ASOTIN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Assisting, protecting, and restoring Asotin County's natural resources.

ACCD NEWSLETTER

September 2009

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

ACCD Welcomes A New Team Member

My name is Mike Miraglio and it is my pleasure to be writing this letter to you as the newest member of the Asotin County Conservation District. My goal is to provide you with information and service and to assist you in any way I can with your property goals. My primary focus will be forestry and wildfire related issues. Currently I'm working to implement the FIREWISE Program, to reduce structure and property loss in the county.

My education includes a B.S. in Forestry from the University of Nevada Reno in 1974. After graduation I came north to work for the Forest Service in Avery, Idaho. I presently serve on the Southeast Washington Resource Committee as well as the Columbia County RAC.

My work experience includes: ten years in the woods as a sawyer, four years as a forester for Weyerhaeuser in Kamiah, Idaho, and the last thirteen years as a forester for Guy Bennett Lumber Company in Clarkston. At Bennett Lumber my duties included managing company timber ground in the Blue Mountains and assisting private landowners with their timber management or timber harvest plans.

I have enjoyed volunteering with the annual Envirothon event held every year by the Asotin County Conservation District.

My wife, Carol and I married and moved to Clarkston in 1980. We feel fortunate to have raised our three children, Michael, Sophie, and Angelina in Clarkston. Michael is a WSU graduate, Sophie is attending LCSC, and Angelina is beginning her first year at Walla Walla Community College in Walla Walla, WA.

I look forward to working with you and urge you to contact me with your forestry or wildfire prevention questions.

FIREWISE

Are you a rural homeowner interested in finding ways to better protect your property from wildfires?

Call Mike Miraglio at the Asotin County Conservation District (509) 758-8012 or email mikeaccd@cableone.net to schedule a FREE "Wildfire Risk and Hazard Assessment." You'll be glad you did!

FIREWISE is not just for homeowners with property in forested areas. All rural homeowners are welcome to have this assessment done.

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Casey Scott
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Mike Miraglio
Resource Technician / Firewise
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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 District Manager

It's hard to believe that Summer is over and we are now officially into Fall. We have had a very busy 3rd quarter here at the District. In August, we welcomed Mike Miraglio to our staff. His background is in forestry and his focus is to get the Firewise program up and running, which includes writing 20 home assessment plans by the end of October.

Interest in our Small Acreage program has been steadily increasing, with six new plans written in 2009. CREP/CCRP activity is also on the rise and we are currently working on seven new contracts totaling approximately 5.7 stream miles.

All of us here at the District office are always on the lookout for grant opportunities that will benefit our landowners and cooperators. So if there is any program or practice that we do not currently offer that you would like to see the District pursue, please let us know. We are more than happy to write grant applications for new and innovative conservation project ideas.

On behalf of all of us here at the District office, we thank you for giving us the opportunity to assist you in your conservation efforts.

Wishing you and your family a "Happy Halloween"
and "Happy Thanksgiving!"

INTENSIVELY MONITORED WATERSHED (IMW)

The IMW is a 10-12 year federally funded program that is intended to answer the question "are the habitat restoration projects producing more fish?" The Asotin Creek watershed was selected as the preferred location for conducting an IMW in southeast Washington. The approach is to use the south fork Asotin Creek as a control, the north fork Asotin Creek as a reference and Charley Creek as the treatment area. Monitoring will continue for the duration of the project and at its end, we expect to be able to answer the question "are habitat restoration projects producing more fish" with empirical data, not speculation, that links fish numbers and health with specific restoration actions.

To view the IMW plan go to www.snakeriverboard.org (Resources, Document Library, Documents, IMW), or for questions contact Sandy Cunningham, ACCD at (509) 758-8012 or the project manager Steve Martin, SRSRB at (509) 382-4115.

Wheat Week Program Report

The Franklin County Conservation District reported that Bob Burrus was able to teach Wheat Week at Parkway Elementary, Heights Elementary, Holy Family and Asotin Elementary, reaching 311 students and 14 teachers in Asotin County as part of the Education and Outreach Wheat Week Program within Asotin County. The Program will be looking into adding local schools to the Program in the future!

Weed Watcher

Rush skeletonweed is Asotin County's greatest weed threat.

Unfortunately this plant is hard to see until it forms a large patch. From July through September it is one of the few green plants in a sea of brown vegetation. It has a long bloom time and the small yellow flowers are distinctive. The mature plant consists of spindly, branched stems with very few, very small leaves. Most plants in Asotin County are between 1 and 3 feet tall. They may form fall rosettes, but most plants do not emerge until late June or July. This weed is hard to kill because of the deep taproot and the extensive lateral root system. If you think you have it, call the Weed Office at 243-2098 for positive ID or treatment options. Grant monies are available through the County to off set land owner costs.

Submitted by Nelle Murray, Coordinator
Asotin County Noxious Weed Control Board

NEW WFFA BLUE MOUNTAIN CHAPTER FORMED

The Washington State Farm Forestry Association inaugural meeting of the Blue Mountain Chapter was held in Dayton, WA on September 26, 2009. The Blue Mountain Chapter of WFFA was formed to provide private land forest owners in southeast Washington a forum to share forestry related topics on their ground. The chapter represents Asotin, Garfield, Columbia, and Walla Walla counties and encourages participation from all forest land owners.

Membership dues to join WFFA are sixty five dollars a year. Besides getting to meet great people, the WAFFA provides educational information to the landowner thru a newsletter and on line. They can help with forest management planning and forest certification through the American Tree Farm Certification Program. WFFA has a representative in Olympia to look out for private landowner's forestry issues in the state legislature.

The Blue Mountain Chapter plans to meet quarterly and hopes to rotate meetings among the counties. They also are planning to do forestry tours. Elected as President and Secretary respectively were Greg and Susan Kelly who have timber ground above Dayton. Tom Beechnoir was elected Vice-President and his farm and timber ground are outside of Walla Walla.

For more information to learn, share, and promote forest management in our area, contact Greg and Susan Kelly at 509-520-4579 or the WFFA at 360-736-5750

SMALL ACREAGE PROGRAM

New Fencing Rates

The Asotin County Conservation District has been offering a cost-share program to assist landowners with addressing resource concerns on properties with 1 to 20 acres. The District's goal is to provide cost-share based on cost rates set by the board of supervisors. Recently the District increased the rate for fencing in order to be reflective of actual implementation costs.

Financial assistance is available for water developments, cross fence, heavy use area protection, windbreaks, roof runoff systems and pasture planting. The small acreage program is still limited to $8,000 per landowner and 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.

NRCS announced in August that they will begin a continuous sign-up for the revamped **Conservation Security Program** now called the **Conservation Stewardship Program** (**CSP**). CSP encourages agricultural and forestry producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt additional ones on their operations. NRCS administers CSP, a voluntary conservation program designed to encourage agricultural and forestry producers to adopt additional activities and to improve, maintain and manage existing ones. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie, improved pastureland, rangeland, non-industrial private forestland – a new land use for the program – and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an American Indian Tribe.

For the 2010 funding cycle the first round cutoff date was September 30, 2009 and NRCS anticipates a second round cutoff date of January 14, 2010. If you are interested in applying or want additional information please visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs or contact Jim or Courtney in the NRCS office.

Shumaker Bridge

Trees Planted On CREP Project

Showing Off Projects

The Asotin County Conservation District projects have been highlighted in two recent tours. On June 25th WSU Extension, NRCS and the District hosted a conservation and variety plot tour. The tour included Jon Coe's project to convert expired CRP acres to grazing lands, Gene Thiessen's remote site water development, Dr. Steve Van Vleet's Ventenata Herbicide Trials on Last Homestead Ranch's property, direct seeding methods by Johnson Farms, Browne Ranch and C&L Farms and the WSU Asotin County Winter Wheat Variety Plots. The tour ended with a BBQ at Ken and Janine Weiss' farm.

The Society of Range Management held their winter meeting in Clarkston and rangeland specialists from NRCS, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, WSU and U of I spent one of their days touring projects in Asotin County. The tour included the George Creek meander and riparian enhancement project, Headgate Park riparian improvement project, Thiessen's alternative livestock watering project and WDFW Smoothing Iron Ranch grazing project. Society members had the opportunity to talk to landowners and producers involved in projects. This tour reminded us how important it is to get funding agencies and technical staff out to projects. We need to continue showing key partners the good work the District, NRCS and landowners have accomplished and remind them why they should continue funding our projects.

The Results Are In...

Asotin County cooperators fared well in the EQIP and WHIP programs. In Asotin County, there were 12 applications submitted for EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program) during the 2009 funding round and 10 were funded. These contracts will provide over $225,000 for conservation projects.

Four applications for WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program) were submitted for funding in 2009 in Asotin County. All four applications were funded, resulting in $85,000 for wildlife habitat improvement projects.

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ACCD BULLETIN BOARD

FREE TREE SEEDLINGS

The U.S.F.S has 10,000 Ponderosa Pine, Douglas Fir, Larch, and White Pine seedlings to give away thru the conservation districts. These are 1-0 plugs (4”-8” tall) that need to be planted this fall. They are excess trees grown for the Columbia Complex Fire, should do real good in our area, and available on a first come first serve basis. Please call Kate at the U.S.F.S. office in Pomeroy at 509-843-4663 for the tree seedlings.

Be sure to check the Asotin County Conservation District website for news, information and updates on programs and cost-share rates.
www.asotincd.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.

Please contact Casey Scott with any questions at (509) 758-8012 or caseyaccd@cableone.net.