

Palouse Conservation District

Since 1940

Palouse News

Winter 2017



After culvert removal

Fish barrier removal opens up spawning habitat *By Lovina Englund*

Whitman County streams are home to a number of fish and wildlife. The Palouse Conservation District (PCD) works at the nexus of private land and agency partnerships to improve fish and wildlife habitat through focused recovery programs. November marked the end of a fish passage barrier removal project aimed at opening up about a mile and a half of summer steelhead habitat on Steptoe Creek in southern Whitman County. About three-quarters of a mile up from the Snake

River, a road culvert was perched about two feet above the stream channel, proving impossible for summer spawning steelhead to swim upstream. Steelhead spawn in small stream habitats throughout the Snake and Columbia River basins.

Biologists with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) fish barrier board identified this perched culvert as a high priority project, deeming it qualified for funding under the statewide Salmon Recovery grant program. In 2014, PCD was awarded a design-only grant to engineer a new fish-friendly bridge, followed by a construction-phase grant in 2015. In cooperation with Whitman County Public Works, the culvert was removed and a new concrete bridge deck was constructed over Steptoe Creek. In the process, a new step-pool stream channel was constructed to realign the channel and open up the upstream habitat to spawning fish.

Looking ahead, PCD and WDFW staff will periodically visit the site to observe adult fish usage and document recovery. The additional stream miles of Steptoe Creek are now eligible for conservation funding available through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), a voluntary incentive-based program to target conservation of high-priority habitat on private land. Funding was made possible by the Snake River Salmon Recovery Funding Board, administered through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). Whitman County provided the required matching funds through contributions of labor and equipment, making this project feasible.



Before culvert removal

Funds available to improve soil, water and habitat

Signup is now open for landowners and producers in the Palouse River watershed, which includes portions of Whitman, Spokane, Adams and Lincoln counties in Washington and part of Latah county in Idaho, to apply for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Stewardship

Program (CSP) funds. You may sign up for RCPP-CSP at any time at your local NRCS office.

These funds are provided by the Palouse Watershed Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), a separate pool from the general CSP fund, and are designated specifically for landowners and operators in the Palouse River watershed. To date, Palouse Watershed CSP funds have helped to protect water quality by implementing precision agriculture practices on more than 3,000 acres of farmland.



CSP signup for producers in the Palouse River watershed



Funds and support, as authorized through the 2014 Farm Bill, are provided by 19 Partners including NRCS, the Washington State Conservation Commission, eight Conservation Districts, WSU and U of I, Washington Department of Ecology, the Palouse Land Trust, the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association, Washington

Department of Fish and Wildlife, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute. Palouse Conservation District is the lead partner for the Partnership.

In addition to the current CSP signup, multiple funding sources are available and Partners are currently accepting applications for the 2019 RCPP EQIP signup. To apply for assistance or to learn more, contact your local Conservation District or Stephen Johnson of the Palouse Conservation District at 509-332-4101 x 116.



Friday February 23, 2018

9am—3pm, View Room
Gladish Community Center
Pullman, WA

Local growers will share experiences from on-farm trials and efforts to find what works for their operation. Join in the fellowship and dialogue!

RSVP at www.palousecd.org

Fondest of Farewells: Thanks for all your hard work Bryana Cope!



Bryana will be dearly missed at the district. She has had a long run here, starting as an intern for two seasons, then fine-tuning her skills in restoration and watershed education as an Americorps member, and helping launch our field crew program as a crew leader. Thank you Bryana. We wish you all the best in your next adventures!

Meet Jessica Self Grants and Development Manager



Jessica is the Grants and Development Manager and is responsible for spearheading new grants and managing developing projects. She comes from a diverse background of biological research, habitat restoration and conservation implementation. Jessica holds a Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Western Washington University and a Master's of Science in Biology from Georgia Southern University. Her graduate thesis focused on the advantage of bipedal running in lizards within desert landscapes. Jessica has spent her entire professional career working in the western United States. In her spare time, you will find her exploring the Palouse while running, hiking and snowshoeing as well as enjoying quality time with her family.

Welcome to the Board Mary Collins



Mary Collins joined the PCD Board of Supervisors in October 2017. Mary grew up on a family farm north of Albion, graduating from Pullman High School in 1970. She attended University of Washington, University of Montana, and Washington State University in Anthropology with an emphasis in archaeology. After 19 years, she retired in 2013 from the WSU Department of Anthropology as the Director of the Museum of Anthropology. She has been active in the Palouse Community with the League of Women Voters, chairing a study to look at poverty in Whitman County, and helping to establish a free summer lunch program for children in Albion. Additionally, she served on the Whitman County Planning Commission for 10 years. As many of us are, Mary is drawn to the landscape, history, and the people of the Palouse. She embraces each season fully, getting ready for the blooms of buttercup in the spring to the brilliance of red osier dogwood peaking out from the snow in winter. In her free time, she enjoys growing a bountiful garden, keeping her hands busy with knitting and other needle work, challenging herself with jigsaw puzzles, cozying up with a good book, and spending her time seeing the world through children's eyes. As a Supervisor, she hopes to give back to the Palouse community and increase awareness and support for the programs that PCD offers.



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Visit our webpage!
www.palousecd.org

If you would like to switch to our e-newsletter, please add your email address to our contact list by subscribing on our webpage, calling the district, or sending an email to palousecd@palousecd.org!

Save the Date!
PCD Tree Sale March 30-31, 2018

Pre-ordered trees can be picked up
 March 30th 9am-4pm and March 31st 10am-1pm.
 If you are interested in pre-ordering trees, contact
 Drew Schuldt at drews@palousecd.org.

The Board of Supervisors meets on the
 2nd Tuesday of each month
(call or check our website for meeting time/location)

Board of Supervisors
 Larry Cochran, Chair (1990)
 Keith Kopf (1997)
 Chris Heitstuman (1998)
 Mark Whitmore (1998)
 Mary Collins (2017)

Associate Board Members
 Vacant

The Palouse Conservation District is located in the
 WSU Research and Technology Park
 Our office hours are Monday-Friday 8:30-4:30pm
 509.332.4101 · pcd@palousecd.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- January**
- 4 Soil Acidity on the Palouse Workshop**
Banyans on the Ridge, Pullman
 - 9-10 PNDSA Cropping Systems Conference**
Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick
 - 10 Three Rivers Grazing Conference**
LCSC Williams Conference Center, Lewiston
 - 16 PCD Board Meeting**
PCD Office, Pullman
 - 25 WSU-WOCS Oilseed Workshop**
First Baptist Church, Colfax
 - 27 Palouse-Clearwater Food Coalition Summit**
Gladish Community Center, Pullman
- February**
- 13 PCD Board Meeting**
PCD Office, Pullman
 - 23 Palouse Alternative Cropping Symposium**
Gladish Community Center View Room, Pullman
- March**
- 6 PCD Annual Listening Session**
Gladish Community Center View Room, Pullman
 - 30-31 PCD Tree Sale**
PCD Office, Pullman