

KLICKITAT CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

Summer 2016

Central & Eastern Klickitat Conservation Districts

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Severely eroding streambanks are reshaped, stabilized, and then planted to native riparian vegetation.



Little Klickitat Temperature Study

Dry-season maximum water temperatures were the basis for Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) declaring the Little Klickitat River to be water-quality-impaired in 1996. Due to this designation, a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) was established for the Little Klickitat River in 2003. CKCD initiated water temperature monitoring in the Little Klickitat Subbasin in 1996, and continues to actively monitor streamflow, air temperature, and water temperature. CKCD has also completed a variety of projects to address the high water temperatures, including riparian plantings and livestock exclusion fencing, which improve riparian conditions and increase shade in the Subbasin. In 2012, while preparing the final report for DOE Grant #G0800396, CKCD identified declining trends (cooling) for maximum water temperatures over the period of monitoring for selected streams in the watershed. Discussions with DOE staff identified the need to determine if a cause was apparent.

Statistical analyses of the water temperature, streamflow, air temperature, locations, and timing of riparian projects was deemed necessary to determine if there was any cause-effect relationship to the cooling trend in water temperatures. In 2014, CKCD received Grant #G1400424 from DOE, which included funding for the analyses of water temperature trends over time at CKCD monitoring stations across the Subbasin, and for the stations showing decreasing water temperature trends. CKCD selected Aspect Consulting, LLC to conduct the statistical analyses.

Their findings indicated that six stations showed statistically significant declining maximum water temperatures over time, with one out of six stations demonstrating a statistically significant correlation with maximum air temperature and other two stations approaching statistical significance. There is a stronger, inverse correlation between the maximum water temperatures and the minimum stream flows, with five of six stations showing a statistically significant correlation. Note that, compared to the period of water temperature monitoring, the period of monitoring for continuous streamflow data is relatively short. Continuous streamflow data dates back to 2009 for two CKCD stations in the central portion of the Subbasin, and 2005 for the DOE station at the mouth of the Subbasin. Continuation of both monitoring programs to obtain longer streamflow data records might reveal a different correlation in the future. (Aspect Consulting, 2015. *Little Klickitat Subbasin Water Temperatures Trend Analysis*)

It's encouraging to see that our efforts over the past decade appear to be having a positive effect on water quality (specifically temperature) in our streams! CKCD continues to monitor water quality parameters in the Little Klickitat and Swale Creek Subbasins and to implement Best Management Practices, including streambank stabilization, livestock exclusion fencing, and riparian plantings, which improve water quality by decreasing sedimentation, increasing streamflow, and shading surface water. For more information on technical and financial assistance available through the District, call CKCD at (509)773-5823 x 5 or email cdoftice@ckcd.org.

Welcome to Central & Eastern Klickitat CDs!

Dr. Kent Apostol joins us as District Manager for both Central Klickitat CD and Eastern Klickitat CD. Kent comes to us from University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, where he was a Regional Extension Forester.



Jason Blain, a wheat farmer, cherry grower, and cattle rancher in the east end of the county, has been appointed to the board of EKCD as a mid-term replacement for an open position. This seat will be up for election in February. Thank you, Jason!



Elizabeth Matula, a 2013 graduate of Goldendale High School, is the new water monitoring technician for both districts.

CENTRAL & EASTERN KLICKITAT CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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Districts Partner with WDFW to Preserve Local Ag Heritage and Wildlife Habitat

In June, CKCD and EKCD finalized a Memorandum of Understanding with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), making the districts equal partners with WDFW in the management of several thousand acres of prime wildlife habitat that WDFW is purchasing in the Simcoe Mountains, east of Highway 97. WDFW understands that the excellent condition of the property is the result of nearly 100 years of responsible timber harvest and livestock grazing, so that agency is pleased to partner with the local conservation districts to facilitate the continuation of local agricultural activities, as well as institute additional conservation practices to further enhance the water quality, wildlife habitat, and recreational values of the property.

Eastern Klickitat Conservation District Showcases Farmland Preservation Efforts to State Leaders

On May 17, Eastern Klickitat Conservation District (EKCD) hosted members of the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) and partners on a tour featuring the district's ground-breaking work to preserve local farmland. The tour visited sites within the Rock Creek watershed where the district has started helping interested landowners explore how to preserve the farming industry and landscape for future generations. One new tool in the district's "farmland preservation toolbox" is agricultural conservation easements. Agricultural conservation easements are voluntary agreements that give landowners the option to sell their right to develop their property to an entity, which in this case is the conservation district. The agreement adds a permanent restriction on development and subdivision to the property title. Landowners are paid the portion of the property value that the development right represents and retain all other rights.



In 2015, the State Legislature provided funding for the district and their partner, the SCC Office of Farmland Preservation, to purchase two easements. This year, the partners are applying to the Washington Wildlife Recreation Program to fund three more easements. If funding requests are successful and the landowners decide to proceed, over 26,000 acres of farmland in the Rock Creek watershed will be preserved. EKCD is the first conservation district in the state to pursue the purchase of agricultural conservation easements at this scale. "Our success so far is a credit to what the conservation district does and the relationships they've developed with landowners," said Josh Giuntoli, coordinator of the SCC Office of Farmland Preservation.

Retired EKCD manager, Jim Hill, told tour participants that the district's work to preserve farmland also may benefit recovery efforts for salmonids listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including summer Chinook. "That's another reason we pursued these easements," said Hill. "In the long-run, it will help with habitat and water quality in Rock Creek." As land parcels are subdivided and developed, there can be a proliferation of new exempt wells. Depending on the number, this can lower stream flow and, in turn, increase water temperatures, which can be dangerous for salmon. "One projected threat to long-term fisheries recovery is the selling of parcels for development. So, one of the goals is to maintain large blocks of land," said Giuntoli. "That makes these projects a great fit."

SCC member Lynn Bahrych joined fellow tour participants in commending the conservation district and landowners for their work to preserve the agricultural landscape and natural resources during a time when many farm regions across the state are being lost or altered by development. "The highlight of the EKCD tour was the stunning landscape of the Rock Creek watershed, over 26,000 acres of beautiful creeks and canyons, now with the potential of being protected for future generations by a group of visionary landowners working with the conservation district and other partners," said Commissioner Bahrych.

Laura Johnson, Communications Coordinator
Washington State Conservation Commission