

CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2020

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

SEVEN COMMUNITIES RECEIVE FUNDING FOR NEIGHBORHOOD FIREWISE PROJECTS



Over the last decade 28 different neighborhoods, road associations, home owners associations and community groups have worked together to become recognized Firewise Communities in Chelan County.

These communities work with Cascadia and their local and state fire responders to complete a community risk assessment and action plan in which projects are identified that will reduce the wildfire risk to the community.

Volunteers, or sometimes contractors, work to complete projects from these action plans such as installing reflective address signs

on homes, removing brush along roadways to improve emergency access, creating fuel breaks, improving water storage, and managing community owned or neighboring open space and forests.

In an effort support the hard work these communities have put in over the years Cascadia, Chelan County Fire District 1 and the Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition applied for and received a grant from Coalitions and Collaboratives, Inc. to help fund projects within communities throughout the County.

This Spring, nine communities applied for the funding. Seven were selected, and thanks to partnerships with WA Department of Natural Resources, all projects will receive some level of financial support.

A few projects are already underway, including a targeted grazing project around a neighborhood in the Wenatchee foothills that is in the Wild and Urban Interface (WUI).

Other projects include:

- Creating defensible space around remote cabins on Blewett Pass, including weed fabric and gravel in a 5' perimeter of structures.
- Thinning sage brush to create a shaded fuel break around two neighborhoods in Wenatchee
- Community pine needle clean-up and haul off days near Plain
- Forest management planning outside of Leavenworth
- Thinning and maintenance of a perimeter fire line around a community near Chelan.



These projects will all be accomplished through a combination of volunteer work, local contractors, and local fire district staff. Thanks to all the communities participating in this program, and to the volunteers and contractors helping to make our communities more resilient to wildfires.

Interested in fuels reduction work and potential cost share opportunities on your property or in your community?

Contact Katie Zander with the WA Department of Natural Resources at katie.zander@dnr.wa.gov to learn about available programs.



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Chelan County Clean Water Campaign

PHOTO CONTEST

Visit www.cascadiacd.org for complete contest rules & details and to submit your photo(s)!

Orange Flower
Savannah Meiners

LANDOWNER SPOTLIGHT: MANSON ORCHARD USES WOOD CHIPPING PROGRAM INSTEAD OF BURNING

Jeanie Craft and her husband grow apples and cherries in Manson. Craft's parents planted the original orchard in the mid 1960s and she grew up with the orchard. They originally grew Top Reds and Golden Delicious and now have Cosmic Crisp, Gala, Ambrosia, Honeycrisp and Golden.

“Every year, we try to either graft or replant a couple of acres to a newer, more profitable variety. As all small family farmers know, its a tough business and trying to stay on top of the variety game is challenging and expensive! But we love what we do so we try,” said Craft.

With replanting or grafting each year, wood removal is the biggest challenge, Craft explained. She read about the chipping program in an industry publication and felt it made sense to try it out.



Photo credit: Chris Wright, NRCS

This is the 3rd year they have chipped wood. Craft said the first year was a bit of a learning curve, but this year their crew had the process down and prepared 2.5 acres of trees for grafting in two days. She explained that this is hard work but well worth it to not have to burn and contribute to the smoke in the air. Since the chipper has a directional flume, they were able to move it around going down each row then use their snow plow to flatten out the piles and smooth the drive rows.

“As orchardists, we all have necessary burning such as wood that is too big to chip or flail. We are all really lucky to farm and live in a beautiful place like NCW. But the smoke tends to get trapped in the valleys sometimes so its nice that we have an alternative to burning!,” said Craft.



Photo credit: Chris Wright, NRCS

work with. He answered all our questions quickly and led us through the process in a very timely manner. I would encourage other farmers to contact him to see if the program would fit their needs. It sure was great for us.”

For more information, contact Chris Wright at NRCS in Wenatchee at (509) 415-3692, or email christopherl.wright@usda.gov.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) program's Chris Wright said, “NRCS is always accepting applications for financial assistance in our conservation programs. We are still looking to grow our orchard chipping program to improve air quality in the county.”

Craft added, “The program was very easy to participate in and Chris was great to

SPRING CHINOOK EGG-TO-FRY SURVIVAL PROJECT IN THE ENTIAT

Contributed by Trenton DeBoer, Fish & Wildfire Biologist for WA Department of Fish and Wildlife

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is planning a spring Chinook salmon egg-to-fry survival project in the Entiat River basin later this summer. The study will be conducted for three consecutive weeks beginning August 18th, corresponding with spring Chinook spawning.



Photo credit: US Fish & Wildlife Service

Twelve study sites will be located between McKenzie Diversion and Entiat Falls and determined by available habitat in proximity of spawning females at the time of artificial redd construction and historic spawning. The project objectives are to identify factors limiting spring Chinook egg-to-fry survival prior to emergence from the gravel and estimate effects of superimposition of summer Chinook on spring Chinook redds. Many factors play a role in egg-to-fry survival such as water temperature, superimposition, fine sediment intrusion, scour, parentage, natural spawner density, dissolved oxygen, and predation. These factors will be studied as possible limitations to survival.

In mid-July we began locating study sites and contacting landowners in preparation of beginning the study in mid-August. On August 18, 25, and September 1, crews will be on site and preconstructing artificial redds eggs and then on August 20, 27, and September 3, crews will place 100 fertilized eggs into modified Whitlock-Vibert egg boxes into the preconstructed artificial redds. Most egg boxes will be left in the gravel until there are 1000 accumulated thermal units then excavated in the spring, however twelve boxes will be removed in mid-November after summer Chinook spawning to assess the superimposition effect of summer Chinook on spring Chinook redds. Surviving fry from recovered egg boxes will be enumerated and egg-to-fry survival estimates generated. We will be visiting each site monthly throughout the incubation period to track water temperature and determine egg box recovery date, and monitor site changes.

Selection of study sites is based on historic spawning and a majority of our study area is privately owned. Having direct access to study sites will increase efficiency and safety, and maximize project funds. We hope to partner with Cascadia Conservation District and local landowners to learn more about egg-to-fry survival in the Entiat River basin.

For additional information please contact Trenton DeBoer at Trenton.DeBoer@dfw.wa.gov or (509) 933-6077.

FAREWELL MIKE!

Program Director Mike Cushman is off to new adventures.

Mike started with Cascadia as a Project Coordinator in 2012, working on habitat restoration and a variety of other projects. He stepped in to the Program Director role in May 2017, leading the technical staff through several construction projects, the development of a forestry program and a number of successful multi-year grant applications.



We appreciate Mike sharing with us his natural resource expertise, his talent for photography and his genuine concern for those around him. We wish Mike and his family all the best. Happy trails, Mike!

FREE Fall Chipping Program
from Cascadia CD and WA Dept of Natural Resources

Registration begins in mid-August!

Visit cascadiacd.org for registration link and details.
For questions contact Amanda Newell at amandan@cascadiacd.org

KIDS IN THE FOREST RELEASES NEW VIRTUAL RESOURCES

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 school closures, we were not able to host field experiences for Kids in the Forest this spring. In order to continue providing quality forestry, fire, and ecology lessons to students, our planning team has created several virtual resources as an alternative until we are able to get kids back in the forest.

These virtual resources are primarily in the form of short videos related to the material we cover during field experiences, including:

- The Shrub Steppe Ecosystem with Susan Ballinger
- Field Journaling with Lindsay Breidenthal
- Fire and the Forest with Dave Spies
- Go Bags with Tina Nicpan-Brown

All the new videos are available in Spanish as well, thanks to Elisa Lopez of Team Naturaleza.

These videos and more are available to anyone interested! To access them, visit: https://cascadiacd.org/kids-in-the-forest_368.html. For additional information please contact Amanda Newell at amandan@cascadiacd.org.

Thank you to all involved in the creation of these resources, including North40 Productions for editing the videos. Thank you to the WA Department of Commerce and the WA Recreation & Conservation Office's No Child Left Inside grant for making this virtual resources effort possible.



BRINGING BEAVERS BACK

Contributed by Kodi J. Jaspers, Trout Unlimited

Trout Unlimited's Wenatchee-Entiat Beaver Project assists landowners with beaver issues and educates the community about the important role beavers play in our local ecosystem. The crew evaluates damage and determine the best solution for mitigation. Mitigation efforts include painting trees to discourage gnawing, caging trees to prevent beaver access, or installing a "beaver deceiver" that maintains pond levels if a beaver dam is built.

Once safely trapped, beavers are taken to an acclimation facility at the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery while they wait to be reunited with their family. Beavers are social animals and keeping the collected beavers at the hatchery allows for the highest chance to trap the whole colony prior to relocating them as a group. Once all individuals in the area are captured, they are released at suitable sites higher in the watershed, where their natural ecosystem benefits can be implemented, with reduced conflict with humans.

Restoring beavers to the watersheds they were once plentiful in can have many benefits. A beaver dam structure slows the flow of water, increasing water storage as surface water and groundwater, increasing sediment retention, filters pollutants, provides flood mitigation, and escalates the overall biodiversity. Trout Unlimited's interest in this project stemmed from the potential benefits for salmon and trout habitat restoration. Beaver dams, once believed to be impassable by fish, actually provide crucial habitat for trout and salmon to lay their eggs. Their dams and pools can also cool water by more than 2°C (3.5°F), critical for the heat-sensitive salmonids.



Questions about beavers on your property? Interested in having beavers reestablished on your property? The Wenatchee-Entiat Beaver Project wants to help! Call Trout Unlimited at (509) 888-0970 to learn more. Wenatchee Beaver Project is also on Facebook.



FERTILIZER USE AND WATER QUALITY IMPACTS

Our homes are often surrounded with a lush green lawn, colorful flower beds and productive gardens. Proper use of fertilizers can enhance our landscapes by providing essential plant nutrients, but those same elements are potential pollutants. When used incorrectly, fertilizers contaminate our drinking water and aquatic ecosystems. Knowing the soil's fertility, the needs of the plants and the right fertilizer to purchase can reduce this negative impact on our water quality.

Fertilizers mainly contain Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P) and Potassium (K). The relative amounts of these nutrients can be easily found on the container, shown as 3 numbers, such as 15-30-15. These are always in the same order and indicate the percentages of N-P-K. For example, the common fertilizer 15-30-15 contains 15% N, 30% P and 15% K, by weight. The remainder is typically an inert carrier. Some products also contain micronutrients and/or pesticides. WSU Extension's free downloadable booklet, "A Home Gardener's Guide to Soils and Fertilizers" is a good resource on this topic. (<https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/a-home-gardeners-guide-to-soils-and-fertilizers-home-garden-series>)

Plant Nutrient Needs: In general, leafy plants like lawns need more nitrogen. Flowering and fruiting plants, like tomatoes and flowers, require more phosphorus, which also is important for root development and growth. Potassium (also called potash) also stimulates flowering and fruiting and helps in plant growth processes.

Soil Fertility and Testing: Soils are often deficient in nitrogen because it is easily removed by plants and water, so adding N during the spring and at times of high plant growth can be beneficial. Locally, many of our soils contain sufficient amounts of phosphorus and naturally have adequate potassium levels. A soil test is the best way to find out what your soil contains and to determine the type and amount of fertilizer you should use. Tests are relatively easy and inexpensive. Simple test kits can be purchased at local garden supply centers. More comprehensive tests with detailed analysis and fertilizer recommendations can be obtained through local labs or online companies.

Impacts on Water Quality: When too much or the wrong kind of fertilizer is applied, the excess amounts can easily leach or run off during heavy rains or due to over or improper watering. In streams, ponds or lakes, excess nutrients can create serious problems, including increased growth of algae and eutrophication. This can make the water unsafe to drink or swim in, and can harm or kill fish and other aquatic life. They can also end up in our drinking water, where high nitrogen levels can be toxic, reducing the ability of red blood cells to carry oxygen. This can cause serious health problems, especially for infants, such as blue baby syndrome. (<https://ecology.wa.gov/DOE/files/b9/b9935925-df3d-479f-b3fa-031764eb5e0a.pdf>)

Fortunately, there are easy ways to reduce nutrient runoff:

- Test your soil every three years and only use the recommended types and amount of fertilizer.
- Do not fertilize when heavy rain is predicted.
- When watering your yard or garden do not allow the water to run off down the road, sidewalk or ditch.
- If you are fortunate enough to have waterfront property, leave a minimum 10' wide unfertilized buffer along shorelines.
- Apply fertilizer at the appropriate time of year for the plants that you are growing to maximize plant uptake and limit waste.

In addition to helping protect our local water quality, using the correct amount and type of fertilizer will also save you money while achieving optimum plant health. Contact Cascadia for advice on soil fertility, soil testing and fertilizers.



Funded by WA
Dept of Ecology



WENATCHEE RIVER SALMON FESTIVAL CANCELLED FOR 2020

Contributed by Corky Broaddus, Salmon Festival Director



Due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic affecting all of us in many ways, the much-beloved award-winning Wenatchee River Salmon Festival (Salmon Fest) has been cancelled in 2020.

The popular north-central Washington nature festival will now begin looking forward to creating a special 30th Anniversary celebration, "Salmon of the Future," to be held September 15-18, 2021. An

educational event on the scale of Salmon Fest hosts approximately 2,500 students and pulls in hundreds of volunteers. Natural resource and recreation specialists, community exhibitors, multi-cultural tribal educators, and other participants from throughout the entire Pacific Northwest are included. The public day can draw more than 4,000 attendees.

The Salmon Fest is a hands-on outdoor event whose mission is to connect people and nature by providing opportunities that create meaningful and enriching outdoor interpretation and education. A visit to Salmon Fest builds life skills and experiences reaching out to all ages about the wonder of science, nature, and culture.

Please join us in 2021 to share a "salmon experience" during next year's Wenatchee River Salmon Festival "Salmon of the Future" celebration! In the meantime please check out the new Salmon Fest website, salmonfest.org, created by Andy Jaynes, President of the Friends of Northwest Hatcheries. Wenatchee River Salmon Festival is also on Facebook.

UPPER WENATCHEE PILOT PROJECT UPDATE

In 2017, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest (OWNF) received approximately \$1.6 million dollars for collaborative restoration and hazardous fuels reduction work otherwise known as the Chelan Pilot. One effort within this larger Pilot is the Upper Wenatchee Restoration Project, covering 75,000 acres near Plain, WA.

The U.S.D.A Forest Service anticipates that the draft Environmental Assessment for the project will be available for public review in mid-September. The Forest Service also hopes to offer virtual presentations of project updates as COVID-19 restrictions have not allowed for community meetings or one-on-one interactions. Please contact Deborah Kelly at Deborah.kelly@usda.gov with any questions. Additional information on the project can be found here: <https://www.newfhc.org/upper-wenatchee-pilot-project/>.



Thinning and prescribed fire help restore a dry forest landscape. (credit: USDA Forest Service)



CASCADIA
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Please Remember to Recycle



UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Cascadia Conservation District Board Meetings*

Aug 21	Call our office for details	1:30 - 4:00 pm
Sept 18	Call our office for details	1:30 - 4:00 pm
Oct 16	Call our office for details	1:30 - 4:00 pm

*Meetings will be call-in or video conference only until the Governor's order is lifted. Watch our website for call 509-436-1601 for updates.

Entiat Watershed Planning Unit Meeting

Aug 5	Conference call/ web-based meeting (605) 313-5111 / 152678# join.freeconferencecall.com/marysuttonc	10:00 am - 12:00 pm
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Cascadia's 2020 Photo Contest is open through Oct 1.
Details and submission form here: www.cascadiacd.org.

Wenatchee River Institute

Programs are being added to the Wenatchee River Institute calendar. Join in for small group, all outside events. Check the events calendar at: www.wenatcheeriverinstitute.org/event-calendar

WELCOME AMY!

Our newest member of the Board of Supervisors is Amy Bridges. Amy is a lifelong resident of the Wenatchee Valley, coming from a long line of orchardists and growing up playing in apple bins and climbing trees. After graduating in 2020 with a degree from the University of Washington in Integrated Social Sciences with a focus on environmental activism, local conservation efforts were a natural next step.

Amy joined the Cascadia Board of Supervisors in April of 2020. Passionate about keeping our waterways clean, her primary goal is lowering our communities' dependence on single use plastics. Amy enjoys yoga, growing a variety of plants, and spending time with her daughter.



WELCOME KATHLEEN!

Kathleen Deason has joined Cascadia as an Administrative Assistant. Kathleen began working in natural resources with the initiation of watershed planning in the Upper Columbia Region in 1999. She has worked to manage a watershed planning program, develop and implement projects, and to provide contractual and fiscal administration.

Kathleen has worked for both local government and non-profit organizations in the Upper Columbia Region. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Planning from Western Washington University and is a graduate of the Washington State Ag Forestry Leadership Program, Class XII. She enjoys being in the outdoors and renovating houses. After taking time away to raise a family, she is excited to be back and working at the Cascadia Conservation District!

