

KLICKITAT CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

SPRING 2011

Central & Eastern Klickitat Conservation Districts

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WHAT HAPPENED TO BROOKS PARK?

On April 3, 2009 Washington State Parks Management personnel, speaking at a meeting of the Klickitat County Commission, stated that State Parks would be seeking a government entity to take over the park in order for it to remain open to the public, adding that if no one stepped up the park could be part of a land exchange with another state agency. In reaction to that statement, local citizens began to prepare a proposal to State Parks that would result in transfer of Brooks to a unit of local government. At the February 17, 2009 Klickitat Co. Commission meeting the County Commission members indicated that they did not feel acquisition and management of Brooks was in the best interest of County Government. Since there were indications of strong local interest in retaining Brooks, the supervisors of Central Klickitat Conservation District (CKCD) decided to invest in leading efforts toward local acquisition and management.

Over a two year period between April 17, 2009 and April 15, 2011, CKCD and local volunteers throughout the county have invested over \$35,000 in staff and volunteer time developing a business plan, a management proposal, and long range management/improvement plan for Brooks. In addition, Klickitat County obligated \$25,000 to be used for infrastructure improvements at Brooks.

The proposal was negotiated and adjusted between State Parks staff and CKCD during several face-to-face meetings in Wenatchee and Goldendale, with the final proposal prepared for presentation and a vote of approval by the State Parks Commission on January 27, 2011. At that time, the State Parks Commission voted unanimously to transfer Brooks to the CKCD, leaving the details of the transfer to be negotiated by their staff. CKCD was assured that the transfer was “a done deal”. CKCD was to take over management in March, 2011 under contract to State Parks, earning revenue to enable startup the first year and survival after the seasonal revenue period. Final deed transfer and a payment for service rendered were assured at the end of June 2011. CKCD was prepared to sign the final agreement prepared by State Parks staff at the CKCD March 17, 2011 meeting, but that same day State Parks adjusted the final interim management agreement to remove all financial support. CKCD has since decided that the venture would be too financially burdensome for them to support further investment.

It is our understanding that State Parks intends to keep Brooks Park open for the foreseeable future and is selecting parts of our proposal and business plan to implement, with public support. As time goes on, you may wish to assist State Parks as they incorporate many of your ideas for the betterment of Brooks. CKCD will retain our business plan and notes from your hard work in the event that a feasible opportunity for Brooks may arise in the future.

The Board of Central Klickitat Conservation District wish to sincerely thank you for your efforts and express our pleasure in working with all of you. We have shown that our community could work toward a common goal of what could have been improved government efficiency and retention of one of the regional jewels...Brooks Park. Thanks also to our County Commission, Senator Honeyford and Representative Chandler for their support.

CENTRAL & EASTERN KLICKITAT CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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IRRIGATION REBATES

Klickitat County is often challenged with long droughts and water shortages. Irrigators have a unique opportunity to help mitigate these water shortages, increase irrigation uniformity, and decrease the amount of water and fertilizer required, all while using less energy.

A common waste of energy and water occurs when pumps and nozzles are worn or improperly sized, making it inefficient and expensive to maintain correct soil moisture levels. Modifying irrigation systems by switching from high- to low-pressure sprinkler systems can save on water and also save as much as \$55.00 and 770 kWh per acre annually.

Another big energy saver is the installation of a variable frequency drive (VFD) on your pump motor. A VFD can save an estimated 400kWh per horsepower, and increase the performance and lifespan of industrial-grade motors.

Klickitat Public Utilities District would like to help by offering incentives for installing a variety of efficiency measures which should make it possible to meet crop water needs with fewer hours of irrigation. Call Sharon at PUD's Energy Services Department for program details and incentive levels (773-7622 or 800-548-8357).

PLANT SALE & TREE PLANTING

The 2011 plant sale distributed more than 9,800 plants to 110 customers. Thanks to everyone who participated—your purchase not only supports the work of Eastern and Central Conservation Districts, it also increases the number of native (or otherwise adapted and appropriate) plants in the Districts. That's good for water quality and water quantity, good for the soil, good for wildlife, and good for the folks who get to enjoy fresh air and exercise while getting all those plants into the ground!

The Districts also donated 850 Ponderosa Pines that were planted by nearly 150 students from Goldendale Primary School 2nd grade, Goldendale Middle School 5th grade, and the Goldendale Seventh Day Adventist School. The planting field trips were preceded by in-class presentations by District staff on the importance of trees for erosion control and water quality. Goldendale Primary School also received some native wildflowers and trees for its native plant garden.

