Palouse Conservation District
Since 1940

Palouse News

First Year of RCPP a Success

More support for landowners and producers coming soon!

The Palouse Watershed Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is helping landowners and producers establish voluntary incentive-based conservation practices that enhance producer operations, and improve soil and water quality and wildlife habitat. The Partnership will provide a total of $11 million in funds over five years for technical assistance and on-the-ground projects, including more than 250 acres of riparian buffer installation, 45,000 acres of conservation tillage, and 520 acres of agricultural conservation easement through multiple funding sources in partnership with NRCS programs like EQIP, CSP, and ACEP, and Washington Conservation Commission cost-share programs administered through local conservation district offices. The first RCPP sign-up for EQIP funds in November 2015 resulted in an overwhelming response of 55 applications from local landowners, with the high ranking applicants currently moving towards contracts with NRCS. A second signup is open now, and the deadline for new applications is September 30, 2016, with a new incentive program for landowners looking to implement riparian buffers.

Highlights from the first year of the Palouse Watershed RCPP include cost share awards for around 7500 acres of direct seeding, installation of over 150 acres of riparian buffers (almost an area the size of 6000 football fields)! The Partners also controlled weeds and helped maintain of over 16 riparian buffers and wetlands. Contributions from partners resulted in 22 acres of conservation easement which will permanently protect an endangered Palouse Prairie remnant, surveys of Palouse Prairie remnants across the region, implementation of precision agriculture to reduce fertilizer and chemical applications, and developing the framework for water quality monitoring studies of Thorn and Kamiache Creeks.

This is a new way of providing conservation planning to help landowners find the best solutions and combination of funding sources to meet their individual conservation goals, while providing enhanced financial incentives to support the implementation of conservation practices and projects. Qualifying producers will also have the opportunity to apply for funding to implement conservation practices necessary to be certified through the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association's Farmed Smart Certification, a value-added marketing opportunity for farming operations that meet a set of conservation standards. In combination with this Partnership, the Farmed Smart sustainable agriculture certification program was launched this year, with 14 producers becoming Farmed Smart certified. Farmed Smart certified operations are utilizing direct seed and precision agriculture practices to protect water and air quality, and improve soil health and wildlife habitat. These farms encompass 48,000 acres and 20 miles of protected streams.

RCPP serves landowners and operators living in the Palouse Watershed, located in parts of Whitman, Adams, Lincoln, and Spokane Counties in Washington, and parts of Latah County in Idaho. Eligible applicants will work with RCPP staff over the fall and winter to develop conservation plans that can be used to apply for federal and partner-assisted financial assistance programs. Multiple funding sources are available. Ranking for NRCS RCPP EQIP funds will begin this fall. To apply for assistance or to learn more, visit your local Conservation District or NRCS office, the Palouse Conservation District at 509-332-4101, the Palouse Land Trust (*palouselandtrust.org),* or the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association (directseed.org).

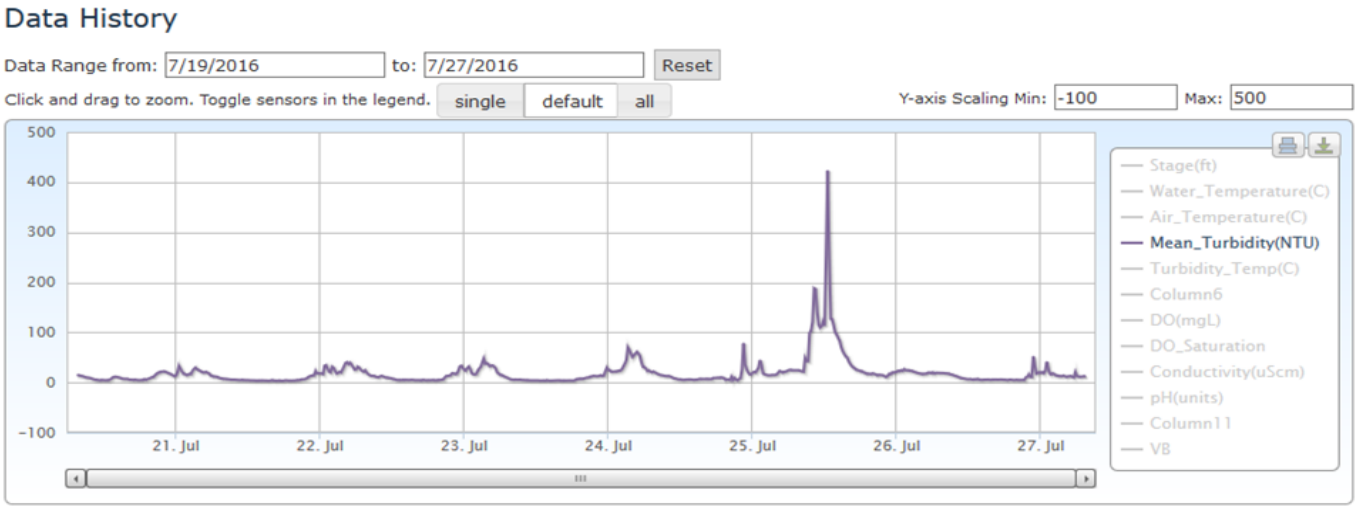
Monitoring Changes in Soil Health, Wildlife Habitat, and Water Quality in the Palouse River Watershed

The Palouse River Watershed Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is excited to announce the launch of a watershed-wide research and monitoring program. These research and monitoring efforts are focused on changes to water, soils and habitat associated with the 80,355 acres of conservation practices that are being implemented as part of the RCPP over the next three years. The overall goals of the program are to 1) quantify the continued improvements to soil health, wildlife habitat, and water quality on the working landscape of the Palouse through voluntary incentive based programs and 2) to try to link the improvements in the Palouse Watershed to salmon spawning and rearing habitat on the Palouse River below Palouse falls and in the Snake River.

Water quality monitoring station and the Watershed Health Team working in Thorn Creek Watershed in July.

The RCPP Research and Monitoring Subcommittee, which is comprised of members from Washington State University, University of Idaho, USDA-ARS, Department of Ecology's Effectiveness Monitoring Group, NRCS, local environmental consulting firms and all the conservation districts across the watershed, have been helping to design the study, gather existing data and identify landowners that are willing to participate in the monitoring program. Currently, two watersheds Kamiache and Thorn Creeks, near St. John Washington, have been instrumented with continuous water quality monitoring stations to examine changes in sediment and nutrient loading associated with conventional and no-till management. The stations provide researchers and local landowners with real time measurements of precipitation, streamflow, pH, temperature, electric conductivity, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity. The real time data can be found by visiting the following two web links: https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/eap/flows/station.asp?sta=34R050, https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/eap/flows/station.asp?sta=34S150. The RCPP research and monitoring program has also recently completed watershed health assessments in Kamiache and Thorn Creeks looking at macroinvertebrates, periphyton (alage), and instream and riparian habitat.

In addition to the water quality work the research and monitoring program is gearing up for a soil health sampling program this fall. If you are interested in participating in the soil sampling or water quality monitoring programs, want to attend a research and monitoring subcommittee meeting or just want more information on the monitoring efforts in the Palouse River Watershed please contact **Ryan Boylan** at the District office 509-332-4101 x112 or ryanb@palousecd.org.



Example of the real time turbidity data, from the water quality monitoring stations, available online for landowners and researchers.

Farmed Smart Certification Provides Regulatory Assurance to Producers

On July 13, 2016, the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) and the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association (PNDSA) finalized the agreement that provides regulatory assurance for producers who have met the criteria for Farmed Smart certification. This groundbreaking agreement recognizes the commitment of Farmed Smart producers to protect clean water, soil health and air quality. The occasion was marked with tours and a celebration at the farms of Derek Schafer and Rob Dewald near Ritzville, WA. Schafer and Dewald each spoke on their own unique direct seed cropping systems including equipment used, crop rotations, precision agriculture, and the use of variable rate fertilizer application. Both producers also told of the benefits and challenges of making the transition from conventionally tilled winter wheat–summer fallow systems to direct seeding and planting alternative crops.

The milestone event was attended by DOE Director Maia Bellon and PNDSA President Douglas Poole, who signed the Farmed Smart MOU between the DOE and PNDSA, and letters of regulatory compliance for the first group of Farmed Smart producers. Also in attendance were DOE staff members, producers and Farmed Smart supporters.

Farmed Smart is a program developed by the PNDSA and launched in early 2016 to certify producers who are using sustainable production practices on their farms while providing clear understanding of the environmental, social and economic benefits of direct seed cropping systems. Certified producers must meet criteria from six major initiatives: water quality, air quality, soil health, wildlife habitat, energy conservation and economic viability.

Attendees of the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) – Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association (PNDSA) Farmed Smart celebration included (left to right): Farmed Smart certified producers Becky and Mark Sheffels; PNDSA President Doug Poole; DOE Director Maia Bellon; Farmed Smart certified producer Rick Jones; and Farmed Smart certified producers Rob, Susan and Travis Dewald.

In addition to the letter of regulatory assurance from the Washington Department of Ecology, Farmed Smart producers are eligible to receive rebates from the AgroLiquid fertilizer company. Efforts to secure additional benefits for Farmed Smart producers are ongoing. Currently, 14 producers have become Farmed Smart certified, with several more expressing interest to become certified this fall after harvest. Three teams of Farmed Smart auditors from Palouse CD, Spokane CD and Foster Creek CD in Waterville have been trained to perform the Farmed Smart interviews, exams and farm visits. For more information on Farmed Smart certification, please contact **Tami Stubbs** (TamiS@palousecd.org; 509-332-4101 ext. 111) or the **PNDSA** (pndsa@directseed.org).

Coming Soon: Vets on the Farm Program!

Vets on the Farm was established by the Spokane Conservation District to provide veterans with “opportunities for education, partnership, and employment in conservation based agricultural industries”. Paralleling the Spokane Conservation District’s dedication to assist veterans, the Palouse Conservation District is establishing the Vets on the Farm program for the Palouse region. We are looking to employ, train, and mentor transitioning veterans into the natural resource field of work and/or farming. As part of the program, veterans will be required to attend and pass “Cultivating Success” which is taught at Washington State University and the University of Idaho. This course will cover many concepts which are part of farming process from planning to economics and will expose them to real world situations. For more information on Cultivating Success visit www.cultivatingsuccess.org. Once completing the course, veterans will have the option of participating in three different tracks though the Palouse Conservation District: small farm production, large farm management, and habitat/riparian implementation and restoration. Through this process, veterans will gain valuable knowledge and experience which will assist them in their return to civilian life.

We are in the process of recruiting veterans and coordinating projects for the upcoming year. For more information, please email **Jake Clements** (jakec@palousecd.org) or **Steven Woodley** (stevenw@palousecd.org) or call Palouse Conservation District.

What's all the buzz about bee's?

Why Should We Care About Honey Bees?

If you've ever felt hungry, you will inherently realize why we should care about pollinators, specifically honey bees. As far as pollinators go, honey bees offer some distinct benefits for crop pollination: they work in mass numbers (colonies of up to 50,000 bees); they can pollinate a wide variety of plants, and they can be managed by humans.

Lack of suitable foraging habitat is one of the biggest issues facing honey bees globally, and this is true in Washington State as well. In fact, the four main issues affecting honey bees are all applicable in Washington . They are; lack of forage/proper nutrition , parasites & pathogens, pesticide exposure and lack of genetic diversity. Just like people, bees flourish under ideal conditions and suffer from reduced hive health when they struggle to meet those conditions.

Planting bee friendly plants is a great way to help the honey bees. You will see a list of beneficial plants in an upcoming article in our series. Parasites and pathogens can be very destructive on the hive especially the parasitic Varroa mite. The Varroa mite has been the single most destructive issue for hives in the U.S. since the late 1980's. It's important to protect your hives with proper miticide to reduce the predation by Varroa mites. Pesticide exposure is another issue being studied for it's effects on bees. That will also be covered in an upcoming article. Similar to humans, bees need genetic diversity to have robust hives. The above issues have caused reduced genetic diversity and have a detrimental effect to overall hive health. So by addressing the above three issues we can help promote more genetic diversity in the hives.
Our public policy group from AgForestry Class 37 looks forward to exploring practical solutions to how we can all work together to help our pollinators.

So, if you're like me and you really enjoy fresh produce, you already know why we should all care about honey bees and work together towards a more honey bee friendly future!

cut along the dotted line

Palouse Conservation District 2017 TREE SALE
ORDER NOW! PRE ORDER DEADLINE is November 1st 2016
PICK UP TREES March 31st 9:00am to 4:30pm & April 1st 9:00am to 1:00 pm
*****PLEASE READ ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS ON THE BACK OF THIS ORDER FORM*****

You can also find order forms and species descriptions online at our website: http://www.palousecd.org/

NAME _____ DATE _____
ADDRESS _____ HOME PHONE _____
E-MAIL ADDRESS _____ CELL PHONE _____

Would you like to receive our quarterly newsletter? ___NO ___YES (___mail or ___electronic copy)

SPECIES	QUANTITY	$ AMOUNT
	10 TREES IN A BUNDLE @ $15.00 A BUNDLE	
AUSTRIAN PINE		
COLORADO BLUE SPRUCE		
DOUGLAS FIR		
GRAND FIR		
PONDEROSA PINE		
	Total=	
	10 TREES IN A BUNDLE @ $16.00 A BUNDLE	
WESTERN HEMLOCK		
WESTERN LARCH (Tamarack)		
WESTERN WHITE PINE		
WESTERN RED CEDAR		
	Total=	
	10 TREES IN A BUNDLE @ $19.00 A BUNDLE	
OREGON GRAPE, Tall		
QUAKING ASPEN		
MOCK ORANGE (Syringa)		
WATER BIRCH		
CASCARA		
	Total =	
	10 SHRUBS IN A BUNDLE @ 17.00 A BUNDLE	
BLACK HAWTHORN		
BLUE ELDERBERRY		
RED OSIER DOGWOOD		
SERVICEBERRY		
SNOWBERRY		
NOOTKA ROSE		
WOODS ROSE		
PACIFIC NINEBARK		
GOLDEN CURRANT		
CHOKECHERRY		
	Total =	
	BUNDLES OF 10--72" CUTTINGS@ $20.00 A BUNDLE	
COYOTE WILLOW		
COTTONWOOD		
DRUMMOND WILLOW		
MACKENZIE WILLOW		
PACIFIC WILLOW		
PEACHLEAF WILLOW		
RED OSIER DOGWOOD		
	Total =	
	SUB-TOTAL	
	Add 7.8% Sales Tax	
	BALANCE DUE	

PLEASE COMPLETE AND MAKE
CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
Palouse CD
1300 NE Henley Ct #6
Pullman, WA 99163

pamf@palousecd.org
OR CALL PCD OFFICE (509) 332-4101

Palouse Conservation District 2017 TREE SALE

ORDER NOW! PRE ORDER DEADLINE is November 1st, 2016

PICK UP TREES March 31st 9:00am to 4:30pm & April 1st 9:00am to 1:00 pm

Ordering Instructions

1. Include your personal information. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS (if you have one). If you do not have an email address, please include your phone # so we can contact you if needed.

2. All plants are bareroot seedlings unless otherwise noted.

3. You can also find order forms and species descriptions online at http://www.palousecd.org

4. Orders must be received by November 1, 2016. There is a limited number of plants so orders will be filled as they are received.

5. Order confirmation, payment confirmation, and pickup reminders will be sent out via email. If you don't have email, you will receive a hard copy confirmation in the mail.

6. Plants will be available for pick up only on:

Friday, March 31st, 2017 from 9:00am until 4:30pm
Saturday, April 1st, 2017 from 9:00am until 1:00pm

Plants must be picked up at the Palouse Conservation District Office located at:
1300 NE Henley Ct
Pullman, WA 99163

7. **Attention!** Any order not picked up at the District office will be donated to conservation projects. These live plants must be planted immediately.

****PLEASE NOTE****
Our office can only accept checks and/or exact cash for ALL transactions

Thank you! We hope that you enjoy your trees and shrubs!

PALOUSE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Weed in the Spotlight

Prickly Lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*) – aka China lettuce, compass plant
The Latin binomial nomenclature for this plant refers to the milky sap (lacta), which is a latex rubber compound; and the saw-like teeth of the leaf edges (serro). Research is currently being conducted to look at making it an alternative natural rubber source. Alternately, the common name of compass plant refers to this highly adaptable plants ability to orient upper leaves north-south, believed to help harness sunlight more affectively. Prickly lettuce is the closest wild relative of cultivated lettuce and can be used in salads, especially the younger leaves before they get bitter.

Description and ID: Prickly lettuce is an annual plant widely distributed globally and is often found in disturbed areas, along road cuts and ditches, natural areas, gardens, and agricultural fields alike. In late fall or early spring seeds germinate producing a basal rosette, that looks much like a dandelion, and begins setting a taproot. Lobbing of the leaves can be highly variable from almost smooth edges to the more common deeply toothed, saw-like edges. The mid-rib of the leaf is prominently white and the bottom is covered with short prickles or spines. Prickles may also be present on leaf edges or on the stem, particularly towards the base. Plants bolt spring and into the summer, responding to environmental conditions. The stems can reach heights of 6-7'. Multiple branches along the stem produce small yellow ray flowers that generally self-pollinate. Mature plants are capable of producing over 180,000 wind born seeds which persist in the soil-seed bank for up to three years.

Control: As always prevention is the best method to prevent the establishment of weeds along with good management practices. Weeds like prickly lettuce often produce large populations in areas that are not regularly used for crop production or other activities, creating a biological weed reserve. Preventing over grazing and minimizing soil disturbance, along with establishing a healthy stand of desired vegetation will keep many weeds at bay. Because prickly lettuce is an annual preventing seed production is important to slowing it spread. Young plants can be tilled, hoed, hand-pulled, grazed, or mowed. Mowed or grazed plants will often put on regrowth and attempt to bolt and flower again. This is often at a reduced rate and if the timing of the trimming corresponds with the right environmental conditions, hot and dry, it can be as effective at killing the plants as herbicide applications. Many herbicide options are available for control of prickly lettuce including selective broadleaf chemistry and more general herbicides like glyphosate. It should be noted that prickly lettuce has been documented to have become resistant to several herbicides commonly used in the Northwest. This includes several different products in a group of herbicides known as the sulfonylureas that inhibit enzyme production in plants. Varieties of prickly lettuce have also been found resistant to 2,4-D and may be showing signs of resistance to glyphosate. Some of these resistances are thought to have developed in as little as 5 years of repeated application of the same product. It is important to switch the type (mode of action) of herbicides that are used in the same areas every few years to help prevent new herbicide resistant populations from forming.

Thank you Summer Interns and AmeriCorps Members!

The PCD summer interns and AmeriCorps members have been hard at work assisting with outreach, research, and on-the-ground restoration efforts within the Palouse! Bryana Cope, 2015-2016 AmeriCorps member, began her service after joining the PCD family through two consecutive internships in the spring/summer of 2015. Her 1,700 hour AmeriCorps term has involved wetland restoration/maintenance on over 10 project sites within the Palouse watershed in addition to education and outreach efforts with various academic institutions. Bryana has led 12 large volunteer events and generated over 1,600 hours of volunteer time. Lacy Ditto, 2016 Summer AmeriCorps member, has contributed 400 hours to "saving the world just a little bit every day" during her summer break from attendance at Washington State University (WSU). She and Bryana have been on the forefront of on-the-ground restoration and maintenance efforts including: brushcutting, planting native plants, weed fabric installation, plant hydration, and more! Our two summer interns, Connor Osterlund and Kailee Theisen, joined the PCD in May as participants of a new paid internship program available with the PCD. While they are both WSU CAHNRS students, each of them have had a different internship experience. Connor has worked extensively on water quality monitoring along the Palouse River, paying special attention to the presence of macroinvertebrates and the implicated effects of no till and conventional farming upon aquatic life. Using the Hilsenhoff Biotic Index (HBI), Connor has dedicated 240 hours to assisting with quantifying stream richness of macroinvertebrates and associated tolerance to pollution. Kailee has taken advantage of a very well-rounded 480 hour-Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) internship by working with each of the PCD staff members to gain experience related to landowner involvement, contract development, project planning/evaluation, implementation, and follow-up procedures. She has gained exposure to a variety of field techniques and office procedures as she familiarized herself with various district programs and partnerships. Your hard work has been greatly appreciated!

Palouse Conservation District
1300 NE Henley Ct.
Pullman, WA 99163

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Don't forget about the
Annual District Tree Sale!
(See inside for more details)

Friday, March 31st 9:00-4:30
Saturday, April 1st 9:00-1:00

Be sure to visit our webpage!

Though our webpage has undergone many changes, our address remains the same! Take a peek at

www.palousecd.org.

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

Cost-Share Available!

Palouse Conservation District has cost-share available for projects that improve soil health, reduce erosion, improve grazing lands, establish or enhance native vegetation, restore riparian areas, improve wildlife habitat...

Protect valuable natural resources and improve your land and/or operation

Projects must meet NRCS standards and specs

Call today to start a cost-share application (509)332-4101

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

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