

CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

WINTER 2016

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS IN 2015

Cascadia Conservation District participates in diverse projects and activities throughout the year. We have several different program areas and in the next few pages have captured some of our accomplishments and successes in each program in 2015:

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Education & Outreach is critical to the success of every program we participate in. Educational programming and outreach materials demonstrate how natural environments function, how our activities impact those environments and how we can best mitigate those impacts. The following are some highlights from our 2015 education and outreach efforts.

Chelan County Clean Water Campaign: In 2015, the campaign hosted a river cleanup, conducted a photo contest, and produced a calendar with the winning photos. *Order yours by calling (509) 436-1601.*

Chelan County Fair: Cascadia hosts an information table and the Enviroscape Model to teach kids about the dangers of pollution and how to be better stewards of natural resources.

District Newsletter: Each quarter Cascadia produces this *Conservation Quarterly*, highlighting current projects, upcoming events, and general district news.



Wenatchee River Appreciation event hosted by Cascadia's Chelan Co Clean Water Campaign

District Website - www.cascadiacd.org and Facebook page: Cascadia maintains a website and Facebook page to keep district members, partners,

and other stakeholders informed about our history, current programs, and upcoming events.

Earth Day Fairs: Cascadia participates in the annual Leavenworth, Chelan, and Entiat Earth Day fairs where we host fun educational activities.

Entiat River Appreciation: In 2015, Cascadia and the Chelan Douglas Land Trust sponsored a community event with environmental education and entertainment that brought over 75 people out to participate.

Kids in the Creek: This annual hands-on outdoor environmental education program gets high school science students out of the classroom and into the outdoors to learn how streams and watersheds work. In 2015, 230 students from six area high schools participated. For additional information and to view our video brochure visit: www.kidsinthecreek.com.

Native Planting 101 Workshop: In 2015, about 30 people participated. *This year's workshop will be held Saturday, March 5 and covers planting techniques, pollinators, weeds and more. For additional information and to RSVP please call (509) 436-1601.*

Water on Wheels & Wheat Week: These hands-on interactive water and soil education programs are taught to kindergarten through 6th grade students. From September to December 2015, 29 lessons were taught and 462 students reached. Contact us at (509) 436-1601 to schedule your class!

Wenatchee River Salmon Festival: Cascadia and partners annually share the Rolling Rivers watershed model where students learn about then build a healthy salmon-friendly watershed. The event hosted 7500 people in 2015.



Students learn about soil as part of the interactive Water on Wheels environmental education program

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LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE

Managing natural resources and meeting regulatory requirements can be a daunting task. Cascadia administers a number of programs that are designed to help landowners navigate complex land management rules, minimize their impact on fish and wildlife populations, and ensure that their land remains healthy and productive for years to come.

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: wildfire fuels reduction, forest health practices, irrigation system upgrades, riparian restoration, noxious weed control, and more. For program application deadline and additional information, please contact Sandy Letzing at: sandyl@cascadiacd.org or (509) 436-1601.

In spring of 2015 Cascadia completed 55 acres of fuels reduction work with three landowners in the Squilchuck, Chumstick and Blewett Pass areas. We will continue that work in 2016 at Chumstick and Blewett Pass with an additional 34 acres of fuels reduction to complete and add on to the work done in 2015. Trimming ladder fuels, thinning trees and removing fire risks around homes are very effective ways to help decrease the intensity and extent of a wildfire. One of these projects is on the 306-acre Sunitsch property, which lies in close proximity to expanses of at-risk public forest in the Cascade foothills. The 2015 project thinned 18 acres and this is to be followed this spring by an additional 13 acres.

"We appreciated working with Cascadia" said manager Andrew Holm, "because of the comprehensive nature of the prescription for overall fire resilience and forest health."



Sunitsch property before treatment



Sunitsch property after treatment

WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS



Sara Rolfs of Grinnin' Meadows finds another great use for her new fire break!
The fire break was completed in November 2014 and was a partnership between Cascadia and the Natural Resources Conservation Service landowner assistance programs

Wildfire is a fact of life in North Central Washington. Although fire is important to natural eco-systems, the effect of wildfire on property, infrastructure, human life and the local economy can be devastating. It is important for residents of fire-prone areas to acknowledge the dangers around them and take appropriate actions to protect themselves and their community before a wildfire starts.

In 2015, Cascadia continued to promote the Firewise communities program. Firewise focuses on taking steps to be prepared for a wildfire by creating defensible space around homes and removing wildfire fuels from communities. Cascadia offered free wildfire risk assessments for residences and support for communities seeking national Firewise Communities/USA recognition. Cascadia assisted local communities with implementing Firewise practices and helped Chelan County communities work toward becoming recognized Firewise communities.

From March to November 2015, Cascadia staff conducted about 150 wildfire risk assessments on private homes in Chelan County. These free assessments were requested by landowners and the number of them clearly illustrates interest from landowners to become Firewise.

In June 2015, Cascadia partnered with the Department of Natural Resources to organize a chipping event that provided free chipping for residents in the Chelan Ridge, Peshastin, and the Lake Wenatchee/Plain areas. Residents worked together to clear and stack piles of slash in preparation for the chipper crew. About 80 acres of forested land was treated on the properties of over 60 landowners. This work will make these areas much less susceptible to damage from wildfire.

Wildfire Recovery Efforts: The Sleepy Hollow, Chelan Complex, and Wolverine Fires of 2015 affected most landowners in the County on some level, with many property owners experiencing loss of homes, outbuildings, infrastructure, and irrigation systems. Cascadia Conservation District has been working with local, regional, and national partners to create a database of infrastructure loss and natural resources at risk. Cascadia hosted six community meetings following the fires, which were an opportunity to provide resources to affected landowners and present information about mitigating flood, erosion, noxious weed, and future wildfire risks. These meetings were organized to support private landowners by providing tools to begin recovery work on their land and connect people with agencies who have programs that can provide financial and technical assistance on the road to recovery.

The District has been working closely with the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Chelan County, NRCS, Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition, Okanogan Conservation District, and other agencies to identify successes and lessons learned from the 2015 fires. Following most fires on USFS land, the Forest Service assembles a Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team to analyze post-fire condition of burned watersheds and to plan emergency stabilization treatments following wildfires. Cascadia is offering FREE site visits for landowners affected by the fires with specific natural resource concerns on their property. Please contact Patrick Haggerty, patrickh@cascadiacd.org, if you would like to schedule a site visit or are interested in receiving information regarding post-fire recovery.

FIREWISE CHALLENGE!

In partnership with the Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition and the WA Department of Natural Resources, Cascadia set a goal of working with 10 new communities in Chelan County to become recognized Firewise Communities. If your community is interested in adapting to life with wildfire, engaging in community planning, reducing future wildfire risks, and being eligible for funds for Firewise projects contact Amanda Levesque at amandal@cascadiacd.org or (509) 436-1601 to see how we can help.



The best offense... **Don't wait...**




...is a good defense. **...until it's too late!**

Cascadia offers free fire risk assessments.
Contact Amanda Levesque at amandal@cascadiacd.org or (509) 436-1601 for additional info

RIPARIAN RESTORATION

Riparian areas are the transition zones between the water and the land. They have many important functional roles that help protect people and property as well as sustain fish and wildlife populations. A well-vegetated riparian area provides erosion control, flood moderation, water quality protection, and essential fish and wildlife habitat.



Grower's League Brender Creek facility before planting



Grower's League Brender Creek facility after planting

Historic and present-day land use practices have resulted in disturbed riparian areas along many streams and rivers in Chelan County and contributed to eroded stream banks, intensified flooding, decreased water quality, and habitat loss. Cascadia implements riparian restoration projects, with an emphasis in the Wenatchee and Entiat watersheds.

In 2015, Cascadia worked with Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) to restore nearly half a mile of streamside habitat on Brender Creek near Cashmere, WA. Two projects were installed in 2015, one on three acres of Chelan County Port District land, and an additional acre was planted in collaboration with the Washington Grower's League at their new Brender Creek facility. Both projects involved development of noxious weed management plans, clearing and grubbing of non-native vegetation, and planting of site-appropriate native trees and shrubs. These projects were in response to the 2007 DOE report which identified above average temperatures as a primary concern for water quality in the Wenatchee River. The report identified strategies to reduce temperature concerns on the Wenatchee including restoring riparian areas to provide increased shade to the river and its tributaries.

In 2016, Cascadia will continue to work toward creating healthier streamside habitat in the Wenatchee Valley, and is always interested to hear from streamside landowners who have potential projects. Cascadia currently has funding for additional streamside restoration projects. Benefits of riparian plantings include: bank stabilization, weed control, shading, and flood attenuation, as well as providing habitat for fish and wildlife. If you would like additional information please contact Patrick Haggerty at patrickh@cascadiacd.org or (509) 436-1601.



FAREWELL MIKE!

After 17 years with Cascadia, Program Manager Mike Rickel has left to explore new career options. We wish him much success in his new adventures!

STREAM HABITAT RESTORATION

Many streams and rivers in Chelan County are home to threatened and endangered salmon, steelhead and bull trout populations that require specific aquatic habitat conditions to support them during different life stages. Historic and current water and land management practices have disturbed some habitat, resulting in high stream temperatures, elevated levels of fine sediments, fish passage barriers, channelization, and loss of habitat.

Cascadia strives to restore instream habitat in the Wenatchee and Entiat watersheds to provide salmon, steelhead, and bull trout with the necessary conditions to live and thrive. An important consideration in Cascadia's projects is that the work will also benefit the community and fit with the landowner's needs and goals for the property.

In 2015, planning continued for the 2017/2018 Middle Entiat habitat projects. The projects were originally scheduled for implementation in the summers of 2016 and 2017, but have been delayed a year.

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), the lead funding agency for construction, has decided to develop an Environmental Assessment (EA) in order to comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The public scoping period for the EA will begin in February 2016 and the entire process is expected to take ten months.



Example of eroding streambank where structures are proposed

While no new schedule has yet been put forth, a new scoping letter is being developed and is expected to be sent out in early 2016. For more information, please attend the next Entiat Watershed Planning Unit meeting (April 6th at the Entiat Grange from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm) or contact Jason Sims at jasons@cascadiacd.org or (509) 436-1601.

WATERSHED PLANNING & COORDINATION

Watershed plans are developed by planning units composed of representatives from the public and private sectors. Planning units are required to address water quantity issues. Some, like the Entiat and Wenatchee, address water quality, instream flow, and habitat issues as well.

Cascadia is the lead agency for the WRIA 46 Entiat River watershed planning effort. Cascadia coordinates quarterly planning unit meetings, participates in subcommittee meetings, and applies for grant funding to help facilitate implementation of actions identified in the WRIA 46 Entiat Watershed Plan and the regional Salmon Recovery Plan. The Entiat Watershed Planning Unit (EWPU) is recognized for developing cooperative, proactive solutions to natural resource issues.

The EWPU has successfully planned and implemented a variety of important habitat, water quality, and water quantity restoration projects in the watershed.

The 2016 Entiat Annual Report will be available in late February. Contact Jason Sims at jasons@cascadiacd.org or (509) 436-1601 to receive a copy.

Cascadia also participates in WRIA 45 Wenatchee River watershed planning unit and subcommittee meetings, as well as implementing restoration projects in the Wenatchee Watershed.



PLANTING SEEDS IN OUR YOUTH FOR FUTURE GROWTH

Contributed by Elayne Hovde of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

For us, the adults that were waiting at our information booths at the NCW College and Career Expo on November 3, 2015, it was sure to be sight and sound sensory overload as yellow buses pulled up in front of the WVC gymnasium and throngs of youth poured out. As they entered the gym they were exuberant, much like a horse that has escaped their pasture due to someone leaving the gate open. I am sure many felt this was a good excuse to not have to sit in class. They were laughing and clustered in groups (I suppose for moral support and not wanting to stand out too much), most avoided eye contact and looked aimlessly around the gym while they swung back and forth their empty plastic expo bags. The dress attire was from subdued to wild, with varying shades of hair color and clothing that I am sure they hoped gave them a sort of unique appearance. Certainly they were unique, contrasted to those of us behind our tables, dressed in suits, jeans without holes, and uniforms and nary a color purple or pink in anyone's hair. How old and boring we must have looked to all of them.

I thought to myself, this is our future, these kids, could potentially be upcoming NRCS and Farm Service Agency (FSA) employees. Today it was our job to plant seeds to kindle a spark or interest for working with the USDA. Not an easy task, but an exciting one. Ten high schools from as far as Wilson Creek and Chelan were represented with approximately 3000 students in attendance, ranging in age from 13-18 years old.

To slow the aimless milling around the circle without ever really stopping, we actually had to go out and break up the aimless wandering and ask "Have you ever considered working for the Federal Government?" the response was 100% of the time "no." This was our window of opportunity! We asked them what they hoped to do when they graduated from high school. Some knew right up front what they wanted; others were uncertain. We heard responses such as working with animals, mechanic, going to college, the medical field, etc.

The girls were the most bold and much more willing to come up and chat about what the USDA was and their possible, if not somewhat uncertain, future plans. Of the 50 plus students that were brave enough to stop and chat they got an opportunity to hear Jose talk about how he helps ranchers and farmers make their dreams come true through low interest loans. Elayne with NRCS said if they wanted a job that was split between the great outdoors and sitting at a desk, the NRCS had that to offer in a variety of disciplines, from engineering to conservation positions and administrative positions. Most students had never considered working for the federal government and none of them had ever heard of NRCS or the FSA.

It was a day well spent, a day of smiling a lot, being brave ourselves, not being concerned if they thought of us as old and boring, but rather putting them first for their future, and approaching these young kids with questions and good listening skills and enthusiasm for what we do at the FSA and NRCS. It was a day of planting for a future crop!



Students at the NCW College and Career Expo explore careers in natural resources



UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

CCD Regular Board Meetings

-February 18, 2016, 3:30-5:30pm at 14 N Mission St, Wenatchee
 -March ?, 2016, 10:00am- 4:00pm Annual Planning Meeting at 14 N Mission St, Wenatchee
 -April 21, 2016, 3:30-5:30pm at 14 N Mission St, Wenatchee

Entiat Habitat Sub Committee Meetings

- February 18, 2016, 9am-12pm at the USFS Building
 -March 17, 2016, 9am-12pm at the USFS Building
 -April 21, 2016, 9am-12pm at the USFS building

Entiat Watershed Planning Unit Meeting

-April 6, 2016, 9am- 12pm at the Entiat Grange Hall

"The Lost Fish" at the Wenatchee Museum

February 16, 2016, 7:00 – 8:30pm. Join the Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group for a screening of the film "The Lost Fish". This film discusses the importance of Pacific Lamprey to our local streams and native tribes, following the film there will be presentations on lamprey biology as well as current research being done in the Wenatchee River to study them. More info at ccfeg.org

USDA Financial Assistance Available for Wildfire Impacted Farmers and Ranchers

The deadline for applications is Friday, February 19, 2016. For more information on how to apply for financial assistance, contact your local NRCS field office or visit the NRCS webpage at www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov.

Wenatchee River Institute

-January 28th- Film at Snowy Owl, "This Changes Everything" climate film and fundraiser for WRI. Also includes 10% off at O'Grady's.

-February 2nd- Living with Wildfires'speaker series begins. Join us for one evening or for the whole series, every Tuesday in February at Milepost 111 in Cashmere. Expert speakers, great food, and fantastic learning about fire ecology and how fire impacts us here at home, now, and in the future.

-February 26th- John Rohrer Red Barn Event, Wolverines of the North Cascades, Return of the Alpine Survivor

-March- Spring Stirrings Photography with John Marshall! A digital camera class for anyone wanting to take better pictures!

-March- Red Barn Event with Joan Qazi, Farm to School

-March- Red Barn Event co-sponsored by the NCW Audubon, Dave Showalter and Sage Spirit

-March 16 through April 1st (Wednesday evenings) -

Community Gardening Series focusing on topics like square foot gardening, vertical gardening, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) opportunities, and functional kitchen gardens

-April 8th- Red Barn Event, "The Hidden Half of Nature" with A Book for All Seasons



CASCADIA
 CONSERVATION DISTRICT

14 N Mission St Wenatchee, WA 98801
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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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