



**WALLA WALLA COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**
ESTABLISHED 1941

Walla Walla County Conservation District



Annual Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2024

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Mission

The Walla Walla County Conservation District is dedicated to the conservation and restoration of the natural resources of Walla Walla County, facilitated by working on a voluntary basis with landowners to identify opportunities and create solutions, while consistently providing education, information, and assistance whenever possible.

Natural Resource Priorities

Most of Walla Walla County land is in private ownership. As a result, WWCCD tends to work with 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 WW Co VSP plan, WW Subbasin Plan, WW Watershed Plan, several USACE flood assessment plans, WW Co Hazard Mitigation Plans, WW Co CWPP and other documents.

- Critical areas and wildlife protection
 - This resource is described in the WWCCD 5-year plan as Fisheries, Range & Pasture, Wetland Resources, and Forest Health. Critical areas 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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. Walla Walla County, WA-Ecology, and NRCS 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.

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 must relate to the district’s long-term goal from the 5-year plan.

Natural Resource Program

Natural Resource Priority Program Area: 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, Dept. of Ecology, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) through the Snake River Salmon Recovery Office, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Washington State Dept. of Agriculture (WSDA)

Activities for FY2024	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time (Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Lead the Voluntary Stewardship Program including implementing the plan, monitoring, developing VSP focused farm plans, and cost-share projects.	On-going	Conservation Scientist	140	117,500	Walla Walla County contract
Monitor construction of stream restoration on the Walla Walla River above Last Chance Road.	Summer 2023	Conservation Scientist	40	594,000	RCO/ Ecology for TA and project costs
Seek funds for in-stream restoration on multiple reaches including Touchet River Mainstem section 1 (below Prescott); Touchet RM 42; Coppei Creek 7; Mill Creek RM 1.75 and new stream and habitat restoration and flood mitigation projects on the Touchet River, Walla Walla River, Mill Creek and tributaries.	On-going	Conservation Scientist	70	26,000	SCC

Coordinate the engineered design and permitting of stream restoration on Mill Creek RM ~16.5-18 Floodplain by Design	On-going to June 2024	Conservation Scientist	60	280,000	Ecology for TA and project costs
Conduct Tree-of-Heaven management efforts	Through Oct. 2023	Conservation Scientist	30	10,000	WSDA for TA and project costs
Complete status reviews of CRP fields	Through Sept. 2024	Conservation Scientist (2), Conservation Tech	100	10,000	NRCS Task Order
Seek funds to design and install fish screens in cooperation & construct fish barrier removal projects.	On-going	Conservation Tech	10	2,500	SCC Implementation

Natural Resource Priority Program Area: 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 85% of eligible streambanks, 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 FY2024	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time (Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist landowners install 40 acres of riparian forest buffers, maintain and monitor current enrollment of ~2,400 acres and about 180 contracts. Re-enroll expiring contracts, providing landowners with conservation plans and protecting 10–15-year-old buffers. 	On-going through June 2024	Conservation Scientist (2)	215	210,000	SCC CREP TA and project costs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct mid-management reviews on 10 CREP contracts. 					
Seek funds for urban riparian buffers and area waterways not eligible for CREP.	On-going	Conservation Scientist	15	5,000	SCC Implementation
Continue implementation of Touchet River Canopy Cover (False Indigo removal) replanting project	Through June 2024	Conservation Scientist	20	155,000	Ecology Water Quality includes project costs
Work with landowners and area partners (Tri-State Steelheaders, WDFW, WA-Ecology, Blue Mountain Land Trust, CTUIR, USFWS, NRCS LWG) to address erosion on lands adjacent to the rivers which impact water quality.	On-going	Conservation Scientist, District Manager	25	10,000	SCC Implementation
Develop and install riparian forest buffers along waterways	Through 2025	Conservation Scientist	60	250,000	SCC Salmon Riparian includes project costs
Coordinate with Walla Walla County to address damages to streams and fields from natural disasters.	on-going	Conservation Scientist, District Manager	4	1200	SCC Implementation
Coordinate with area livestock producers on water quality concerns offering technical assistance and/or seeking financial assistance.	on-going	Conservation Scientist, District Manager	4	1000	SCC Implementation
Aid and monitor construction of bridge across Coppei Creek	Through 2025	Conservation Scientist	25	62500	SCC NRI includes project costs
Promote soil testing and soil health practices	on-going	Conservation Scientist, District Manager	4	1000	SCC Implementation, WSDA

Natural Resource Priority Program Area: Water Quantity

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

Funding Source(s): Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC)

Activities for FY2024	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time (Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Assist landowners in developing on-farm	On-going	Conservation Scientist,	30	10,000	SCC Irrigation Efficiency

irrigation efficiencies projects.		District Manager			
Participate in and work closely with the Dept. of Ecology, the Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee, and the Bi-State Flow Enhancement Group and other water forums to help improve management of water.	On-going	Conservation Scientist, District Manager	10	5,000	SCC Irrigation Efficiency

Natural Resource Priority Program Area: Air Quality

Goal(s): Reduce air pollutants by assisting with 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): Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC), Washington Dept. of Ecology under contract with Walla Walla County

Activities for FY2024	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time (Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Provide technical assistance in Best Management Practices regarding tillage management and air quality	On-going	Conservation Scientist	12	5,000	SCC Implementation
Assist landowners with permitting for prescribed agricultural burn permits. Attend Ag Burn Task Force meetings.	On-going	Conservation Scientist, District Manager	80	25,000	Walla Walla County contract

District Program

District Program Area: Education and Outreach

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

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective:

Education and outreach program will include 1) maintaining publications including website, quarterly newsletters and 2) conducting a farmer hosted mini-session, workshop and/or tour. Education and outreach programs will target and engage 30 landowners annually.

Funding Source(s): Washington State Conservation Commission through Implementation Conservation Scientist; Snake River Salmon Recovery Office through Lead Entity (LE), and other Conservation Districts

Activities for FY2024	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time (Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Inform the public of WWCCD mission accomplishments through quarterly newsletter (800 subscribers), website, videos, and other outreach media.	On-going	District Manager, Bookkeeper	25	4000	SCC Implementation
Meet all statutory requirements of RCW 89.08: conducting regular audits, fiscal management, commission reporting, and management.	On-going	Bookkeeper	125	50,000	SCC Implementation & Overhead
Maintain certifications and skills of WWCCD staff through various trainings such as WADE, GIS, Riparian Planting Symposium, SAO, NRCS Conservation planner and others.	On-going	All staff, as needed	6 to 10 each	10,000	SCC Implementation
Coordinate a Farmer to Farmer Mini-Session/ Webinar with area producers to inform them of conservation innovations and cost-share assistance.	On-going	District Manager	7	2000	SCC Implementation
Collect yearly and maintain historic records of rainfall data to benefit the community.	On-going	Conservation Technician	5	1,000	SCC Implementation
Educate area youth and landowners through community events (Wheat Week, Fair, Make-a-Splash days, Return-to-the-River Event, Fourth Grade Foresters Program)	On-going	Conservation Scientist (2)	20	10,000	SCC Implementation, LE, other CDs
Actively participate in regional Lead Entity Committee/Regional Technical Team/Snake River Salmon Recovery Board activities throughout the year.	On-going	Conservation Scientist (2)	15	4000	LE

Budget

FY 2024 OPERATING BUDGET (7/1/2023-6/30/2024)

<u>Revenues</u>		
Project		Salary plus cost share
SCC (Implementation, Irrigation Efficiency, Basic, Natural Resource Investments, Riparian)		455,700
SCC-CREP		210,000
SCC/Walla Walla Co.-Voluntary Stewardship Program		117,500
Priority Projects (WW River 35.5, Mill Creek FbD, Canopy Cover 1 & 2)		1,029,000
SRB Lead Entity		4,500
Ecology/ Walla Walla Co. MOU for Burn Permit		25,000
Other CDs, NRCS (Task Orders), WSDA		20,000
Total Revenue:		1,861,700
 <u>Expenses and Other Uses</u>		
Description		FY24 Est. Expenses
CREP cost-share		150,000
Natural Resource Investments		72,000
SCC/Walla Walla Co.-Voluntary Stewardship Program		76,000
Priority Projects (WW River 35.5, Mill Creek FbD, Canopy Cover 1 & 2, Riparian)		965,700
Subtotal Project Expenses:		1,263,700
Wages and Benefits: 8 FT, 2 PT employees		502,000
General Office Expenses		96,000
Total Expenses:		1,861,700