



A quarterly newsletter produced and distributed by the Palouse Conservation District— bringing you news and updates on conservation efforts within SE Whitman County

Palouse News

Cost Share Opportunity for the North Fork Palouse River Watershed

We are in the final year of the North Fork Palouse River (NFPR) TMDL Implementation Project. The goal of this project is to reduce fecal coliform bacteria levels throughout the watershed. Since 2007, the Palouse Conservation District has planted tens of thousands of plants, built miles of fence and installed several off-stream water facilities, but we still have time and money for your project.

Funding is available for implementing **Best Management Practices (BMPs)** that improve water quality in the NFPR watershed. These are proven methods for reducing pollution in surface runoff from agricultural and ranching operations. 90% cost share is available for vegetated riparian buffers, riparian fencing, off-stream water facilities, corral/fence relocation and heavy use area protection.

Any landowner along the NFPR, Duffield, Cedar, Clear and Silver Creeks, and many smaller streams can take advantage of this opportunity. Your share of only 10% can be paid with in-kind contributions of your time or equipment. Some BMPs require engineered plans or permits that can take months to complete, so don't delay. All projects must be completed by March 2012.

The staff at the Palouse Conservation District can work with you to develop a comprehensive plan for managing your herd's potential fecal coliform bacteria or any other agricultural pollutant. Contact us today at (509) 332-4101 or visit our website, www.palousecd.org, for more information.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Looking for a way to get involved with your local watershed this summer? The Palouse Conservation District has the following volunteer opportunities available this summer:

- Storm drain marking
- Watering native trees and shrubs
- Weed control
- Restoration site maintenance

Please contact John at 509-332-4101 or johnpcd@palousecd.org to get involved.



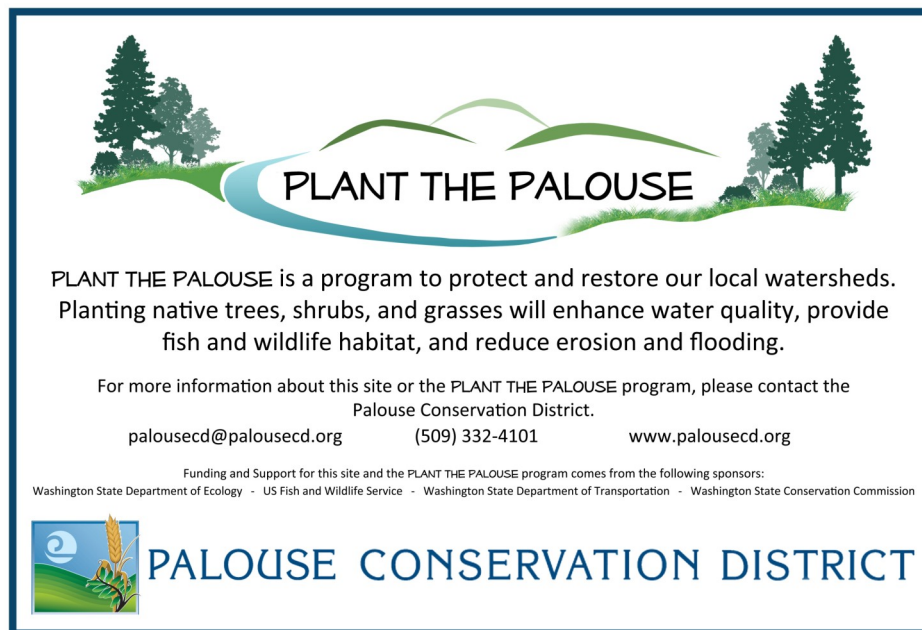
Did you know that you can receive the Palouse News electronically right to your e-mail Inbox?

Simply call or email our office and we will put you on our electronic mailing list. You can also go to our website: www.palousecd.org where you will find the Palouse News filed under "Newsletters".

If for any reason you want to be removed from our mailing list please let us know.

New Program: PLANT THE PALOUSE

The Palouse Conservation District is excited to announce PLANT THE PALOUSE, a new program to protect and restore our local watersheds. We will be highlighting project sites that are part of the Plant the Palouse program through placement of PLANT THE PALOUSE signs. The Palouse Conservation District works closely with and relies on landowners and volunteers to accomplish most of our projects, and many of the project sites that are enhanced as a part of the PLANT THE PALOUSE program have benefited from volunteer efforts. When you see PLANT THE PALOUSE signs, you can feel proud knowing that your fellow community members have volunteered their time and energy to making the Palouse a better place to live.



Sign designed by Carrie Kyser

Notice to Farmers and Ranchers

Earn added income from your farm by selling environmental credits

American Farmland Trust is excited to offer help to farmers and ranchers interested in selling credits for environmental services. There is increasing interest from potential buyers in paying farmers to adopt conservation practices on their working farms. These include actions like: conservation tillage; habitat restoration in unproductive areas; precision fertilizer application; conservation rangeland management; restoration of non-farmed riparian; irrigation efficiencies; energy generation through wind, solar, or digesters; cover crops & wildlife-friendly crop rotations; and wetland restoration in unproductive areas.

American Farmland Trust has begun to build a registry of farmers and ranchers who may want to participate. If you are the owner/manager of active farmland and may be interested, we'd like to work with you to identify how credits might be produced on your farm and how to bring them to market. Please let us know by contacting: Dennis Canty, American Farmland Trust, 1335 N. Northlake Way, Ste. 101, Seattle, WA 98103, dcanty@farmland.org. Or give us a call at: 206-860-4222. You may also find it useful to consult the recent American Farmland Trust publication: "Guide to Environmental Markets for Farmers and Ranchers" on line at: <http://www.farmland.org/documents/GuidetoEnvironmentalMarketsforFarmersandRanchers.pdf>.

USDA AFRI Grant to Research Processing and Marketing Strategies for Livestock Producers

Good news! The University of Idaho has received a USDA AFRI grant to research processing and marketing strategies for livestock producers in the Palouse and North Idaho. Our goal is to find ways to increase revenues for small and medium-sized livestock producers, and to provide you with information about the opportunities and risks associated with different business strategies. Based on your feedback and our research, we will also determine the viability of expanding local meat processing infrastructure.

USDA funded this project because many local producers are interested in different production, processing and marketing options. We have put together a team at the University of Idaho to look into a number of these strategies. How many local producers are interested in USDA certified local processing? How many head of livestock would potentially be processed? How many producers are interested in a cooperative marketing model? We'll be working towards answering these questions and others to build a foundation for determining the costs and benefits of various strategies.

To make this work, we need the participation of small livestock producers to provide the information, questions and interests that will guide the project.

The first step is to determine the potential supply for various local processing options. We've developed a brief survey for producers that shares basic information such as the types and number of animals you raise and sell each year, where you sell them, if you market them yourself, and through what avenues. We will use the data to explore the feasibility of local processing options and your interest in potential branding and marketing strategies.

We are also looking for a small number of producers to participate in a more detailed feasibility study of several potential strategies. These producers will share more detailed information about their operations so we can build more accurate estimates of the financial and environmental pros and cons of different processing and marketing strategies. Livestock producers who participate in this part of the project will receive a number of additional benefits, including a report with data and maps of your operation, estimates of benefits and risks associated with different processing and marketing strategies tailored to your operation, and information useful to various certification processes and marketing opportunities.

To take the survey, or join our email distribution list, please go to <http://uidaho.edu/livestockproject>.

For more information, or to become an in depth study site, please contact Darin Saul, University of Idaho Sustainability Director, at dsaul@uidaho.edu, 509-885-0124.

****PLEASE NOTE****

**Our office can only accept checks and/or exact cash
for ALL transactions
including Burn Permits**

Weed Spotlight: Common Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)

A native of Europe, common tansy was brought to the US as a garden herb for its medicinal uses. It has been used for treating colds, fevers, intestinal worms, and digestive problems. As an important plant in Colonial America, other cultural uses included cooking into tansy cakes and puddings, meat packing, and lining coffins. In the state of Washington common tansy is listed as a Class C noxious weed and is listed as invasive in 45 other states. It is mostly found in pastures, along waterways and wet areas, and along fence lines. It should be noted that tansy contains alkaloids that can be toxic to people and livestock when consumed in large quantities. Common tansy is unpalatable for grazing however making livestock poisonings rare. Tansy can take over pastures and non-crop areas forming a monoculture stand that greatly reduces forage value and desired plant species.

Description and ID: Common tansy is a perennial that spreads mainly by seed and also by rhizome forming dense clusters of stems. It has an alternate 2-10" fern like leaf and grows 1-6' in height ending in a cluster of yellow button like flowers. The flowers lack ray petals and appear from July through October. Once the seed has set the stems and flowers turn brown and often persist through winter. The plant is highly aromatic, especially when cut or crushed, smelling like camphor. The oils that produce the aroma have fungicidal and antibacterial properties and have been shown to repel insects.



Image source: USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Control: The best control is prevention. Check and clean animals and equipment that have been in infested areas to prevent the spread of seeds into new areas. Not allowing animals to overgraze will also help prevent tansy establishment and spread. A healthy pasture is the frontline in preventing weeds. As the spread is mainly by seed populations of tansy can be contained by timely mowing in the summer before the plant produces flowers. Hand pulling and digging is an option for smaller patches, but it is a good idea to wear gloves and protective clothing. Some people have reported an allergic reaction to handling the plant. Try to remove as much as much of the roots as possible to prevent regrowth. Spot spraying or broadcast application is effective with herbicides that are labeled for control of common tansy. This includes several selective broadleaf herbicides containing the active ingredient clopyralid, metsulfuron, or 2, 4-D. Higher rates of metsulfuron are reported to provide good control for up to three years but has plant back restrictions, will persist in the soil, and should not be used near water. Rates and application should be performed in accordance with the label. Glyphosate is also effective for control but it is non-selective and may kill desirable plants and grasses as well. Be sure to monitor treated areas for tansy that has resprouted from roots or the seed bank. There are no known biological control agents for tansy at this time.

Whitman County Regional Envirothon

The Whitman County Regional Envirothon competition was held at Klemgard County Park on Tuesday, April 26th, 2011. During the competition, students visited seven “in-the-field” test stations (forestry, wildlife, soils, water quality, current environmental issue, presentation prep, and team presentation), staffed by career professionals, where written, oral, and hands-on problem solving was required along with formulating a strategy for increasing public awareness. The Garfield-Palouse High School team that placed first at the Whitman County Regional Envirothon competition continued on to the Washington State



Left to right: Jennifer Boie (PCD) with Garfield-Palouse High School team members: advisor Buddy Carter, Ben Weagraff, JB Lange, Tiona Shea, Chad Redman, Blake Slocum, and advisor George Landle

Envirothon event where they took second place.



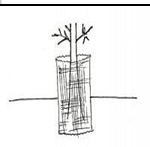
Rich Riehle, forestry station leader, reviews the forestry exam with students

Envirothon is North America's largest high school environmental education competition. Envirothon is a great opportunity for students to compete in a team setting, meet people who work in natural resource-related careers, and have a good time while learning more about environmental topics! The Regional Envirothon competition is open to teams of 9th-12th graders from Whitman County and surrounding areas. Teams consist of 3 to 5 students. Please contact Jennifer at jenniferpcd@palousecd.org if you are interested in fielding a team next year.

Find out more about Envirothon at:
www.envirothon.org.

Vole Control

A common question we get here at Palouse Conservation District is “what can we do to protect our trees and shrubs from voles?” Here are a few suggestions we have found that may work for you.



Place a cylinder of ¼ inch mesh hardware cloth around the trunk. Place the wire into the ground at least 4 to 6 inches taking care not to damage the roots. Leave two to three inches between the wire and the trunk. Make sure that the tree does not grow into the wire!



Encourage predators! Cats, coyotes, hawks and owls eat voles. Consider building an artificial perch which will be used by American Kestrels, owls and hawks. Simply bury a pole which is at least 15 foot high and attach either a platform on top or cross arms. All perches should be placed with the horizontal axis pointing east-west.



Keep mulch back. Avoid piling mulch directly against the trunks of trees and shrubs to reduce temptation for vole burrowing and munching. Ideally, leave a 3' diameter cleared space around trees.

Spring Planting

This spring has been a busy time for District staff. From mid March through the end of April the crew was in the field planting native trees and shrubs, **33,615** to be exact! These plants were spread across 15 different sites totaling 92 acres. Eighty two of those acres were installed as riparian buffers in the Palouse River watershed along over 10 miles of stream bank. As these plants grow they will help to improve water quality in the river by reducing sediment and erosion, filtering excess nutrients, and providing shade to the water to help mitigate summer temperatures. They will also provide habitat for wildlife and pollinators and aesthetically enhance our corner of the Palouse. District staff had help planting from the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) and numerous volunteers. Without their help we would probably still be out there.

The species planted included trees such as Ponderosa pine, aspen, and Douglas fir; and the shrubs included serviceberry, elderberry, red osier dogwood, roses, and various willow to name a few. These are just a few of the species available in our annual tree sale, so look for the order form in upcoming newsletters. If you have questions about planting native species or would like help installing a riparian buffer, wind break, or other planting please give us a call.



Washington Conservation Corps Crew members planting pines on the North Fork

The Palouse Conservation District Needs Your Support

The Palouse Conservation District is asking for your support. Every year we provide opportunities for local businesses and community members to support various programs that the Palouse Conservation District offers to area residents. These programs increase conservation education within our communities while enhancing the watersheds in which we live.

Your financial support goes directly to fund important conservation efforts on the Palouse including local stream cleanup events, riparian restoration projects, storm drain marking projects, service learning opportunities for students and community members, educational programs for K-12 students, regional Envirothon competitions, educational tours, a quarterly newsletter, and community conservation workshops.

In addition to accepting general donations, opportunities for advertisement in our quarterly newsletter are also available. When you advertise your business in our quarterly newsletter, you reach the very people who do business with you while sending a message that you support locally led conservation.

This is a wonderful opportunity for you to actively participate in addressing the conservation needs of our local community. With your support, we are able to better serve the local community by putting more conservation on the ground.

If you are interested in becoming a Palouse Conservation District sponsor or advertising in our newsletter, please contact Jennifer at jenniferpcd@palousecd.org.

Donations can be sent to **Palouse Conservation District, 1300 NE Henley Ct. #6, Pullman, WA 99163**

Thank You, Spring 2011 Volunteers!

Palouse Conservation District volunteers have been hard at work in and around the district. So far, **255** volunteers have donated **802** hours this year. They have worked inside and out, through rain, wind, mud and dust. We have worked with groups from Washington State University, University of Idaho and the Palouse Prairie Foundation, plus a few dedicated individuals.

Here's the tally so far:

- * **5075 plants planted in local restoration sites**
- * **Dozens of bluebird and bat houses constructed**
- * **Countless tree tubes installed, repaired or removed**
- * **Plants prepared and sorted for the surplus tree sale**
- * **Several tons of weed mat fabric removed along the Chipman Trail**
- * **300+ dogwood cuttings collected and prepared for use at planting sites**



Volunteer opportunities will be available throughout the summer. All of our restoration sites need watering, weed control and general site maintenance. Check the Volunteers page at www.palousecd.org for community events. WSU students can sign up for weekly watering events with the Center for Civic Engagement. To set up something for your group or yourself, please call the Palouse Conservation District office at 509-332-4101 or contact John Celley (johnpcd@palousecd.org) or Jennifer Boie (jenniferpcd@palousecd.org).

Storm Drain Marking Project

In February, during our regular monthly water quality monitoring, we noticed a glimmer on the water. Upon further inspection we discovered that someone had dumped large amounts of oil into a storm drain. So the Palouse Conservation District has decided to take action! This summer we will be partnering with Pullman Storm Water Services on a storm drain project in order to keep instances like this from happening.

Spray painting near a storm drain is not very sustainable, as the paint will wear down and, chances are, be illegible the following year. So instead, we will be installing "No Dumping" plaques that can take a lot of damage and survive the seasons. These plaques have a lifespan of 30 years or more. The project is slated to begin this July.





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Pullman, WA 99163

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North Fork Palouse River
Cost Share Available

CALL NOW TO SIGN UP!

Details Inside

**Palouse Conservation
District says “thank you”
to all of our fantastic
volunteers!**



The Board of Supervisors meets monthly on the
2nd Tuesday at 7:00 PM at the District Office.
There is no meeting in August.

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Keith Kopf
Mark Whitmore
Joan Folwell

Associate Board Members

Greg Jones
Dave Stout
Al Bruns

District Staff

Mary Rosen, District Manager
Pam Furchtenicht, Administrative Assistant
Randy Stevens, Natural Resource Coordinator
Jennifer Boie, Information & Education Coordinator
John Celley, Conservation Intern
Drew Schuldt, Restoration and Outreach Intern

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