



South Douglas News

South Douglas Conservation District

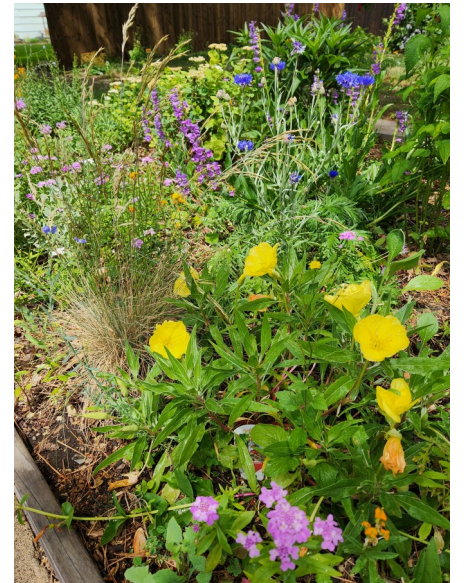
Summer 2023

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

TREE AND SHRUB SALE RECAP

Our 34th annual Tree and Shrub sale was the biggest sale ever! More customers, more plants and impulse buys pushed us over the top. People are realizing that staying at home instead of travelling can be rewarding. Yard and garden improvements, using native and adapted plants, have many advantages. Providing shade for summer BBQs, screening for privacy, pollinator and wildlife enhancement and other purposes all improve your yard and surrounding areas. The 2023 catalog is on our website so you can see what we normally offer. Watch for 2024 catalog early March.

Next year the sale will be at the Douglas County Fire District #1 Station in Waterville. It will be a challenge to get the plants and cars organized, but the Fire District is welcoming us and will also be able to reach out to residents about fire protection and prevention. Sale is always the first Saturday in April— April 6, 2024. See you there.



Spring Chipping Day was May 18 and 19. We started in Farmer, up onto Badger Mountain and down into East Wenatchee. This program is designed to promote fuels reduction to lessen fire danger in both rural and urban areas. We have offered this service for seven years, paid for by State grants. If you live within the South Douglas Conservation District boundaries, watch this newsletter for the next event, which will be in November 2023.



Bushman Landscaping does a great job chipping. This is out by Farmer.

POSTAL CUSTOMER
LOCAL



Swallows enjoying their bluebird house

DOUGLAS COUNTY WATER CONSERVANCY BOARD

The Douglas County Water Conservancy Board was established in 2000. Conservancy Boards across the state may provide a faster option for processing applications for change or transfer of water rights. Douglas County's board usually can process the application within 6 to 9 months. Some applications at Washington State Department of Ecology have been in the queue for years. The three member board of commissioners are appointed by the County Commissioners and serve six year terms. Applications can involve change in use of water, place of use or point of withdrawal.

Currently Martin Hernandez (Mansfield), and Courtney Hill (East Wenatchee), are on the board. Lee Hemmer had been on the board from the beginning but stepped down in January 2023. His knowledge and experience will be missed.

The WCB is currently seeking a new commissioner. Training by the Department of Ecology will take place this fall. This position is voluntary, unpaid. Travel and training will be reimbursed. Currently, the Board meets second Monday of the month at Waterville City Hall.

The application for the position is available on the Douglas County website. Search for "Volunteer" and the pdf application will be available. Call Carol Cowling, 509-745-9160, if you have further questions.

Fuels Reduction on Badger Mountain

We have been partnering with DNR on several parcels of land on Badger Mountain to thin stands of trees and reduce the amount of undergrowth that can encourage fire to run once it is present. Ten landowners have had projects completed. If you have acreage you want evaluated, please give the office a call. These are cost share projects and some have been 100% funded with no cost to the land owner. This is based on funding available.



"I was pleased with the fuels reduction done on my property. I can enjoy the forest without the constant worry of fire. My neighbors have also signed up for the program." DN



During these months of celebration, balloons are often released outside. Unfortunately, these balloons do not go to heaven, instead they land in fields or waterways or forests for curious animals to find. Although the first balloons were made of animal intestines and fully biodegradable, balloons now are made of plastic or latex or foil and never really disappear. The ribbons can wrap around birds and mammals, leading to their deaths. If you do use balloons, secure them so you can dispose of them later. Foil balloons can be deflated and used again.

What can you do instead? Give everyone their own small bottle of bubble water and wand so they can disperse bubbles or light a candle (which have their own dangers).

Better yet, plant a tree or flowers to remember a loved one or an event.



Solar Leasing: A Guidebook for Agricultural Landowners

The American Farmland Trust has available this guidebook for those interested in the pros and cons of solar farms on agricultural lands. This unbiased publication discusses all aspects of solar power. Benefits vs the actual cost of losing fairground and wildlife habitat and natural shrub steppe landscape is discussed. While solar leases can be a new source of income for agricultural landowners, they can also carry significant risks and last upwards of 30 years. Go to farmland.org to read or download your copy.

Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.
- Aldo Leopold

Pollinators at Home

June is National Pollinator month. Twenty-eight percent of North American bumble bees and 19 percent of butterflies in the United State are at risk of extinction. Why is that? Three major factors are reduced habitat, use of pesticides and climate change. While climate change will take years to turn around, you can help with habitat and garden design.

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has realized that some agricultural monoculture fields are not diverse enough to support pollinators and other wildlife. They are now promoting planting pollinator plants specific to the area and NRCS provides technical and financial assistance for farmers and private forest owners to improve pollinator habitat on their property. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program has targeted assistance for honey bee and other pollinator habitat.



Three-fourths of the world's flowering plants depend on pollinators to reproduce. Most fruit, vegetable, seed crops and other plants that provide fiber, medicines and fuel are pollinated by animals. Some scientists estimate that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of animal pollinators like bees, butterflies and moths, birds and bats, and beetles and other insects.

But we gardeners knew that already, didn't we? While currently NRCS works with larger farmers and ranchers to develop their pollinator needs, many organizations, including South Douglas CD, can help develop plantings. Our yearly tree and shrub sale includes wildflowers and some flowering shrubs native to our area. Need some ideas?

1. Select a range of native and adapted plants that have bloom times from spring into fall. Overlapping bloom times are best.
2. Include butterfly larval host species. Even though the caterpillars can munch on your plants, the butterflies that develop are important pollinators. A bit of rotten fruit left under trees is enjoyed by the butterflies. Bare earth in the garden provides further nutrients and rocks in sunny places give them a place to bask in the sunlight.
3. Butterflies are important pollinators. Among the bees, hummingbirds and other garden visitors, butterflies are part of the cycle that keeps flowering plants producing. Inviting them to your yard and garden supports this need.
4. Limit planting cultivated plant varieties, especially those bred for showy blooms. These beauties do not provide much pollen or nectar for pollinators.
5. Avoid use of pesticides in your garden and yard. Pesticides include insecticides, herbicides and fungicides. Broad spectrum insecticides, which lack selectivity of pests, can harm bees and other pollinators if applied when they are foraging. Herbicides, while killing weeds, reduce the number of flowering plants which provide nectar and pollen for pollinators. Be very selective when using any pesticide. Concentrating on gardens near the door or patio, and letting the "back 40" go more natural will improve habitat for the pollinators.

Xerces Society's website has an excellent guide for pollinator plants. Check it out.



Hummingbirds feed by day on nectar from flowers, including annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs, and vines. They feed while hovering or, if possible, while perched. They also eat insects, such as fruit-flies and gnats, and will consume tree sap, when it is available.

The best way to support hummingbirds and other pollinators in your area is to plant native nectar plants. Penstemons, honeysuckle, sage and salvia are favorites. They also like caragana, fuchsia and petunias.

Consider putting out hummingbird feeders in order to attract and support resident and migrating hummingbird populations. Feeders have helped support hummingbird by counteracting the loss of forage and habitat caused by human activity.

- Red colored feeders typically are the most attractive to hummingbirds.
- Place the feeder in a shady spot at least a few feet off the ground and out of reach of predators like stray cats.
- There is no need to use colored nectar - it is unnecessary to attract hummingbirds, and its health effects are unknown. Use one part sugar to four parts water. Heat to dissolve all the sugar. And replace and clean the feeder every couple of weeks.

Cost Share Project Facts

Am I eligible?

Landowners who live within the South Douglas Conservation District are eligible to apply for cost share. We cost share on new projects, not on projects already started or implemented.

What BMPs/conservation practices are eligible?

A BMP is a Best Management Practice defined by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, a federal agency. Ideas:

- ♦ Brush Management—Fuels reduction in forest or shrub steppe
- ♦ Irrigation System—Micro irrigation
- ♦ Windbreak
- ♦ Wildlife habitat
- ♦ Livestock Water Facility
- ♦ Dams and Terraces
- ♦ Other projects may also be eligible. What did you have in mind?



How will I get paid for my project?

SDCD can pay up to 75% of the project. Our normal reimbursement rate is 50-75% depending on our funding sources. The landowner must keep accurate records of costs and labor involved. Payment is on a reimbursement basis—the landowner will be paid after the project has been done and inspected or approved by the SDCD.

How do I apply?

Submit a cost share application. Available on our website or call the office to get one sent to you. We need photos, description of the project an estimated budget and any other documents that might help us decide on approval of the project.

What about the budget?

If you have a project that needs professional design, you will need to get an estimate before submitting the application. If you are providing labor, our rate is \$22/hour. If you are providing equipment we would need the going rental rate.

When can I start?

You can start as soon as approval of the project is completed at a supervisor meeting and cost share agreement is signed. You must be completed by June 15 of the following year and provide complete financial records at that time.

Contact the office if you have questions.

South Douglas Conservation District

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Please recycle.



Do you have your Fair Exhibits ready? Entry Day is August 23. Check out the premium book online—vegetables, crafts, livestock, artwork and more can be entered. You can also take still life exhibits to Coastal in East Wenatchee August 22. See the Fair's website for more details.

They are remodeling the Horticulture Building and the final design has not been revealed. But South Douglas will have a booth in that building. Also, check out the Douglas County Agriculture Exhibit. Open to students, the poster should tell the story of agriculture in Douglas County. First place in each division is \$100. See page 33 in the Premium Book.