



# South Douglas News

South Douglas Conservation District

SPRING 2026

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

## **CHIPPING DAYS ARE COMING UP !!**

We are planning our spring chipping event. Scheduled dates are early June dependent on number and location of sites. This is paid for by our Washington Conservation Commission grant. We have been chipping Spring and Fall for over 10 years, hiring a licensed contractor to do the work. Landowners are responsible for getting the piles ready for the chipping crew. And the chips are yours to be used for mulch, or paths. No locusts or thorny bushes, please. Check our website for more details. This service is for cooperators within the South Douglas Conservation District boundaries. We have chipped from Rock Island to Farmer.

This program was started to decrease the amount of fuels near homes. Several landowners have used this service several times, working on getting their property more fire resistant while still providing shade and wildlife habitat. Deadline for sign up is May 25. Call the office to get your name on the list.

Our fuels reduction program is for larger sites. See page 4.



### **Congratulations Bridgeport**

The Bridgeport Brosquitos won the NCW Envirothon on April 23. A Natural Resource Problem Solving competition, high schools students compete against other schools in their region. Waterville was a close second. State competition is in May 20-21 at Conconully State Park. Good luck!

### **Cost Share Dollars**

South Douglas CD has cost share dollars for many conservation practices. New funding will be available starting July 1. If you have a project you think may qualify, give the office a call or contact one of the supervisors listed on page 4.

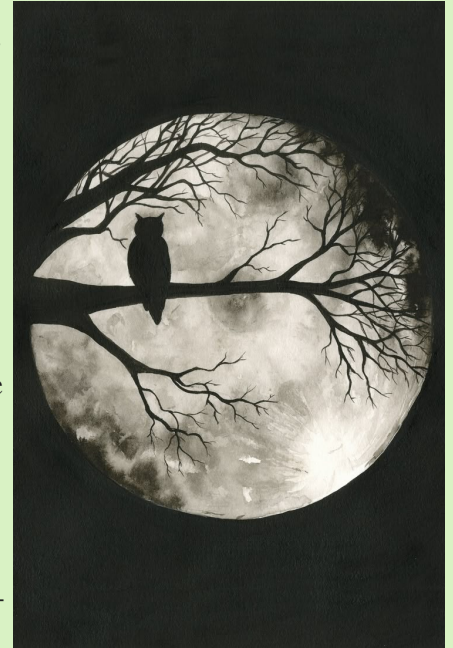


POSTAL CUSTOMER  
LOCAL

## Turn Your Night Lights Out!

Did you know that 80% of North American birds migrate at night? They rely on the moon and stars to navigate. But with more people comes more outside night lights, which can confuse the birds. Most people can no longer step outside on a clear night and see a sky full of stars. And most outside lights are pointed outward and upward. The lighting can attract birds from as far as five miles away, and may cause the birds to avoid habitats essential for their survival—altering the local ecosystem dynamics. But you can do something to lessen the bright lights of the night:

- ◆ **Turn it off:** Turning off lights at night or minimize unnecessary lighting. This will help restore natural darkness, creating a healthy environment for both people and birds. Birds are at greater risk during spring and fall migration. Consider temporarily turning off lights between April-May and August-October. The long summer nights are also more enjoyable without artificial lights blazing.
- ◆ **Timing:** Limit your lighting to necessary times only. Extinguish or dim lights when not needed. Consider timers so you can regulate the timing of the lights.
- ◆ **Direction:** Turn off lights that point up to the sky or lights that illuminate surrounding landscape. Keep lighting low to the ground if possible, only illuminating necessary structures. And think of what your neighbors see. They don't want your lights shining in their yard.
- ◆ **Prevent light spill from windows:** Close blinds, shades or curtains at night and remember to turn off the lights when you leave the room—just like your mom told you.
- ◆ **Color and Brightness:** Use amber, orange, red or warmer hued LED lights. Avoid blue, white or cooler LEDs, which are the least favorite for birds and wildlife and people. Keep the lights as low as possible, or best, turn them off completely.
- ◆ **Nocturnal animals** come out in the darkness to forage for food and move around. Predators can take advantage of the light and prey on these nocturnal creatures, not giving them a chance. Insects, like bees and beetles, are also confused by constant light.
- ◆ **Do you really need the lights on at night?** Many people think that lights on means security. But the lights can illuminate your possessions for those looking for a quick steal. Consider motion detectors instead that only turn on when someone enters your property.



## May is Fire Awareness Month

Due to climate change and other factors, wildfires are increasing in intensity and size, resulting in damaging economic, environment and community health impacts. Between 2016 and 2020, the federal government has spent an average of \$2.5 Billion per year on fire suppression on federal land alone. Private lands are not included. That is for putting the fires out only—indirect costs like rehabilitation, loss of business and property values, or loss of human lives are not factored in. After the wildfire is out, the hot, dry landscape changes the native ecosystem and can prevent plants and trees from regrowing. Invasive weeds move in. Soot and ash from the wildfires fall into lakes and streams, polluting water sources for humans and wildlife. Respiratory problems are linked to wildfire smoke. People who work outside and are not able to afford AC/heat systems with air filters are also at risk. We all know prevention is the key to preventing wildfires. What can we do?

- ◆ **Keep Fires Safe:** Remove debris from your campfire, bonfire or yard waste site. Be sure it is completely doused with water when you are finished and never leave the fire unattended. Don't burn on a windy day. Don't burn things highly combustible, like something soaked in oil or gasoline.
- ◆ **Handle Fireworks with Care:** Most counties are limiting where you can use fireworks. But if you do set them off, have a bucket of water or a hose handy. Consider wetting the ground around your site before setting them off, and douse with water when they are burnt out. Better yet, leave the fireworks to the experts who put on the big shows. The neighborhood dogs will also thank you.
- ◆ **Use Equipment Safely:** Avoid parking a hot car or other machinery on dry grass and keep oil and gas from spilling on the grass. If you use equipment in a wooded area, they must have spark arrestors to prevent the emission of a spark that could start a fire.
- ◆ **Make an Emergency Plan:** Know your evacuation route. Account for all household members and pets. Make sure everyone knows what to do. Gather materials like medications, a first aid kit, water and portable chargers in case of evacuation. N95 masks are helpful to have on hand to prevent inhaling smoke. Keep the kit in your car for a quick getaway.
- ◆ **Protect Your Home Against Wildfires:** Keep flammable debris like dead leaves and wood piles at least 30 feet from your house. If you are building or remodeling, use fire-resistant materials.

## Annual Tree and Shrub Sale A Success

April 4 marked the 37th year of the annual plant sale. Just imagine how big that tree would be if you had bought it at the first sale. We plant for ourselves, but also plant for future generations. The tree you plant today may not provide much shade in your lifetime, but your kids and grandkids will thank you for it.



Plants are used for windbreaks, wildlife habitat, landscaping and more. The photo on the right is a community garden with a new native border along the fence to encourage pollinators and conservation education.

Of course not all the plants we sell are trees. We also sell shrubs and the wildflowers are very popular. As people become more aware of the importance of pollinators, the flowers and bushes that attract those insects are growing in popularity. We purchase our plants from established nurseries.

Thank you to the Douglas County Fire District #1 for the use of the fire hall.

Our sale is the first Saturday in April each year.



## Soil Testing Cost Share Available

Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture issued its Farm Income and Wealth Statistics. Referring to the 2024 USDA data, Washington now ranks 50th in the nation in net farm revenue. The data states WA agriculture posted a negative \$396 million in farm net income. This reflects a collapse of more than \$1.3 billion from 2023 to 2024.

Higher labor costs, new restrictions, soaring fertilizer costs, processing infrastructure closures and many other factors are making it harder to continue farming. Loss of markets, jobs, and weakened local economies impact all of us. The answers seem hidden. Our farmers continue to persevere. Thank you to all agriculture workers.

One small thing South Douglas CD has been doing is providing cost share for soil testing and tissue sampling. What is a soil test?

- ◆ **Accurate Nutrient Management.** Soil testing can identify nutrient deficiencies and excesses, allowing farmers to apply fertilizer more efficiently. This not only enhances crop growth, but also reduces waste and environmental impact.
- ◆ **Improved Crop Selection.** Knowing the specific characteristics of the soil can help select crops best suited for their field.
- ◆ **Disease and Pest Management.** Soil tests can reveal conditions that may predispose crops to diseases or pests. Early detection allows for proactive measures.
- ◆ **Economic Savings.** By only applying the necessary inputs, farmers can save on costs related to fertilizers and amendments.

We will reimburse a farmer 50% of the soil test or tissue sampling up to \$250. Contact the office for more information.

### KESTERL BOXES WORK!

This box is south of Douglas and five eggs are ready for incubation. This site has been used for five years, each year successfully fledging four to five kestrels.

Formerly known as Sparrow Hawk, these small falcons are great for mice and small rodent control. The Wenatchee Audubon Society sponsors this program and this year we got a camera for an inside view. In 26 days we should see our first chick.



## Fuels Reduction Projects on Badger Mountain

Five years ago South Douglas CD began the fuels reduction program on Badger Mountain. We have cost shared projects, either with WA Department of Natural Resources or the property owner. 620 acres. It was a challenge to get property owners to sign up for the program. Fear of clear cutting or not having control of the trees to be cut prevented much from being done. But it took off as people learned what was involved and saw what was accomplished by their neighbors. They wanted in, too. Thank you to Washington State DNR for allowing us to partner with you to get this accomplished, usually at no cost to the landowner. We have a waiting list for more to be done once DNR funds are released.

Fuels reduction lessens the threat of fire. Eliminating low growing branches, clearing overgrown shrubs and eliminating some of the trees is vital to preventing devastating fires. Badger Mountain has the only major forest in Douglas County—there is another forested area in north Douglas County, mostly owned by the State of Washington. As more people move to Badger Mountain, the fire risk increases because of the human activity. Most residents are aware of fire prevention, but if a fire does start, the destruction will not be as great with treated acres.

If you or a friend has property on Badger and would like to be in the program, contact the office to get on the list. DNR staff will come out and assess your property and give you an estimate of how much and what will be done. The program will start up again in the fall. Summer heat and the pine beetle population prevents much to be done during the summer.



Before



After

### South Douglas Conservation District

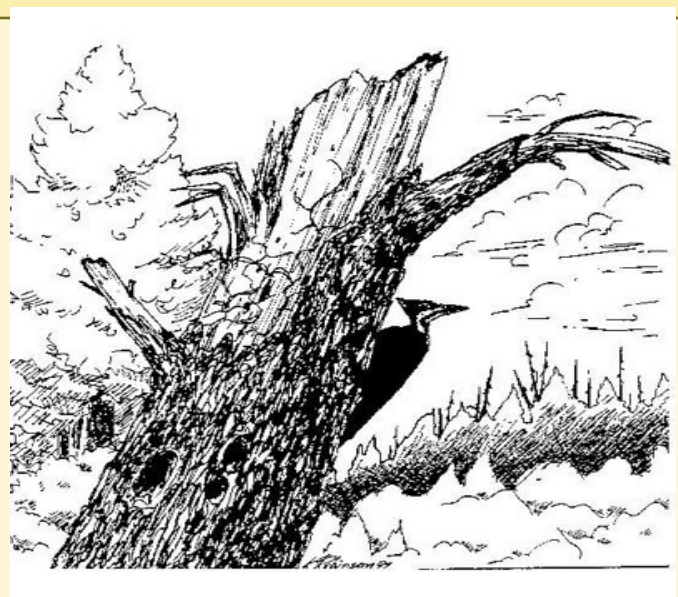
P.O. Box 246, 206 N Chelan  
Waterville, WA 98858  
(509) 745-9160 •  
[www.southdouglascd.org](http://www.southdouglascd.org)

Staff Member  
Carol Cowling, Coordinator  
[carolc@southdouglascd.org](mailto:carolc@southdouglascd.org)

**Board of Supervisors**  
Carolyn Kelly, *Chair*  
Lindsey Morrison, *Vice Chair*  
Justin Grillo, *Auditor*  
Mike Lesky, *Member*  
Joe Sprauer, *Member*



Please recycle.



Not the prettiest view, but trees can actually provide more habitats for wildlife dead than when they are alive. Standing dead and dying trees, called “snags” or “wildlife trees,” are important for wildlife in both natural and landscaped settings. 39 birds, 23 mammals and numerous insects in Eastern Washington use these trees for food and shelter.