

CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

WINTER 2012

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS IN 2011

As we move into the new year, Cascadia would like to highlight some accomplishments from 2011.

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 2011 education and outreach efforts.

Cascadia's Conservation Conversation Blog: Updated weekly, follow it at <http://ccdconservationconversation.blogspot.com/>

District Newsletter: Each quarter Cascadia

produces the *Conservation Quarterly* highlighting current projects, upcoming events and general district news.

District Website - 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 Essay Contest: Chelan County 6th-8th graders participated in this contest. The winning writers received savings bonds from Cashmere Valley Bank and accompanied a local biologist on wood duck surveys.



Rolling Rivers at the Wenatchee River Salmon Festival



*PTW
Chumstick
Creek
Clean-up*

Kids in the Creek: This annual hands-on learning program gets high school science students out of the classroom and into the outdoors to learn how streams and watersheds work. In 2011, 350 students from eight area high schools participated.



*Entiat River
Appreciation*

Native Planting 101: A one day event, this workshop covers planting techniques, pollinators, weeds and more. The 2012 workshop is currently full, but we have a waitlist. Call (509) 664-9370 if interested.

Picture the Wenatchee (PTW): This water quality campaign encourages all citizens of the Wenatchee watershed to be better watershed stewards. In 2011, PTW volunteers removed over one ton of trash from private property on Chumstick Creek where a restoration project will take place in 2012. Visit picturethewenatchee.com for additional information and to receive a FREE Watershed Care Package. Follow PTW on Facebook as well.

Wenatchee River Salmon Festival: Cascadia and its partners annually host the Rolling Rivers activity station where students learn about, then build and place, the components of a healthy salmon-friendly watershed.

Entiat River Appreciation: In 2011, Cascadia sponsored a logo contest for Entiat 4th/5th graders and the winning logo appeared on outreach materials for the clean-up event. Over 100 volunteers filled two 20 yard dumpsters with debris and planted 100 native trees and shrubs at the Entiat National Fish Hatchery.

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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.

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. In 2011, Cascadia implemented riparian restoration projects in the Wenatchee and Entiat watersheds.

Chumstick Clean up and Riparian Restoration: This project consisted of removing streamside debris (metal, empty barrels, glass, etc.) along 250 feet of Chumstick Creek and a total area of 17,000 Sq. Ft. A twenty cubic yard



Riparian restoration on Chumstick Creek

garbage bin was filled with noxious weeds and trash that was removed from the project site. The project also focused on planting native trees and shrubs to re-establish 12,500 feet of riparian area. Icicle River Middle School 8th graders participated in a two-day clean-up and a two-day riparian

Lower Sleepy Hollow Island Riparian Restoration: This project consisted of stream bank stabilization along 790 feet of an eroding channel. Noxious weeds like Russian olive and knapweed were removed from the site and two acres of native riparian trees, shrubs, and grasses were planted.

Entiat Riparian Restoration: This project consisted of restoration, enhancement, and protection of 4.2 acres of riparian habitat stretching along 1.1 miles of stream bank by installing native riparian trees, shrubs, and native grasses, livestock exclusion fencing, temporary irrigation systems, and controlling of noxious weeds at all five sites.

Below Keystone Bridge: This project upgraded the existing Keystone Diversion and improved Entiat River salmon habitat diversity. In 2011, invasive weeds such as Russian thistle, tumble mustard, spotted and diffuse knapweed were removed. Approximately 1000 willows, and red osier dogwood shrubs were planted in the riparian area.

Cascadia currently has funding for 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 our office at (509) 664-9370.



Planting on Lower Sleepy Hollow Island

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.



Typical surface water diversion to be replaced

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 prosper.

Surface Water to Well Conversions:

In 2011, Cascadia worked with several landowners in the Entiat River valley to complete surface water to well conversions for their irrigation water. The intent of these projects is to reduce the demand on Entiat surface water for irrigation, especially during high-demand, low-flow late summer conditions. This retains instream flow at a critical time, avoids entrainment and mortality of fish, and improves water quality by helping to moderate temperature.

The Gaines Ditch, in the lower valley, was the last component of the “Big Ditch” that supplied irrigation water since 1906, and stretched along the north side of the river valley from just below Ardenvoir to half a mile upstream from the river’s confluence with the Columbia River.

Two of the three remaining water users on Gaines Ditch, representing more than 99% of the allocated surface water, were converted from surface diversions to wells. This work resulted in keeping 1.96 cubic feet per second (cfs) of surface water in the river. Cascadia also worked with three other landowners to convert from surface diversions to wells, resulting in an additional 0.64cfs of surface water remaining in the Entiat River.



Drilling for surface to well conversion

WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

Wildfire is a fact of life in North Central Washington. Although fire is important to natural ecosystems, the threat that wildfire poses to 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.

Cascadia coordinated fuels reduction thinning of approximately eight acres in Squilchuck State Park and 12 additional acres on private timbered land near the park in 2011. Work included thinning of densely spaced small trees (less than 8” diameter) and piling of brush. Total cost for the work done in 2011 was approximately \$35,000.

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.

In 2011, our Landowner Assistance Program worked with six cooperators to split the cost of installing natural resource conservation projects on their land. Approximately 68 acres were treated in 2011. These treatments

included: seven irrigation system upgrades, seven installed irrigation water management systems, three fabric mulch applications, two kestrel nesting structures, one release of knapweed-eating weevils, and one hedgerow for beneficial insect habitat.

If you are interested in participating in our Landowner Assistance Program or would like additional information (including our new Landowner Assistance Program brochure) please contact us at (509) 664-9370.



Hedgerow planted for beneficial insect habitat

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, instream flow and habitat issues. Some, like the Entiat and Wenatchee, address water quality as well.



Cascadia is the lead agency for the WRIA 46 Entiat River watershed planning effort and the local co-chair of the WRIA 45 Wenatchee River watershed Water Quality Technical Subcommittee.

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. 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.

In 2011, Cascadia and the EWPU began developing a video outlining watershed resource planning and conservation efforts going on in the Entiat Valley over the past 30 years. The video will premier this spring.

Also in 2011, Cascadia and the EWPU began designing "Welcome to the Watershed" signs that will be placed around the Entiat watershed.

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

AN ABUNDANCE OF GOOD THINGS:

CONTRIBUTED BY RANDY KELLEY, NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

The economy isn't good, jobs are in short supply and government actions seem more difficult to comprehend. Certainly conservation districts are feeling the challenge with fewer grants and fewer dollars from all sources. In an environment such as this it can be hard to see the many good things going on to get conservation of natural resources on the ground.

First, we have a remarkable partnership between conservation districts, the Washington Conservation Commission, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This is the foundation that has provided the solid footing for all the sound conservation work on private lands since the dust bowl days. The conservation districts in North Central Washington work on projects ranging from sage grouse habitat restoration in Douglas County, salmon recovery in places like the Entiat and the Methow Rivers and their tributaries, water quality work associated with irrigated cropland, soil erosion work associated with dry cropland, and plant community health work on forest and range lands.

Second, the partnership extends to a group referred to as the Local Working Group (LWG). This is an advisory group comprised of conservation minded individuals representing agencies such as the Farm Service Agency, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; private operations such as tree fruit growers, cattlemen, wheat growers, and forest landowners; and non-government operations such as the Nature Conservancy and Trout Unlimited. The convening body is the local conservation districts: Cascadia, South Douglas, Foster Creek, and Okanogan representing Chelan, Douglas and Okanogan Counties.

Why is this Local Working Group important? Since the 2002 Farm Bill was enacted, the North Central Washington Local Working Group has advised the NRCS on natural resource priority concerns which has resulted in \$9,500,000 in financial assistance to over 350 agricultural producers to put conservation on the ground via the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) alone! There is a similar group at the state level called the State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC).



Left to right: Roger Wristen, CCD Board Member; Kate Koenig, CCD; Junell Wentz, cooperator; Amy Hendershot, NRCS

Junell Wentz accepts the 'Statewide Wildlife Stewards of the Year' award, a joint award between WA Association of Conservation Districts and WA State Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Wentzes participated in CCD's Landowner Assistance Program and NRCS's EQIP program.

(Continued on page 4)

AN ABUNDANCE OF GOOD THINGS

(Continued from page 3)

With solid advice from these two groups of volunteers, the NRCS, in fiscal year 2011, provided technical and financial assistance to our local agricultural producers who completed:

- 4,886 acres of wildfire risk reduction and forest health improvements
- 29,462 acres of fish and wildlife habitat restoration and enhancement
- 36,629 acres of grazing land improvements
- 2,032 acres of irrigation efficiency improvements
- 57,842 acres of improvements that address water quality
- 22,484 acres of improvements that address soil quality
- 93,740 acres of land covered under new conservation plans developed with ready, willing and able agricultural producers

Additionally, 79 conservation plans and program contracts were developed on 93,300 acres of agricultural land representing \$2,790,950 worth of conservation program financial assistance funds. The technical and financial contributions provided through conservation district programs are equally substantial and meaningful to the citizens of North Central Washington. These successes are the result of hard work and dedication by many, but it all begins with the local community volunteers who step up to dedicate their time and energy so that conservation of our natural resources benefits us now as well as future generations.

Really good things are being done in this region to address serious natural resources concerns. We have a solid partnership with like-minded groups, led by the local conservation districts who represent all of you. To continue the legacy of this abundance of good things it would be great to have more individuals get involved with their local conservation district and help lead their local communities to get conservation efforts on the ground.

WELCOME ABOARD!



Cascadia would like to welcome our new Project Coordinator II, Michael Cushman. Michael graduated from Northern Michigan University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Earth Science. He was previously a Senior Staff Geologist with a geotechnical engineering firm and has assisted the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board with monitoring habitat restoration sites in the Upper Columbia Basin. Michael has lived in the Wenatchee area for ten years and enjoys photography and all things outdoors.



CASCADIA
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

215 Melody Lane Wenatchee, WA 98801
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Staff Members

Mark Amara, *Archaeologist*
Mike Cushman, *Project Coordinator II*
Susan Dretke, *Resource Specialist II*
Peggy Entzel, *District Administrator*
Valerie Hampton, *Administrative Assistant*
Kurt Hosman, *Project Coordinator*
Kate Koenig, *Resource Specialist*
Kim Lancaster, *Archaeologist*
Julia Leach, *AmeriCorps Intern*
Amanda Levesque, *Education & Outreach*
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Please Remember to Recycle

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Cascadia Conservation District Board Meetings

February 16, 3:30pm at 215 Melody Lane, Wenatchee
Annual Planning Meeting, March, date TBD
April 19, 3:30pm at 215 Melody Lane, Wenatchee
Please contact our office for more information: (509) 664-9370.

Entiat Habitat Subcommittee Meetings

February 16, 9am-12pm at 215 Melody Lane, Wenatchee
March 15, 9am-12pm at Chelan County Fire District #1, 206 Easy St, Wenatchee
April 19, 9am-12pm at Chelan County Fire District #1, 206 Easy St, Wenatchee

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

NRCS is currently accepting applications for on-farm energy improvements including hoophouses, more efficient pumps, and energy audits. Up to 100% of the implementation cost could be covered. Application evaluation periods end February 3, March 30 and June 1, 2012. For more information, please contact Amy Hendershot at (509) 664-9303.

Local Working Group Meetings

February 29, 6pm-8:30pm
March 21, 6pm- 8:30pm

Meetings to be held at the Campbell's Resort conference rooms in Chelan. For more information, please contact Amy Hendershot at (509) 664-9303.

Wenatchee Habitat Subcommittee meetings

Third Wednesday of every month.

Please Contact Mary Jo Sanborn at (509)-667-6532 for more information.

Entiat Watershed Planning Unit (EWPU) meeting

April 4, 9am-12pm at the Entiat Grange Hall, 14108 Kinzel Street, Entiat

Chelan County Farm Services Agency (FSA) Newsletter

The FSA office will again be publishing newsletters to be posted on the state FSA website, www.fsa.usda.gov/wa. Contact the county office at (509) 664-9385 to sign up for electronic notifications.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

The SURE program has begun and runs through June 1, 2012. Please contact the FSA office for more information: (509) 664-9385.

"Foodways and Byways" Video Release and Photo Drive

The Initiative for Rural Innovation and Stewardship (IRIS) has released their DVD "Foodways & Byways: The Story of Food in North Central Washington." With the North Central Regional Library (NCRL), they are also collecting historic photographs as part of the "Foodways & Byways" project. Visit www.gatheringourvoice.org for more information.

For more information on any of the meetings and events listed above, call our office at (509) 664-9370 or visit our website at www.cascadiacd.org.



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