



Water Ways Newsletter

Fall 2006

CHELAN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

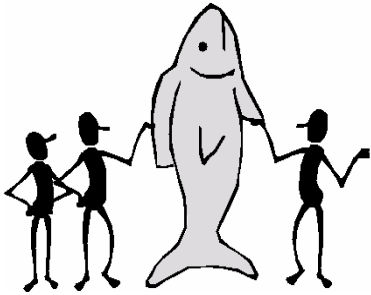
301 Yakima Street, Room 307

Wenatchee, WA 98801

(509) 664-0275

Helping Farmers Help Fish

Matt McDevitt was aware he would eventually have to upgrade his irrigation setup in Chumstick Creek. His system was outdated, required a great deal of maintenance and posed a seasonal barrier to migrating fish. It also lacked an appropriate screen to prevent the uptake of fish into the diversion system. With the assistance of the Chelan County Conservation District, Bureau of Reclamation and the Chelan and Douglas County PUD Tributary Committee Habitat Conservation Plan he was able to get his irrigation diversion redesigned and constructed at *no cost*.



The objective of the project was to install a low maintenance water diversion that provided fish passage through the site at all times, and was properly screened to prevent the entrapment of juvenile fish. The old 1.5-foot-high wood plank weir was replaced with a low-maintenance "fish-friendly" system. Project features include a Pump-Rite® shallow water pump screen and natural-looking boulder weir to help pool the water necessary for irrigation while also permitting fish to pass.

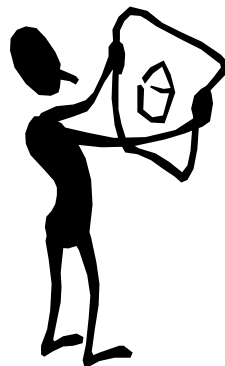
The new system benefits both people and fish. Advantages include not only improved fish passage past the diversion site and the elimination of juvenile fish entrainment, but also a reduction in the amount of maintenance and repairs required on the part of the landowner. Mr. McDevitt was pleased with the results of the project and said, "Working with the Conservation District and Bureau of Reclamation was very easy. It was apparent that they had the best interest of both the landowner and fish in mind." He

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It's time to think about...gardening?

Fall is in full swing and winter will soon be setting in. It's time to start thinking about gardening. One secret to a successful garden is proper planning. Fall is a perfect time to take a look around your yard and start considering how you want your garden to look next spring. Here are some tips to get you started...

- **Do some research on plants that are appropriate for our area.** Choose plants that can withstand the temperature extremes and precipitation levels we experience. Native plants are well adapted to local climate and soil conditions and are an excellent choice for any garden.
- **Make a site plan, or scaled "blueprint", of your garden.** Identify planting zones within your yard and select plants accordingly. Take into account such characteristics as shade and sun exposure, aspect, slope, frost pockets, soil type, irrigation needs and availability, plant size at maturity, existing plants and garden features, and height restrictions such as overhead power lines. Group plants together based on similar needs. Draw in trees and other large plants, and then fill in remaining spaces with colorful annuals, perennials and bulbs. Keep your site plan handy throughout the year to make notes.



- **Promote a healthy soil environment.** Mulching and fertilizing are the cornerstone of a successful garden. Mulch conserves soil moisture and reduces weeds by shading the soil, while compost or organic fertilizers provide essential nutrients for plants.
- **Plant at the appropriate time.** Typically, we think of spring as the time to plant,

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Mark Your Calendar...



- November 17** NRCS EQIP applications are due. (See page 3.)
- January 8** Board Member petitions due from interested candidates. (See page 4.)
- January 24** Board Member Election. (See page 4.)
- February 15** Plant Sale Order Forms are due. (See page 2.)

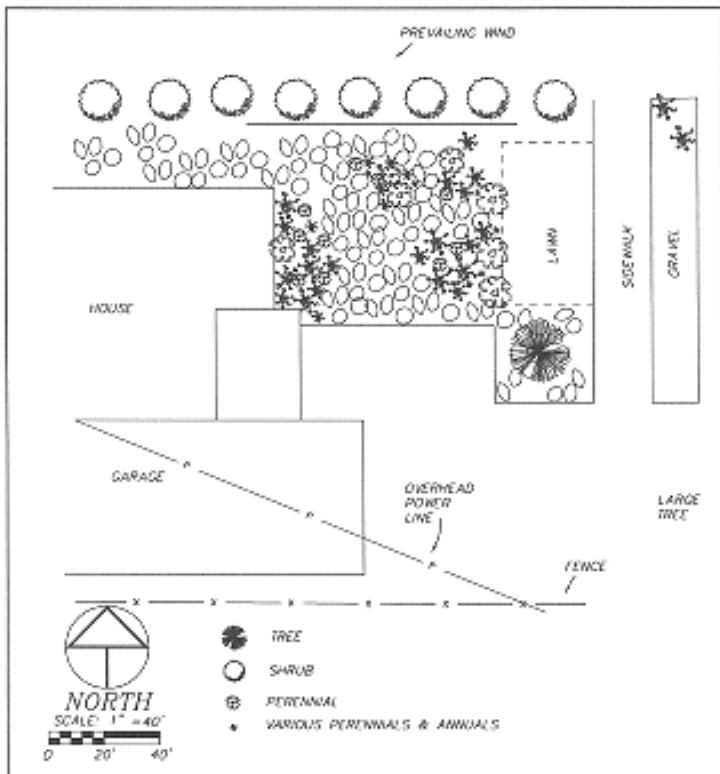
Garden Planning

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but fall can be an ideal time as well. Plants planted in the fall are given a head start by the time the heat of summer sets in. In general, bulbs, perennials, and container-grown trees and shrubs do well when planted in the fall.

For further advice on how to plan your garden we suggest contacting the Washington State University Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners Program at (509) 667-6540 or any area nursery.

Article research and illustration provided by District volunteer Phylisha Olin.



An example of a site plan, or scaled "blueprint", of a garden. Existing features, environmental characteristics, and planting zones are depicted.

Pioneer Water Users Enter the 21st Century

Pioneer Water Users Association, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Washington State Department of Ecology, and the Chelan County Conservation District have teamed up to launch a truly 21st century automation project in the lower Wenatchee Valley. Dan Jaspers, ditch manager for Pioneer Water Users, along with Bureau of Reclamation technicians, installed a new fully automated headgate at the Gunn Ditch intake structure in Monitor this summer. Dan will be able to control the gate in real time and tailor the amount of water being diverted at any moment to the demands put on the system by users. He will also be able to reduce the amount of "spill", or excess water, delivered back into the Wenatchee River to a minimum at the system's three spillback points. Keeping the water in the river helps to keep water temperatures cooler and provides more water for fish. Since warmer water in ditches evaporates faster than cooler water in the river, there is also an overall water savings by diverting less water.

The automated headgate will be powered by solar recharged batteries. An electric motor drives a large threaded shaft, raising and lowering the gate either according to a programmed schedule or on command. A system of radios will communicate information up and down the whole system, including two flow monitoring sites and a control center at the manager's office. The flow monitoring sites are also powered by solar recharged batteries and consist of a radio, stilling well, and float type sensor system to track changes in water level. These stations are located just below the ditch's fish screen at the Monitor pedestrian overpass, and also on lower Sunnyslope Road.

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Water Management: A Balancing Act

Background

As we all know, water is a limited resource. In Washington State, competition for water exists on many rivers in the Columbia River basin. There are hundreds of pending applications for new water rights, and there is little agreement on the stream flows needed to support both people and fish. With Washington's population booming the competition for water will only continue to escalate. In response, the legislature recently established the Columbia River Water Resource Management Program (CRWMP).



The CRWMP authorizes the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to work with stakeholders to pursue development of new water supplies, particularly in Eastern Washington where there is a strong tie between water use and economic productivity. It will allow access to the river's water resources for out-of-stream uses while providing adequate protection for endangered salmon and other species through water storage and conservation projects and voluntary regional water management agreements.

Funding and Water Priorities

Two-thirds of CRWMP funds are earmarked for the development of new storage facilities, with the remaining one-third going to support the other activities listed above. Two-thirds of new stored water supplies will be used to serve out-of-stream uses; one-third will be managed by Ecology and used to augment instream flows for the benefit of salmon and steelhead populations.

Next Steps

A consulting team has been hired by Ecology to work with the Washington State Conservation Commission and Conservation Districts to develop a comprehensive database of all known conservation project opportunities in the greater Columbia River basin in Eastern Washington. The database will include information such as the amount of water that could be conserved and estimated project costs.

A report must be completed by Nov. 15, 2006, and provided to appropriate committees of the Legislature as well as the Governor's office. Ecology plans to provide a draft report for public comment by fall 2006 and will host several open houses throughout Eastern Washington to describe the report findings and seek public comment. For more information, visit the Ecology website at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov> or e-mail Dan Haller at cwp@ecy.wa.gov.

2007 Plant Sale

It's time to start thinking about your spring planting projects. The Conservation District will be offering two-year-old Ponderosa pine seedlings again. We are also planning on offering a small selection of bare root native plants. Species being considered are...

Blue Elderberry	Vine Maple
Golden Currant	Woods Rose
Ocean Spray	Western Red Cedar
Red Osier Dogwood	Kinnikinnick
Serviceberry	Coyote Willow
Snowberry	

Interested?

Give us a call at (509) 664-0275 or watch for the order form in our winter 2007 newsletter.



Washington Biodiversity Council Visits the Entiat

The Washington Biodiversity Council was created by Governor Gary Locke in 2004 to develop and promote more effective ways of conserving biological diversity in Washington State. Biodiversity is defined as the number or abundance of different species living within a particular area or region (California Biodiversity Council). Maintaining a wide diversity of species in an ecosystem is necessary to preserve the web of life that sustains all living things, including humans. One of the primary missions of the Washington Biodiversity Council is to develop a 30-year comprehensive prioritized strategy and implementation plan that enables the state to sustainably protect its biodiversity heritage. The 23-member Council must submit its 30-year strategy to the Governor and the Legislature by December 31, 2007.

Part of the Council's work involves completing an assessment of existing and potential landowner stewardship incentive programs, and demonstrating the applicability of two pilot biodiversity conservation projects, one on the east side of the state and one on the west. On the east side, the Council is funding the *Healthy Lands Initiative*, an 18 month pilot program, launched by the Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship (IRIS) at Wenatchee Valley College. A goal of the *Healthy Lands Initiative* is to bring together north central Washington conservation, agriculture and economic development interests to craft new approaches for combining biodiversity conservation with the maintenance of productive and profitable agricultural enterprises.



The Biodiversity Council's September 27 stop in the Entiat basin allowed them to talk with local growers and learn about the work they and IRIS are doing, as part of the overall *Healthy Lands Initiative*, to explore options for development of a "Habitat Farming Enterprise" pilot program. The concept involves establishing a pilot riparian habitat incentive program that would compensate tree fruit growers in Chelan County for removing some of their holdings and growing riparian habitat instead. In 2005, IRIS completed a feasibility study for Chelan County that identified the need and potential for this type of innovative approach. Work to develop a pilot program is supported by many orchardists and members of the Washington Growers Clearinghouse.

Maintaining a wide diversity of species in an ecosystem is necessary to preserve the web of life that sustains all living things, including humans.

The Habitat Farming Enterprise program would help growers succeed economically and promote retention of family farms while providing a way to measure their contribution to improved riparian habitat and watershed health.

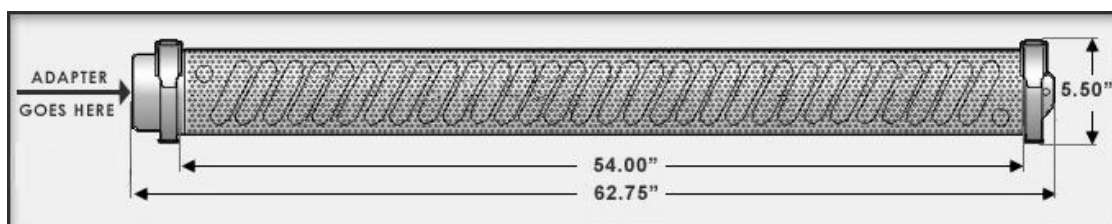
This type of pilot program would also help implement actions recommended in the Entiat Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 46 Management Plan, Wenatchee WRIA 45 plan, and draft Regional Salmon Recovery Plan. IRIS recently secured additional partners and funding, including support from the Entiat Watershed Planning Unit, to start exploring the economics of the concept. The hope is that the Biodiversity Council's recent stop in the Entiat highlighted the innovative thinking that is going on in Chelan County and will provide an added boost to ongoing efforts. For more information about the Habitat Farming Enterprise feasibility study contact IRIS members Nancy Warner at nwarner@tnc.org or Kent Mullinix at mullinix@wsu.edu.

Farmers Help Fish

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said he, "...would encourage other landowners to contact the Conservation District if they have similar types of projects in mind."

Fish screens, like the one installed on the McDevitt diversion, are required by law on all water diversion devices pulling water from a lake, river, or stream containing game fish. This includes the majority of waterways in Chelan County. Contact us at (509) 664-0275 for more information. We may be able to find a cost-share program to help fund your project.



A diagram of the Pump-Rite® shallow water pump screen installed on the McDevitt diversion on Chumstick Creek.

New EQIP Deadline Announced

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced a new deadline for EQIP applications this year. Washington producers interested in participating in the popular cost-share program must have their applications completed and in by Friday, November 17.

"In order to improve the quality of conservation practices, the new application deadline is two months earlier than previous years," said Dave Brown, assistant state conservationist for programs in Washington. "Better planning makes for better contracts and better planning takes time," he said.

EQIP, which stands for Environmental Quality Incentives Program, is a voluntary, cost-share assistance program that helps to fund or provide incentive payments for conservation practices such as irrigation system upgrades, soil nutrient analysis, and innovative pest control technologies. Last year Washington agricultural producers qualified for more than \$20 million in cost-share assistance through the program.

All applications received by November 17, 2006 will be considered for funding in 2007. Due to the high level of interest in this program, potential applicants are urged not to delay in submitting their applications. The process requires a fair bit of paperwork, but may prove to be a worthwhile investment of your time.

"EQIP has become a workhorse program for helping landowners apply critical conservation practices to their land," Brown said. "The program provides key technical and financial tools to help producers get practical conservation measures on the ground," he said. "Those conservation practices and activities, in turn, protect soil, water, and wildlife resources for all of Washington's residents."

Producers interested in applying should call Justin Mount at (509) 664-0269 or Jessie Ham at (509) 664-0244 at the Wenatchee NRCS field office.



