



South Douglas News

South Douglas Conservation District

VOLUME 2—ISSUE 1
SPRING 2018

Assisting cooperators to adopt, implement and promote conservation practices which encourage good land stewardship and the protection of natural resources.

WHY SHOULD YOU READ THIS NEWSLETTER?

You should read this newsletter because it is Tree and Shrub Sale Time!

This will be the 29th year of the sale. We have native and adapted plants suited for our area, good for wildlife, habitat, windbreaks and just for fun. Check out the catalog at our website, or call for a paper catalog. Pre ordering is required no later than March 26, but we also have plants available for impulse buying on pickup day, April 7, at the NCW Fairgrounds in Waterville.

Which tree should I plant?

Our catalog has descriptions for all the plants we have. But knowing which tree to plant where is important. Small trees have skyrocketed in popularity. Trees shorter than 25 feet will not interfere with utility lines and reduce the need to prune. Small trees can fit into smaller places, requiring less space above and below the ground. Remember that small trees are no less prone to storm damage than large trees and the damage can be more dramatic on a smaller tree when they do break. Dogwoods, crabapples and cherries can produce a showy display of flowers in the spring that larger trees cannot match. And the small trees are susceptible to a host of pests that can threaten local fruit crops if not controlled. Small trees planted along a sidewalk can block building signage that may be crucial for customers.

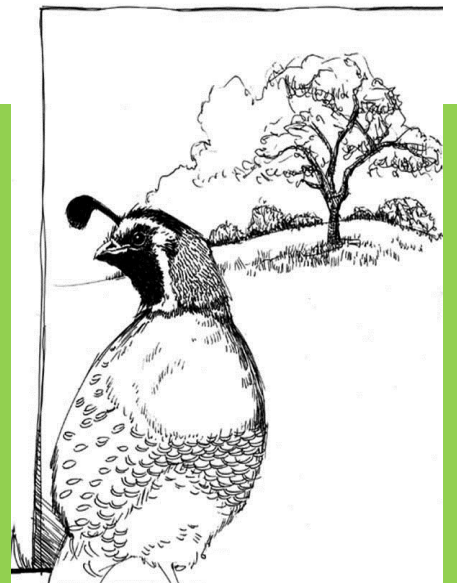
A small tree provides less shade, conserves less energy and buffers fewer winds. The smaller trees will capture less stormwater and capture less carbon than large trees. Shorter life spans equals shorter benefits.

Planting the right tree in the right place should always include examining the pros and cons.

(For more information see the Department of Natural Resources Tree Link website)

POSTAL CUSTOMER
LOCAL

2018
Tree and
Shrub Sale



Non-Profit Org.
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT # 40
Wenatchee, WA
ECRWSS

PROGRAMS AVAILABLE FOR YOU

NEED A DAM?

SDCD began its cost share program in 2002. Since then we have funded almost a quarter million dollars directly to cooperators for their projects. This does not include support such as staff or engineering time. While most cost share dollars are available through the Washington Conservation Commission Implementation Grant all State Conservation Districts receive, reserves and other funding opportunities are available to complete projects.



Who is eligible?

Landowners within the district boundaries are eligible to apply for cost share. These are for projects not yet started. Most of our projects are \$10,000 or smaller. This depends on the funding available. We can fund 50 – 75% of a project, again depending on funding.

What projects are eligible?

Projects are based on Best Management Practices (BMP), as specified by Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Prior projects:

- Forest Stand Improvements – Thinning, clearing
- Wildlife Pond
- Compost Facility
- Irrigation Improvements
- Livestock water development
- Soil Testing and Tissue Sampling
- Dam and Terraces in dryland ag fields
- Windbreaks
- Pasture fencing
- Other projects may also be eligible

How do I apply?

Call or email the office for more information.

VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE

The Douglas County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) work group has been working hard over the past few months. The work group has completed a draft of the county-wide VSP work plan. In January, Aaron Rosenblum, Douglas County VSP coordinator, went to Olympia to present the draft of the work plan to the state technical panel during an informal review. The technical panel has provided feedback to the work group which is now being incorporated into the work plan.



The end is now in sight for completing the work plan. Once final feedback and comments are incorporated into the work plan, and the work group all agrees, the plan will be submitted to the state technical panel for its formal review. The review process typically takes 2-3 months. Once the work plan is approved by the technical panel, VSP will move into the implementation phase. More information and details about VSP implementation will be coming soon! For more information and to see a work group meeting schedule, please contact Aaron Rosenblum or visit the Douglas County VSP webpage at <http://www.fostercreekcd.org/programs/voluntary-stewardship-program/>.

FALL CHIPPING EVENT

Last November 15 landowners from Waterville to Rock Island took advantage of the free chipping provided through a grant from the Bureau of Land Management to have piles of branches and brush removed. While our previous chipping event was up on Badger Mountain, this one concentrated on urban residences. The chipping reduces fire hazards both for the landowner and neighbors. Trees and limbs up to ten inches in diameter as well as trimmings and brush are allowed. The resulting chips can be scattered or used for mulch.



SPRING CHIPPING DAY

We are planning a FREE chipping day. We can do 5-7 landowners a day, depending on the size of the piles. This project will help promote community wildfire protection and improve forest health.

Let us know if you are interested.

ORCHARD CHIPPING PROGRAM

Orchardists interested in chipping their tree prunings and slash piles are encouraged to apply for the Air Quality Initiative of the Environmental Quality Incentives program (EQIP), sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service. (NRCS) Designed to improve air quality, this program is open to orchardists enrolled in the EQIP program. You may earn payments to chip tree limbs or entire blocks of trees that have been cut and piled and would otherwise be burned. This would greatly reduce the particulate matter that burning creates in both urban and rural areas.

You must be signed up by March 16, 2018 for this round of funding. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has a list of requirements that must be met before funding is available. Contact the Waterville office, (509) 745- 8561 or Wenatchee (509) 662-1141 for more information.

MAKING THE CASE FOR RANGELAND

Molly Linville, KV Ranch, Palisades

June 26th 2017 a strange little summer squall moved through southern Douglas County and five dry lightning strikes ignited five separate fires that would eventually merge into one. Our ranch, KV Ranch, in Palisades is 6,000 acres made up mostly of dry shrub-steppe range land. We have a cow/calf operation and raise hay. The KV has an interesting ownership pattern as it land-locks two sections of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) ground and is bordered by Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land. One lightning strike hit the land-locked section of BLM and one struck the DNR ground adjacent to the ranch. I'm not going to dwell too much on what happened next, but the abbreviated version is, BLM showed up quickly, sent a hand crew out and put the fire on BLM land out. DNR showed up and watched the fire burn off DNR ground onto the ranch where the fuels were heavier, the winds picked up and the fire took off, ultimately burning most of the ranch in a matter of hours. An additional 36,000 acres, most of which were in Grant County also burned. I was shocked; I couldn't understand what had happened, two similar sets of fire resources on the ground with two completely different outcomes. I set out to get answers and knocked on the door of everyone in the fire services that I could think of. My first interaction with DNR fire staff was to be told, and I'm paraphrasing a little here, "oh yeah, we often don't put fires out on rangeland because it's not valuable enough to worry about". I was floored, how could this person be telling me that it's not valuable when I just lost my entire livelihood because it burned? Beef sales contribute almost a billion dollars annually to Washington State's economy, many of those animals start their lives on range land, how is that not valuable?

I continued seeking answers and a clear pattern emerged, most people do not understand the importance and value of range land. It's not their fault, it's not that they don't care; it's that they simply don't understand all of the contributions of range land to wildlife species, to ranchers, to hunters and to the State's economy. Chief Kelly O'Brien (Chelan Co #3) helped me put a presentation together on the importance of range land to the State of Washington. He has organized it so that I have been able to go around the State and present it to fire chiefs, fire fighters, state mobilization folks and even FEMA. Chief O'Brien is creating a curriculum around our presentation about the importance of range land that will be given at every fire refresher class in Washington. The response has been the same almost every place I have given it, "I just didn't know". This brings me around to my main point, we as ranchers, private land owners, hunters, conservationists and wildlife enthusiasts need to advocate for fire suppression on range land. I know that may sound strange, but it is the truth. Why was the BLM's response so different to our fire than the DNR's? Because BLM is mandated to protect sage grouse and DNR is mandated to sell trees. DNR's official stance is they own 600,000 acres in Washington State they are not mandated to fight fire on because there are no trees on those acres. This creates a nightmare for our county fire chiefs. Our county fire resources are mostly volunteer and are stretched so thin they cannot fight fire on State land too, but they do, because range fires move extremely fast and everyone knows they are going to end up in someone's fire district, or worse, in the urban interface.



Unless DNR policy changes, we are going to continue to experience mega fires on our range lands. I was at a fire summit two weeks ago in Olympia put on by the DNR, and I can tell you, they don't hear our rural voices! If you are so compelled, please write your Commissioner of Public Lands, Hilary Franz, and let her know that DNR's policy on range lands needs to change. We absolutely have to start advocating for ourselves; DNR should not have a policy that lets them avoid accountability on lands they own. Currently there is no one to tell them it isn't okay. Let's tell them it's not okay.

YOUTH LOANS

The USDA-Farm Service Agency makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien.
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age.
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements.
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources.
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above.
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

Please contact the local FSA Office at (509) 662-1141 for help in preparing and processing the application forms.

VETS ON THE FARM

The Vets on the Farm program works to pair farmers who need help with veterans who are looking for work. The average age of the American farmer at 58, and has been steadily increasing over the last 30 years. The number of farms has decreased from 2.48 million in 2008 to 2.11 million in 2012. By bringing veterans into agriculture, perhaps this trend can be reversed. Vets on the Farm is designed for veterans transitioning back into civilian life. This program can provide veterans in our community an opportunity to combine their military service and skills with an education in conservation that can lead to farming or agriculture based employment.

Local farms and other Ag based industries act as mentors and the veterans are interns learning on the job. Areas of interest include but are not limited to small scale production agriculture, livestock management, equipment maintenance and custom farm work. In Douglas County opportunities exist in orchard work, wheat farming, cattle ranching, machine maintenance and agriculture based businesses.

As with any program, getting the word out can be difficult at the beginning. We had one introduction meeting a year ago in Waterville. We hope to have Vicki Carter, Spokane Conservation District, come this spring for another meeting in East Wenatchee to spread the word South Douglas Conservation District is starting a new program in Douglas County. Spokane CD has a strong growing program. All Conservation Districts in Washington State hope to develop the program.

Free Firewise Assessments

In cooperation with Cascadia Conservation District we can come to your Property and evaluate your fire risks and strengths. The 15-30 minute review can alert you to simple things you can do to reduce fire hazards. Call us and we can schedule an appointment.

OUR NEWEST SUPERVISOR

Lindsey Morrison is our newest supervisor. Coming aboard this fall, Lindsey will be a valuable contact for the area orchardists. She has a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Central Washington University and is a current graduate of the Washington State Agforestry Leadership program. Prior employment at both Okanogan and Foster Creek Conservation Districts, Lindsey knows how Conservation Districts work to promote natural resource conservation in our county. Living in East Wenatchee, currently she works for Stemilt Growers as an outside field consultant. Welcome Lindsey!

Idea for a short article? Or is it up to me?



South Douglas Conservation District

206 N Chelan, Waterville, WA 98858
(509) 745-9160 •

www.southdouglascd.org

Staff Member

Carol Cowling, *Coordinator*

southdouglascd@conserveva.net

The Conservation Quarterly is published on a quarterly basis by South Douglas Conservation District. This newsletter is funded in part by grants from the Washington State Conservation Commission, and the Bureau of Land Management, and other public and private granting entities.

Board of Supervisors

Jeff Rock, *Chair*

Eileen Bone, *Vice Chair*

Joe Sprauer, *Auditor*

Mike Lesky, *Member*

Lindsey Morrison, *Member*

Ken Borders, *Associate*

Neil Irmer, *Associate*

Glenn Ludeman, *Associate*



Please Remember to Recycle