

CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2023

EN ESPAÑOL:
CASCADIACD.ORG



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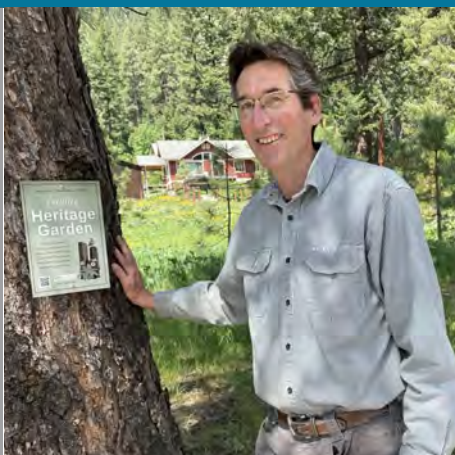
LANDOWNER SPOTLIGHT: FIRST CERTIFIED HERITAGE GARDEN IN CHELAN COUNTY!

Article and Photos by Elizabeth Jackson, Cascadia CD

Don Schaechtel purchased his property in Leavenworth during the winter of 2008. All winter he eagerly awaited a bonanza of native plants blooming in the spring. Instead, the former pasture and orchard sprouted weeds. Thus began Don's journey in creating a native plant garden, which is now over an acre in size.

When asked why native plants, Don responded, "With a garden full of native plants, it never feels that I am far from wild places".

Through his journey of converting the property to a native habitat, he has learned the benefits to wildlife. The native plants attract wildlife, including insects, whose abundance in-turn supports birds and their growing chicks. He has observed at least 11 species of mammals, two species of lizards, five species of snakes, and at least eight species of nesting birds. Not to mention the frogs, salamanders, bees, and butterflies that use his yard as habitat, it is not just a garden.



When he saw an article in the Conservation Quarterly describing Heritage Gardens, Don knew his garden would qualify. Through a certification process, the Heritage Garden program (hgcd.info) recognizes landowners who create low water use and diverse native plant gardens. To be certified, gardens must maintain a minimum of 75% native Columbia Basin flora and include plants that provide wildlife and pollinator habitat. Also required is a rock feature that reflects the region's geologic history. Basalt and granite are good options.

Don initially learned about the Heritage Garden program in Benton County and hoped it would come to our area. Today, certification and assistance are



Left: front of house before. Right: front of house after.



provided by conservation districts throughout the central Columbia Basin, including Cascadia (Chelan County). Technical assistance includes complimentary garden design, plant recommendations, demonstration garden tours, and a free yard sign for certified gardens.

If you are new to native plants, or planting a pollinator garden, Don advises the most important step to get started is to remove the weeds and grass first. Solarization--putting down plastic sheeting and letting the sun bake the weed seeds--is a popular and effective technique. Patience is key too. For example, balsamroots take five years to grow from seed to flower but are worth the wait. Balsamroots are the big, yellow bouquets dotting the landscape from April to June. Don says, that, Cascadia Conservation District has great resources, as does the Derby Canyon Natives Nursery (derbycanyonnatives.com) in Peshastin. Joining the Washington Native Plant Society (wnps.org) is another great way to learn from others growing native plants.



Don explains, "I wanted to get a yard sign to promote the program to others...It [Heritage Garden] doesn't have to be big, but adding native plants brings interest to any garden and is a great way to learn about our native flora". He encourages others to make a Heritage Garden of their own.

To learn more about Heritage Gardens and the certification process, contact Elizabeth Jackson at elizabethj@cascadiacd.org or (509) 679-7861 or request a site visit through the website hgcd.info/request-site-visit.

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NEWSLETTER FEEDBACK GREATLY APPRECIATED!

Please follow this link: rebrand.ly/News14
Or scan the QR code to complete a short survey
Or call (509) 436-1601 or email info@cascadiacd.org



JOINING FORCES: TO BRING RESIDENTS ONE STEP CLOSER TO BEING FIRE ADAPTED

Article and Photos by Joe Hill, Cascadia CD

This spring the American Red Cross joined the efforts of Team Rubicon and Cascadia helping Chelan County residents identify fire hazards and improve the defensible space around their homes. As a result, 15 households that did not have the means to improve their defensible space were referred to Cascadia to create a fuels reduction prescription that was implemented by Team Rubicon.

In May, 18 Red Cross volunteers and three Fire District 6 firefighters provided free home fire risk assessments in the Valley-Hi community. The group taught 31 residents about their fire risk and steps they could take to reduce it.



The team also wrapped up last year's work at the Wenatchee River Institute, which serves as a demonstration site for defensible space and home hardening measures. Additionally, they assisted multiple landowners on the Chumstick Highway. These efforts focused on flammable debris and vegetation management.

In June, Team Rubicon assembled 42 volunteers from the Northwest and abroad. Over an 8-day period they donated over 1,000 hours thinning and limbing trees, cutting brush, and clearing downed branches and logs on the ground. Thus, reducing the risk of fire damage to 18 homeowners properties.



Team Rubicon, Cascadia, and the Red Cross plan to build from these successes in the years to come and expand the efforts across the county. If you or anyone you know would benefit from these resources, please reach out to Forest and Community Resilience Specialists Joe Hill at JoeH@CascadiaCD.org.

FUEL BREAK AND FOREST RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Please scan the QR code, go to the link below to fill out our interest form: tinyurl.com/Forest-Resilience or call Joe at Cascadia: (509) 463-1601 or JoeH@CascadiaCD.org



LOOKING AHEAD: URBAN AG CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE GARDENS

Article and Photos by Elizabeth Jackson, Cascadia CD

Urban Agriculture ensures fresh food for everyone.



Our Urban Agriculture initiative began in 2018, primarily with local students growing food crops. Cascadia is expanding this conservation program throughout the county to increase the public's access to fresh food.

Ag conservation applies to urban and suburban landscapes, not just rural farms. Community gardens and small-scale farms can use sustainable practices to produce food locally at an affordable price. Raised beds, composting, crop rotation, fertilizer and pest management, a hoop house, and efficient irrigation system (like micro-irrigation, drip irrigation, and timers) are examples of Urban Ag conservation practices.



Do you have an idea for an Urban Ag community project? Contact Elizabeth at (509) 679-7861 or elizabethj@cascadiacd.org to learn how we may be able to assist.

Heritage Gardens honor the cultural and natural heritage of the Columbia River Basin while utilizing waterwise gardening practices.



In May 2023, Cascadia officially certified the 1st two Heritage Gardens in Chelan County. The program started in 2012 in the Tri-Cities, in partnership with the WA Native Plant Society, and expanded into Chelan County in the summer of 2022.

Our staff offers free site visits, customized plant lists, technical advice, and inspirational planting guides for residents, with emphasis on the use of native and drought tolerant plants of the Columbia Basin. Certified gardens receive a complimentary yard sign to recognize their efforts.

To request a site visit, go to: hgcd.info/request-site-visit.



**PART OF CASCADIA CD'S
75 YEARS OF CONSERVATION!**

LEARN & BURN A SUCCESS

Contributed by Colin Sternagel, Ecological Services LLC

On May 12 and 13, Cascadia Conservation District, US Forest Service, WA Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, Lake Wenatchee District 9, and community members teamed up to provide a two-day training on prescribed fire.

Over 30 individuals participated in this Prescribed Fire Association's Learn & Burn, which took place just outside of Leavenworth. Members of the community ranging from their 20's to 70's came out to participate. Attendee's learned: how to use hand tools to build a fireline, how to determine appropriate weather for the burn, use of drip torches, forest and fire ecology, and more!

This day has been a long time coming. Some of our older community members have been wanting to be involved with prescribed fire on private lands for many decades and we hope this is just a spark!



This burn & training event could not have happened without the collaborative efforts & partnerships of each person, agency & organization that came out in support.



Interested in hosting a burn on your property or participating in a training? Contact: Joeh@cascadiacd.org



BEAVERS CREATE FIRE BUFFERS

Written by Alex Harwell, Cascadia CD

With our hot, dry summer many of us have wildfire season on our mind. Living with the reality of wildfire we try to do all that we can to reduce fire risk around our homes and communities. Creeks and rivers can also act as a green fire break in the event of a fire. Add in a beaver and the wetted area is increased even more. Beaver dams help to spread out and hold water, making it available longer for plants and animals to use. Water, soggy ground and green vegetation is difficult to ignite. These "green buffers" with higher moisture content in the leaves and a higher water table, are resistant to combustion, creating a refuge for wildlife in a scorched and on-fire landscape.

Analyzing post-fire drone imagery, researcher Joe Wheaton tweeted, " Why is there an impressive patch of green in the middle of 65,000 acres of charcoal? Turns out water doesn't burn. Thank you beaver!"



A green strip of vegetation along beaver-made ponds in Baugh Creek near Hailey, Idaho. The ponds, resisted flames when a wildfire scorched the region in 2018, as shown in this drone image. Credit: J. WHEATON/ UTAH STATE UNIV.

While we are not beavers, we are trying to mimic these ecosystem benefits through the installation of Beaver Dam Analogs (BDAs) throughout our watersheds. BDAs are wooden in-stream structures that mimic natural beaver dams. This spring Cascadia Conservation District, with the help of local landowners and our partners at Trout Unlimited and Cascade Fisheries, installed over 100 BDAs in the Chumstick Watershed in Leavenworth. The goal is to increase the amount of water in the channel throughout the year. Contact us if you are interested to learn more about BDAs or other restoration practices on your property!

Check out this video to see the interaction between beaver and fire!: <https://youtu.be/IAM94B73bzE> or the QR code



WELCOME ISOBEL



FOREST & COMMUNITY RESILIENCE SPECIALIST

Isobel is originally from Portland, OR but has lived and worked all over the West. She has experience working in Timber and Silviculture for the Forest Service on the Willamette, Mt. Hood, and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests - mostly recently in the nearby Cle Elum Ranger District. She's excited to bring her forestry experience and love for beautiful Central Washington to Cascadia, where she hopes to foster sustainable stewardship of our natural resources while serving the community. Isobel is honored to engage in creating healthier and more resilient ecosystems. She enjoys birding, hiking with her dog Bandit, gardening, and foraging for wild edibles.

FAREWELL MARCY



Marcy Bartelheimer is off to Guatemala on a teaching assignment for the next year but we look forward to reconnecting with her when she returns. During her time with Cascadia, Marcy performed site visits to inform landowners and operators about our agriculture and cost-share assistance programs, helped with education & outreach programs and events, including designing lessons and materials for a mini-8th grade internship, creating a beaver activity book for kids, creating a compact composting brochure, and a container gardening handout in English and Spanish, and designing fliers about our landowner assistance programs. Thank you, Marcy! Good luck on your new endeavors!

RESOURCE TECHNICIAN

KIDS CORNER: SPOTLIGHT ON BEAVERS

Funded
by:  DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

WHY ARE BEAVERS SO IMPORTANT?

Fill in the blanks with the words below

dams
water

engineers
changing
cold

insects
habitat

Beavers are called ecosystem _____, because they are very good at _____ the environment where they live.

They build _____ out of sticks, mud, rocks, and logs that turn rivers into ponds.

Beaver ponds slow down and pool water. This helps keep more _____ on land and in the river for plants and animals. The ponds also help keep the water _____. Keeping the water cold is important for salmon and many other fish.

_____, birds, amphibians, mammals, plants and fish, oh my! The ponds made by a beaver dam make _____ for many plants and animals.

Want to learn more about beavers? Check out our new Beaver Activity Book available to print from cascadiacd.org or by calling (509) 436-1601.



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Please Remember to Recycle

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Cascadia Conservation District Board Meetings

Aug 18, Sept 15, Oct 20, 1:30-4:00. Watch our website or call (509) 436-1601 for updates. Call-in/Zoom options are available.

***Strategic planning in progress. Watch our website for updates & opportunities to participate.**

Entiat Watershed Planning Unit Meeting

Sept 6, 4-7 pm, Entiat Fire Station, 2200 Entiat Way. Food provided. Call/Zoom participation available. Call (509) 436-1601 for details.

Chelan County Natural Resources Department

Aug 5. Wenatchee River Clean-up. WenatcheeRiverCleanUp.eventbrite.com

Historic Chelan-Third Thursday Community Event

Aug 17. <http://historicchelan.org/events/third-thursdays-music-in-the-park/>

Sustainable NCW: Waste Wizard

What goes where? How to recycle in NCW! To view the Waste Wizard, visit: sustainablecw.org/wastewizard

Upper Valley MEND's Gleaning Program

May-October. Help harvest excess produce for food pantries in Chelan and Douglas counties. Contact: rachel@uvmend.org or 509-699-7395.

Waste Loop: Sustainable Living and Farming Tour

Sept 15-17 various times & locations. www.wasteloop.org or contact@wasteloop.org

Wenatchee River Institute

- Birding by the River - Aug 9, Sept 13, Oct 11 from 8-9:30am @ WRI
- Beer & Bots - Adult STEM - Aug 17 from 6-8pm in WRI's Red Barn
- Wildfire Stewardship of Upper Wenatchee Valley- Sept 14 7-8pm
- More events listed at: <https://wenatcheeriverinstitute.org/>
Contact programs@wenatcheeriverinstitute.org, call 509-548-0181

Wenatchee River Salmon Festival

Sept 21 at Rocky Reach Dam Discovery Center. Details at: www.salmonfest.org

FALL CHIPPING EVENT

Details at: cascadiacd.org



PICTURE CHELAN COUNTY

Photo Contest

May 1 - Oct 1

Details at cascadiacd.org



To join the list scan the QR code
or call (509) 436-1601




Photo credit: Oly Mingo & Entiat Chamber of Commerce