

Kittitas County Conservation District

Serving Landowners in Kittitas County Since 1942

July 2017



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

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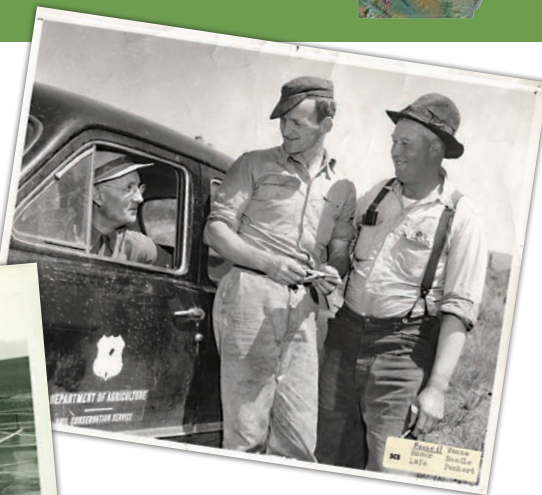
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75 Years of Conservation

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Kittitas County Conservation District. On March 21, 1942, more than 400 Kittitas Valley landowners visited nine polling stations to vote overwhelmingly in favor of forming a conservation district. It was a beginning, but it was also the culmination of years of work at the federal, state and local levels not only to bring attention to the impacts of soil erosion but to do something about it.

The USDA Soil Erosion Service (SES) established a demonstration project in the Badger Pocket area southeast of Ellensburg in 1936. In a speech to the Ellensburg Chamber of Commerce in December 1936, Jack Rodner (SES employee) stated that the shallow soils on the steep lands under the Kittitas Reclamation District (KRD) highline were eroding badly. His assessment was that if the soil erosion wasn't slowed or halted, a large part of the Badger Pocket could be abandoned within 5 years.

The Badger Pocket Project included as much 20,000 acres and was essentially from Cooke Creek east and south. Some of these lands were in the Ellensburg Water Company Canal (Town Ditch) and Cascade Canal delivery areas and had been farmed for two decades or more, but most were in the KRD delivery area and were newly



Above: Soil Conservation Service employee Russell Vance and Cle Elum Conservation District cooperators Homer Beedle and Lafe Penkert. Circa 1950



Left: The District owned equipment and worked with landowners all across the valley to level land for agricultural production.

converted to irrigated cropland. About a quarter of the project area was relatively flat, the rest was steep. Most of the area under the KRD also did not have stock water during the non-irrigation season and drilling wells was expensive, so the farmers concentrated on crop production.

Like other demonstration projects across the state, willing farmers in the Badger Pocket signed five-year cooperative agreements to install conservation measures. The SES furnished equipment, seed, seedlings, assistance in planning the measures, and labor from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) or the Works Projects Administration. In fact, a CCC camp was set up at Kittitas County Fairgrounds in 1938.

The SES staff worked to demonstrate conservation practices that would allow crop production while conserving soil. This included changing the distance between corrugations (the furrows in the field that direct irrigation water), shortening the

See **75 Years**, Page 2

Manastash Creek Restoration Project Reaches Major Milestone

The Manastash Creek Restoration Project reached a major milestone this spring when adult steelhead were documented passing upstream of former fish passage barriers in Manastash Creek. In November 2016, the last large fish passage barrier was removed from Manastash Creek restoring access to the upper watershed. This spring, the first adult female steelhead was detected near Manastash Canyon, more than 6 miles from the confluence with the Yakima River.



AFTER



BEFORE

Left: Manastash Creek after the Reed Diversion was removed and passage restored.
Right: Reed Diversion Dam on Manastash Creek.

Over the last decade, work by the Kittitas County Conservation District and countless partners has resulted in the construction of new irrigation water diversion facilities designed with proper screens to prevent fish from entering the

irrigation ditches and incorporating fish passage structures. Three new facilities were built between 2009 and 2011 at Barnes Road, Keach/Jensen and the Manastash Water Ditch Association (MWDA).

See **Manastash**, Page 4

75 Years of Conservation

Continued from page 1

lengths of corrugations, adding water control structures, using sprinklers on the steepest slopes, and planting trees. Many of the water distribution practices that are still in use began as part of that demonstration project.

As the Badger Pocket project was coming to an end in 1941, it became apparent to the farmers that the conservation work should continue. Since the 1939 Washington State Legislature passed Revised Code of Washington 89.08 – Soil Conservation District Law, it was now possible to not only continue the conservation work but to take local control. As required by the law, a petition was submitted to the State Soil Conservation Committee stating the interest in forming a district. Public Hearings were held in February and the referendum was scheduled for March.

After the successful vote, the State Soil Conservation Committee appointed two local landowners as the first Board members. R.L. (Bob) Rutter and Alan Rogers met first in May 1942. Together they made the application to the Secretary of State and mailed it with the required \$5 fee. They set the date for the election for the remaining three board members. In the June election, Rufus Schnebly, Jess Newman, and Mike Schormann joined Rutter and Rogers as the first Board of Supervisors. They would meet weekly (Thursday at 8PM) the first few months in order to organize the District.

The Cle Elum Soil Conservation District followed suit in 1947, establishing the District with a unanimous vote by 77 landowners. Tom Newton and Ray Baker were appointed by the State Soil Conservation Committee, and



Cooperator George McKenzie looks over his crop of winter rye, which is to be turned under for a green manure crop before potatoes are planted in June. 8 miles SE of Kittitas 1939

Fred Cushing, Steve Bednar, Otto Cooper were elected locally.

The Board members solicited some of the first funds for the Districts from the managements of the Washington National Bank of Ellensburg, the National Bank of Commerce, Ellensburg Branch, Kittitas State Bank of Kittitas and the Cle Elum Branch of Seattle First National Bank.

In first year of operations for the Kittitas District, there were 125 applications for technical assistance, of which 95 were applications for farm and range plans. Forty plans were completed and signed for a total of 36,110 acres. When the Cle Elum District was established in 1947, they received 39 applications for farm plans, with 10 completed in the first year covering 3,500 acres.

Such was their enthusiasm for the conservation districts that both Bob Rutter and Alan Rogers were part of the effort to establish the Washington Association of Conservation Districts and served as state officers. Rutter served a term as an officer for the National

Board of Supervisors Changes

The District’s election this year brought a new member to the Board of Supervisors. The election of Matt Eslinger was certified by the Washington State Conservation Commission in May. Matt is a fifth generation timothy hay farmer in the Denmark area. Matt replaces Ron Gibb, who served three terms on the Board. Ron’s service to the District is greatly appreciated.

The Washington State Conservation Commission also certified the re-appointment of Lynn Brown to the Board of Supervisors. Lynn has served five terms on the Board and represents the Central Region conservation districts on the Washington State Conservation Commission.

Members of the Board of Supervisors are both elected and appointed. Three of the five board positions are selected in a local election held each February. The other two positions are appointed by the Washington State Conservation Commission, with applications due the end of March. Appointments and elections are certified each May, at which time the candidates may fill their positions. The terms are three years long and are staggered so that an election of one supervisor occurs annually.

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 2018)
- 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**
- Mark Crowley - Resource Technician III**
- Lance Downing - 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@conservewa.net

PLANNING DOCUMENTS

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

USDA Awards Funds to Local Effort

On the third try, the Kittitas County Conservation District finally succeeded in securing funding through the USDA's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The "Yakima Integrated Plan – Toppenish to Teanaway" was one of 88 projects across the nation to be approved in December 2016. More than \$7.5 million will be dedicated to projects and programs in irrigated crop lands and grazing areas of Kittitas County and the Yakama Reservation. The proposal includes \$9.3 million in local contributions to the project from private, local and state agencies.

The proposal is a partnership between the Yakama Nation and the District to provide assistance to landowners and producers on the Yakama Reservation and in Kittitas County. It may seem like strange combination for a proposal, given the geographic separation of the priority areas. "In previous rounds, we had a strategy, in that the Yakama Nation was applying for assistance for on-reservation work and we were applying for assistance with off reservation work, but we were all working together under the umbrella of the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan" said Anna Lael, District Manager. Program rules are different on and off reservation, so it seemed logical to keep them separate. After the second round, feedback was received indicating that the proposals were essentially competing against one another and that a combined single proposal would be a better idea. "So, we took our second round proposal and the Yakama Nation's second round proposal and put them together in a single project and applied again," she said. Only one lead partner is allowed in the proposal process, so the Yakama Nation agreed to fill that role. Of the total funding award, more than \$6.2 million is dedicated to Kittitas County programs and projects.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) implements RCPP conservation program contracts and easement agreements through four existing NRCS programs authorities.

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)



Conversions to sprinkler irrigation systems and the installation of pump stations with compliant fish screen are examples of projects that will be eligible for funding through RCPP.



Local producers who are or have worked with the NRCS Field Office in Ellensburg will recognize the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This is the program that typically is utilized for sprinkler conversion projects and other on-farm efficiencies. Over the last several years, the EQIP program has funded 10% or less of the applications each year. The new funding through RCPP will approximately triple the amount of local EQIP funding available for the next four years. The easement programs are not as widely known here. The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) includes funding for farmland preservation as wetland reserve projects. The Healthy Forest Reserve Program is new in this state this year, although it has been implemented elsewhere. Together the easement programs have approximately \$1.4 million in funding through this proposal.

Through RCPP, the District also requested technical assistance funding which will allow District staff to assist with sign-ups, ranking of applications, conservation plan activities and cultural resources surveys and reviews. This means that District staff will assist producers directly, an effort that will increase the efficiency of the application process through NRCS.

In addition to the District and the Yakama Nation, partners contributing funding for this project include:

- Washington Department of Ecology
- Washington State Conservation Commission
- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

- Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Kittitas County Flood Control Zone District
- Forterra
- Trout Unlimited Washington Water Project
- Wapato Irrigation Project
- Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Other partners providing assistance include Washington Water Trust, Kittitas Conservation Trust, and the Mid-Columbia Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group.

Producers interested in learning more about potential funding should contact the KCCD at a-lael@conservewa.net or 509-925-3352, ext. 207.

For more information on RCPP, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov

Manastash Creek Restoration Project Reaches Major Milestone

Continued from page 1

In 2014, pipelines were constructed to allow the water diverted at the two remaining structures (Reed and Hatfield) in the creek to be diverted at the MWDA facility. This meant that the Reed Diversion structure was no longer necessary to divert irrigation water and could be removed. After considerable planning, the structure was removed in November 2016.

The project has also taken advantage of the monitoring activities conducted by the co-managers in the Yakima Basin (Yakama Nation and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife-WDFW) to document the movement of adult steelhead up Manastash Creek. All adult steelhead passing above Roza dam are tagged with Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tags. These tags can then be read by antennas at various locations throughout the watershed. Using funding from the Bonneville Power Administration, two sets of antennas were installed in Manastash Creek. The lower set of antennas has been in place for three years and has detected adult steelhead in the lower part of the Creek. Shortly after removal of the Reed Diversion, another set of antennas were installed approximately 6 miles up Manastash Creek, above all the previous project sites. The first adult steelhead was detected at the upper site on April 17, 2017.

Adult steelhead are not the only fish with PIT tags. When the Reed Diversion removal occurred, fish were removed from the work site. Some of those fish were PIT tagged as well. Three of the juvenile rainbow trout (O. Mykiss) were also detected at the upper antennas, indicating that all the Manastash projects had also achieved upstream juvenile

passage, a much higher bar. These steelhead are part of the mid-Columbia summer steelhead population, currently listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Reestablishing connectivity within



WDFW crew counting, identifying and tagging fish removed from the project area before construction.

tributaries will further steelhead recovery in the upper Yakima River basin and hopefully work toward future de-listing of the species.

Work continues in the Manastash watershed to improve instream flow. For decades, nearly three miles of the stream (upstream of Cove Road to nearly Barnes Road) went dry each summer. Conservation activities including on-farm conversions to sprinklers and installation of pipelines, along with the purchase of water rights from willing sellers has done much to improve flow conditions. In 2015, the Kittitas Reclamation District began a supplementation program in several tributaries in the County, including Manastash Creek. This supplementation has helped to ensure that Manastash Creek remains flowing throughout the summer.

Fuel Reduction Programs

Rover Chipper Program Assists 200 Landowners

For several years, a partnership between the Kittitas County Conservation District and fire districts has provided landowners with a roving chipper service. Kittitas County Fire District No. 7 and Kittitas Valley Fire and Rescue are working together to fund and operate a crew and a wood chipper to assist communities across the county. The communities work hard to thin, limb and remove brush, stacking the debris for the chipping crew. In the last year and a half, more than 200 landowners in 20 communities from Hyak to Secret Canyon and Liberty Mountain to Manastash have benefitted from the program. Funding is provided by the Washington Department of Natural Resources and a FEMA grant secured by the Kittitas County Fire Marshal's office.



Future funding for this program is pending. Landowners interested in participating should contact Rose Shriner at 925-3352 ext.202 or rose-shriner@conservewa.net.

Partners Meet to Discuss Upper Kittitas County Wildfire

In late May, the Teanaway Grange Hall was the site of a meeting of partners and stakeholders involved in wildfire hazard reduction work in Upper Kittitas County. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss opportunities to coordinate more closely on projects, programs and activities to effectively reduce the risk of wildfire damage.

Similar coordinating efforts are ongoing in other areas, like the "Yakima Valley Fire Adapted Community Coalition," the "Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition" in Leavenworth and even "Project Wildfire" in the Bend Oregon area. These efforts demonstrate great promise to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of fuels reduction, community planning, and even wildfire response and recovery. Our County has 20 recognized Firewise USA Communities and one Fire Adapted Community (Hidden Valley/Swauk). Many of the pieces of a greater organization and effort are already in place here.

The Washington Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D) organized the meeting and it was facilitated with assistance from the Washington State Conservation Commission. Partners attending included the Kittitas County Conservation District, Kittitas County Fire

Fuel Reduction Programs

Continued from page 4

District No. 7, Kittitas County Fire District No. 51, Kittitas Valley Fire & Rescue, Kittitas County Fire Marshal, The Nature Conservancy, Washington Department of Natural Resources, US Forest Service, Kittitas County Public Works, Kittitas Conservation Trust, consulting foresters, and private landowners.

There was enthusiasm and support for pursuing an effort in Upper Kittitas County. The group discussed potential future achievements, an organizational framework, and priority project criteria. The group agreed on a name, “Upper Kittitas Wildfire Coalition” and a tentative purpose statement:

“The coalition is a coordinated movement to increase community resilience to wildfire by providing education, planning, and technical assistance for implementing activities with the people that live, work and recreate in the Upper Kittitas County.”

The Upper Kittitas Wildfire Coalition will continue to meet and develop the effort this summer and fall. For more information, please contact Rose Shriner at 925-3352 ext.202 or rose-shriner@conservewa.net.

Kittitas County Leads in Firewise USA Communities

With 22 active Firewise Communities, Kittitas County leads Eastern Washington and is second in Washington state. Here at the District, we provide assistance to communities who are working to either achieve or maintain their status in the program.

The Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program has empowered neighbors to work together in reducing their wildfire risk since 2002. Using a five-step process, communities develop an action plan that guides their residential risk reduction activities, while engaging and encouraging their neighbors to become active participants in building a safer place to live.

If your community is interested in this program please contact Rose at 509 -925-3352 ext. 202.

Firewise USA recognized communities in Kittitas County

- Banti Creek, Cle Elum , 2015 • Buffalo Springs, Cle Elum, 2013
Goat Peak Ranch Home Owners Association, Cle Elum, 2016 • Green Canyon, Ellensburg , 2015
Hidden Valley Terrace, Cle Elum, 2014 • Hidden Valley Vistas/Hidden Valley Meadows, Cle Elum, 2012
Hyak, Snoqualmie Pass, 2016 • Kachess Ridge, Easton, 2013 • Kachess Village, Easton, 2013
Lauderdale Ridge HOA, Cle Elum, 2016 • Liberty Mountain Development, 2017
Morgan Creek, Ronald, 2015 • Pine Loch Sun, Ronald, 2013 • Ski Tur Valley, Snoqualmie Pass, 2014
Sky Meadows Ranch, Cle Elum, 2009 • Sun Country, Cle Elum, 2012 • Sunlight Waters, Cle Elum , 2012
Swauk Pines, Cle Elum, 2013 • Teanaway Terrace, Cle Elum, 2013 • Upper Manastash Canyon, Pending
Vistas at Cle Elum, Cle Elum, 2013 • Wagon Wheel, Cle Elum, 2010 • Wildwood, Roslyn, 2016



In addition to the roving chipper, the Conservation District also reimburses landowners for approved practices like thinning, limbing and brush removal in their defensible space zone. These projects are generally larger and often require a contractor to be completed. With funding through the Department of Natural Resources, the District assisted fifteen landowners on 75 acres.

What is a Fire Adapted Community?

A fire adapted community is a community that is working to prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfire. It incorporates people, buildings, businesses, infrastructure, cultural resources, and natural areas into the preparedness effort. Fire adapted communities use many tools and programs to better live with wildfire. The Firewise Communities

USA program is one tool available to communities but is not the only tool. Programs such as Ready, Set, Go! as well as our local codes and ordinances, Community Wildfire

Protection Plans, collaborative planning efforts, business resilience activities, local mutual aid agreements, fire department capacity, and more all help adapt a community to live with wildfire. The Hidden Valley/ Swauk area was chosen by the Washington State Fire Adapted Community Learning Network to become Kittitas County's first FAC.

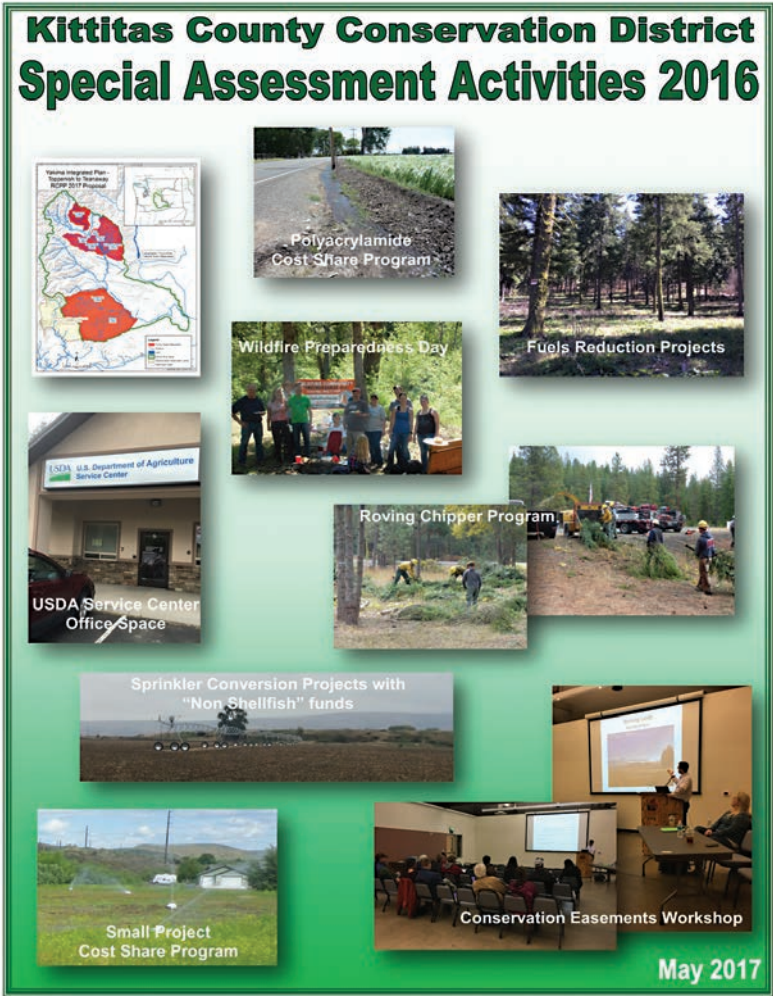


Conservation District Renews Local Funding

In 2007, a source of local funding was approved for the Kittitas County Conservation District providing a significant level of stability to support the continuity of basic operations, while allowing the District to address local priorities for which grant funding was lacking. The local funding, called a "Special Assessment" is allowed by Chapter 89.08.400 RCW has a statutory maximum of \$5 per parcel and \$0.10 per acre. The RCW authorizes the county legislative authority of the county in which the conservation district is located to accept the proposed assessment for a period not to exceed ten years in duration. The Kittitas Board of County Commissioners did so in 2006 for a period of 10 years beginning in 2007.

Even with the local funds, the District is primarily grant funded with an annual budget averaging \$3 million over the last five years during which the special assessment averaged \$156,000 per year or about five percent of the total budget. This particular fact may make it seem as though the local funds are unimportant, but the opposite is true. These local funds have allowed the District to work on resources concerns and apply for grants that may have otherwise been unavailable to local landowners. A prime example is the Firewise and Fuels Reduction programs, an area where District staff supported by these local funds worked to secure more than \$1.2 million grant funds for fuels reduction work and Firewise USA Community development. In 2012, the District's involvement in forestry and fuels reduction, and the relationships developed with landowners, the community and partner agencies allowed the District to respond quickly to a request by the Board of County Commissioners to assist with the recovery of the Taylor Bridge Fire burned area. District staff worked primarily with the Washington State Conservation Commission and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to secure more than \$800,000 for technical and financial assistance for landowners.

The District also used local funds to develop a list of landowners interested in converting from rill to sprinkler irrigation



analysis was necessary, along with public hearings and action of the District's Board of Supervisors, as well as the Board of County Commissioners. The proposed system of rates and charges has the same statutory maximum of \$5 per parcel and \$0.10 per acre. The rates analysis resulted in slightly changing the per parcel and per acre rates, but not exceeding that maximum.

The District's Board of Supervisors approved the renewal of the local funding in July 2016 and forwarded the proposal to the Board of County Commissioners. They approved the system of rates and charges as well, implementing it for 10 years and providing the District with continued stability for operations and the ability to continue to seek funds for priority activities and programs in the County.

For more information
about the District's local funding, visit
<http://www.kccd.net/LocalFunding.htm>
or contact **Anna at 925-3352, ext. 207**

Small Project Cost Share

The Conservation District offers technical and financial assistance to landowners implementing small projects. Financial assistance (cost share) is available with an emphasis on improving water quality and water use efficiency. Potential projects may include piping earthen delivery ditches, installing gated pipe, converting to sprinkler systems or installing livestock control fences. Landowners with approved agreements can be reimbursed for costs at a 50% rate up to \$4,000. Applications are due in September and projects must be completed by the following April.

To receive an application,
contact Mark Crowley at
925-3352 ext. 205
or mark-crowley@conservewa.net



Above: Livestock watering facility

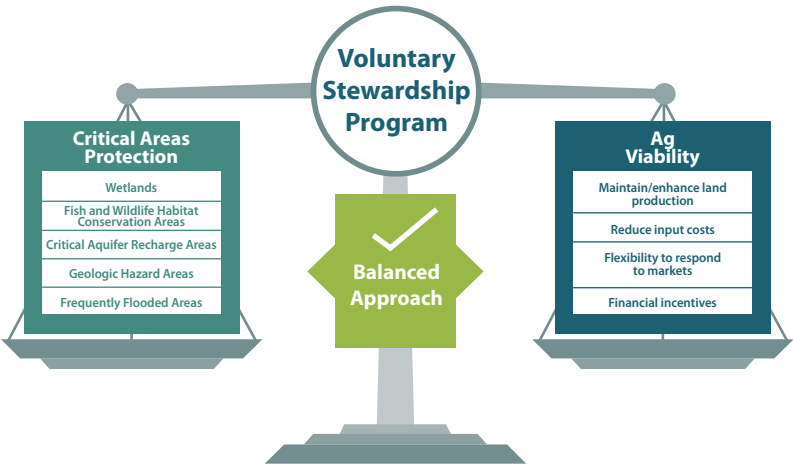
Below: Installing a mainline for a small sprinkler system



Voluntary Stewardship Program

The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is a non-regulatory, incentive-based approach to protecting critical areas on agricultural lands, while maintaining agriculture viability. VSP allows farmers and ranchers (“producers”) to continue agricultural practices without regulation under the Critical Areas Ordinance by promoting voluntary stewardship strategies and practices by producers that protect critical areas and maintain and enhance agricultural viability.

VSP is allowed under a recent change in the Growth Management Act and provides an alternative to traditional approaches to critical areas protection, such as protection buffers. Twenty-seven counties (including Kittitas) across the state opted into VSP and are working towards implementation. VSP is intended to balance critical areas protection and agricultural viability at the County level through voluntary actions by agricultural producers. VSP is not a replacement for compliance with other laws and regulations, but participation in the program can often help agricultural producers comply with these requirements.



The guiding document for the VSP is the Work Plan. The Work Plan includes detailed information intended to fulfill the state requirements outlined under the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70A.720(1), which includes several elements, such as protection and enhancement goals, measurable benchmarks, and an implementation, reporting, and tracking framework.

The Kittitas VSP Work Plan is being developed by the Kittitas County VSP Watershed Group, which was convened by the Conservation District

and the County in 2016. The Watershed Group includes representatives of producer groups (Farm Bureau, Cattlemen, etc), individual producers (upper and lower county, small acreage), irrigation districts, tribes, and environmental interests (Kittitas Conservation Trust, Washington Water Trust, Trout Unlimited, etc). A Technical Committee was also convened to advise the Watershed Group. The Committee includes primarily local and state agencies’ staff with expertise related to critical areas and agriculture. More than a dozen meetings of the Watershed Group have been facilitated since March 2016 to gather information and review data. Efforts to write the work plan will begin in earnest this fall, with a goal of completing the plan by the summer of 2017.

The Work Plan must be submitted to the Washington State Conservation Commission. A VSP Technical Panel must review draft work plans submitted by the VSP Workgroups and make recommendations to State Conservation Commission (SCC) Executive Director on whether to approve or reject the plan. The Technical Panel represents directors (or director-designees) of the Washington Departments of Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, Agriculture, and the Conservation Commission. To date, two Work Plans (Thurston and Chelan) have been approved, with several more in the pipeline.

For more information
on the Kittitas VSP Work Plan development, visit <http://www.kccd.net/VoluntaryStewardship.htm>.
For information on Work Plans statewide, visit <http://scc.wa.gov/vsp/>



Kittitas County VSP Watershed Group listens to a presentation on groundwater and surface water interaction by Dave Nazy of the Department of Ecology.

- What are “agricultural activities” under VSP?**
- VSP applies to lands where agricultural activities are conducted, as defined in RCW 90.58.065. Agricultural activities mean agricultural uses and practices including, but not limited to:
 - Producing, breeding, or increasing agricultural products, including livestock
 - Rotating and changing agricultural crops
 - Allowing land used for agricultural activities to lie fallow in which it is plowed and tilled but left unseeded
 - Allowing land used for agricultural activities to lie dormant due to adverse agricultural market conditions
 - Conducting agricultural operations
 - Allowing land used for agricultural activities to lie dormant because the land is enrolled in a local, state, or federal conservation program, or the land is subject to a conservation easement
 - Maintaining, repairing, and replacing agricultural equipment or facilities (provided the replacement facility is no closer to the shoreline than the original facility)
 - Maintaining agricultural lands under production or cultivation

- What are critical areas?**
- Critical areas include the following areas and ecosystems:
 - Wetlands
 - Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water
 - Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
 - Frequently flooded areas
 - Geologically hazardous areas

2017 Elementary Ag Appreciation Day

The 16th annual Elementary Agriculture Appreciation Day was held April 11th 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 thoroughly washing their hands. More than four hundred elementary students from 20 classrooms across the County participated in the program 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 group of volunteers who put together quality 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), Lance Downing (Kittitas County Conservation District), Scott Montgomery (Three Peaks Outfitters), Dairy Ambassador Alicia Smaczarz (Washington State Dairy Association), Julie Sorensen (WSU Extension), Connie Dunnington, Stefanie McCann, and Steve Russell and his Ellensburg FFA members.

Farm equipment and animals were provided by Washington Tractor, Broadmoor Farms, Pat & Linda Clerf, Charlene Andrews, Cookie Preston, Kat Satnik, and Three Peaks Outfitters.

Additional volunteers helping during the day of the event included Melanie George, Megan Welker and members of the following 4-H Clubs: Get Up & Go, Country Roots, Fairview, Valley Crafty Critters, Clover Rovers, Royal Riders, and On Target.

The Kittitas County Cattlewomen 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 educational event.



Above: Ellensburg FFA members at the Farm Equipment Station. Equipment provided by Washington Tractor and Broadmoor Farms.

Middle: Scott Montgomery (Three Peak Outfitters) talks about the horse's historic and current role in agriculture.

Bottom: KCCD's Lance Downing at the Soil Station discussing soil erosion.

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.

This year is the first year that the Kittitas County Conservation District organized this event. Past events have been put together by Julie Sorensen (WSU Extension) who kindly provided information and support to the District to ensure this event continues its past success.

