Group. VSP is Walla Walla County's alternative to environmental regulation on agriculture. The VSP Work Group is a local committee that directs small conservation projects and environmental monitoring in Walla Walla County. Please contact Grant Traynor (grant.traynor@wwccd.net / 509-956-3767) if you are interested.

Summer Internship: The Walla Walla County Conservation District is seeking a seasonal intern to aid our programs including: in-stream restoration projects, riparian buffer projects, and landowner outreach & field assessments. Wage \$19.50 per hour. For additional information contact Renee Hadley at renee.hadley@wwccd.net or 509-956-3756.

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 Scientist
Annie Byerley, Conservation Scientist
Kayla Peterson, Conservation Technician
Grant Traynor, VSP Program Coordinator
Alison Crowley, Mill Creek Program Manager

Board of Supervisors

Jesse McCaw
Alyson Buckley
Jim Kent
Jeff Schulke
Don Schwerin

Our USDA SERVICE CENTER partners

NRCS Staff

Tracy Hanger, District Conservationist Snake River Team
Bryce Krueger, WW area Resource Conservationist
Cameron Toerner, WW area Soil Conservationist
Katy Martin, Snake River Team Program Support

FSA Staff

Kelley Betts, County Executive Director for WW & Columbia
Norma Colunga, Program Technician
Tally Ross Program Technician

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