

Kittitas County Conservation District

Serving Landowners in Kittitas County Since 1942

October 2018



Kittitas County Conservation District
2211 W Dolarway, Suite #4
Ellensburg, WA 98926

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Second Application Cut-off Date for 5-Year Program Announced

The Kittitas County Conservation District announces a November 2, 2018 application deadline for the second sign-up period for the “Yakima Integrated Plan - Toppenish To Teanaway” project. This project is a

five-year effort to address insufficient water/drought, water quality degradation, and inadequate habitat for fish and wildlife in priority areas in Kittitas County through the USDA’s Regional Conservation Partnership

Program (RCPP). The Kittitas County Conservation District is accepting applications immediately. Interested farmers, ranchers or landowners should contact the District at 509-925-3352 or 2211 W Dolarway Road, Ellensburg.

Funding is provided through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) of the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). EQIP is a voluntary, technical and financial assistance program through NRCS designed to help farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners/managers improve irrigation efficiency; reduce soil erosion; improve water quality; and improve fish habitat in priority streams. The program pays for a portion of the cost of conservation practices implemented by the farmer or rancher.

Although this sign-up is being conducted by the District, all

requirements of the EQIP program must still be met. Each applicant must establish themselves as a USDA customer and complete all Farm Service Agency (FSA) eligibility requirements prior to the application cut-off date. For more information about those requirements, contact the local NRCS field office at 2211 W Dolarway Road, Suite 6, Ellensburg or 509-925-8585 ext. 115.

The first sign-up period was conducted in 2017 and resulted in seven contracts totaling more than

See *5-Year*, Page 3



Irrigation water use efficiency is improved when a producer converts from rill irrigation using gated PVC pipe (above) to a sprinkler irrigation system (below). A gated pipe system is approximately 50-60% efficient with water use, while a sprinkler system is 85% efficient. The sprinkler system results in a more even application of irrigation water and also can allow for more precise application of nutrients.

Contributions to RCPP Project Multiply Benefits

The Yakima Integrated Plan Toppenish to Teanaway Project (“RCPP Project”) funded through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also has significant contributions from state and local agencies. Funding from the Washington State Conservation Commission, the Department of Ecology and Bonneville Power Administration in particular help to expand the number of

projects completed with local landowners. At the same time that seven irrigation improvement projects were funded through the NRCS funds, six more were funded with combinations of other funding. Contributed funds also help to complete engineering and design plans for pipeline projects and fish screen and passage structures. In the first year of this RCPP Project, more than \$1 million in

contributions have been spent or committed to these on-farm and habitat improvement activities.

KCCD staff work with landowners signing up for the RCPP funding to ensure that their projects are also on the lists for the contributed funds. Contact Mark Crowley (925-3352 ext. 205) or Sherry Swanson (925-3352 ext. 206) to add your project to the funding lists.



Anna Lael presents the Manastash Creek project to (L to R) Harold Crose (Central Area Representative on the Washington State Conservation Commission), Jeff Brunson (KCCD), Alan McBee (NRCS), Nick Vira (NRCS), Roylene Rides at the Door (NRCS State Conservationist), Leonard Jordan (NRCS Acting Chief), Patricia Hickey (Washington Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director), Mark Clark (Washington State Conservation Commission Executive Director), Paul Ward (Yakama Nation), Mike Tobin (North Yakima Conservation District).

KCCD hosts NRCS Acting Chief Leonard Jordan

In May 2018, KCCD was part of a tour for Leonard Jordan, Acting Chief of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Chief Jordan was in state for meetings with NRCS staff and was able to include a tour through the Yakima River Watershed starting with a project site on Manastash Creek. The tour was an excellent opportunity to show the Chief how important NRCS funding is to the natural resources and landowners in Kittitas County. NRCS programs provide both technical and financial assistance to improve water use efficiency, reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and enhance both forest and range land conditions.

KCCD Welcomes City of Roslyn

The City of Roslyn voted in April to petition for inclusion into the boundaries of the Kittitas County Conservation District. The petition was approved by the KCCD Board of Supervisors and forwarded on to the Washington State Conservation Commission for their approval as well. The Conservation Commission approved the petition in July and the Secretary of State accepted and approved adding Roslyn to the KCCD boundaries in August. Roslyn and Cle Elum (who joined the KCCD in 2006) are the only two incorporated areas in Kittitas County to petition for inclusion. Both cities are able to receive both technical and financial assistance through the KCCD to address natural resource conditions and concerns.

Kittitas County Conservation District

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Mark Moore - Chair (Elected - term expires 2019)

Lynn Brown - Vice Chair (Appointed - term expires in 2020)

Jeff Brunson - Auditor (Elected - term expires in 2021)

Bill Boyum - Member (Appointed - term expires in 2019)

Matt Eslinger - Member (Elected - term expires in 2020)

DISTRICT STAFF

Anna Lael - District Manager

Miranda Nash - Financial Manager

Ryan Roberts - District Engineer

Sherry Swanson - Project Manager

Rose Shriner - GIS Specialist/Wildfire Fuels Reduction Specialist

Mark Crowley - Conservation Planner

Wendy Mee - Resource Technician

Bridger Cohan - Resource Technician

MEETINGS

Board meetings are generally held on the second Thursday of each month at the District office.

The schedule for the year is as follows:

April through October - 7:00 a.m.

November through March - 1:00 p.m.

Meeting notices are also posted on the District web page (<http://www.kccd.net/boarddocuments.htm>) and at the District office. Additional special meetings are held as needed throughout the year. For more information or to receive e-mail notifications of meetings, contact Miranda at 925-3352 or m-nash@conserveva.net

PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The District's Long Range Plan 2017-2021 and Annual Plan of Work for FY 2019 (July 2018 to June 2019) are available at <http://www.kccd.net/boarddocuments.htm> or at the District office.

5-year *Continued from page 1*

\$750,000 to improve irrigation water use efficiency on nearly 500 acres of cropland in the Kittitas Valley. This second sign-up is expected to fund a similar number of contracts.

The “Yakima Integrated Plan - Toppenish To Teanaway” project was one of 88 high impact projects across the country that was approved for funding through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program in December 2016. For more information, visit the project webpage at www.kccd.net/rcpp.htm or contact the KCCD at 925-3352 or 2211 W Dolarway Road, Ellensburg.



First meeting with an applicant for RCPP funds in October 2017. The application process involves meeting with KCCD staff to complete the necessary forms. After deadline, all applications are screened and ranked to determine funding awards. Screening and ranking criteria can be found on the KCCD's website at <http://www.kccd.net/rcpp.htm>.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Yakima Basin Integrated Plan Helps Bring Funding to Landowners



The Yakima Basin Integrated Water Management Plan (“Integrated Plan”) is a 30-year plan for responding to drought and changing climate, assuring water is clean and ample, and lands are both protected and productive for growing communities and the natural environment. The goals are to protect and enhance fish and natural resources, improve water availability and reliability, establish

more efficient water markets, manage the variability of water supplies, and prepare for the uncertainties of climate change through operational and structural changes. The Integrated Plan is often associated with very large capital projects, including the Cle Elum Dam fish passage project for which a 4-year \$76 million construction contract was just awarded. Those large projects are not all the Integrated Plan is funding or helping to leverage. The RCPP project (see page 1) is a direct result of the Integrated Plan and the power of the partnerships

and collaboration happening in the Yakima Basin. The application for these funds was competitive at a national level because of the overall effort in the watershed. Projects on private lands are eligible for these funding sources and the water conservation and fish passage and habit improvements are happening across our County and the entire watershed. In addition to the on-farm projects here, there are projects on the Kittitas Reclamation District to both improve water delivery efficiencies (lining canals to reduce seepage) and to supplement stream flows to benefit salmon and steelhead.



The Kittitas Reclamation District completed a lining project on the North Branch canal earlier this year. The project reduces conveyance losses in the canal, improving water supply conditions.



On-farm work funded through the 2017 RCPP applications were primarily conversion to sprinklers. Above is a center pivot sprinkler being assembled on field that was rill irrigated.



The Kittitas Reclamation District, in coordination with other irrigation districts, and state and federal agencies, continues to convey water to tributaries that support salmon and steelhead. This supplementation is on Big Creek.

Prescribed-Fire Training Tackles Forest Health, Community Protection

Contributed by *The Nature Conservancy*

Beginning Sept. 23, firefighters from seven agencies across the state will be conducting prescribed burns across hundreds of acres to improve forest health in Central Washington.

Unlike the large wildfires burning across the West this summer, these are intentionally set fires designed to protect communities and restore forests. The agencies' goals are to learn and train in the use of prescribed fire through a formal training exchange (TREX). Sponsored by the Fire Learning Network, TREX is a unique opportunity for fire personnel from across the region to learn about prescribed fire and forest health across traditional agency boundaries.

"Prescribed fire is the right fire, in the right place, for the right reasons," said USDA Forest Service Fire Staff Officer Rob Allen. "It's a proactive step — a choice to put fire to work for our communities and forests rather than just fight against it year after year."

Shared stewardship of our forests requires increasing coordination and training across fire and forest-management entities. A primary goal of the TREX training exchange is to increase local capacity, knowledge and skills for prescribed fires by providing fire training and creating new relationships and trust among participating groups.

For firefighters, TREX is a collaborative environment designed to enhance the sharing

of experience and learning across agencies as well as seeing first-hand how low- to moderate-intensity fire can restore forests and create safer conditions for communities.

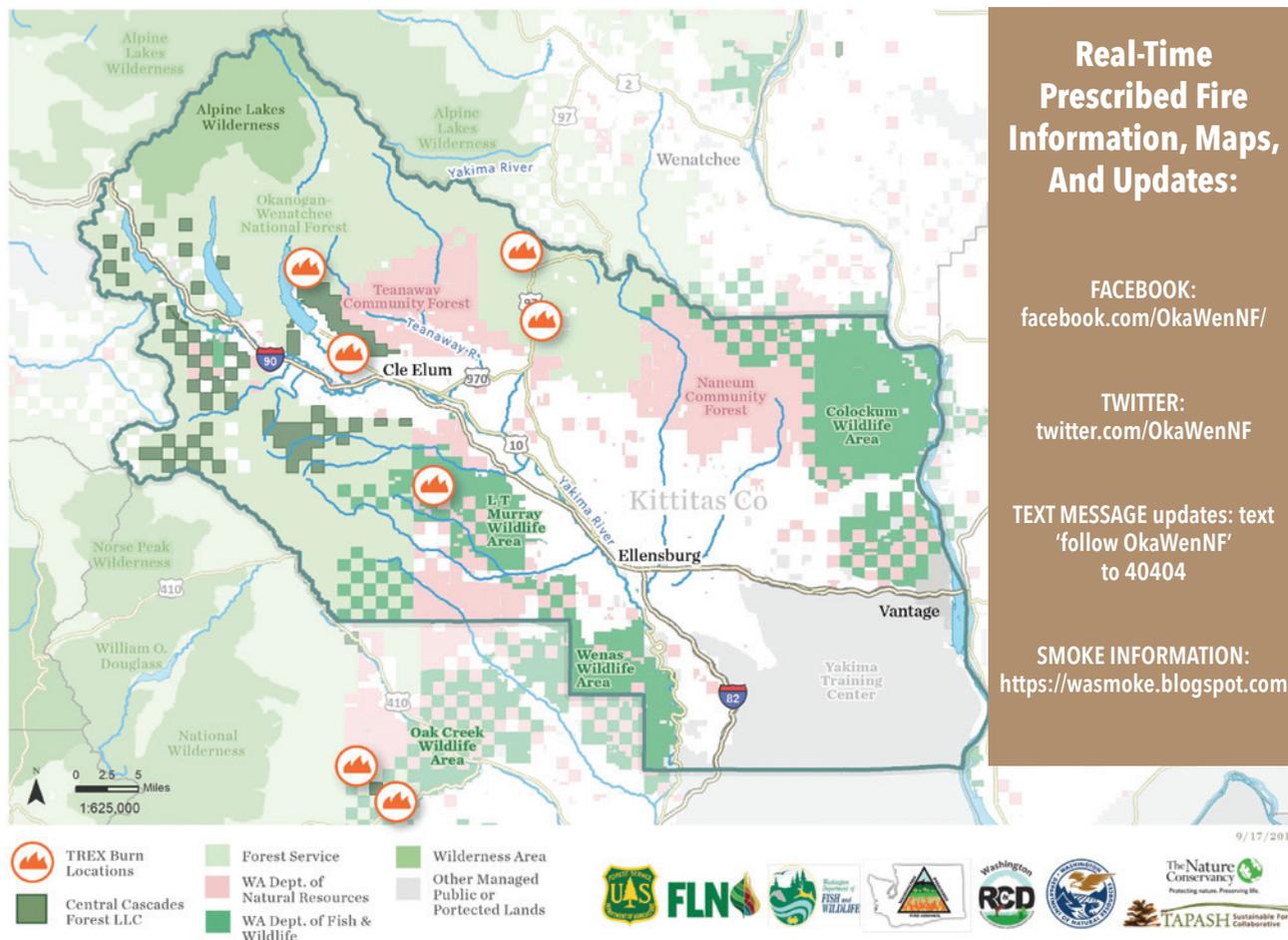
"This summer I visited community after community struggling to breathe and thrive in unnaturally dense wildfire smoke," said DNR Public Lands Commissioner Hilary Franz. "It's a wake-up call for everyone in the state — we must come together and support tools like prescribed fire that can restore Washington's dry forests."

Prescribed fire plans for the greater Cle Elum area TREX include approximately 500 acres on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest near Cle Elum, 250 acres on lands managed by the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife in Yakima and Kittitas Counties, 85 acres in the Central Cascades Forest managed by the Nature Conservancy, and 95 acres of private lands near Roslyn. TREX burns could occur Monday Sept. 24 through Friday Oct. 5. Other planned burns by state and federal agencies will also occur into the fall, depending on weather conditions.

Residents and visitors can expect to see and smell some smoke each day during burning operations. For more information on smoke and public health, please visit: wasmoke.blogspot.com

Training participants are from the Washington Department of Natural Resources, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Roslyn Fire Department, Kittitas County Fire District 1, National Park Service, and the British Columbia Wildfire Service. The training is hosted by the Washington Prescribed Fire Council, the Washington Resource Conservation & Development Council, The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife and the Fire Learning Network.

TREX Potential Burn Locations



Virtual Wildfire Workshop Available for Landowners

KCCD, together with the Kittitas Fire Adapted Communities Coalition (KFACC) recently released two videos and are planning a third to educate landowners and the public about wildfires. The videos star local agency staff, community members, and landowners and touch on the issues that are important in the landscape of Kittitas County. They are available in a format that may be used as a virtual workshop, for the convenience of the viewer and with references to agencies and people available to provide assistance.



The first video is a direct result of the Jolly Mountain fire and the need to help the community and the public understand the environment we all live in. It stars Mike Starkovich (US Forest Service) and his description of the Jolly Mountain fire. The video also includes Gary Berndt, Larry Leach (DNR), and Phil Hess (Washington Farm Forestry Association).



The second video is a how-to for landowners who want to build effective defensible space around their home. This video includes local landowners Patty O'Hearn, Carolyn Berglund,

and John & Yolanda Randlett, who share their stories about building defensible space. Jason Emsley (DNR) and Phil Hess review the actions and strategies that achieve effective defensible space.

The third video in production now will be another instructional video this time about emergency planning and evacuations. The videos are or will be available on Kittitas Fire Adapted Communities Coalition YouTube Channel and Facebook page.



Phil Hess works with the crew from North by Northwest to film information about forest health and fuels reduction.

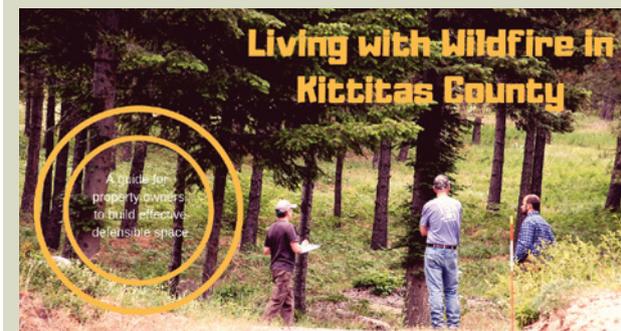
These are the videos posted on the KFACC YouTube channel



How is Kittitas County a fire environment?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EbuRaOdxoM&t=127s>

This video was funded by the Kittitas County Board of Commissioners, Kittitas County Conservation District, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington Resource Conservation, and Development Council and The Nature Conservancy.



Living with Wildfire: A defensible space guide

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1Y2Hnely3o>

This video was funded by the Suncadia Fund for Community Enhancement, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and the Kittitas County Conservation District.

Special thank you to Jeri Downs, Peter Ackroyd, North Hills Logging, EcoDig LLC, Wilderness Ridge Tree Service, Roslyn Urban Forest, Eric Koenig (AFM) for allowing access to their property and operations for the videos.

Firewise USA Community Annual Renewals Due November 16

The Firewise USA® program provides a collaborative framework for neighbors to reduce wildfire risks at the local level. The national recognition program's annual criteria are designed to empower and engage residents living in wildfire prone areas with a plan and actions that can increase their home's chances of surviving a wildfire, while also making it safer for firefighters.

Part of being a recognized Firewise USA® site is reporting the ongoing work

residents complete each year to reduce their wildfire risks, while addressing the areas identified in their community's wildfire assessment. Every year participating sites must submit an annual renewal to maintain their "In Good Standing" status. KCCD's Rose Shriner is available to assist communities either with their initial application to the program or with the renewal.

Contact her at rose-shriner@conservewa.net or 925-3352 ext. 202 for more information.

Kittitas County currently has 23 Firewise USA Communities:

Banti Creek, Cle Elum
 Buffalo Springs, Cle Elum
 Goat Peak Ranch Home Owners Association, Cle Elum
 Green Canyon, Ellensburg
 Hidden Valley Terrace, Cle Elum
 Hidden Valley Vistas/Hidden Valley Meadows, Cle Elum
 Hyak, Snoqualmie Pass
 Kachess Ridge, Easton
 Kachess Village, Easton
 Lauderdale Ridge HOA, Cle Elum
 Liberty Mountain Ownership Association, Cle Elum
 Morgan Creek, Ronald

Pine Loch Sun, Ronald
 Ski Tur Valley, Snoqualmie Pass
 Sky Meadows Ranch, Cle Elum
 Sun Country, Cle Elum
 Suncadia, Cle Elum
 Sunlight Waters, Cle Elum
 Swauk Pines, Cle Elum,
 Teanaway Terrace, Cle Elum
 Tillman Creek, Cle Elum
 Vistas at Cle Elum, Cle Elum
 Upper Manastash Canyon, Ellensburg
 Wagon Wheel, Cle Elum

Technical & Financial Assistance for Landowners

Through a partnership with Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the KCCD is helping to connect landowners to available financial assistance to reduce wildfire fuels and improve defensible space. Staff is available to conduct home site assessments, community assessments, and to assist landowners to find the financial resources to complete recommended fuels reduction treatments. Currently DNR has cost share funding for projects, but additional funds are likely to be available through other sources next year as well. Landowners interested in planning ahead for that potential are also encouraged to contact KCCD for help with assessments and plans.

Contact Rose at rose-shriner@conservewa.net or 925-3352 ext. 202.

Kittitas Fire Adapted Communities Coalition

In May 2017, agencies, stakeholders, and community members met to discuss wildfire related issues in Kittitas County. The group quickly agreed that a coordinated effort to mitigate risks and prepare for the inevitable next fire would benefit the community. Fire adapted communities bring together the various stakeholders helping to change the culture from one of wildfire victims needing federal, state, and local aid

to survive a wildfire to communities living proactively with wildfire. In recognition of the importance of fire adapted communities, the Kittitas Fire Adapted Communities Coalition (K-FACC) was born.

Meetings are generally the second Wednesday of the month. Contact Rose Shriner (rose-shriner@conservewa.net) to receive notices of the K-FACC meeting dates and locations.

Mission: A coordinated movement to increase community resiliency to wildfire by providing education, planning, and technical assistance for implementing activities with the people that live, work, and recreate in Kittitas County.



Voluntary Stewardship Program

Working together, farmers can use voluntary efforts to avoid additional regulatory controls

The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is a new, non-regulatory, and incentive-based approach that supports individual farm operations while protecting critical areas and maintaining agriculture viability in Kittitas County through voluntary stewardship strategies and practices. VSP is available to counties across the state and involves first identifying priority watersheds and then convening a Watershed Group. The Watershed Group writes a Work Plan which is then approved by the Washington State Conservation Commission. The Kittitas County Watershed Group completed the Work Plan and it was approved in May 2018. Its available for review here: <http://www.kccd.net/VoluntaryStewardship.htm>

What are critical areas?

Washington's Growth Management Act covers five critical areas that counties must identify and protect: 1. Wetlands 2. Frequently flooded areas 3. Critical aquifer recharge areas 4. Geologically hazardous areas 5. Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas (emphasis on anadromous fish).

Critical areas exist throughout the County. You can direct questions about the presence of critical areas on your property or participation in the VSP to the Kittitas County VSP Coordinator Anna Lael, at a-lael@conservewa.net or 925-3352 ext. 207.

How Can the VSP Support Operations on Your Farm?

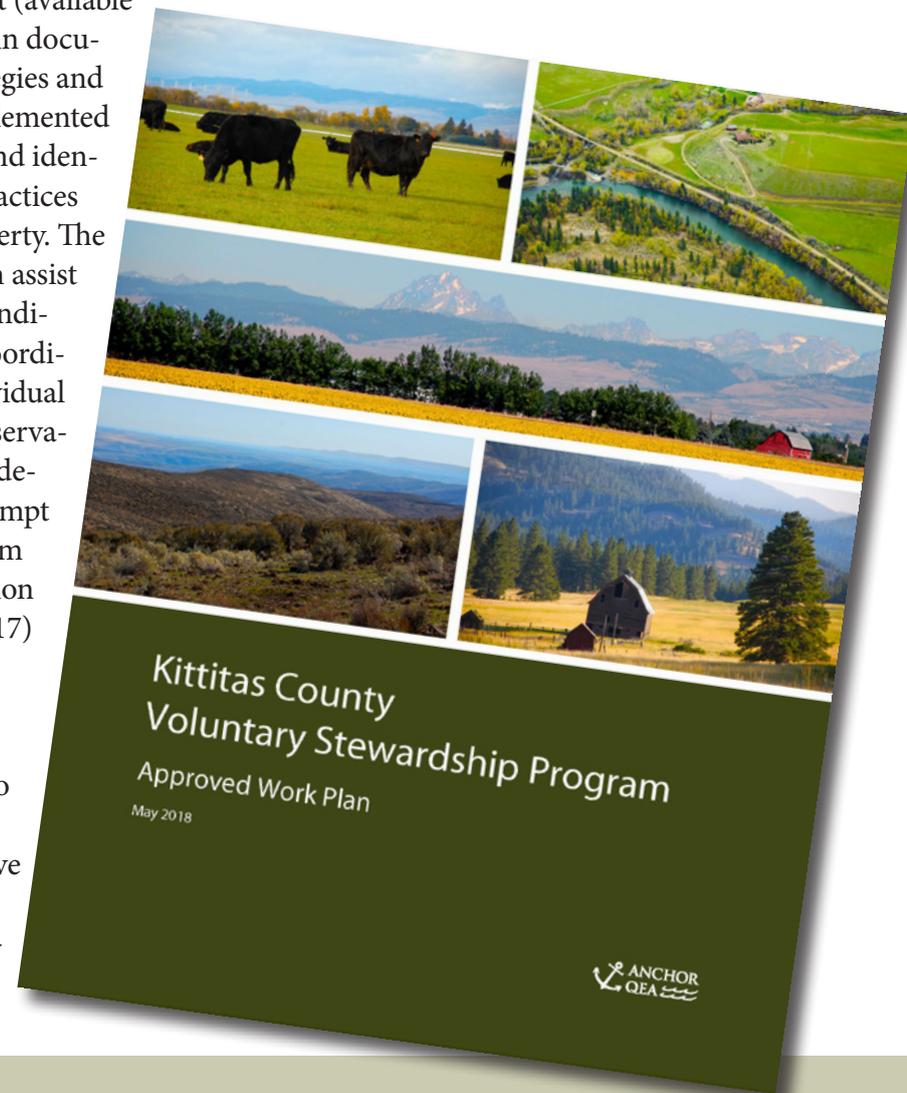
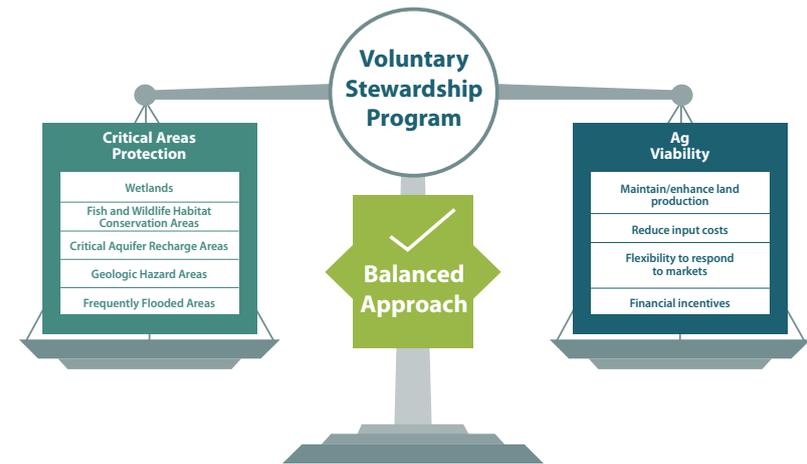
VSP allows farmers to have more flexibility through ongoing agricultural stewardship practices, than traditional regulatory approaches for protecting critical areas. VSP also requires that this approach maintain and enhance the long-term viability of agriculture. Many farmers in the County are already conducting and tracking stewardship activities and practices that promote farm viability while also providing protections to critical area functions.

Stewardship Practices on Your Farm

Stewardship practices are broadly defined as any practice that, when implemented, further protects critical areas directly or indirectly, and maintains or improves agricultural viability whether or not they meet a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation practice or other standard recognized by VSP.

A Self-Assessment Checklist (available on KCCD website) can assist in documenting all stewardship strategies and practices currently being implemented by producers in the County and identify additional stewardship practices that might apply to your property. The Self-Assessment Checklist can assist producers in developing an "individual stewardship plan" in coordination with the KCCD. "Individual stewardship plans" that a conservation district helps a producer develop are confidential and exempt from disclosure, similar to farm plans developed by conservation districts per RCW 42.56.270(17) (a) and (b).

Stewardship practices information shared by producers with the KCCD will be used to quantify, at the County-level, stewardship measures that have been implemented, as well as associated critical area protections and enhancements and agricultural viability benefits.



Additional information on the VSP can be found at the Kittitas County Conservation District website: <http://www.kccd.net/VoluntaryStewardship.htm>.

2018 Elementary Agriculture Appreciation Day a Success

KCCD organized the 17th annual Elementary Agriculture Appreciation Day which was held April 10th at the Kittitas Valley Event Center. The program invites third-graders, their teachers, and parents to discover the importance of agriculture and the farming life and includes stations offered by several local farm, ranch, and natural resource organizations. The students explore aspects of cattle ranching, raising livestock, dairying, hay and grain production, irrigation, water and soil conservation, and weed control at ten learning stations. They also learn the importance of reducing germs by thoroughly washing their hands.

More than four hundred elementary students from 20 classrooms across the County participated in the program again this year. Teachers, students and parents truly appreciate learning about agriculture in Kittitas County. Evaluations completed by participating teachers indicated that Ag Appreciation day is informative, engaging, and holds the students interests at each station. This can be credited to the great volunteers who put together superior presentations for the students. This year's presenters included Tip Hudson (WSU Extension), Marc Eylar (Kittitas County Noxious Weed Board), Kat Satnik (Kittitas County Water Purveyors), Wendy Mee (Kittitas County Conservation District), Scott & Michelle Montgomery (Three Peaks Outfitters), Megan Zapel, Tammi Schoenbachler (Washington State Dairy Women), Dairy Ambassador Anna Teachman, Steven Heithusen (Washington Tractor), Jay Herbers (S&S Equipment), Connie Dunnington, Stefanie McCann, and

Steve Russell (Ellensburg FFA) and Becky Carollo (Kittitas FFA) and their members. Farm equipment and animals were provided by Washington Tractor, Broadmoor Farms, S&S Equipment, Bill & Lynette Miller, Kat Satnik, Mike & Pam Scott, and Krysta Brashler.

Group leaders included Ellensburg and Kittitas FFA members and members of the following 4-H Clubs: Get Up & Go, Stirrups & Irons, Hard to Beat, and Kids & Kritters. Timekeepers were Melanie George and Barb Pettit. The Kittitas County Cattewomen provided lunches for volunteers working the event, as well as educational materials for the students. The Kittitas Board of County Commissioners and the Kittitas Valley Event Center staff provided the location and great support for this event. Funding to support bus costs was provided by the Kittitas County Farm Bureau, Kittitas County Cattlemen, Kittitas County Water Purveyors, and Kittitas County Conservation District.

For more information about the program, contact Mark Crowley at 925-3352 ext 205.



Top: Scott Montgomery (at front of the wagon) of Three Peaks Outfitters and Megan Zapel (left) provide wagon rides and information to the students.

Middle: Ellensburg FFA members talk about crops, especially the timothy hay grown in the Valley and shipped overseas.

Bottom: Steven Heithusen (Washington Tractor) and Jay Herbers (S&S Equipment) talk about farm equipment.