

CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

WINTER 2020

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS IN 2019

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 2019 accomplishments and successes in each program:

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 2019 education and outreach efforts.

After School Program: Cascadia staff brought soil, water, and gardening education to three Wenatchee elementary schools during the program.

Chelan County Clean Water Campaign: In 2019, the campaign conducted a photo contest and produced a calendar with the winning photos. *Get your 2020 calendar at our office - 14 N Mission St, Wenatchee.*

Community Events: Cascadia participates in many community events, hosting fun educational activities to teach kids how to be better stewards of

natural resources and sharing information about Cascadia programs. Some of these events include: Earth Day fairs, Pybus Firewise Day and local Farmer's Markets.

Conservation News Minutes: These one minute video clips highlight our projects and programs. View on our website.

District Newsletter: Cascadia produces a quarterly newsletter highlighting current projects,

upcoming events, and general district news. Distribution: 36,500.

District Website and Facebook page: Cascadia maintains these social media sites to keep district residents, partners, and other stakeholders informed about our history, current programs, and upcoming events.

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 2019, about 240 students from 11 area high schools participated. For additional information and to view our video brochure, visit: www.kidsinthecreek.com.

Kids in the Forest: Through this program, 3rd-8th grade students head into the woods to learn about forest health, ecology, and fire. About 2,000 students participated in 2019 between the spring and fall field days. See more info here: https://cascadiacd.org/kids-in-the-forest_368.html

Native Planting 101 Workshop: In 2019, about 40 people participated. **2020 workshop date & location TBD. Call (509) 436-1601 in February for info.**

Water on Wheels & Wheat Week: These hands-on, interactive water and soil education programs are taught to kindergarten through 6th grade students. In 2019, 2,300 students were reached. **Contact us at (509) 436-1601 to schedule your class!**

Wenatchee River Salmon Festival: Cascadia and our partners share the Rolling Rivers watershed model where students learn about and build a healthy salmon-friendly watershed. An annual favorite, the event hosted 7,500 people in 2019 and attracts schools from several counties. Learn more at <http://www.salmonfest.org/>.



Students make observations about different types of habitat, then become the predators and try to catch fish in various conditions



Students grow their own wheat and learn about soil, the water cycle, and the parts of a plant during wheat week

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WELCOME KIRK!



Cascadia is excited to have Kirk Beckendorf join the team as our Environmental Educator. Kirk will coordinate programs like Wheat Week, after school programs, and school gardens, and expand our already successful education program. Kirk recently moved to the Wenatchee Valley. He grew up on a dairy farm and small ranch in Texas- where he earned a B.S. in agronomy and a secondary science education certification from Texas A&M University. Since then he has lived in Wyoming, Alaska, Oregon, Washington D.C. and Tennessee (where he earned a M.S. in science education). He has taught middle school science for 20+ years in rural and suburban schools. In Washington D.C., Kirk helped develop education programs, resources and grants for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He is thrilled to be out west again. He and his wife love to travel and enjoy the outdoors.

LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE

Managing natural resources and meeting regulatory requirements can be a daunting task. Cascadia offers 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.

Landowners work toward a healthy Chumstick

Beginning in the summer of 2016, Cascadia started working with landowners about eight miles up the Chumstick on a series of projects to improve stream water quality. The work includes:

Removing noxious weeds: Noxious weeds outcompete native plants and can be dangerous to livestock health. Areas of the Chumstick are dominated by Reed Canary grass, which is a major threat to natural wetlands. It crowds out most native species as it forms large, single-species stands of grass that can reach three to six feet in height.

Planting native vegetation: Native vegetation is adapted to the local climate and soil conditions. These plants are tolerant of drought and extreme temperatures, and are naturally resistant to most local pests and diseases. Native plants in the riparian area enhance habitat and provide food and shelter for a variety of insects, amphibians, reptiles, songbirds, mammals, and fish. They also protect the streambank and shoreline from the erosive forces of moving water. The deep, extensive root structure of native grasses, shrubs, and trees prevents erosion and undercutting of banks. By slowing runoff, trapping sediments, and increasing absorption, these plants act as a living filter to protect water quality.

Installing livestock fencing: Restricting livestock access to the creek improves stream health. When livestock are allowed access, they trample and erode stream bottoms, stream banks and streamside vegetation as they seek water to cool themselves and drink. This increases sediment erosion and nutrient runoff, while increasing water temperature. The direct deposit of feces and urine also contributes to nutrient pollution and high bacteria counts in the waterways. Fencing and alternative watering sources provide for livestock needs while protecting other users of the waterway. Prior to installing this fencing, the owner reported their cows were “destroying the creek and it was a constant battle to keep them out.”

Installing beaver dam analogues: Beaver dam analogues (BDAs) are channel-spanning structures that mimic or reinforce natural beaver dams. BDAs used to restore incised channels can improve stream and riparian habitat, improve water quality (e.g., reduce excess sediment and nutrient loads), reduce stream temperatures in the summer, and improve natural seasonal groundwater storage in shallow alluvial aquifers.



Volunteers plant and mulch native vegetation

Removing barriers: We are working to remove barriers to fish in the stream, such as culverts, dams or diversions. The structures often block salmon and steelhead from swimming upstream to their spawning, rearing and overwintering habitat.

In Fall 2019 students from the Key Club at Cascade High School and volunteers from the Washington Native Plant Society installed plants, while Troop 7 Eagle Scouts from Leavenworth moved 10 yards of mulch to surround and protect each plant. By Fall 2020 Cascadia will have installed three BDAs, 2,000 feet of livestock exclusion fencing, and 3,500 native plants, including Aspen, dogwood, willow, rose, and chokecherry.

If you would like to volunteer on this project or are interested in this type of work on your property, contact Sandy Letzing, sandyl@cascadiacd.org



Beaver dam analogues improve water quality and habitat among other benefits

LOCAL FARMS PROTECT FISH AND DRINKING WATER



Hope Mountain Farms practices sustainable agriculture and has participated in cost-share programs with Cascadia to upgrade to efficient irrigation systems and implement bee-friendly weed suppression. These practices and others helped them become Salmon Safe Certified!

Local farmers are taking action to help keep surface waters clean for people and fish. Two area farms recently became Salmon-Safe Certified, meaning that their operations meet required conditions related to water quality, fertilization and pest management, biodiversity, irrigation efficiency, erosion control, and habitat conservation.

Thank you to Diamondback Acres in Chelan and Hope Mountain Farm in Leavenworth for practicing environmentally sustainable agriculture!

Diamondback Acres Inc. in Chelan, WA covers of 139 acres of cherries, blueberries, and apples. Their certifications include: Salmon-Safe, WSDA Organic, and Safe Quality Food. Best Management Practices installed on this farm include efficient irrigation systems and water management plan, noxious weed control, no high-hazard pesticide application, and erosion control management .

Hope Mountain Farm LLC in Leavenworth, WA consists of 4 acres of mixed berries, vegetables, food processing, and an apiary. Their certifications include: Salmon-Safe, WSDA Organic, and Better Process Control School. Best Management Practices installed on this farm include no till, drip irrigation with timers, integrated pest management, crop rotation, mulching, and native pollinator protection.

Other farmers, vineyards, or cideries interested in becoming Salmon-Safe certified or receiving cost-share funds to implement best management

practices can contact MarySuttonC@cascadiacd.org for more information.

FAREWELL ROGER



Appointed Supervisor Roger Wristen has served on Cascadia's board since June 2009, most recently as Auditor. Roger has been active in the Washington Association of Conservation Districts,

providing input on various issues. He's also made himself available for day-to-day operations needs on a regular basis. This month, Roger shared the news that he will be relocating out of the area to be closer to family and will resign his position. Thank you for your service, Roger! We wish you the best on your move and future adventures.

Interested in assisting residents with voluntary solutions to natural resource concerns? Join our Board of Supervisors! Please contact us for details at (509) 436-1601.

URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY

The City of Chelan recently partnered with Cascadia to complete a tree canopy assessment of their urban growth area supported by DNR's Urban and Community Forestry Program. The study aimed to provide Chelan with a benchmark of its tree canopy and other land cover types so that the City can track changes in its urban forest health and growth. Outcomes of the study indicated that there is about 8% canopy cover throughout the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the City. Major areas identified as suitable for increased canopy cover included both public lands and privately-owned single-family residential areas. Healthy urban forests can have a variety of benefits ranging from reduced electric costs, decreased levels of stress, and cleaner air and water. Read the full assessment report at cascadiacd.org.

Cascadia Conservation District is also working with WA Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide technical and educational urban and community forestry assistance in Chelan, Douglas and Okanogan Counties. Cascadia's Sandy Letzing, an ISA certified arborist and WSU Chelan-Douglas Master Gardener, is the lead for this work. It includes supporting local communities with forestry programs that preserve, plant and manage forests and trees for public benefits and quality of life.

For more information check out www.dnr.wa.gov/urbanforestry.



City of Chelan urban forest trees contribute to environmental health and the well-being of residents and visitors
(Photo from City of Chelan)

CHELAN COUNTY OPENS MODERATE RISK WASTE FACILITY

Contributed by Jill FitzSimmons, Chelan County Department of Public Works

People can drop off their household hazardous waste – materials such as used motor oil, antifreeze, oil-based paints, pool chemicals, pesticides, and fertilizers – at the year-round facility for safe disposal.

“We are very excited to be opening this much-needed facility,” said Brenda Blanchfield, manager of the Solid Waste program of Chelan County Public Works. “In the past, the county has held one-day collection events once a year. A permanent facility gives people more opportunities to dispose of their household hazardous wastes in a safe and responsible way and helps keep these materials out of our groundwater and rivers and lakes.”

The 5,000-square-foot facility was built on county-owned property at 3612 Highway 97A in Wenatchee. It is open to all Chelan County residents three days a week, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. The facility is free to residents; however, a \$10 contribution per trip is appreciated. Another feature is the onsite stormwater system, also designed to retain a 100-year storm event. The system incorporates Low Impact Development design principles that include pervious pavers in the parking areas, an underground stormwater chamber and two bio-filtration swells to promote infiltration of onsite-generated stormwater. For additional information contact JillFitzSimmons at (509) 667-6415 or jill.fitzsimmons@co.chelan.wa.us.

WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

Wildfire is a fact of life in North Central Washington. Although fire is important to natural ecosystems, 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.

Wildfire Preparedness accomplishments from 2019:

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 continued to assist local communities with implementing Firewise practices and helped several more Chelan County communities work toward becoming recognized Firewise Communities.

Cascadia staff conducted 50 wildfire risk assessments on private homes in Chelan County. These free assessments were requested by landowners with an interest in taking a proactive approach to wildfire preparedness.

At the Chelan Transfer Station, Cascadia teamed up with the Department of Ecology and the City of Chelan for free yard waste disposal days.

Cascadia partnered with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to organize free chipping events for residents of Chelan County. Residents worked together to clear and stack piles of slash in preparation for the chipper crew. About 127 acres of forested land were treated on the properties of 132 landowners. The work will make these areas much less susceptible to damage from wildfire.

Cascadia plans to offer a spring chipping program and will begin taking signups in early March. The chipping will take place in late May. To participate please check Cascadia's website for a registration link beginning March 1 or contact Amanda Newell at amandan@cascadiacd.org or (509) 436-1601 for additional information.

These chipping programs are designed to treat the 200 foot area around your home. For larger scale projects on forest land, Cascadia offers a cost share program. For additional information please contact Sandy Letzing at sandy1@cascadiacd.org or (509) 436-1601.

Cascadia also continued to work with the US Forest Service (USFS) and the North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration work on public lands. Most forest landowners in Chelan County neighbor USFS land, so we remain committed to participating in planning efforts where we can advocate for good forest stewardship on both public and private lands.



Roving chipper program helps landowners reduce risk of wildfire damage



WATERSHED PLANNING

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 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.

Cascadia participates in WRIA 45 Wenatchee River watershed planning unit and subcommittee meetings, as well as implementing restoration projects in the Wenatchee Watershed and throughout the county. Cascadia also participates in watershed planning activities in the Lake Chelan and Stemilt-Squilchuck watersheds.

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. With more work planned in the future, Cascadia aims to keep consistent, reliable, and regular updates coming in the form of newsletters, public meetings, events, direct mailings, and calls.

We would enjoy hearing from you about natural resource concerns in your neighborhood.

FAREWELL BONNIE

Resource Technician, Bonnie Meaux, has moved on from her role at Cascadia. During her time with us, Bonnie performed maintenance on restoration projects, installed livestock exclusion fencing, planted native vegetation on private land, and assisted with environmental education programs like Kids in the Creek and Kids in the Forest. Bonnie has moved back east to be closer to family. We wish her the best in her future endeavors!



CASCADIA
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Please Remember to Recycle



UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Cascadia Conservation District Board Meetings

Feb 20 14 N Mission St, Wenatchee 3:30 pm
Mar TBD 14 N Mission St, Wenatchee Time TBD
(Annual Planning Meeting)
Apr 16 14 N Mission St, Wenatchee 3:30 pm

Entiat Watershed Planning Unit Meeting

TBD Entiat Grange Hall 10:00 am

Wenatchee River Institute - For additional info on these events contact: rbishop@wenatcheeriverinstitute.org

Winter Break Snow Camp

Feb 18-21 Wenatchee River 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Institute, 347 Division St
Leavenworth, WA

Thursday Snowshoeing in February

Every Wenatchee River 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Thursday Institute, 347 Division St

Moonlight Evening Snowshoe Stroll

Feb 21 Wenatchee River 5:00- 7:00 pm
Institute, 347 Division St

Fly Tying Series

Feb 11- Wenatchee River 6:00- 8:00 pm
March 10 Institute, 347 Division St

Winter Shrub Identification

March 13 Wenatchee River 9:00- 11:00 am
Institute, 347 Division St

Spring Break Adventure Camp

Apr 6-10 Wenatchee River 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Institute, 347 Division St

Trout Unlimited - Screening of the documentary film "The Beaver Believers"

April 14 Wenatchee Valley 7:00 pm
Museum and Cultural
Center

Program will include a presentation about a local beaver-powered restoration program led by Trout Unlimited. Contact Cody Gillin at 509-888-0970 or cody.gillin@tu.org.

Chelan-Douglas Land Trust—for additional info on these events contact Hillary@cdlandtrust.org

Wild Ideas - Food, drink, and short fun talks about local outdoor issues.

Feb 28 Pybus' LocalTel Event 5:30 - 7:00 pm
Center

Hike for Health Series - Get outside on trails, explore new places, and get exercise with these events in partnership with CVCH and CDLT.

Once per- Varies - visit cdland- Varies
month trust.org/outings-events/
Mar-Oct events

Early Wildflower Walk at Sam Hill—explore early bloomers

April 25 Sam Hill Preserve in 1:00 - 4:00 pm
Leavenworth