

Walla Walla County Conservation District Newsletter

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

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Staff Updates



We are excited to introduce Grace Cooper! Grace will serve as our Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Coordinator. In her role, she will focus on developing VSP initiatives and assisting local producers and the community in understanding the partnership between VSP and landowners aimed at conserving our county's vital areas. A recent graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science from Whitworth University, Grace has also gained practical experience working on a local farm.



We would like to extend our warmest goodbye to Grant Traynor, our valued VSP Coordinator and exceptional colleague. Grant played a crucial role in executing various projects through VSP. His contributions to numerous riparian enhancement initiatives have greatly improved the waterways in Walla Walla County. Grant has relocated to Bend, OR, to join the Deschutes River Conservancy, aligning with his passions for conservation and rock-hounding.



Tapteal Native Plants



May 2025 will be the last board meeting that Jeff Schulke will act as a Walla Walla County Conservation District board of supervisor. Jeff has served the conservation district since 2009. He has actively represented farmers and ranchers in the annual NRCS Local Working Group meetings. He often hosted soil health and riparian tours for Whitman College students and community groups. We thank Jeff and his family for the many years of service and wish him the best in his future pursuits.



Heritage Garden Program

Are you looking to reduce your water expenses, save time on landscaping, and protect local wildlife? If so, the Heritage Garden Program might be just what you need! This certification initiative focuses on developing water-efficient gardens and landscapes that feature native plants from Washington State. Additionally, Heritage Gardens celebrate the distinctive natural and cultural elements of the Columbia River Basin. The program has gained traction throughout much of the Columbia Basin, and Walla Walla County is set to introduce HGP services in our region.



These services are free and encompass site evaluations, tailored plant recommendations, expert guidance, and planting resources. We offer the tools necessary for you to create and nurture a thriving native garden. If you or someone you know is interested in participating in the program or certifying an existing garden, please sign up for our mailing list by scanning the QR code or reach out to Jake Mantela at jake.mantela@wwccd.net or 509-956-3777



Outreach and Education

This March, WWCCD partnered with Dixie Elementary, the U.S. Corps of Engineers, and the Blue Mountain Chapter of Pheasants Forever for an outdoor educational experience. The students revisited their previous restoration site from last fall, where they planted 250 native plants. During this trip, students planted 150 plants along a riparian corridor within the Bennington Lake Recreation area. This program has been an ongoing educational experience for Dixie Elementary K-5th grade students, made possible with the funds from the Verle Kaiser Grant provided by WSU Extension.





Tapteal Nursery will be hosting a Native Plant sale.

When: Saturday May 3rd from 10 am-1pm.

Where: 325 N. 13th Ave. Walla Walla, WA 99362



Native Plant Sale Questionnaire

The Columbia Basin Chapter is looking for input on the kinds of plants and landscaping environments (and challenges) our members are interested in to help guide our selections for the 2025 plant sale. We'd also like to know what the level of interest is in Walla Walla and Tri-Cities for online and/or in-person sales slated for this fall. We need your input. Fill out this questionnaire (QR code) or contact Mickie Chamness at mickiec@charter.net.



A WATER PUB TRIVIA EVENT

Tapping into the Walla Walla Watershed

Join us for a free and open to the public Water in Our World Trivia Night. We'll dive into fascinating facts about how water shapes our lives.

Whether you're a trivia pro or just looking for a fun evening, come make a splash with us.



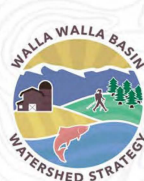
Date: Wednesday April 9th, 2025
Time: 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Location: Walla Walla Beer Parlor
14 W Main St, Walla Walla, WA 99362
Details: Pub trivia team sizes can be 4-6 people, with a max of 10 teams.

RESERVE YOUR SPOT NOW!

alison.crowley@wwccd.net



This Water 101 Pub Trivia Talk series is part of the Walla Walla Watershed Strategy – a collaborative effort to improve streamflows, water supplies and watershed health in the Walla Walla River Basin for today, tomorrow and beyond.



*Beverages will be available for purchase at the establishment.

A WATER AND WINE EVENT

CTUIR in the Walla Walla Basin: Honoring the Past, Shaping the Future of Tribal Practices

Join us for an insightful presentation on the history of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) in the Walla Walla Basin, their ongoing efforts in habitat restoration and fisheries management, and the future implications of these initiatives.

Jerimiah Bonifer, The Fisheries Program Manager for The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation will host a discussion that will highlight the deep connection between the CTUIR and the Walla Walla Basin.



Date: April 16th, 2025
Time: Doors open at 5:00 p.m.
Presentation starts: 5:30 p.m.

Location: Bledsoe Family Winery, 3229 E Main St, Walla Walla, WA 99362

RESERVE YOUR SPOT NOW!

<https://bit.ly/3TmBk6u>



This Water and Wine talk series is part of the Walla Walla Watershed Strategy – a collaborative effort to improve streamflows, water supplies and watershed health in the Walla Walla River Basin for today, tomorrow and beyond.
For more information go to www.wwccd.net



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THANK YOU

We extend our thanks to the speakers at our annual meeting on January 21, 2025. Matthew Williams of Predictive Nutrient Solutions led an engaging discussion on soil health and current agriculture practices with local farmers. The Washington State Department of Agriculture was represented by Briana Rhode and Emily Oberhoffer, who discussed changes in pesticide requirements and water quality monitoring efforts. Daniel Matsche and Paul Rossow from the Department of Ecology discussed pest management in relation to agricultural burning.

Additionally, we would like to thank community members who participated in our farmer mini-sessions in February. There have been many agency changes, so adaptation is the game. Aside from program updates, farmers discussed the use of drones, grass weed management, and drought mitigation.

We welcome your participation. Your input guides meeting topics, educational sessions, and the direction of the conservation district. The Walla Walla County Conservation District holds its monthly Board of Supervisors meetings on the second Monday.



Walla Walla County Conservation District

District Staff

Renee Hadley, District Manager
Jenny Freer, Fiscal Specialist
Joanna Cowles Cleveland, CREP Scientist
Annie Byerley, Conservation Scientist
Alison Crowley, Education and Outreach Coordinator
Jake Mantela, Conservation Scientist
Grace Cooper, Conservation Scientist

Board of Supervisors

Jesse McCaw
Jim Kent
Jeff Schulke
Don Schwerin

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Our USDA SERVICE CENTER partners

NRCS Staff

Tracy Hanger, District Conservationist Snake River Team
Bryce Krueger, WW area Resource Conservationist
Katy Martin, Snake River Team Program Support
Ryan Foley, Natural Resource Specialist
Trevor Shea, Natural Resource Specialist

FSA Staff

Kelley Betts, County Executive Director for WW & Columbia
Norma Colunga, Program Analyst
Stephanie Kaping, Program Analyst
Brooke Barich, Program Analyst
Samantha Castoldi, Program Analyst

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