

From Whitetop to Whitetail

Kelly Kolrud, Okanogan Conservation District

We congratulate **Okanogan County Wildlife Habitat Farmer of the Year Mark Nysether and the Sea Real Corporation** for encouraging riparian restoration and wildlife habitat while also maintaining rangeland for livestock grazing.

In 2002, Mark, President of the Sea Real Corporation, purchased a large tract of land just east of Twisp, Washington. Mark contacted the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) about opportunities and expertise that might be available to him as he tackled the joys and burdens of responsible land ownership. Through NRCS, Mark learned that the Okanogan Conservation District could also support his conservation goals.

In 2008, Mark and Sea Real Corporation constructed approximately 3 miles of fence to control livestock on what used to be a continuous, year-round grazing system where cattle had free access to the creek. In 2009-2010 additional pipeline and watering facilities were installed across the property to create a livestock watering system utilizing well water and numerous watering facilities. This has allowed existing wetland/riparian areas to be protected from livestock grazing impacts. NRCS employees have also worked with Mark on the development of a grazing and pest management plan for the property.

Initially, the property had its share of weeds; one weed in particular was Whitetop (*Lepidium draba*). This weed's density was increasing each year, displacing native vegetation and making particular areas of land no longer productive. With the weed management plan in place, Mark is seeing a reduction in the amount of this invasive noxious weed.

Mark continues to improve wildlife habitat. With help from US Fish & Wildlife, fencing has gone up around Jim Johnson Lake to improve water quality and wildlife habitat. He is currently planting hundreds of native hardwoods in the fenced-off areas to increase wildlife cover, nesting, and forage. The abundance of wildlife on his property shows that things are functioning properly.



Three years ago this area was 90-100% Whitetop.



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Okanogan Conservation District
WSU Okanogan County Extension

Resource Quarterly

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Repair? Replace? Rebate!

Kirsten Cook, Okanogan Conservation District

As the growing season comes to an end and your thoughts turn to maintenance and preparation for next year, remember that the Okanogan Conservation District has programs that will help you increase efficiency and save money. The **Save Water Save Energy** program targets on-farm energy efficiency, especially irrigation. Rebates are available for repair and replacement of a wide range of equipment. **So far, cooperators using this program have received close to \$500 in rebates and will be saving 3,004 kilowatt hours per year (kWh/yr) and nearly 6 acre-feet of water thanks to the improvements made to their system.**



As you take a look at your system this fall, consider some of these currently available rebates :

Irrigation Efficiency Measure	Rebate	Energy Savings
New flow controlling type nozzle for impact sprinklers.	\$4.00	27 kWh/yr
Rebuilt or new brass sprinklers.	\$3.75	27 kWh/yr
New rotating type sprinkler replacing impact sprinklers.	\$4.00	24 kWh/yr
New gasket for wheel lines, hand lines and portable main line	\$2.75	22 kWh/yr
New low-pressure regulators	\$5.00	37 kWh/yr
New rotating sprinklers replacing low pressure sprinklers.	\$4.00	24 kWh/yr
New multiple configuration nozzles for low-pressure pivot sprinklers.	\$3.00	48 kWh/yr
New multi-trajectory sprays that replace impact sprinklers	\$4.00	36 kWh/yr
New drains for wheel lines	\$1.00	22 kWh/yr
New hubs for wheel lines	\$14.50	63 kWh/yr
New drop tubes for low-pressure pivot sprinklers (min. 3 ft. length)	\$3.00	7 kWh/yr
New center pivot base boot gasket.	\$175.00	1367 kWh/yr
Cut and pipe press repair of leaking hand lines, wheel lines, and portable mainline (per section)	\$10.00	44 kWh/yr

Call or email us today to arrange a site visit with our Field Energy Analyst to take a look at your system and assess your eligibility for rebates. Funding for the program is limited and will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact Bob Clark at 509-422-0855 ext. 122 or email bobc@okanogand.org



Ties to the Land - A workshop for the whole family

Need information about legal and economic aspects of transferring farm and forest lands from one generation to the next? This one day workshop will help families develop techniques needed to address tough issues around succession planning.

Registration Fee is \$45 per family or ownership and includes “Ties to the Land” an award-winning curriculum developed by leading estate planning experts at Oregon State University Extension and the Austin Family Business Program.

Dates and locations are still to be determined. For more information and to view all upcoming events, please visit <http://ext.wsu.edu/forestry> or contact Andy Perleberg, WSU Extension Forester at (509) 667-6540 or andyp@wsu.edu

Stop Paying Sales Tax on Replacement Parts

Bob Clark, Okanogan Conservation District

Replacement Parts for Irrigation Systems and Water Wells Exempt from Sales/Use Tax

The Washington State Department of Revenue recently published a special notice explaining the Department's position on the sales/use tax exemption for replacement parts for qualifying farm machinery and equipment (http://dor.wa.gov/docs/pubs/specialnotices/2011/sn_11_irrigation.pdf).



The costs of replacement parts and service to install these parts are exempt. “Replacement parts” is defined to be “those parts that replace an existing part, or which are essential to maintain the working condition of a piece of qualifying farm machinery or equipment.” A distinction is made between qualifying machinery and equipment and non-qualifying buildings or structures. Irrigation systems, in particular, consist of a number of separate pieces of equipment generally grouped as pumping station/pumping plant, center pivot unit, etc. Only the purchase and installation of parts of these qualify for the exemption, while purchasing and replacing any of this equipment is subject to the retail sales tax. For example, replacing the motor of the pump qualifies for the exemption, but replacing the entire pump would not qualify.

Water wells, underground water lines, and underground power supply lines are structures that are not “qualifying farm equipment machinery and equipment.”

- Purchase of a center pivot span would not qualify for the tax exemption, but purchase of a sprinkler head, pressure regulator, wheel bearing, or wheel gearbox that replaces the same on an existing span qualifies.
- Parts that replace existing parts of a piece of equipment qualify for the exemption, even if those parts are upgrades (please refer to the article on Page Two that explains the Save Water Save Energy program that offers rebates for replacing parts of irrigation systems).

On the other hand, parts *added* to the irrigation system do not qualify. Moreover, purchasing the parts to make a piece of equipment does not qualify for the exemption. If you have questions, refer to the Department of Revenue online agriculture guide (<http://dor.wa.gov>) or call their Telephone Information Center at 1-800-647-7706.



Lynsey Bassen, WSU Raptor Club, shares information about birds of prey during last year's series.

Come to Highland Wonders ~ Explore Natural History

Fall has settled into the Okanogan Highlands, and the outdoor program **Highland Wonders** is moving indoors, featuring the natural history of the Okanogan Highlands and surrounding areas. Okanogan Highlands Alliance (OHA) will present a diverse array of speakers on the **first Friday of each month**, at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Cultural Center in Tonasket. The exciting Highland Wonders lineup in the months to come includes Bears of Washington, Owls and Woodpeckers, Bats, Bighorn Sheep and Butterflies, and the events are free of charge. OHA's Education Program is designed to build the capacity of the community to steward natural habitats and resources by helping to develop an informed and empowered population. Visit www.okanoganhighlands.org/education for more information.

Please note that December will be skipped in light of the many events offered during the holiday season.

Developing Agritourism in Okanogan County

Curtis Beus, Okanogan County WSU Extension

Breaking New Ground

We are very fortunate to live in a place as beautiful, diverse, rugged and full of adventure as Okanogan County. I grew up in Eastern Washington, but have lived the last 16 years in Western Washington, and only moved to Okanogan County six months ago. I am so very glad to be here, and excited for the opportunities to work with the farmers, ranchers, and other citizens of Okanogan County.



I am especially excited to announce that WSU Extension has just received a grant from the USDA

Risk Management Agency to begin a new program this year. The program is entitled “Breaking New Ground,” and through this program we will be working with farmers, ranchers, and other area citizens to expand what has come to be called “agritourism” in Okanogan County. Agritourism is pretty much what it sounds like – bringing tourists into farming country to visit farms and ranches, experience country/farm life, buy farm products, and get a small taste of life outside the rush and hassles of city life. Recent research indicates that agritourism, along with other rural-based tourism such as nature tourism, and heritage tourism, is expanding rapidly in the United States. As people have become more isolated from nature, the land, and their rural roots, many of them are seeking out genuine, real experiences where they can fill this void by getting closer to nature and their historical roots in their leisure time. And, as our increasingly urban population becomes more removed in both time and space from agriculture, there is a growing desire to make a connection with the source of our food and sustenance, and experience agricultural life.

Okanogan County already has a significant tourism industry, with its open spaces, beautiful landscapes, and many outdoor adventures, and of course Okanogan County also has many unique farms and ranches spread throughout the county. Some of the farms and ranches in the county have already developed agritourism enterprises to supplement their farming and ranching operations. However, there is a great deal more potential to develop successful, profitable tourism-based activities and enterprises on many more farms in Okanogan County. The primary goal of our new “Breaking New Ground” program will be to provide education, resources and assistance to farmers and ranchers in Okanogan County who want to start or expand agritourism enterprises as part of their farming and ranching businesses.

Before describing the “Breaking New Ground” program, it is probably useful to better define what is meant by terms such as “agritourism” and “value-added” agricultural products. Simply defined, an agritourism enterprise is a business conducted by a farm operator for the enjoyment and education of the



Developing Agritourism in Okanogan County, cont.

public, and to promote the products of the farm, and thereby generate additional revenue. Whereas in parts of Europe agritourism deals primarily with lodging on farms (“farm stays”), in the U.S., agritourism deals not only with lodging on farms, but also with various other activities ranging from birding to pumpkin patches to farm festivals. As the definition above suggests, agritourism often has a major goal of promoting and marketing the farms’ products. Many agritourism operations develop a variety of value-added farm products that are sold as part of the agritourism enterprise. Pies, cider, syrups, sausage, cheese, pickles, and countless other value-added products are marketed by farms involved in agritourism activities. The development and sales of these value-added products are often an integral and critical part of agritourism operations. However, some agritourism operations are strictly experience-based, providing camping, lodging, horseback riding, farm tours, etc. for their visitors.



The “Breaking New Ground” program will consist of two multiple-session training programs that will be repeated in two locations in the county. These training programs will help participants to better understand the agritourism industry, assess their resources for conducting agritourism enterprises, develop ideas for activities and products for their agritourism operations, assess and manage risk associated with agritourism, and most importantly devise marketing and business strategies to make sure their enterprises are profitable. In addition to the multiple-session training classes we will be conducting field tours of successful agritourism operations in the region for participants to visit, and the program will culminate in 2012 with a major regional agritourism conference to bring together the best resources and expertise to our area to help promote and build agritourism as a rural economic engine for Okanogan County.

If you think you might like to participate in this exciting new program, or if you simply want more information, please call the WSU Extension office at 509-422-7245. You can also e-mail me directly at beusc@wsu.edu and I will be very happy to correspond with you about this new program and opportunity.

Notice of Intent to Adopt an Election Resolution

The Okanogan Conservation District Board of Supervisors will hold an open public meeting at 4:00 PM on December 8, 2011 at 1251 S. 2nd Ave, Room 101, Okanogan, WA to adopt a resolution setting the date, time, and location of an election to fill a Conservation District Supervisor’s expiring term.

Are you interested in becoming more involved with your conservation district? An elected Board of Supervisors position for a term beginning in 2012 and ending in 2015 is open. This is a voluntary, non-compensated position which involves attending monthly board meetings as well as identifying natural resource needs throughout the District. Time commitment would be a minimum of six hours per month. For more information, contact the Okanogan Conservation District at 509-422-0855 or ocd@okanogand.org.

Don't Miss the Plant Sale!

Laura Clark, Okanogan Conservation District

Get your plant sale order in by January 13, 2012!

Visit the website, stop by the office, or give us a call for a catalog and order form. The 2012 spring plant sale will be conducted on one day only – Saturday, March 24, 2012 from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. All orders, project orders included, must be picked up on that date. Other pickup arrangements will be very limited this year due to expenses and cooler space.

Our spring native plant sale is done as a pre-sale of stock. We then order plants based on your orders. Some surplus is available, but limited in variety and quantity. There will be a very limited supply of ponderosa pine available for 2012 due to low sales in previous years.



Mock Orange (Philadelphus lewisii).

This and several other native plant species are available through the Conservation District bareroot plant sale.

Manager's Note...

Craig Nelson, Okanogan Conservation District

Many things related to conservation are happening right now and not just the great 'on the ground' work being done by the District and our fabulous cooperators.

Okanogan County is seeking participants for an ad-hoc advisory committee on whether Okanogan County should participate ('opt into') the Voluntary Stewardship Program. This is a program developed by the Washington State legislature to allow counties in Washington State to develop specific rules related to critical areas on and near agricultural lands. The first meeting is set for October 25th at 7:00 PM in the Commissioner's Hearing Room.

The Washington State Prescribed Fire Council is conducting a workshop related to using prescribed fire to treat lands as a conservation tool. The event will be in Wenatchee on March 6th and 7th. More information will be coming forward in the next couple of months so stay tuned to the Okanogan Conservation District website (www.okanogand.org) for more details.

Finally, **the Okanogan Conservation District** is working with other conservation districts, industry groups, and others to ensure that even with our tight financial times funding for voluntary conservation isn't cut by the Washington State legislature by significant amounts. We understand there will be cuts, but we feel that voluntary conservation measures lead to greater resource conservation than regulatory efforts.

We will work to keep all of you apprised of these issues and programs in the coming months. As always, if you would like more information give us a call, stop by our office, or visit our website.

Bonaparte Creek Cleanup

Kirsten Cook, Okanogan Conservation District

On a sunny Saturday in September, three dedicated volunteers met Conservation Planner Kelly Kolrud and me on the banks of Bonaparte Creek to remove trash from the creek. While we may have been few, we were mighty, filling the F-150 with four loads of garbage ranging from cigarette butts to a mattress and bed frame. In fact, we were having such a good time getting rid of things that we nearly threw Kelly's sneakers in the dumpster by accident!

Our biggest accomplishment was the removal of a dam in the creek created by two enormous tires. It took a great deal of effort to get these out of the creek bed and up over the side, away from the flood zone, but we were quickly rewarded as the clean gravel bottom was revealed. We were also able to pull a significant amount of lumber and other woody debris from another dam downstream, allowing water to flow more effectively and clearing a passage for fish looking to migrate upstream.



Scott and Kelly getting ready to take another load to the dumpsters.



BEFORE



AFTER

A huge thank you to volunteers Scott Olson, Lynn Hendrix, and Laverne Hendrix. We appreciate you and so does Bonaparte Creek! Ongoing funding for this project is provided by the Washington State Department of Ecology. Snacks were donated by SunOpta Foods and Home Depot provided funding for gloves, garbage bags, and tools. The Bonaparte Creek Restoration Project is coordinated by the Okanogan Conservation District and advised by the Bonaparte Creek Landowners Group.





Building a Shared Future



By Paula Mackrow, Methow Restoration Council

The first Annual Methow Salmon Celebration and Community Dinner enticed well over 200 folks to activities linking the Twisp Ponds restoration area with the TwispWorks campus for a day and evening filled with fun and food.

The afternoon event at Twisp Ponds was a collaboration between Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation (MSRF) and Methow Arts Alliance and included elements of the MSRF Watershed Watchers natural history program, salmon games organized by Okanogan Conservation District, a bird identification activity led by North Central Audubon Society, salmon flag painting hosted by Methow Arts Alliance, and more. The US Forest Service provided a giant Salmon Tent for native storytelling by Loretta Watt. The TwispWorks campus hosted the free dinner and entertainment, centered near the new Methow Valley Interpretive Center located at TwispWorks.

The event helped create connections between local community organizations and the Methow Restoration Council (MRC) network of resource agencies by bringing the larger community together for a fall harvest celebration, sharing stories, music, and conversation. Celebrating the watershed as our common home with salmon and recognizing their value to the community as a whole, brought a common theme to the harvest time dinner. Columbia River coho salmon were prepared for dinner by volunteers from the Methow Valley Interpretive Center as, coincidentally, fishing for coho opened in the Methow River for the first time in 30 years. Partnership for Sustainable Methow and Twisp Works coordinated the site planning, locally grown food and the orderly clean-up.

Speaking on behalf of salmon recovery efforts, Okanogan County Commissioner Bud Hover expressed the importance of this work to the entire



Metal salmon art welcomed the public to the activities at Twisp Ponds.



The Rolling River: hands on exploration is always fun!



More than 200 folks took part in the salmon dinner and potluck.



Building a Shared Future, cont.



community. Welcome and entertainment were provided by the Pinkertons, Ken Bevis, Chewaco Drummers, Rob Crandall and the Jugglers and TwispWorks site manager Tori Karpenko. Tinker Watt and Spencer Martin provided a traditional blessing of gratitude for the dinner as salmon are a symbolic link from the past to our shared future.

The MRC partners work together to promote the understanding of natural systems including natural history and ecology with a focus on the Methow watershed. Collaborations and partnership efforts for salmon recovery continue to grow as new opportunities arise to address habitat conditions. Through the Salmon Celebration, the MRC goal is to help the community to better recognize the links between rivers and floodplains; riparian and upland habitats, while living respectfully with the rivers and streams of our watershed.



Traditional blessing at the start of the dinner.

Through a variety of actions focused on Endangered Species Act salmon recovery, the MRC supports local community stewardship of our watershed through involvement in water quality and habitat protection. Recognition of the social and economic benefits of a healthy watershed creates opportunities for improved recreation, fishing and tourism industries. The event was partially funded by Bonneville Environmental Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Trout Unlimited, Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Ecology Washington State Centennial Fund. All photos for this article provided by D.E. McIvor/Hinterlands.

LIVING WITH THE METHOW RIVER CALENDAR



COVER ARTWORK BY MACKENZIE WOODWORTH

Methow Restoration Council and Methow Arts Alliance are excited to offer an 18-month calendar to landowners involved in recovery projects as well as the general public. The river-centric wall calendar features block prints made by Methow Valley 5th graders. The students learned about fish and habitat from river ecologists and then worked with local artists to create their prints. Each month has useful facts about fish, river terminology and contact information for water resource agencies and nonprofit organizations working with watershed protection and restoration. The calendar is free and available to the public at the Twisp and Winthrop libraries as well as at the Bureau of Reclamation office in the Riverbank Building in Twisp.

Okanogan Land Trust Community Partnerships

By Fernne Rosenblatt, Okanogan Land Trust

On July 4th, 2011, the Okanogan Valley Land Council officially became the Okanogan Land Trust. The name has changed, but the dedication to protecting working land, open space, and wildlife habitats remains the same. Through voluntary conservation easements and local community action we're helping to improve the economics of open space so we can all continue to enjoy the values it provides.

In 2008, the 840-acre Buzzard Lake property, just west of Okanogan, went up for sale and neighbors worried that intrusive development would soon follow. Instead, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) purchased the property, bringing sighs of relief and inspiring neighbors to organize and discuss the future of Buzzard Lake. In 2009, neighbors gathered for a clean-up day at the lake and heard from Dale Swedberg, WDFW Manager for Buzzard Lake. He talked about the need to complete a formal survey and fence to protect the lake and then move into restoration. Neighbors offered to help with the fencing and to keep an eye out for stray cattle at the lake. Thinking to the future and the possibility of grant funding for projects, the group adopted the name "Friends of Buzzard Lake" and requested fiscal sponsorship from Okanogan Land Trust.

In May 2011, Okanogan Land Trust, in partnership with Friends of Buzzard Lake and WDFW, received an Aquatic Land Enhancement Account (ALEA) Volunteer Cooperative Grant for the first phase of Buzzard Lake Restoration. The project is intended to improve the campground area at the lake and keep cars, trucks and ATV's from disturbing the sensitive wetland areas adjacent to the lake. On September 19, 2011, fourteen volunteers from the Okanogan Land Trust, Friends of Buzzard Lake, Okanogan Fly-fishing Club, and former WDFW employee John Danielson worked over 95 hours to build nearly 1,000 feet of barrier fencing near the campground at Buzzard Lake. An additional 750' of barbed wire was completed after the work party to tie in the camping area. The remainder of the project, which includes placing fire rings and land signage, will be implemented Spring 2012 with Okanogan Land Trust and others in our community.

What started as a mailbox conversation has become an amazing example of community stewardship. Okanogan Land Trust President Christine Olson says, "This is an excellent example of how our local land trust can encourage conservation through partnerships with other local groups. In this case, we are helping Friends of Buzzard Lake make a stewardship dream come true in partnership".



Fall is a great time to get those weeds!

By Janet Nelson, Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board

It is time for your Fall treatment of your perennial and biennial noxious weeds such as Russian Knapweed, St Johnswort, and Toadflax, as well as Spurge Flax, which is a Class A annual. Using a fall application of herbicide, with a spring follow-up, provides better and more efficient control, as these plants will absorb the herbicide down into the root system as they go dormant. Even biennial weeds such as Knapweed, Thistles, and Houndstongue fall rosettes can be treated now with good results. Always read and follow the herbicide label.



Please don't let Scotch Thistle get this large!

Fall is also a great time to consider re-seeding those areas where you performed weed control on your property earlier this year. By re-seeding those areas and any disturbed areas, you will not only be providing competition for noxious weeds next year, but you will also be able to choose what kind of vegetation that you want to grow in the area. Make sure that the seeds you buy are compatible with the area that you will be re-seeding. A little bit of research before you start re-seeding an area can save you a lot of time and money, and will also help ensure that you get the results that you are looking for.

You will also want to make sure that you are buying seeds that are certified as being 'Weed Free', to keep from introducing some other kind of weed into the area. Always read the seed package before you buy it to see if you are getting the product that you want. And keep in mind that if you spend a little more money now and buy a quality product to re-seed your property, you may be saving yourself a lot of time, money, and headaches in the future.

Now that we are moving on to the fall season we have noticed the increased moisture seemed to make every viable seed in the soil germinate. More surveying efforts are going to continue to take place October through November.



Dalmatian toadflax

Coming soon to Eastern Washington!



The Smithsonian exhibit "**Dig It! The Secrets of Soil**" will be featured at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture from February 4, 2012 until September 22, 2012 in Spokane, Washington. The exhibit was created in partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the Soil Science Society of America, Nutrients for Life Foundation, and the National Association of Conservation Districts. Info at www.northwestmuseum.org.

Okanogan Conservation District

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Okanogan Conservation District

Providing local leadership through educational, technical, and financial assistance to landowners to help them voluntarily conserve and enhance natural resources for over 65 years.

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