

Walla Walla County Conservation District NEWSLETTER

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Staff Updates:

After 20 plus years of service to the Walla Walla County Conservation District, Audrey has turned in her key and retired. She managed million dollar grants during the irrigation efficiency push after 2002. She created our policies and a stringent financial oversight procedure. But the greatest strength having Audrey on staff was her calm demeanor and ability to provide a positive light in the office. The Washington State Auditor Office completed an accountability audit with a clean bill of our WWCCD financial books. What a great testament to Audrey's hard work over the years. She will continue to be an asset in our community as a Special Olympics Coach for our area ski team. From all the staff, board supervisors and area partners, we thank you.



Outreach programs and events



This past fall the district partnered with Pheasants Forever Blue Mountain Chapter, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Dixie Elementary. The Dixie Elementary students learned about habitat restoration through native plantings. Students learned what animals this habitat supports and how to plant native species.

WWCCD also partnered with Abeja Winery to help restore riparian habitat along Titus Creek and Mill Creek. The volunteers planted 165 native plants such as Blue Elderberry, Coyote Willow, and Snowberry. Stay tuned for future volunteer events this coming spring of 2024.

No-Till and Direct Seed Program

The Spokane Conservation District is offering a No-Till and Direct Seed Program to producers. Direct Seed Loan Program makes it easy for you to switch to direct seed and no-tillage operations as we offer low-interest loans to producers for major agricultural equipment purchases that: Aid in the direct placement of seed and/or fertilizers in one or two passes and aid in the removal or management of residue. To learn more about the program and to see if you are eligible to follow this link: <https://spokanecd.org/pages/no-till-direct-seed-program>. For any program questions contact Ty-Meyer@SpokaneCD.org and/or 509-995-1220.

The Difference between conventional tillage and direct seeding/no-till is often obvious.



Conventional - Poor soil structure due to heavy tillage inhibits water infiltration. Topsoil from the hilltops is eroded into the low areas and ditches ultimately making its way to the region's waterways.



Direct Seed - Straw residue from the previous crop remains on the field while the new crop grows. There is virtually no chance of soil erosion occurring in these situations with heavy residue and good soil structure that enhances water infiltration.

Walla Walla River Mile 35.5 In stream Restoration Project

This instream restoration project was 5 years in the making! This reach of the Walla Walla River caught the attention of the WWCCD due to the lateral migration of the channel as well as the disconnection of the floodplain. The landowners were willing to see this project through all the hoops (some unexpected!) to get this project implemented. Draft engineered designs were drawn up prior to the 2020 flood but because the flood caused enough modifications to the reach, another set of plans needed to be drafted in 2022. This project was funded by three different sources: WA State Recreation and Conservation Office Snake River Salmon Recovery Board, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and WA Dept. of Ecology.

The goals of this project were to increase in stream habitat for ESA listed steelhead, chinook, bull trout, and other species of concern, re-establish side channels, and retain existing mature riparian vegetation. There were 28 in stream engineered log structures installed to address the concerns and over 2000 native trees and shrubs planted to add a diverse mix of species and ages. This project will not only increase needed habitat for aquatic species but also address water quality concerns in the Walla Walla River. Photos left to right: Planted Ponderosa Pines and in stream large woody debris structures.



Conservation Conversations

The Conservation District will be hosting open public forums this winter of 2023 and future talks in 2024. These are informal opportunities for community members to speak with experts regarding soil health, livestock, invasive species, and water rights. These forums are free and open to the public. See the schedule to learn more about our next talk. Stay tuned for more talks to be on the schedule.



**WALLA WALLA COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**
EST. 1982 (ORIGINALLY 1961)

Conservation Conversations Calendar

Mar 6th	SOIL HEALTH FOR GARDENING 5PM-7PM SPEAKER NATHAN BRANNON AT THE WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
Mar 13th	SOIL HEALTH RESIDUE MANAGEMENT 5PM-7PM SPEAKER RACHEL WIEME AT THE WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
Apr 10th	LIVESTOCK AND NOXIOUS WEEDS 3PM-6PM SPEAKER TYLER COX, DEBBIE MOBERG, AND VIC REEVE AT THE WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
Apr 24th	WATER RIGHTS 5PM-7PM SPEAKER SARAH DYMECKI WITH WA WATER TRUST AT THE WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
	STAY TUNED FOR FUTHER UPDATES! VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE AND/OR WEBSITE FOR FUTURE EVENTS

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Annual Meeting



Voluntary Stewardship Program

Walla Walla County's Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is always 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.

WWCCD Board Meetings

The District holds monthly meetings that occur on the 2nd Monday of each month. These meetings provide a round table of district updates and in-depth discussions on current projects. These meetings are open to the public, if you are an interested community member or have topics to be discussed contact the District Manager, Renee Hadley at renee.hadley@wwccd.net

Walla Walla County Conservation District

District Staff

Renee Hadley, District Manager
Jenny Freer, Bookkeeper
Jeff Klundt, Burn Permit Coordinator
Joanna Cowles Cleveland, CREP Scientist
Annie Byerley, Conservation Scientist
Eila Chin, Conservation Technician
Grant Traynor, VSP Program Coordinator
Alison Crowley, Mill Creek Program Manager
Cat Garza, Conservation Scientist

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
Stephanie Kaping, Program Technician
Brooke Barich, Program Technician

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