

KLICKITAT CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

Central & Eastern Klickitat Conservation Districts

- *Windbreaks*
- *Klickitat County Fair*
- *On-line survey*
- *Thermal refugia study*



Summer 2010

WINDBREAKS

Here along the Columbia River Gorge, windbreaks are a must. They provide protection not only for homes and outbuildings, but also for livestock, wildlife, and environmentally sensitive areas. Home heating costs can be reduced up to 40% by keeping the cold wind off your house, and in the summer it's much easier to enjoy your yard. Crop yields can be increased up to 45% because a protected field experiences less moisture stress. Of course, windbreaks also reduce soil erosion by wind. Livestock performance is improved when animals are not required to use more energy to keep warm. For example, beef cattle energy requirements increase 13% for each 10° drop in temperature below 30°, so if the wind chill temperature *without* a windbreak is -29° (30° day with 25 mile-per-hour winds) then a windbreak can reduce the herd's energy requirements by up to 50%. Most windbreaks provide food and shelter for wildlife, and plants can be selected for their benefits to local species of birds and mammals. Windbreaks protect not only from the wind, but also from what is *in* the wind, including dust and agricultural spray drift. This can be especially desirable for homes and riparian areas.

A windbreak is most effective when planted perpendicular to the prevailing winds. It should be placed 100-150 feet from any structures to be shielded and extend at least 50 feet past either end of the area being sheltered. The protective effect generally extends a distance ten times the height of the windbreak. At the very minimum a windbreak can consist of a single row of tall evergreen trees, but the most effective windbreaks include multiple rows, with five being optimal. A resource conservationist at NRCS can help you design a windbreak for your unique situation, and provide you with specific information on types of plants to use, the number of plants needed, and proper spacing.

Like many things in life, the success of any windbreak is a direct result of the planning and maintenance that go into its installation and upkeep. The better a windbreak is maintained, the sooner it will reach an effective height. Maintenance basically consists of weed control and irrigation, which can require a fair amount of labor and initial expense, but the result is a windbreak that reaches an effective height in three or four years instead of seven or more years. Other required maintenance may include livestock exclusion fencing, pest management, and control of other herbivores (deer, mice, voles, etc.).

Suggested Plants for Windbreaks

The following species of plants are good choices for windbreaks in central and eastern Klickitat County:

Tall Evergreen: Douglas Fir, Grand Fir, Ponderosa Pine, Western White Pine

Medium-sized Evergreen: Austrian Pine, Colorado Blue Spruce, Rocky Mountain Juniper

Medium-sized Deciduous Shrubs: Black Hawthorn, Blue Elderberry, Choke Cherry, Serviceberry, Vine Maple

Tall Deciduous Trees: Black Cottonwood, Paper Birch, Quaking Aspen, Rocky Mountain Maple

Dense Shrubs: Golden Currant, Mock Orange, Red osier Dogwood, Rugosa Rose, Russet Buffaloberry, Silver Buffaloberry, Snowberry, Woods Rose

The majority of these are available from our annual plant sale or through special order. You may also be able to transplant some of these from other areas of your property. For more information on windbreaks, call the district office at (509)773-5823 x 5.

What are we up to now? The summer water monitoring season is in full swing now, and technician Martha Blair is busy collecting data from 22 sites in Central and 19 sites in Eastern. We are also partnering with Klickitat Co. Natural Resources to conduct a *thermal refugia* study in the Little Klickitat River, which means we are going to identify locations and sources of cooler water within the river. *(continued)*

CENTRAL & EASTERN KLICKITAT CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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Conservation • Development • Self-Government

Klickitat County Fair

August 19-22

County Fairs are a summer tradition in America - a great outing for the entire family and a chance to see friends from other parts of the county. Watching the livestock competitions and viewing the handiwork, garden produce, and art exhibited by your neighbors, local students, and maybe even your own family is interesting, educational, inspiring, and fun. Your enjoyment of the fair is increased dramatically by participating in it, so be sure to pick up a premium book and get your entries ready.

The Central and Eastern Klickitat Conservation Districts will again be entering a booth exhibit in the Still Life department. This year's fair theme is "Barbwire and Roses." We hope you'll take a moment to stop by our booth and pick up some information on varieties of wild roses that are useful for conservation and wildlife plantings in Klickitat County. There will also be information on the benefits of cross-fencing pastures to optimize forage production and harvest.

The theme for 2009 was "Hoof it on over to the Klickitat County Fair." Our blue ribbon-winning booth demonstrated the benefits of exclusion fencing to keep livestock out of streams and ponds.

On-Line Survey

Did you know that both Central and Eastern Klickitat Conservation Districts have web sites where you can see the 5-Year Plan, Annual Plan, and information on the Annual Plant Sale? There are also posts of different articles and programs that are of interests to land owners and operators in the Districts. You can even see the latest edition of the Klickitat Quarterly.

The latest addition to each site is a survey to help us identify the priorities and concerns of our constituents, as well as gauge our effectiveness at making our programs known to the residents of both districts.

Please take a moment to visit ckcd.org or ekcd.org. Then take the survey and let us know what we can do to better serve you.



Thermal Refugia Study (continued from page 1)

The Little Klickitat has a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for elevated temperatures, as determined by the Washington State Dept. of Ecology. A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still safely meet water quality standards. Funding for monitoring and for this study, which begins July 19, is being provided by a grant from the Department of Ecology.

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