

KLICKITAT CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

SUMMER, 2012

Central & Eastern Klickitat Conservation Districts
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Water on Wheels



energy.

State-wide this last school year, the program was presented to **21,934** students and **985** teachers through **828** individual lessons.

Central and Eastern Klickitat Conservation Districts again helped sponsor the presentation of “Water on Wheels/Wheat Week” at Goldendale Primary School and Bickleton School. The 6-part series, developed and presented by Franklin Conservation District, includes lessons on watersheds, the water cycle, wheat production, and

Dear Washington Wheat Commission and CKCD,
I thank you for sponsoring and sending Ms. Hart for Wheat Week at our school. I learned about the water cycle and the wheat system. I really liked the watershed activity.
Thanks,
E. Bickleton Elem.

ATTENTION: Irrigators in Klickitat County

Save Water, Save Energy, Save Money

The Central Klickitat Conservation District has programs to help agricultural producers increase efficiency and save some money along the way. The *Save Water Save Energy* program is a partnership with Bonneville Power Administration and Klickitat PUD which targets on-farm energy efficiency, especially irrigation and lighting.

There are many small changes to your irrigation system that can make a big difference in efficiency. Worn out sprinkler nozzles and gaskets can lead to inefficient application of water, leaks, soil erosion, unnecessary energy usage, and unnecessary costs from pumping too much water. Rebates are available for several sprinkler hardware upgrades and repairs. Rebates for other irrigation pumping improvements, such as variable frequency drives, NEMA premium efficiency motors, and custom pump modifications, may be available through the program as well.

If you are thinking about replacing or repairing parts of your agricultural irrigation system contact us today for more information or to arrange a site visit. Please note that funding for the program is limited and will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact Kerry Bodily at 509-773-5823 ext. 5 or email cdeduca-tion@gorge.net. *Save Water, Save Energy, and Save Money* by signing up for this exciting program today!

WACD Wolf Task Force Position Paper

The following excerpts are taken from the WACD Wolf Task Force's six-page official position paper, which was released in May of this year. The complete document is available to view on our web sites, ckcd.org and ekcd.org, and also on the WACD web site, www.wadistricts.org/our-programs/committees/wolf-task-force.html.

The Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) supports and encourages the wise use and management of all natural resources that results in a healthy sustainable environment and economy for the future of the state and its citizens, including those who depend on forestland and rangeland resources.

WACD represents forty-seven conservation districts in the State of Washington, who provide programs and services for our state's working landowners and operators in natural resource conservation. In 2012, WACD established a **Wolf Task Force** in response to two resolutions from WACD membership requesting action on the issue of introduction of the Gray Wolf. WACD directed the task force to report on the impacts to conservation of natural resources, land use management and the economic viability of land users in the State of Washington by the continued state listing of the Northern Gray Wolf as a threatened and/or endangered (T&E) species, despite federal delisting in the eastern third of the state (*the federal delisting covers all lands east of US HYW 395*)

WACD supports the efforts and methods developed by various groups (i.e. Washington Cattlemen's Association and Cattle Producers of Washington) who have requested the delisting and immediate move to management status of the Introduced Gray Wolf by the Washington State Fish and Wildlife (WSFW) Commission.

The following is a list of specific conservation and landowner concerns supporting WACD's position related to the current implementation of Washington State's gray wolf management/recovery plan and the impacts that will be experienced on working lands (private & public):

- The best science strongly supports the US Fish and Wildlife Service's conclusion that the northern Rocky Mountain population is biologically recovered. It contains over 1,650 wolves, 244 packs and over 110 successfully breeding pairs. It has exceeded recovery goals for 11 consecutive years, occupies nearly the entire suitable habitat in the northern Rocky Mountains, is at or above long-term carrying capacity, and has high levels of genetic diversity and gene flow throughout the region. (*USFWS Gray Wolf Recovery and Delisting Q & A, May 2011*).
- WACD believes that the "Cascade Mountain Wolf" was native to the state. This species is extinct. This animal's habitat needs and food sources were uniquely different than those of the Northern Gray Wolf. The history of wolf presence in the State of Washington is limited and does not truly identify the Northern Gray Wolf as present. Therefore, the Northern Gray Wolf should be considered an *invasive* species not suitable to the habitat provided throughout the State of Washington.

The current Wolf Recovery Plan relies upon the unwarranted and unauthorized use of private lands to provide much of the habitat identified for this species, as well as upon increased management expenses that are incurred by the working landowner or operator.

- The use of private lands by apex predators has the potential for conflict (as demonstrated in other states) with current land management uses (private and public), economies (agricultural, sporting and governmental) cultures, and customs. The appropriation of private lands is occurring without regard, respect, or adequate compensation to the private landowners of Washington.

The gray wolf impacts the agricultural and forestry habitats and economies of the state by the following:

- In Washington State, the livestock industry is dependent upon healthy working lands - both large and small, and both public and privately held tracts - to provide grazing. *It should be noted that these working land managers are the best rangeland conservationists.* If the landowner is not able to remain economically viable, due to the negative impact of the Northern Gray Wolf, these tracts of land will be sold to the next best use, most likely a sub-division which will cause exponentially greater adverse natural resource impacts.
- Direct impacts due to predation of livestock.
- Indirect impacts due to predation of ungulates.
 - Wolf predation of ungulates (deer, elk and others) causes them to shift their grazing behavior, which has been shown to negatively impact livestock producers' ability to protect natural resources through conservation practices, such as to adhere to a rotational grazing plan (that may be required under a conservation plan and cost-share program contracts).
 - Harassment and predation of ungulates forces these populations to move from the rangeland and forested habitat to feed on high value commercial crops grown on land used for agricultural production.
 - The harassment of wild herbivores forces movement from desired forested cover into young reforestation units/forest tree plantations that are vulnerable to foraging damage. Such forced movements in neighboring states have been shown to have adverse impacts on all affected wildlife and associated habitat.
 - Harassment of livestock results in reduced productivity due to inefficient grazing. This can result in grasses being over-grazed in some areas, placing producers out of compliance with required management plans, and under-grazing in other areas, leading to competition for young trees as well as increased fire danger from fine fuels loading. Increased fine fuels mean that fires spread more quickly with increasing intensity, potentially doing more long-term damage to the resource.
 - Increased grazing pressure from all species trying to avoid predation can result in destabilization of the rangeland and riparian areas, leading to resource damage and impacts to existing conservation practices.
- Economic destabilization of livestock and wildlife enterprises may result in severe financial hardship and inability of land users to afford implementation of natural resource conserving practices. Neighboring states have shown increasing costs associated with actions needed to protect livestock, but resulting in very low success rates. When faced with increasing costs and limited resources, a producer's efforts at conservation often suffer first (e.g., less effective pasture utilization). This effect is worse when livestock producers are forced into "survival mode" protecting animals from wolf attacks. Considering the amount of high-quality conservation work performed by landowners and conservation districts on private, working lands of this type, this poses a very real threat to our ability to maintain conservation of these natural resources.
- Predictable adverse economic impacts can occur to the hunting/fishing/sporting industries if rangeland grazing is lost and is replaced by development. Habitat will be reduced and today's opportunities for hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities will be eliminated.

It is hoped that this position paper will stimulate a discussion of conservation impacts and possible solutions emerging from this situation. It is further hoped that this type of information will find a place at the table when decisions are made about the future of the Northern Gray Wolf and our working landowners and operators.

CENTRAL & EASTERN KLICKITAT CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

1107 S. Columbus Ave.
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Conservation • Development • Self-Government

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to improve, conserve, and promote the wise use of natural resources by serving the citizens within our districts through educational programs, public information, technical advice, and financial assistance.

Man - despite his artistic pretensions, his sophistication, and his many accomplishments - owes his existence to a six-inch layer of topsoil and the fact that it rains.

author unknown



On Saturday, June 23, 2012, members of the Trout Unlimited club and employees from the Central Klickitat Conservation District participated in watering and revitalizing riparian plantings and cleaning up the areas around the district's TMDL Projects on the Little Klickitat River at Ekone Park and Singing Bridge.