

Walla Walla County Conservation District Newsletter



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



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Drought Survey

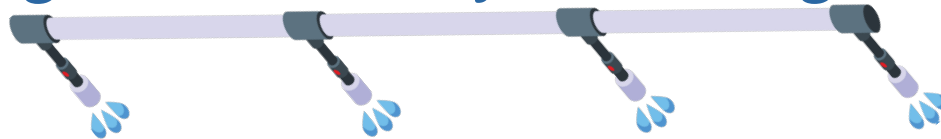
This survey is part of a broader, ongoing effort to build drought resilience in the Walla Walla Basin and address the environmental, social and economic impacts that may occur because of drought conditions. We need your help to tell us stories of how changing climate conditions, including drought, may be affecting your and other agricultural operations in the Walla Walla Basin. Results from the survey will be used to inform development of an inclusive and comprehensive local drought preparedness plan for the Walla Walla Basin.

Please scan the QR Code to take the survey!! You can find the survey online at <https://bit.ly/DroughtAgSurvey>. If you would prefer a paper copy, please contact Annie Byerley (annie.byerley@wwccd.net).

We anticipate it will take approximately 5-7 minutes to complete. All responses are completely anonymous. Once you've completed the survey, please drop off your survey responses at the Walla Walla County Conservation District Office (325 N. 13th Ave, Walla Walla, WA 99362).



Irrigation Efficiency Grant Program



Are you looking to upgrade your irrigation system or have irrigation concerns? WWCCD is developing funding applications related to irrigation improvements, including pivots, variable-frequency pumps, and drip irrigation.

Reach out to Annie Byerley at 509-956-3764 or annie.byerley@wwccd.net.



Heritage Garden



The Heritage Garden Program is now available in Walla Walla County! This program is designed to help landowners convert a portion of their landscaping into a water-wise native plant paradise. If you need initial help and inspiration, our dedicated staff is ready to schedule a site visit to provide ideas and feedback on how to initiate the process. We can also provide you with a list of native plants that are likely to thrive in your yard, along with guidance on when and how to plant them, as well as where to source the necessary materials. Once your native garden meets the criteria we can certify it as a "Heritage Garden." The process is straightforward, and we'll even provide you with a sign to showcase the success of your hard work. Even a small corner of your yard with native plants may be eligible for certification.

Please review the program's requirements and additional information on the Heritage Garden Website at <https://www.hgcd.info/>. These services are free and encompass site evaluations, tailored plant recommendations, expert guidance, and plant resources. 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.



Examples of a newly certified gardens within Walla Walla County.

Recap of the Fiscal Year 2025

As we conclude projects for the state's fiscal year, here's a brief summary of our accomplishments.

The Irrigation Efficiency Grant Program has been updated to help staff work with landowners on upgrading irrigation systems. We installed seven efficient center pivots and a variable frequency drive, resulting in approximately 4.07 cubic feet per second of water savings.

Thanks to funding from the Washington State legislature in 2022, we have expanded riparian plantings. Over the past two years, we completed 22 projects with 40 landowners, planting and maintaining over 130 acres along waterways.

Instream projects enhance salmon habitat and improve resilience against flooding and erosion. We installed four such projects in summer 2024 and are designing five more for installation in 2026 or 2027.

We also acquired a 3-foot-wide 'Dew Drop' drill, which has now been utilized by six landowners and is available for public rental.

The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) continues to protect critical agricultural areas by assessing fish passage at 21 locations and conducting wetland audits and irrigation use analyses across the county.

We welcome your concerns and ideas. While we may not have immediate answers, we're committed to providing resources and funding to help you achieve your goals. The Walla Walla County Conservation District is dedicated to conserving natural resources through voluntary participation and education. We look forward to your input!

Noxious Weeds Update

Puncturevine and Poison Hemlock are categorized as noxious weeds by the Washington State Noxious Weed Board.

Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) is a highly toxic invasive plant that resembles wild carrot but can be deadly if ingested. It features smooth, hollow stems with purple blotches and finely divided fern-like leaves. Commonly found along roadsides, fields, and waterways, all parts of the plant are poisonous to humans and animals.

Puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*) is a low-growing, invasive weed known for its sharp, spiny seed pods that can injure people, pets, and puncture bicycle tires. It thrives in hot, dry climates and disturbed soils, spreading rapidly along roadsides, trails, and open areas. Due to its aggressive growth and painful seeds, it poses a significant nuisance and ecological threat in many regions.

You can find more information regarding treatment and identification on www.nwcb.wa.gov/weeds

Currently, the Walla Walla Noxious Weed Control Board is offering assistance to concerned landowners who have these species on their property. Reach out to Paul Castoldi, Program Coordinator weedsw@wwcowa.gov or 509-524-2688

Poison Hemlock



Puncturevine



ARE YOU WILDFIRE READY? GET YOUR FREE WILDFIRE READY PLAN TODAY!

Wildfire is a fact of life. But when we come together as neighbors, we can reduce the risk wildfire poses to our properties, homes, and communities.

By working together, everyone benefits. Sign up today to get your free Wildfire Ready Plan and schedule a consultation from our local wildfire experts.

Scan the QR code for your free wild fire assessment or visit the website <https://wildfireready.dnr.wa.gov/>



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
Don Schwerin
Matt Williams

www.wwccd.net

Our USDA SERVICE CENTER partners

NRCS Staff

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

FSA Staff

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

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