



ASOTIN COUNTY

June 2009

CONSERVATION DISTRICT



NEWSLETTER



720 6th Street, Suite B Clarkston, WA 99403 509-758-8012

From the District Manager

It's been a busy Winter and Spring here on the District – DOE Tour in February, Annual Meeting and Tree Sale in March, Training in April, Envirothon in May and WADE Conference and the Conservation Tour in June!

- The Tree Sale was a huge success and hopefully lots of folks are now busy watering and enjoying their purchases. Our appreciation goes to the Master Gardeners whose advice and assistance throughout the Tree Sale was greatly appreciated!
- Our Annual Meeting went well and thank you to all who attended. Our guest speakers were wonderful and their presentations were interesting and informative – it's always helpful to share information and everyone benefits! Lunch was great – and we are very grateful to our many 2009 Annual Meeting Sponsors for making that possible as well as for providing the special door prizes.
- Envirothon was wonderful – the weather was “interesting” but the day was great and all the students, staff and volunteers were once again enjoying this unique and special experience – write-up and pictures to follow in the newsletter.
- The upcoming ACCD Conservation Tour – Thursday, June 25th – is done in cooperation with NRCS and WSU Extension. See the Tour Flyer in the newsletter!

As District Manager, I am enjoying the opportunity to work together with our Board of Supervisors and dedicated staff to continue to expand the programs of the District. Megan Stewart is our Finance Coordinator / Resource Technician and is also handling the Small Acreage Program. Casey Scott is our CREP Coordinator and also is responsible for the Spot Burn Permits and Database. Pat Worle is our part-time Office Assistant. Jason Schlee who has been working with us as a Resource Technician and coordinating the Fish Screen and Meter Program, Envirothon and working with Snake River Recovery Board projects and doing an exceptional job, will be leaving the end of June to work with his family's farm – the J Bar S. We thank him for the work that he has done and his enthusiastic attitude and look forward to his continued input from the landowner's perspective. We will be advertising the position during the next few weeks – see information related to applying for this position later in the newsletter and on the District website. www.asotincd.net

I will be keeping you posted on conservation and water quality options, opportunities and the latest District news. We will continue to provide you, the landowner, with more individualized attention, timely cost-share reimbursements and better overall efficiency in the District office. Don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns at sandyaccd@cablone.net or 509-758-8012.

On behalf of the District Staff, I want to thank all of you for your participation in the District programs and your continued support of our efforts to conserve our natural resources for future generations. We look forward to working with you!

Sandy Cunningham, District Manager

Board of Supervisors

Chairman

Keith Ausman

Vice-Chairman

Rich Witters

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Jerry Hendrickson

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Ron Scheibe

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Rod Hostetler

Associate Supervisors

Barb Appleford

George Brott

Don Dotson

Jay Holzmiller

Elaine Nagle

Dan Schlee

District Staff

Sandy Cunningham

District Manager

Megan Stewart

Financial Coordinator / Res. Tech.

Jason Schlee

Resource Technician

Casey Scott

Resource Technician

Pat Worle

Office Assistant

NRCS Staff

Jim Schroeder

Courtney B. Smith

Board Meetings

All District Board meetings are open to the general public and are normally held on the Thursday of the first full week of the month and the Thursday of the third full week. Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. during the winter (Nov - Mar) and at 7:30 p.m. during daylight savings time (Apr - Oct). Meetings are held at the District Office located at 720 6th Street, Suite B, in Clarkston.

From the Board

Board Member Dan Sangster completed his three-year term as an ACCD District Supervisor in May and it is with thanks and appreciation that we recognize his many contributions to the District. Dan has served his rural community constituents well and will continue to participate in the District's programs as an Associate Supervisor. Thank you for a job well done, Dan!

The District also welcomes Rod Hostetler, who was elected at the Annual Meeting and confirmed by the Washington Conservation Commission, as the new member of our Board of Supervisors. Rod has been attending meetings, has received his orientation and is looking forward to working with the District community.

At the June 11, 2009 Board Meeting, cost-share rates were reviewed and updated. A revised cost-share chart is included in this newsletter.

EQIP and GRP 2010 APPLICATIONS DUE NOW!

Applications for the GRP Grassland Reserve Program are due to the USDA by June 26. Applications for 2010 EQIP Environmental Quality Incentives Program funding are due to NRCS by July 15th 2009. The

GRP program will prioritize expiring CRP contracts in Asotin and Douglas Counties for 2010 funding. If you have an expiring contract this fall or the fall of 2010 you will receive priority points for the chance at this funding. Rental rates for Asotin County are set at \$13.75/Acre for 10, 15, or 20 year contract opportunities. The GRP and EQIP applications will be ranked based upon a environmental benefits score related to your offered acres or planned practices. More information is available on line at the Washington NRCS State Website www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov. GRP applications are available from your extraordinarily friendly and reliable FSA office.

ACCD Resource Technician Position

The Asotin County Conservation District (ACCD) is looking for an enthusiastic team player with a genuine interest in conservation to join our agency. Position will address natural resource issues by working cooperatively with private landowners and other agencies to develop and implement conservation plans and provide technical assistance to landowners. Field experience and knowledge in natural resource management and forestry is desired. This is a full time position with generous benefit package. Salary DOQ. Open until filled.

Applications are available at the District Office at 720 6th St., Suite B in Clarkston – or call (509) 758-8012.

Send Applications/Resumes to:
Sandy Cunningham, District Manager
Asotin County Conservation District
720 6th St., Suite B, Clarkston, WA 99403

ENVIROTHON 2009

On Tuesday, May 5th, 2009, students from Clarkston High School met to participate in a competition which tested their knowledge and challenged their skills. The Asotin County Conservation District (ACCD) sponsors this event each year to encourage schools and students from the southeast region of Washington to learn about and take an active role in addressing environmental issues. Seven teams, totaling 37 students, arrived with enthusiasm and determination early in the morning on a day that promised to provide a weather sample from all types – wind, rain, all kinds of clouds and finally some sun. The students' curriculum over the last year had incorporated many of the Envirothon topics in the classroom. It was time to apply what they had learned in the classroom in a setting that presented the issues in a real and natural environment.

The competition was held at Headgate Park, located on Asotin Creek, to provide students with first hand knowledge of a project that was sponsored by ACCD in cooperation with Asotin County. The ACCD had received a grant from SRFB to reduce impacts of recreational vehicles at Headgate Park and the accompanying impacts on aquatic species in Asotin Creek. Asotin Creek is home to ESA listed steelhead, spring Chinook and bull trout. This year's current issue topic was Biodiversity and the Park presented an excellent environment for examining the biodiversity of the area.

The Envirothon is a competition that tests student's knowledge of natural resources through hands-on opportunities as they work together in teams. Students are tested on forestry, wildlife, water, soil and environmental issues. Oral presentations on Biodiversity were given by each team before a panel of judges whose backgrounds included topic related experience. The students could use charts, drawings, maps and other materials that they created during a preparation period at the event. They had no prior knowledge of the issue topic. There was a real effort to develop a good sound plan and support it before a panel. The judges questioned the teams on their facts and assumptions as they encouraged them to "think outside the box." The judges commented that there were some very well thought out proposals being presented. Future planners at work!

Volunteers from the ACCD Board, local Landowners, Asotin County, NRCS, Blue Mountain RC&D, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Forest Service and supportive Citizens were tasked with everything from preparing and grading tests on specific topics and working at the learning stations. The student teams were given a topic orientation at each station. Then together, they answered test questions during a timed period designed to challenge their knowledge, creativity and curiosity. Good test scores – 710 total possible – would result in winning locally, going on to the State competition and possibly to the Canon Envirothon – but if you were observing, you could see how important answering each test question correctly was to every student involved. They took great pride in knowing the answers and working as a team to come up with solutions as well as participating in the overall competition.

Funding for Envirothon expenses was provided by the WACD and BPA. A generous donation, used toward the purchase of awards and special T-shirts, from the Blue Mountain RC & D Council was greatly appreciated once again this year.

CONGRATULATIONS to the winning team from Clarkston High School: Gavin Lejameyer, Devin Norland, Sarah Eystad, Clayton Waller and Lena Miraglio – with 592.5 total points! For team recognition, they received a plaque for their school as well as individual medals and Envirothon T-shirts. Their team placed first in the Wildlife and Oral Presentation categories and tied for first in Forestry. They did a great job at State, finishing 4th overall!

1st Place Team



Steve Kirking and Don Dotson
CHS Teachers making a difference!



The fun and competitive spirit of Envirothon motivates students to learn about real-world problems and solutions. Today's Envirothon students will become tomorrow's leaders in stewarding Washington State's natural resources.



SMALL ACREAGE PROGRAM

The Asotin County Conservation District has funding available for the small acreage program to assist landowners with addressing resource concerns on properties with 1 to 20 acres. Financial and technical assistance is available. To receive financial assistance the property must be located within the District boundaries.

Financial assistance is available for water developments, cross fence, heavy use area protection, windbreaks, roof runoff systems and pasture planting. Landowners can receive up to \$8,000 in assistance and funding is available on a first come first served basis.

Landowners interested in the small acreage program; please contact Megan Stewart at the District at 758-8012 or meganaccd@cableone.net.

Washington Announces 2009 Sign-up For Grasslands Reserve Program

Farmers and ranchers in Western Washington and two Eastern Washington counties have a short time to take advantage of a program to help protect their grasslands from development. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced the 2009 sign-up for the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) and will be accepting applications through June 26, 2009.

GRP is a voluntary program that financially assists landowners with restoration and protection of grassland, rangeland, pastureland and other lands, and provides assistance for rehabilitating grasslands and conserving water resources. The goal is to assist producers in conserving valuable grasslands and rangelands under a threat of conversion to non-agricultural use.

USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency manage the program. Farmers and ranchers may sign up at USDA service centers in Western Washington and in Asotin and Douglas counties.

"Washington's rangelands are a vital part of our state's economy and our natural resource base," said Dave Brown, assistant state conservationist for Washington's Natural Resources Conservation Service. "Through this voluntary program, we will work with producers to protect valuable rangelands from conversion to other land uses, keeping them in agricultural use as grazing lands. For lands under contract or easements, grazing will be managed to ensure sustainability."

Over 21 percent of Washington's non-federal lands are pasturelands and rangelands, covering over 7 million acres in the state. Nationally, privately owned rangelands, grasslands and shrub lands cover more than 525 million acres.

A total of \$550,000 has been made available in Washington for this year's GRP sign-up. Western Washington farmers and ranchers may apply for funding to be used for permanent conservation easements. Priority will be for grasslands that include native grass and forb species. In Asotin and Douglas counties, farmers and ranchers have the option for 10, 15, or 20-year rental contracts. Priority will be given to land expiring from the Conservation Reserve Program.

Easements and rental agreements allow grazing practices, including those related to forage and seed production. Activities inconsistent with maintaining grazing uses and related conservation values are prohibited.

"This is first and foremost a conservation program. It just happens to be one that enables a rancher or farmer to continue production on the land," said Melissa Cummins, acting state executive director for Washington's Farm Service Agency. "The environmental benefits of the land and the producer both provide value to society."

Applications are made on a competitive offer basis. To participate in GRP, offers must be for private land. Ranking criteria will be used to accept the top applications based on environmental benefits.

When properly managed, grasslands and shrub lands can result in cleaner water supplies, healthier riparian areas and reduced sediment loadings in streams and other water bodies. These lands are vital for the production of forage for domestic livestock and provide forage and habitat for maintaining healthy wildlife populations. These lands also improve the aesthetic character of the landscape, provide scenic vistas and open space, provide for recreational activities and protect the soil from water and wind erosion.

Additional details on payments and cost-share for the program can be found on Washington NRCS's website at: <http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov>

For more information about GRP and other conservation programs, contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or online at <http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/fieldoffices.html>.

ACCD BULLETIN BOARD

"Eight great teams, 21 excellent volunteers, one more chance at making a positive difference for our local natural resources and those who live and work in the great outdoors we hold so dear. What am I talking about? Our annual Envirothon competition! This was my first time with the Envirothon and it was awesome to see so many dedicated community members from Soil Scientists to Cattlemen come out and guide the young competitors through this one-day event. This was the second year that our local competition was held at Head Gate Park on Asotin Creek, thanks to the Asotin County Commissioners giving the OK. County Engineer Joel Ristau was on site representing the County as one of the presentation judges. My thanks to all!"

Jason Schlee, Envirothon 2009 Coordinator

Is this the first newsletter you have received?

Do you want to be added to our mailing list?

Please contact us at 509-758-8012

pataccd@cableone.net

DON'T FORGET YOUR 2009 FALL BURN PERMIT!

Just a reminder that burning by commercial agricultural operations requires a permit except when burning orchard prunings, natural vegetation along fence lines, irrigation and drainage ditches or natural vegetation blown by the wind. A grower must still comply with their fire protection authority's notification/ approval process prior to igniting any outdoor fire even if an air quality permit is not required.

Two types of commercial agricultural permits are available. Spot burn permits, which are available through the District, allow burning of up to 10 acres total area of unforeseen and unpredictable small areas such as small weed patches, spots of heavy residue, and equipment plugs and dumps. The cost is \$25 and the permit is good for the entire calendar year. Field burn permits are issued for any burning which is definable and predictable.

Any individual burn area, which consists of over 5 contiguous acres, would be considered a field and requires a field permit. Permits are issued by the Dept. of Ecology and cost \$2.25 per acre. Applications are available at the District office and online.

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