

KLICKITAT CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2016

Central & Eastern Klickitat Conservation Districts

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A WCC member plants Ponderosa pine along Squaw Creek

Planting Project Completed Along Squaw Creek



Eastern Klickitat Conservation District (EKCD) completed a planting project last fall along the headwaters of Squaw Creek using funding provided by the Washington State Department of Ecology. Squaw Creek is a tributary to Rock Creek, which is listed by Ecology on the 303(d) list for having elevated stream temperatures along a segment of the stream system.

This native planting project was implemented by EKCD staff and a planting crew from the Washington State Conservation Corps (WCC), which is also funded by the Department of Ecology through the AmeriCorps program. This project will combat bank erosion and will help alleviate high stream temperatures that occur in Rock Creek by providing bank stabilization and shade.

Agricultural Conservation Easements

The Eastern Klickitat Conservation District (EKCD) lists farmland preservation as a top priority in its 5-year plan (2014-2019) along with its Fiscal Year 2015 annual plan. EKCD has been actively pursuing Agricultural Conservation Easements over the last three years, and was recently funded for two projects located in the Chapman, Rock Creek and Squaw Creek watersheds, which are located in Watershed Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 31.

Agriculture Conservation Easements can help protect farming and ranching as a way of life and also be an effective and practical planning tool for the future. An Agriculture Conservation Easement is a voluntary agreement between a landowner and an entity, in this case your local conservation district, to protect a property's agricultural values by allowing for continued farming or ranching while limiting future development and other non-agricultural uses. Please contact EKCD at (509)773-5823 x 5 to set up an appointment for further information.

Stream Gage Stations in WRIA 31

In the fall of 2014 the Conservation District and the Klickitat County Natural Resources (KCNR) worked together to install two permanent stream gaging stations, one located on Rock Creek (listed by Ecology on the 303(d) list for elevated water temperatures) and one on Squaw

Creek, within the Rock Creek Sub-basin of Water Resource Inventory Area 31 (WRIA 31). The two stations provide important hydrologic data to help identify opportunities to provide stream benefits during critical low-flow periods, and to further refine water budget estimates for the Rock Creek Sub-basin that were performed as part of the Rock Creek Availability Assessment (Aspect, 2015b). Staff from the District and KCNR visit these sites monthly to take stream flow and staff gage measurements, and to download stage data. This information is then used to develop rating curves, which are used to determine daily mean flow values for each stream.



CENTRAL & EASTERN KLICKITAT CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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2016 Supervisor Election Results

In the spring of each year, conservation districts across the state conduct elections for open seats on their boards of supervisors. Each district is governed by a five-member board; three are elected locally, and two are appointed by the State Conservation Commission (SCC). Furthermore, at least three board members must be farm owners or operators.

Central Klickitat CD and Eastern Klickitat CD hold their elections in conjunction with their Annual Meetings. For 2016, EKCD voters re-elected long-time board member Ron Juris, who has faithfully served the district since 1982, including a term as President of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts. CKCD's incumbent board member, Doug Miller, was automatically re-elected by reason of being the only candidate to file for the position, and submitting a nominating petition with the signatures of at least 25 district voters.

EKCD still has an open seat which is not required to be held by a farm owner or operator. Any resident of EKCD who is registered to vote and who is interested in helping to inform and direct the wise use and conservation of local natural resources is welcome to apply for the position. For more information, speak to a local supervisor or call the district office at (509)773-5823 x 5.

Why Should We Care About Honeybees?

Part 1 in a 5-part series by Washington State AgForestry Class 37

As far as pollinators go, honeybees offer some distinct benefits for crop pollination: they work in mass numbers (colonies of up to 50,000 bees), they can pollinate a wide variety of plants, and they can be managed by humans.

Lack of suitable foraging habitat is one of the biggest issues facing honeybees globally, and this is true in Washington State as well. In fact, the four main issues affecting honey bees are all applicable in Washington. They are: lack of forage/proper nutrition; parasites & pathogen; pesticide exposure; and lack of genetic diversity. Just like people, bees flourish under ideal conditions and suffer reduced hive health when they struggle to meet those conditions.

Planting bee-friendly plants is a great way to help the honeybees. You will see a list of beneficial plants in an upcoming article in our series. Parasites and pathogens can be very destructive on the hive, especially the parasitic Varroa mite. The Varroa mite has been the single most destructive issue for hives in the U.S. since the late 1980's. It's important to protect your hives with proper miticide to reduce the predation by Varroa mites. Pesticide exposure is another issue being studied for its effects on bees. That will also be covered in an upcoming article. Similar to humans, bees need genetic diversity to have robust hives. The above issues have caused reduced genetic diversity and had a detrimental effect on overall hive health. By addressing the first three issues we can help promote more genetic diversity in the hives.

Our public policy group from AgForestry Class 37 looks forward to exploring practical solutions to how we can all work together to help our pollinators.

Firewise Communities in Klickitat County

Wildfires in Klickitat County are a growing concern. The Firewise Communities Program encourages local solutions for safety by helping homeowners take individual responsibility for preparing their homes for the risk of wildfire.

Central Klickitat Conservation District will be working with the Department of Natural Resources to assist in establishing three new Firewise Communities within Klickitat County. The communities will include High Prairie, Boardman Acres, and Box Canyon. If you have any questions regarding this effort, please inquire with Kaci Bartkowski at the District.

