

2005 Report of Accomplishments (July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005)

Whatcom Conservation District



Most Significant Natural Resource Accomplishment

- Established Phase III rehabilitation on Fourmile Creek, completing just over 20,000 contiguous lineal feet of native riparian buffer on private agricultural land in an important sub-basin within the Nooksack Watershed (WRIA 1). Since 2003, through Phases I, II, and III, a total of 27 landowners have participated in planting their riparian areas to demonstrate that better functioning stream systems (i.e. free of reed canary grass, intact buffer of native plants, functioning filter strip) can improve drainage, water quality, water quantity and fish and wildlife habitat and thus benefit both farmers and wildlife.



View looking east at Phase III buffer planting on Fourmile Creek.

Mission of Whatcom Conservation District :

- Promotes conservation education and provides technical assistance to foster a healthy relationship between people and the environment.

Natural Resource Improvements in 2005 - Summary

- Partnered with local drainage improvement districts and Whatcom County Public Works to rehabilitate 46,390 lineal feet of stream bank. Stream segments benefiting from rehabilitation include portions of Johnson Creek, South Fork Nooksack, Saar Creek, California Creek and Deer Creek.
- Completed 10 Dairy Nutrient Management Plans, resulting in implementation of 113 agricultural best management practices.
- Coordinated farm tours, distributed newsletters, staffed informational booths, and provided classroom and field instruction to promote conservation education and natural resource stewardship.

Water Quality Implementation

- Completed 8 farm plans for non-commercial, hobby farms and provided significant technical assistance to 18 additional hobby farm operators, including site visits, fact sheets, and follow-up phone consultations.
- Led the effort to coordinate regulatory agencies and landowners to bring resolution to drainage issues in north Whatcom County.

Basic Funding

- Provided continuing education support for District Manager and administrative staff.
- Supported District supervisor election process.
- Maintained the District's water sampling supplies.

Local Funding

- WCD does not receive funding from Whatcom County, local cities, or an assessment.

Puget Sound/Water Quality

- Participated in 10 watershed education events and led 2 field experiences for adult and school age groups.
- Provided watershed education to approximately 3000 school age children and young adults through annual events such as Milk Makers Fest, 6th Grade Conservation Tour, Northwest Regional Envirothon, the Bellingham Eco-Expo, and the NW Washington Fair.
- Provided guidance to Whatcom County in its efforts to revise the county's critical areas ordinance, especially as it relates to "conservation planning on ag lands".
- Worked closely with Northwest Indian College and WA Dept. of Ecology to track local water quality trends in support of the Nooksack River Watershed Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load.

Professional Engineering

- Surveyed and provided conceptual design for removal of flow blockages on agricultural land in Tenmile Creek watershed.
- Evaluated fish passage conditions and designed fish passage improvements at irrigation pond spillways on tributaries of Bertrand Creek for a large commercial berry farm.
- Surveyed and provided technical assistance in support of channel maintenance and habitat restoration on a commercial dairy property in the Fishtrap Creek watershed.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

- As of June 2005, a total of 137 implemented CREP projects have improved 1245 acres and 73.6 miles of riparian fish and wildlife habitat in Whatcom County.
- Established 30 new planting projects encompassing 77 acres and 5.9 miles of new riparian buffer.
- Completed 99 fall maintenance inspections, 21 site preparation inspections, 21 planting inspections, 103 spring maintenance inspections, and 29 status reviews for 4 and 5 year old projects to confirm they will no longer need maintenance.
- In support of obtaining accurate state-wide CREP budget numbers for Washington Conservation Commission staff, WCD assessed CREP data from 22 other districts. WCD continued to make database improvements and has made its CREP database available for use by all conservation districts in Washington, encouraging all districts to develop solid local budget data for use at the state level.

Livestock/Dairy

- Completed 10 Dairy Nutrient Management Plans, including updating plans for existing facilities and writing plans for new facilities. These plans resulted in implementation of 113 best management practices.
- Completed 107 federal and 57 state costshare contract status reviews.
- Worked with NRCS staff to rank 120 producers who applied for 2005 Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) costshare funding. Fifteen contracts totaling \$1,079,334 were awarded in Whatcom County for 2005 federal EQIP funding. State funds contributed \$11,606 and landowner matching funds amounted to \$5869.

Watershed Conservation/Habitat Restoration

- Partnered with local drainage improvement districts and Whatcom County Public Works to rehabilitate 46,390 lineal feet of streambank with approximately 44,550 native trees and shrubs.
- Successfully completed all deliverables for the Tenmile Watershed Pilot Project, a sub-watershed based project to encourage local residents to adopt riparian buffer practices and to restore and maintain at least 12,000 linear feet of riparian habitat.
- Administered a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Aquatic On-the-Ground cooperative agreement enabling Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association to provide maintenance to existing plantings, to establish native vegetation along 8000 feet of riparian area, and to restore stream complexity by introducing large woody debris to the Tenmile watershed.

Small Farm Program

- Led development of 8 conservation plans incorporating agricultural BMPs (composting systems, fencing, use exclusions, nutrient management, filter strips, pasture management, etc.) to protect water quality for small livestock operations including horses, beef cattle, llamas, and goats.

Marketing/Outreach & Education

- Processed orders for 24,500+ trees, shrubs, and perennials during the District's 12th Annual Plant Sale.
- Led 3 tours of Whatcom County's agricultural buffers. Tours were given to support the Coordinated Resource Management program and to demonstrate to two groups from King County how successful local cooperative efforts have been in establishing riparian buffers of native plants on private agricultural land.
- Maintained communication with local cooperators through newsletter publications: two issues of Whatcom Conservation News (distribution list of 2000+ countywide) and five issues of In Balance (distribution list of 300+ local livestock industry recipients). Provided technical assistance to publication of three issues of Tenmile Treasures (distribution list of 300+) to residents of Tenmile Creek Watershed who own property along the creek.
- Maintained an educational display at various community events to provide watershed information and to encourage participation in District programs.

Washington Conservation District assisting land managers with their conservation choices



All year long, WCD is involved with activities that promote agriculture and encourage people of all ages to be stewards of the land and water.