

THE CASCADIA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

WINTER 2009



CHELAN COUNTY FIRE PLAN COMPLETED

The Cascadia Conservation District and Chelan County Commissioners are pleased to announce the completion of the Chelan County Community Fire Plan. Since 2004, Cascadia has been working with area residents, local fire districts, county government, and state and federal agencies to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans, or CWPPs, for nearly every fire district in Chelan County. The county fire plan is a compilation of the individual CWPPs and represents a comprehensive approach to wildfire mitigation.

The primary goals of the Chelan County fire plan are to 1) identify and implement projects that protect people from injury or loss of life during a wildfire, and 2) minimize or eliminate damage or loss of property and essential infrastructure to wildfire. Components of the plan include an assessment of existing information, wildfire risk evaluation, and a review of recent, current and proposed wildfire mitigation projects.

CWPPs and county level fire plans are a required prerequisite under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 to receive hazardous fuels reduction funding. Completion of the county plan makes Chelan County more competitive for limited state and federal funding for wildfire risk reduction and prevention projects.

The Chelan County Community Fire Plan is expected to be a "living" document that is reviewed and updated on an annual basis as funding allows. Copies of the Chelan County Community Fire Plan can be found at www.cascadiacd.org or by calling our office (509) 664-9370.

NEW YEAR TAKES DISTRICT TO NEW OFFICE

After over 25 years in the Federal Building in downtown Wenatchee the Cascadia Conservation District has relocated to the Olds Station area of north Wenatchee. The local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency offices have relocated as well. The three entities share the building with the USDA Forest Service and US Fish & Wildlife Service who have been tenants there since it was completed in 1995.

The move came at a good time for the District as it has struggled in recent years to provide adequate space for a growing staff. The new location has many positive features including easy access off US Highways 2 and 97, ample on-site parking for staff and visitors, and enough space to house all district employees in one office suite.



The Cascadia Conservation District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and USDA Farm Service Agency have relocated to the Olds Station area of north Wenatchee.

The District has undergone a number of changes in recent years including a new name, new logo, and new website. Change is never easy, particularly when relocating an office, but District

Administrator, Peggy Entzel views the move as, "...yet another timely change that will help us better serve our District members."

The Cascadia Conservation District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and USDA Farm Service Agency can now be found on the ground floor of 215 Melody Lane in Wenatchee or by calling the main reception desk at (509) 664-9200.

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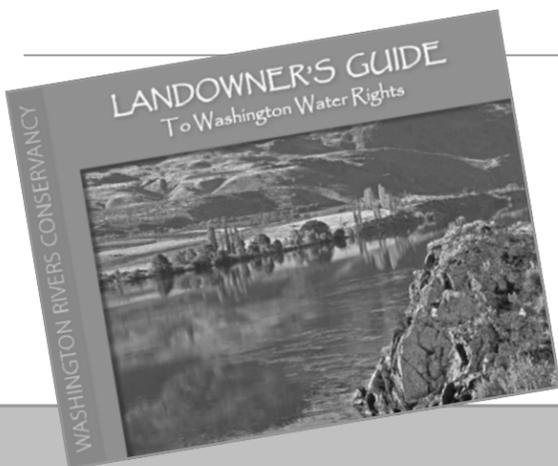
- **Annual Native Plant Sale**

Orders are due by Friday, February 27.
For a brochure and order form visit
www.cascadiacd.org or call (509) 664-9370.

- **Committed to conservation?
Join our Board of Supervisors!**

Applications are due by Tuesday, March 31.
For more information visit www.cascadiacd.org
or call (509) 664-9370.





HANDBOOK CREATED TO HELP DEMYSTIFY WATER RIGHTS

Washington State water law is very complex. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of misinformation in circulation about water rights. This misinformation has caused many landowners and would-be land buyers disappointment and heartache.

The Washington Rivers Conservancy recently completed a publication titled a *Landowner's Guide to Washington Water Rights* to help demystify water rights and provide the public with the basic tools for understanding what a water right does and doesn't provide.

If you own land with water rights, want to buy or sell land with water rights, or want to transfer water rights from one piece of property to another, this handbook is for you. It will not make you a water rights expert, but it will provide you with sufficient background to answer the following questions...

- What is a water right?
- How is a water right established?
- How is a water right maintained?
- How can a water right be transferred?
- What are trust water rights?

The handbook was made possible through assistance from the Bullitt Foundation, Cascadia Conservation District, Cascadia Law Group, Icicle Fund, Key Bank, Laird Norton Foundation, Mountaineers Foundation, and the Washington State Department of Ecology.

Washington Rivers Conservancy is a non-profit organization that works statewide to provide water rights expertise. To find out more about the organization or obtain a copy of the new handbook call (509) 888-0970 or visit their website at www.warivers.org.

FIRE BREAK PROVIDES CRITICAL LINK IN PROTECTION FOR FOREST RIDGE

The first project funded under a National Fire Plan grant obtained by Chelan County Fire District #1 was recently completed along the west edge of the Forest Ridge neighborhood near Mission Ridge.

The project provides a critical link between similar fuels reduction efforts in the area recently implemented by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources. Together the projects complete a sixty acre shaded fuel break around one of the most vulnerable neighborhoods in the Squilchuck Creek basin.

A local contractor was hired to reduce vegetative fuels along a seven acre swath of land on the neighboring Scout-a-Vista property owned by the Boy Scouts of America.

Brush and dead or downed trees were removed, small diameter trees were thinned out, and the lower limbs of remaining large trees were pruned up. The objective of the project was to create an open understory with a tree canopy large enough to provide adequate shade to help keep understory regrowth manageable.

The result is a more fire resistant landscape which will help to slow the speed of an approaching wildfire, provide firefighters a safe zone from which to fight a fire from, and ultimately help protect the Forest Ridge community.

To increase the effectiveness of the project, homeowners within Forest Ridge are being encouraged to reduce vegetative fuels on

their property and replace combustible building materials on their homes with more fire resistant alternatives. A number of residents have received free wildfire risk assessments and are taking the necessary steps to reduce the vulnerability of their home and landscape.

The Cascadia Conservation District is administering and implementing the grant for Fire District #1 and is providing free wildfire risk assessments to residents with the help of fire district personnel.

Additional fuels reduction projects are currently being planned in the Squilchuck Creek basin. For more information visit www.cascadiacd.org or call (509) 664-9370.

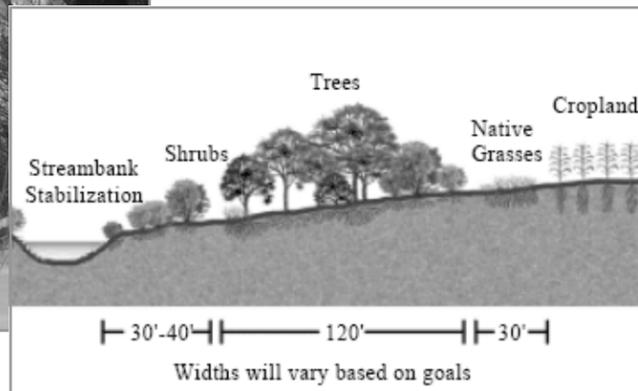


Contractors completed a shaded fuel break along the west edge of the Forest Ridge neighborhood near Mission Ridge by reducing vegetative fuels along a seven acre swath of land on the Scout-a-Vista property owned by the Boy Scouts of America. (Photos: ArborWorx)



Left: Stuart Fraser stands beside the riparian restoration project area on his property along the Entiat River. The wire fencing around the young plants prevents beavers from snacking on them.

Below: Diagram of a mature riparian area.



STREAMSIDE LANDOWNERS IMPROVE ENVIRONMENT WITHOUT COMPROMISING AESTHETICS

The Cascadia Conservation District recently partnered with a number of local landowners in the Wenatchee and Entiat watersheds to restore miles of degraded stream banks. The partnership between the District and participating landowners resulted in over two miles of stream bank being revegetated with more than 6000 native trees and shrubs.

Stream banks compose what is referred to as the riparian area and they play many important functional roles that help protect people and property, and sustain fish and wildlife populations.

Participating landowners Janet and Stuart Fraser own one of twelve qualifying project sites. The Frasers enjoy the natural surroundings that are synonymous with rural living. They relocated from Manson to Entiat in 2005 to maintain the rural lifestyle.

Their new home on five wooded acres adjacent to the Entiat River was a perfect fit with a few exceptions. Trees and brush were dense, creating a fire hazard and limiting their view of their property. Wildlife sightings were few and far between despite their location. And to top it all off, their stream bank was eroding in places.

Like many new landowners the Frasers saw a lot of potential for improvements but they wanted

to make sure they were not compromising the very environment that provided the lifestyle they were seeking to maintain. “*We wanted to enhance the aesthetics of the property without causing environmental damage,*” recalled Fraser during a recent interview.

The previous landowner assisted them with wildfire fuels reduction efforts. This ultimately reduced their property’s risk from wildfire and improved their view of the river, but they didn’t know how to move forward when addressing their other concerns about the property.

“*We felt we needed to do something but didn’t know where to start,*” remembered Fraser. So, when the Cascadia Conservation District approached them about participating in a riparian restoration project they were very interested and willing.

Through a mix of grant resources the District was able to provide the Frasers with funding, labor, and much needed technical advice. What really appealed to the Frasers was the active role they were able to maintain throughout the life of the project. From the initial site visit, through plan design and plant selection, they had a voice. Fraser said, “*It was easy to work with the District; they were flexible and provided their expertise.*”

View corridors, river access points, and a family entertainment area were all preserved and enhanced through careful plant selection and spacing. The Frasers look forward to welcoming more wildlife to their property as plants mature to provide shelter and forage. They also look forward to holding on to more of

ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR STREAMSIDE LANDOWNERS

Riparian areas are the transition zones between the water and the land. If you live next to a stream or river your riparian area may be one of your property’s greatest assets.

A well vegetated riparian area provides...

- erosion control
- flood moderation
- water quality protection
- essential fish & wildlife habitat

If you are interested in making the most of riparian areas on your property the Cascadia Conservation District may be able to help.

Grant funding is currently available to help you cover up to 100% of the costs of approved riparian restoration projects in Chelan County.

From site design to plant selection to planting, we have the resources to help you get the job done.

Projects in 2009 will be approved on a first-come, first-served basis, so don’t delay.

Deadlines are...

- **April 15 for Fall 2009 planting**
- **July 15 for Spring 2010 planting**

Protect your investment and the environment. Call (509) 664-9370 to see if you qualify.

their investment as plant roots develop and help stabilize the soil along their stream bank.

The project on the Fraser property is one component of a larger riparian restoration project involving four adjoining landowners. Over 800 contiguous linear feet of riparian area was restored thanks to the cooperation and participation of four families.

With the help of the Cascadia Conservation District the Frasers and their neighbors were able to improve the quality of the environment along the Entiat River without compromising the quality of life they enjoy on their property. Their riparian restoration projects are proof that living well and living “green” can go hand in hand.

DISTRICT HONORED AS “PARTNER OF THE YEAR”

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) honored the Cascadia Conservation District as “Conservation District Partner of the Year” at an awards luncheon during the Washington Association of Conservation Districts annual meeting on December 3 in Wenatchee. The district primarily serves Chelan County, but through various task orders with the NRCS this year, has provided conservation technical assistance to landowners in Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan and Grant Counties.

According to the NRCS, the district has taken a leading role in conservation activities related to river systems and fish habitat restoration. In addition, the district provided critical support in implementing a wide range of agricultural conservation activities throughout the area.

“Without the help of the Cascadia Conservation District this past year...,” said NRCS State Conservationist Roylene Rides at the Door, “...we would have been hard pressed to...meet our obligations to some producers.”

The Cascadia Conservation District exemplifies the cooperative, can-do spirit that makes local conservation districts such a critical link in all of our efforts to protect and improve natural resources on Washington's private lands,” said Rides at the Door.

Numbering nearly 3000 strong, conservation districts are found in almost every county across the nation. They are non-regulatory entities established to provide private landowners with technical and financial assistance for natural resource projects.

Since 1948, the Cascadia Conservation District has been dedicated to working cooperatively with local landowners, communities, and public and private entities to conserve natural resources in Chelan County.

“The Cascadia Conservation District exemplifies the cooperative, can-do spirit that makes local conservation districts such a critical link...”

-Roylene Rides at the Door
NRCS State Conservationist



Cascadia Conservation District staff members.
Back row (left to right) Rich Malinowski, Mike Rickel, and Tom Gibbons.
Middle row (left to right) Phylisha Olin, Kate Koenig, and Sarah Rudback.
Front row (left to right) Peggy Entzel, Valerie Hampton, and Nada Wentz.
Not pictured are Mark Amara, Rob Koch, Kurt Hosman and Katherine Salomonsen.

FEDERAL PARTNER UNDERGOES STAFF CHANGES

In addition to the recent office move described on page one, our federal partner the Natural Resources Conservation Service or NRCS, has undergone some staffing changes as well.

After two years in the Wenatchee field office Justin Mount left his position as Resource Conservationist to accept a position as a Natural Resource Specialist in Raleigh, North Carolina where he will be working on the NRCS Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative.

The agency is currently working to fill his position with an expected start date in the spring or summer of this year. Until a new Resource Conservationist is identified, Amy Hendershot will be the main point of contact for the NRCS Wenatchee field office.



Amy Hendershot joined the NRCS Wenatchee field office as a Soil Conservationist in October 2008.

Hendershot joined the NRCS as a Soil Conservationist in October. She holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Environmental Science from Washington State University. Prior to her employment with NRCS she was a Conservation Planner with the Okanogan Conservation District.

Her experience working with the Okanogan CD acquainted her with NRCS programs and the challenges faced by growers. As an NRCS employee she will be facilitating conservation programs in Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan counties. Amy can be reached by calling (509) 664-9303.



CASCADIA
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Staff Members

Peggy Entzel, *District Administrator*
Valerie Hampton, *Administrative Assistant*
Nada Wentz, *Office Assistant*
Michael Rickel, *Program Manager*
Richard Malinowski, *Project Coordinator*
Mark Amara, *Archaeologist*
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