

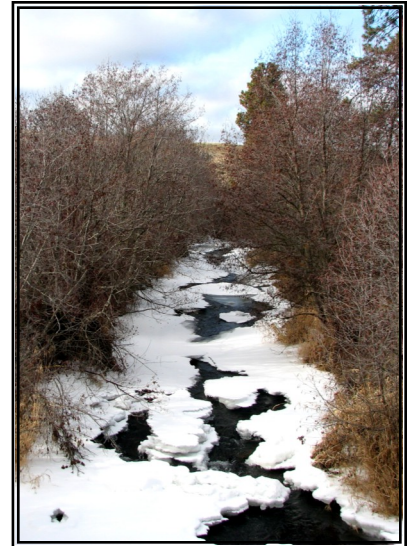
KLICKITAT CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2011/2012

Central & Eastern Klickitat Conservation Districts

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WATER QUALITY WORK CONTINUES THROUGH THE WINTER

By Martha Blair

It is cold. I've been standing in the Little Klickitat River at Olson Road for over 30 minutes now, measuring stream flow. The air temperature is just below freezing, and the stream temperature is not much warmer. My toes and fingers are feeling numb, despite the gloves on my hands and multiple layers of wool socks down in my wading boots. As I think about hot chocolate and a warm fire in the woodstove, I move over 1.2 feet and collect the next set of depth and velocity readings.

Just a few short months ago, the Little Klickitat's maximum stream temperatures reached 76 degrees F here at Olson road. This may sound warm, but in 2010 the maximum stream temperatures were about 3 degrees higher! By nature, streams are dynamic systems, changing drastically from season to season and year to year. Stream levels rise and fall, temperatures fluctuate, channels migrate over the flood plain and both erosion and deposition occur within the system. Streams are a valuable resource, providing irrigation water for farms, drinking water for livestock, recreational opportunities such as fishing, swimming and boating, as well as fish and wildlife habitat. Because of the dynamic nature of streams and their importance as a resource, the Central and Eastern Klickitat Conservation Districts monitor water quality and quantity in local watersheds. Other agencies such as the Department of Ecology, City of Goldendale and Yakama Nation Fisheries also monitor streams in the county.

Concern has been raised regarding the condition and health of our local watersheds for fish and wildlife habitat. The Districts' monitoring program has documented stream conditions over the past 15 years, providing baseline data to help direct stream restoration efforts. Monitoring data is also being used to track and evaluate the effectiveness of projects implemented and to identify trends in water quality and quantity over distance and time. The Districts consider desired future conditions for our local streams to be long term goals requiring continued efforts from stream side landowners and local agencies.

Three of our streams, specifically the Little Klickitat River, Rock Creek and Swale Creek, have been classified as Category 5 by the Washington State Department of Ecology during a water qual-

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CKCD Assists Victims of Wishram 2 and Monastery Complex Fires

A meeting hosted by CKCD, WSU Extension, and Wa. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was held at the Goldendale Library on November 10th to discuss what assistance these agencies can offer to landowners who were affected by the wildfires this summer.

Jim Freed, Extension Forester, and Wyatt Leighton, DNR Forester, were on hand to offer technical advice for those whose forest land was burned. Jim Hill, manager of CKCD, presented information on financial assistance available for qualified riparian area plantings. Funds for eligible cost share projects are being provided through a grant from the Washington Department of Ecology.

CKCD has also been authorized by DOE to use the same grant to assist ranchers whose Columbia Hills pastureland was burned by the Wishram 2 fire. These hillsides are not in riparian areas, but they do drain directly into Swale Creek to the north and the Columbia River to the south, both of which are on Ecology's 303(d) list of "impaired waters." The grass that was burned will certainly return, but allowing cattle into those areas before the grass is fully re-established will contribute to potentially severe soil erosion, leading to an increase in the amount of sediment being washed off the hillsides and into those vulnerable waterways. Ranchers can apply for up to \$5,000.00 for the purchase of feed or to lease alternative grazing land, but must agree to keep their cattle off of recovering pastures until at least next fall.

If you would like more information about technical and financial assistance available for fire recovery projects, please call Jim Hill at (509)773-5823 ext. 5. Technical assistance is also available from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). And if you are looking for native trees and shrubs for your replanting project, our annual plant sale is a good source. Be sure to see the catalog included with this newsletter.



That's not snow, it's ash!

This charred hillside drains directly into East Prong of the Little Klickitat River. Without live tree roots to hold and store water, or grasses to keep the surface layer of soil in place, this slope will quickly erode.

The Little Klickitat has a DOE-issued Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for exceeding the state's standard for water temperatures. Excessive sedimentation from increased soil erosion is known to have a negative affect on several water quality parameters, including water temperature and the availability of clean gravel for fish species that use gravel beds for spawning.

Interested in growing camelina? There will be an informal meeting on December 19 at 2 pm, at Windy Ridge in Goldendale. For information, call 773-3604.

WATER QUALITY, continued from page 1

ity assessment. A Category 5 stream does not meet one or more state and federal water quality standards. In our case, the three streams exceed the established temperature standard, which affects the habitat of resident rainbow trout as well as downstream steelhead.

A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for temperature is a lengthy process designed to work toward achieving water quality standards. It involves watershed planning, project implementation and monitoring. The Little Klickitat River is currently in the TMDL process. Recognizing that a TMDL is a lengthy and cumbersome process, the Department of Ecology has developed an alternative Straight to Implementation (STI) process. In the Rock Creek watershed the STI process is underway, and Swale Creek is soon to follow. Watershed planning takes place locally to involve stakeholders in efforts to address water quality and quantity concerns. Your local Conservation Districts and the Klickitat County Natural Resource Department help facilitate this process, along with the Department of Ecology. A Water Quality Improvement Protection Plan (WQIPP) will ultimately be produced, to guide stream restoration efforts. The stream monitoring and restoration work performed by the District is in support of the watershed planning process, as we seek to document stream conditions and establish projects to address watershed concerns.

The District would like to thank cooperating landowners who allow access for water quality monitoring as well as those who work with the District to implement riparian projects and/or agricultural Best Management Practices. We are a non-regulatory agency working with landowners on a voluntary basis. Our goal is for District activity to benefit natural resources, agricultural operations, and land management. If you would like additional information on stream monitoring, riparian restoration, or watershed planning efforts, please contact Jim Hill, District Manager, or Martha Blair, Water Quality Technician, at 509-773-5823 ext. 5.

2012 PLANT SALE

Enclosed you will find our 2012 catalog. This year, more plants will be offered as “singles”, but a 10% discount is offered for pre-ordering them in bundles of five. See the catalog for more details. Most of our plants are offered as either plugs or bare roots. Plugs are delivered with soil intact around the roots; sizes indicate the volume of soil in cubic inches (e.g. 20 cu). Bare root plants are usually listed by age and height. For example, a 2-1, 12”-18” tree was grown 2 years, then transplanted and grown another year, and the height of the stem above the root crown is 12-18 inches. Conservation grade (c.g.) plants are considered suitable for conservation purposes and are selected mainly on the merits of their possible survival, not for ornamental qualities. Please note that deciduous plants may arrive dormant, looking like nothing more than dead sticks. This is normal and is not cause for alarm or disappointment. See the last page of the catalog to find out which species require “sweating” to break dormancy. When you read that a particular species of plant is drought-tolerant, please keep in mind that it is only after the plant is established. *Every new plant needs regular, sufficient water for at least the first growing season.* It is also important to consider weed control. Without it, plants will be slow to establish, or may even fail. Seedlings that don’t have to compete with weeds grow quickly and are less vulnerable to wind damage, browsing, and disease. So when planning your project, please remember to account for regular water and weed control.

CENTRAL & EASTERN KLICKITAT CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

1107 S. Columbus Ave.
Goldendale WA 98620



Conservation • Development • Self-Government

Annual Meetings and Supervisor Elections

Both Central and Eastern Klickitat Conservation Districts will be hosting their Annual Meetings in February. Annual Meetings are a chance for you to meet district supervisors and staff, learn more about our programs, hear from other agricultural agencies, enjoy a free lunch, and even earn some pesticide applicator credits.

Annual Meetings are also the polling locations for our supervisor elections. Each conservation district in the state is governed by a five-member volunteer board; three elected by citizens of the district and two appointed by the Washington State Conservation Commission. Supervisors set priorities for the district, give guidance to district staff, and oversee the disbursement of funds. If you would like more information about conservation district elections, feel free to call the district office, or check out the Conservation Commission's web-site at www.scc.wa.gov.

Eastern Klickitat CD's Annual Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 9, 2012 at 9:00 am at Alder Creek Grange Hall in Bickleton.

Central Klickitat CD's Annual Meeting will be held Thursday, February 16, 2012 at 9:00 am at the Goldendale Grange Hall.