

KLICKITAT CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

Central & Eastern Klickitat Conservation Districts

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Fall 2016

Fall colors start to show along the Little Klickitat River, east of Goldendale



Healthy Watersheds, Healthy People

(adapted from "Healthy Watersheds, Healthy People," a publication of the WA State Dept. of Ecology)

What is a watershed?

Unlike states and counties, watersheds have natural boundaries defined by the shape of the land and the flow of water. In basic terms, a watershed, or basin, is all the land that drains to the same body of water, such as a lake or river. Smaller watersheds become part of larger watersheds as streams feed into rivers, and rivers flow into oceans. This means wherever you are and wherever you go, you're in a watershed.

Why should you care?

You are a citizen of a watershed. Your health and the health of your watershed are inseparable. This is because a watershed is an interconnected system of land, water, air, and the life they support—including people. Your everyday actions affect your watershed.

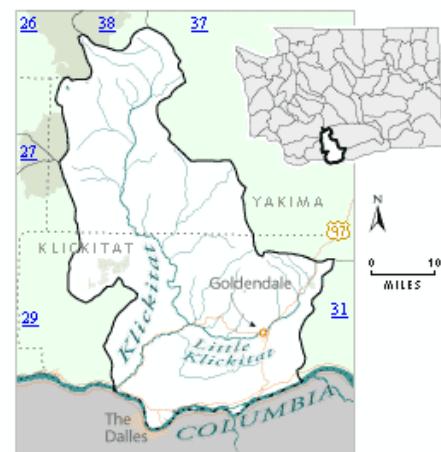
Healthy watersheds perform a number of “jobs.” As water continually cycles through, the watershed stores and releases water and filters many pollutants. Trees and plants help anchor soil and absorb rain and snowmelt, so flooding and landslides are less severe. Vegetation also provides shade, keeping water temperatures cool and stable so fish and other aquatic life can thrive. In a healthy watershed, water, soil, and air are clean. People, as well as fish and wildlife, have the water, food, shelter, and other resources they need to survive.

Increased population and increased pollution go hand in hand. In urban areas, storm water runoff is the #1 water pollution problem. Developing land typically creates

changes in the natural water patterns of an area. As more surfaces can't absorb water, runoff from rain, lawn sprinklers, or snowfall carries oil, fertilizers, pesticides, trash, and pet waste into streams. Bacteria from failing septic systems are released into the earth. Our waters, both on the surface and underground, become contaminated.

What's your watershed?

For administrative and planning purposes, our state is divided into 62 Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIs). Central and Eastern Klickitat County fall within the boundaries of WRIA 30, Klickitat River Watershed, and WRIA 31, Rock Creek-Glade Watershed. The two major sub-basins within WRIA 30 are the Little Klickitat River Sub-Basin and the Swale Creek Sub-Basin, which encompass Goldendale and Centerville.



WRIA 30

WRIA 31 is subdivided into five major sub-basins; Alder Creek, Chapman Creek, Pine Creek, Rock Creek and Wood Gulch. Bickleton spans four of these sub-basins, while the boundary of Roosevelt includes part of the Wood Gulch and Pine Creek sub-basins.

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Healthy Watersheds, Healthy People (*continued from page 1*)

The primary water quality concern for both WRIA 30 and WRIA 31 is elevated stream temperatures, which are a result of several factors, including water quantity, water

depth, air temperature, sedimentation, and the lack of adequate streamside shade in some areas. Elevated water temperatures and low wa-



WRIA 31

ter quantity negatively impact salmonids, wildlife, and riparian health. Other water quality concerns include invasive aquatic weeds and the presence in some areas of contaminants, like bacteria (from leaking septic systems and also pet, livestock, and wildlife waste) and nitrates.

What can you do?

Everyone has the ability to make a positive impact on watershed health. Small changes, like using low-flow faucets and putting your lawn sprinkler on a timer, can greatly reduce your household water usage, leaving more water in streams, reservoirs, and aquifers.

Significant improvements to water quality can be achieved by using yard care chemicals only in strict accordance with label instructions; cleaning up promptly and properly after your pets; *never* using a storm drain to dispose of trash, chemicals, motor oil, or yard debris; and ensuring that your septic system is not leaking.

The spread of invasive species can be reduced by inspecting boats and other watercrafts for aquatic weeds after use in any waterbody, and cleaning them when necessary.

EKCD Proposes Control Plan for Invasive Aquatic Weed

You may have read in past newsletters or on our web site about EKCD's work in regards to the infestation of Eurasian watermilfoil in the pool at the mouth of Rock Creek (where it enters the Columbia River). This is the site of an Army Corps of Engineers park, where for many years families enjoyed swimming, boating, and fishing. Now, this invasive aquatic weed has almost completely filled the pool, making it unsuitable for recreation.

According to the Dept. of Ecology, the pool is home to Pacific lamprey, suckers, smallmouth bass, walleye, channel catfish, dace, red-side shiners, sculpin, crayfish, and freshwater mussels. The bass in particular love the milfoil, and this presents another problem, as there is now the potential for an un-naturally large population of predatory fish to feed on the native salmonids attempting to migrate in and out of Rock Creek. Rock Creek and its tributaries are the only salmon-bearing streams in WRIA 31 (see related story on page 1) and are home to Fall Chinook, coho, steelhead, and rainbow trout. The State has already made a substantial investment in improving salmonid habitat in the Rock Creek Sub-basin, but that could all be meaningless if the fish are subjected to excessive predation.

Funded by a grant from Ecology's Aquatic Weed Management Fund, EKCD has been working with local stakeholders and natural resource professionals to document the extent of the invasion, investigate available

*Jennifer Parsons
(Dept. of Ecology
Aquatic Plants Specialist)
and Marty Hudson
(Klickitat Co. Noxious
Weed Control
Board Coordinator)
helped with the initial
survey in July of 2015*



control methods, and recommend the strategy that is most likely to achieve control in an ecologically safe and financially feasible way. Note that, due to the fact that the Columbia River provides a constant influx of Eurasian watermilfoil, total eradication is not a realistic expectation.

For the initial implementation phase, the steering committee has recommended the use of Renovate® Max G.

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This is the first dual-action herbicide combining triclopyr and 2,4-D. It is appropriate for use in the slough due to the specificity for the target species, its short contact exposure time requirement compared to some other aquatic herbicides, demonstrated efficacy, and the general acceptance of this chemical based on past uses.

The ultimate goal of the current grant is to develop an Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan (IAVMP) which includes all the control options investigated by the steering committee, and the proposed short- and long-term strategies (e.g. public education for prevention of infestation and local involvement program, ongoing monitoring efforts and control maintenance activities). This IAVMP is not a one-year management tool; it must evolve as conditions in the waterbody system change. The IAVMP will be used by EKCD to obtain funding for implementation of the recommended treatment.



A survey conducted in May of 2016 by AquaTechnex revealed that the upper section of the pool is nearly 100% covered by Eurasian watermilfoil. Pondweed, common waterweed, and coontail were also present.



EKCD would like to thank the following individuals who participated in this process over the last two years:

Marty Hudson, Klickitat County Noxious Weed Control Board
 Dave McClure, Klickitat County Natural Resources
 Greg Schuler, Klickitat County Natural Resources
 Kirsten Schilling, Klickitat County Natural Resources
 Jacob Anderson, Klickitat County Natural Resources
 Jennifer Parsons, WA State Dept. of Ecology
 David Holland, WA State Dept. of Ecology
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 John Davis
 Michael Nichols
 Jim Beeks

Scott Kraynak, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
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 Jeanette Burkhardt, Yakama Nation Fisheries
 Jeremy Takala, Yakama Nation Fisheries
 Jay Chambers, WA State Dept. of Transportation
 Bruce Beauchene, City of Kennewick
 Pat Everhorn, City of Kennewick
 Karen Van de Graaf-Erickson



District Manager Kent Apostol enjoyed his first Klickitat County Fair. CKCD and EKCD hosted a booth highlighting conservation Best management Practices (BMPs) This year's them was "Star-Spangled Celebration."

Resource Technician Kaci Bartkowiak helped at DNR's Firewise booth at the fair, encouraging people to choose fire-resistant landscape plants and create defensible space around their homes.



You can support the work of Central Klickitat CD or Eastern Klickitat CD by making a tax-deductible donation. Visit our websites at cked.org or ekcd.org and select the "DONATE" button (we can also accept cash and checks).

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Schedule Your Firewise Assessment Today! Make plans to attend the Firewise workshop on October 1st

The risk of catastrophic wildland fires is extremely high now due to active fire suppression over the last several decades. Fire acts as a natural thinning agent to maintain a healthy forest, but past suppression efforts have allowed our forests to become over populated and stressed. Couple that with several years of drought, and the perfect habitat for beetles has been created. Proper forest management requires the balanced removal of vegetation to reduce ladder fuels and to open canopy space. If you live on wooded property, thinning trees and removing ladder fuels can mean the difference between saving your home or losing it during a forest fire

Thanks to grants from the WA State Conservation Commission (WSCC) and the Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR), Conservation District staff are trained and available to provide on-site assessments of your property, recommend actions you can take to

make it less susceptible to fire damage, and even provide cost share for certain fuels reduction activities. If you are interested in taking Firewise a step further, we can work with you to establish a Firewise community in your area. A certified Firewise Community is prepared for emergency situations, and can also be eligible for financial assistance through grant programs specifically for Firewise Communities. Currently, High Prairie, Keystone Acres, and the Box Canyon area are in the process of becoming Firewise Communities.



DNR and CKCD will be holding a Firewise workshop on October 1st from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Klickitat PUD. Please contact Kaci Bartkowski at (509)773-5823 x 108 for more information or to register. You can also schedule an assessment.