

CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

SPRING 2016

CHELAN LANDOWNER PROVIDES FIRE RESILIENCY TIPS

Randy Brooks and his family were some of the very fortunate homeowners in Chelan who did not lose their home in last summer's Chelan Complex fires. Randy has provided the following testimonial and tips for his fellow homeowners in hopes that these suggestions will help save more homes:

There are many factors that contributed to the survival of our house during the August 14, 2015, firestorm in Chelan. Some were within our control, many were not.

During construction of our house in the mid 1990s, we considered some aspects of fire protection, but really didn't focus on it. Since then we have focused more on fire protection. We organized a neighborhood work party to remove brush along the shoulders of our access road, to ensure fire fighters would be safe bringing fire apparatus down our road. We have also maintained a 30 foot "fire break" around our house, mowing the grass on the hillside immediately behind and along the ends of our house with a string trimmer.

After the Carlton Complex fire, we expanded our fire break, removing sagebrush and bitter brush from within 50 feet or more of the house and out buildings, and mowed the dry grass two or three times during the summer to keep it very short.

After the Sleepy Hollow fire in Wenatchee we redoubled our efforts.

- We expanded our fire breaks even more, removing brush even further from the house,
- We trimmed the branches of evergreens even farther up from the ground, so there were no "ladder fuels" to carry fire up into the trees.
- We raked leaves and pine needles from around buildings and from under trees.
- We talked with our neighbors about clearing areas around their houses, particularly those areas that might impact our house.



Home of Randy Brooks in the center. His home and outbuildings survived the fires in Chelan

- We improved our road safety by removing brush out 20 to 30 feet from the road shoulder.
- We enclosed our open sided wood shed with 1/4" hardware cloth screen.
- We pre-positioned extra hose and spray nozzles that we could use to wet down buildings in advance of a fire.

We reviewed our "evacuation list," things we would take if evacuated, and consolidated some of these items in containers, so we could just grab the container and go.

About 5 am Friday morning, August 14th, 2015, a lightning storm passed through the Chelan area. By 6 am we were up, listening to the local radio

Continued on page 2

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Orange Flower
Savannah Meiners

CHELAN LANDOWNER CONT.

station reporting fires on the Chelan Butte, and on Deer Mountain, just to the north of our house. We finished packing our evacuation items and pre-loaded our two vehicles as much as possible. We removed anything flammable from near the house and moved them inside to keep them from being ignited by blowing embers.

By this time the wind driven fire was raging up Willmorth Drive less than a mile to the south of us. We could see a black cloud of smoke from behind the hill to the south, blowing completely across the Columbia River. We agreed that when we saw flames round that hill, we would evacuate. In fast moving situations like this, it is impossible for emergency workers to inform everyone when to evacuate. You must pay attention and decide for yourself when you must evacuate. We listened to the local radio station all day to keep abreast of the fire situation and direction of travel.

I was on the roof adjusting a sprinkler when I glanced downhill to the east and saw a plume of black smoke rising above our neighbor's house. The fire had spotted to the slope below us, a half mile from the fire front. Not good! I immediately called my wife on her cell and told her we needed to evacuate now.

We turned to look back to the east and saw a huge column of smoke coming from our neighborhood. We were certain our house was gone.

Later a friend informed us that our house was still there, but four of our neighbors' houses had burned. We were incredulous, but had to inform our neighbor, who was with us, that her house was gone.

Recently we learned that the fire front burned through our neighborhood before fire crews arrived. The fire crew then protected our house from the embers of our neighbor's burning house. So our house survived the fire front without intervention. Our efforts paid off! And in particular:

- Having sprinklers set up on our fire break and roof.
- We remained home and took protective measures until forced to evacuate.
- There were two routes of escape.
- We returned to our house as soon as possible to protect it from flare ups.

We hope this narrative is helpful to you. If you live in the "wildland urban interface," it's not a matter of "if", but "when"...



To learn more about protecting your home from wildfire contact Amanda Levesque with Cascadia Conservation District at amandal@cascadiacd.org or (509) 436-1601. Cascadia offers FREE fire risk assessments, chipping programs, assistance for Firewise Communities, and cost-share assistance when funding is available.

CASCADIA OFFERS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO HELP MANAGE NATURAL RESOURCES ON YOUR LAND

This spring Cascadia Conservation District would like to help landowners learn about Best Management Practices for irrigation. **Start by checking your Irrigation IQ:**

Need help managing natural resources on your property? Cascadia is here to help!

Cascadia's Landowner Assistance Program offers technical and financial assistance and can pay up to 75% of the total cost of eligible projects. Eligible projects include: fuels reduction, irrigation system upgrades, and more.

Cascadia is currently seeking cooperators for streamside planting projects in the Wenatchee River basin.

For additional information, please contact Sandy Letzing at: (509) 436-1601 or Sandyl@cascadiacd.org

How much water used for irrigating lawns and gardens, on average, is wasted due to overwatering and evaporation?

- 50%
- 25%
- 15%
- 10%

A water-efficient irrigation system may include which features?

- Drip irrigation
- Moisture sensors
- Rain shut-off device
- All of the above

What is the best method for determining the duration of irrigation?

- Historical—how past generations irrigated
- Amount allowed under the current water right
- Based on needs of the targeted crop



New micro irrigation sprinklers result in water savings, reduced soil erosion and less risk of leaching nutrients into groundwater.

Visit www.cascadiacd.org and click on **Programs** then **Landowner Assistance** to take the rest of the quiz, get answers, and see the rest of our Irrigation Packet information. This page also includes additional information on our cost-share program. If you do not have computer access, give us a call at (509) 436-1601 and we will help you get paper copies of this information.

CASCADIA'S PRESENCE IN THE ENTIAT COMMUNITY

Entiat's annual Kite Fest was held on March 21 this year at the Kiwanis Park on the north end of town. Over 100 people attended the event, which was hosted by the Entiat Valley Chamber of Commerce. Cascadia helped sponsor the event and had an information table where Jason Sims, Cascadia's Entiat watershed coordinator, engaged the public, flew a couple of kites, and performed another set of magic for the crowd.

On April 9, Cascadia brought the Bureau of Reclamation's Rolling Rivers interactive watershed model to the Ardenvoir Swallowfest to teach kids and adults alike about the importance of a healthy watershed. Rolling Rivers has always been a big hit with the young and young-at-heart and our experience at Swallowfest this year was no different. About 200 people attended the event.

The 12th annual Entiat Earth Day took place at the school on April 22 and Cascadia was excited to participate. The entire elementary school, about 165 kids, participated in this fun event organized by the Entiat Valley Community Services Group. Several different organizations had booths set up with fun educational activities. Cascadia brought our table length fish anatomy puzzle. This beautifully crafted wood puzzle depicts the internal and external organs of a fish. We played a game of Fish Anatomy Jeopardy with the students, where we would describe a fish organ and they would guess the part, then place it in the puzzle. The students also enjoyed doing fish origami as another component of Cascadia's station.



Children enjoy making and flying their own kites at the annual Entiat Kite Fest

As many of the private landowners are aware, the Entiat is a very busy and highly monitored river. With several habitat projects already constructed, Cascadia has been actively engaging multiple landowners in preparation for the next round of implementation. In the years 2017 and 2018, Cascadia, Chelan County Natural Resource Department, Yakama Nation Fisheries, and Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group will be working to complete several new habitat projects in the Middle Entiat. These entities have been working with about seven private landowners and two organizations within the project areas, the US Forest Service and the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust. They have been coordinating together to plan and collect data. The projects are currently heading into the final design phase and a public meeting will be coming up soon to review the final plans and the draft Environmental Assessment. For additional information, contact Jason Sims at jasons@cascadiacd.org or (509) 436-1601.



Students at the Kids in the Creek Invertebrate Investigator Station

May 10-12, Cascadia and partners will be at the Entiat National Fish Hatchery hosting Kids in the Creek, a hands-on environmental education program for high school 10th graders. Students explore actual field methods for assessing aquatic and riparian habitat, water quantity, water quality and indicator insects, as well as an introduction to land use planning considerations. Kids in the Creek annually reaches over 300 hundred students from 8-10 area high schools. In preparation for the kids' field days, Cascadia and partners hosted the Adults in the Creek training day for Kids in the Creek volunteers on Wednesday, April 27. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Amanda Levesque at amandal@cascadiacd.org or (509) 436-1601. For additional information on this great program please visit the Kids in the Creek website, www.kidsinthecreek.com and make sure to tell your local teachers and school board about this exciting educational opportunity!

*Thank you again to our funding sources who keep this great program in operation!
South Douglas Conservation District and the US Bureau of Reclamation contribute to the program
Annually, and the Alcoa Foundation has contributed \$25,000 to fund the majority of last and this year's events!*

Entiat River Appreciation - Saturday, July 16 at Entiaqua Park

Please join us for a day of fun and education at our Entiat River Appreciation community event Saturday, July 16. The event will include a scavenger hunt, family activities and entertainment, natural resource experts on hand to answers questions, and a free BBQ lunch!

“WELCOME ABOARD” TO CRAIG GYSELINCK

Cascadia would like to welcome our new Program Manager Craig Gyselinck. Craig has expertise and interest in environmental management and planning and specializes in water quality and conservation. He began work with Cascadia on April 11. Craig will be responsible for directing various District programs relating to resource needs in the County including forest health, water resources, and land use programs and projects. Additional tasks include policy development and coordination with other local governments.

Craig's professional experience includes work with the Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District as their Water Quality Programs Manager and Cascade Analytical as an Environmental Chemist. Craig has a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Central Washington University and a Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) from Washington State University.

Outside of work, Craig spends most of his free time rock and mountain climbing, hiking, and traveling with friends and family.

Look for Craig at a variety of meetings and events as he gets to know our programs, landowners and partners. He'll be providing his leadership to expand our services and find more ways to assist the citizens of Chelan County.



WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT HONEY BEES?

POLLINATOR ARTICLE SERIES - ARTICLE 1 OF 5

Contributed by Nate Andreini, East Columbia Basin Irrigation District

If you've ever felt hungry, you will inherently realize why we should care about pollinators, specifically honey bees. As far as pollinators go, honey bees offer some distinct benefits for crop pollination: they work in mass numbers (colonies of up to 50,000 bees); they can pollinate a wide variety of plants, and they can be managed by humans.

Lack of suitable foraging habitat is one of the biggest issues facing honey bees globally, and this is true in Washington State as well. In fact, the four main issues affecting honey bees are all applicable in Washington. They are: lack of forage/proper nutrition, parasites & pathogens, pesticide exposure and lack of genetic diversity. Just like people, bees flourish under ideal conditions and suffer from reduced hive health when they struggle to meet those conditions.

Planting bee friendly plants is a great way to help the honey bees. You will see a list of beneficial plants in an upcoming article in our series. Parasites and pathogens can be very destructive on the hive especially the parasitic Varroa mite. The Varroa mite has been the single most destructive issue for hives in the U.S. since the late 1980's. It's important to protect your hives with proper miticide to reduce the predation by Varroa mites. Pesticide exposure is another issue being studied for effects on bees. That will also be covered in an upcoming article. Similar to humans, bees need genetic diversity to have robust hives. The above issues have caused reduced genetic diversity and have a detrimental effect to overall hive health. By addressing the above three issues we can help promote more genetic diversity in the hives. Our public policy group from AgForestry Class 37 looks forward to exploring practical solutions to how we can all work together to help our pollinators.

So, if you're like me and you really enjoy fresh produce, you already know why we should all care about honey bees and work together toward a more honey bee friendly future!



UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

CCD Regular Board Meetings

-May 19, 2016 3:30-5:00 pm at 14 N Mission St, Wenatchee
-June 16, 2016 3:30-5:00 pm at 14 N Mission St, Wenatchee
-July 21, 2016 3:30-5:00 pm at 14 N Mission St, Wenatchee

Entiat Habitat Sub Committee Meetings

-May 19, 2016 9am-12 pm at the Chelan Co Fire Dist 1 on Easy St
-June 16, 2016 9am-12pm at the Chelan Co Fire Dist 1 on Easy St
-July 21, 2016 9am-12pm at the USFS building

Entiat Watershed Planning Unit Meeting

-July 6, 2016 9am at the Entiat Grange Hall

Kids in the Creek

-May 10-12, 2016 Entiat Fish Hatchery - For additional information, contact Amanda Levesque at (509) 436-1601 or amandal@cascadiacd.org

Firewise Chipping Program

-Sign up deadline is May 1! Landowner release form due May 15. Timesheet for volunteer hours due May 30. Chipping will take place the first two weeks of June. For additional information, contact Amanda Levesque at (509) 436-1601 or amandal@cascadiacd.org

Entiat River Appreciation

-July 16, 2016 10am-2pm at Entiaqua Park in Entiat. See details on page 3 of this newsletter.



Kids learn about habitat in the Rolling Rivers watershed model at the 2015 Entiat River Appreciation event



CASCADIA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Please Remember to Recycle

Cascadia Conservation District has a blog:
Please check it out at:
<http://ccdconservationconversation.blogspot.com/>

Thank you to our three new funding sources for keeping important outreach projects and programs in operation!



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