

**CENTRAL & EASTERN KLICKITAT
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

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Family Forest Fish Passage Program

A Funding Program for Small Forest Landowners to Improve Fish Passage



Many miles of stream are inaccessible to fish because of barrier culverts. Road culverts and other stream-crossing structures that are aging, too small, or improperly installed can block fish from reaching their spawning grounds.

Private owners of forestland who want to do their part for salmon recovery may be eligible for funding to complete a fish passage project through the Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP). The goal of this program is to help restore declining salmon and trout populations by replacing barriers with new structures that allow fish to migrate upstream. An additional benefit is that job and economic opportunities are created in rural communities during the construction season.

Our conservation district plays an integral role by managing the project design, construction oversight, permitting, billing and grant management. Central Klickitat CD has recently finished a project on Jenkins Creek which replaced a barrier of four large culverts with a pre-constructed 50 foot bridge. CKCD was responsible for project layout, bid preparation and construction oversight, and financial management of the grant funding. The bridge was delivered by truck on time from Colorado, a local construction company was awarded the bid, and fish were swimming upstream before the final piece was installed.



Three state agencies are responsible for implementing FFFPP: Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources and the Recreation and Conservation Office. Local groups or sponsors experienced in fish passage restoration – such as conservation districts – play an integral role by managing the project design, construction oversight, permitting, billing and grant management. To learn more and to see if you are eligible for funding through the program, watch a video at: dnr.wa.gov/fffpp or contact the

CKCD or EKCD office at (509) 773-5823 ext. 5.

KLICKITAT CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

SUMMER

Central & Eastern Klickitat Conservation Districts

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Agricultural Conservation Easements

If you own a farm or ranch and would like to have it remain in your family, or remain as farmland or rangeland, then one option is to sell an agricultural conservation easement (“ACE”). The existence of such an easement will keep your land in agricultural use *permanently*. An ACE allows the farm owner and future family farmers (or other farmers) to continue to own, farm, and manage their land as before. The only change is that the land must remain as working agricultural land, subject to the terms of the conservation easement.

The value of an ACE is the difference between the fair market value of the property and the agricultural value. When a landowner sells this “development right” it assures the land will remain a farm or ranch in perpetuity. The buyer of the easement would be a local or regional land trust or other third-party partner, such as your local conservation district. The board of supervisors of Eastern Klickitat Conservation District voted in April to participate in the holding of development right contracts, and is being assisted in this process by the Washington State Conservation Commission’s Office of Farmland Preservation.

ACE’s in EKCD

In order to finance the purchase and maintenance of conservation easements, EKCD will pursue funding sources in the form of grants. Since grant applications are competitive and awards are based on the priorities of the individual funding entities, priority will generally be given to lands which meet the following criteria: realistic potential for non-agricultural development, protects or enhances water quality/quantity, protects or enhances important wildlife habitat, or is of historic or cultural agricultural significance.

For more information on conservation easements and development rights contracts, contact Jim Hill, district manager, at (509)773-5823, ext 5, or by emailing cdoffice@gorge.net.

Demo Plots for Mulch-Till

Two landowners are supplying plots in Central CD to demonstrate mulch-till conservation tillage. Careful records will be kept and a cost/benefit analysis will be run by NRCS to determine how effective the tillage system is in Klickitat County soils. The result of the demonstration will determine whether a minimum tillage practice will be cost effective yet still provide the necessary soil moisture for planting fall wheat.

Conservation tillage systems are methods of soil tillage which leave a minimum amount of crop residue on the soil surface during the critical soil erosion period. This slows water movement, which reduces the amount of soil erosion. Conservation tillage systems also benefit farmers by reducing fuel consumption and soil compaction. By reducing the number of times the farmer travels over the field, farmers realize significant savings in fuel and labor. In most years since 1997, conservation tillage has been used in US cropland more than intensive tillage systems. The benefits of this practice are significant. Soil slowly but steadily improves when erosion is reduced and organic matter increases. Soil tilth improves and productivity increases as the constant supply of organic material left on the soil surface is decomposed by a healthy population of earth worms and other organisms.