



Your Local Voice in Conservation

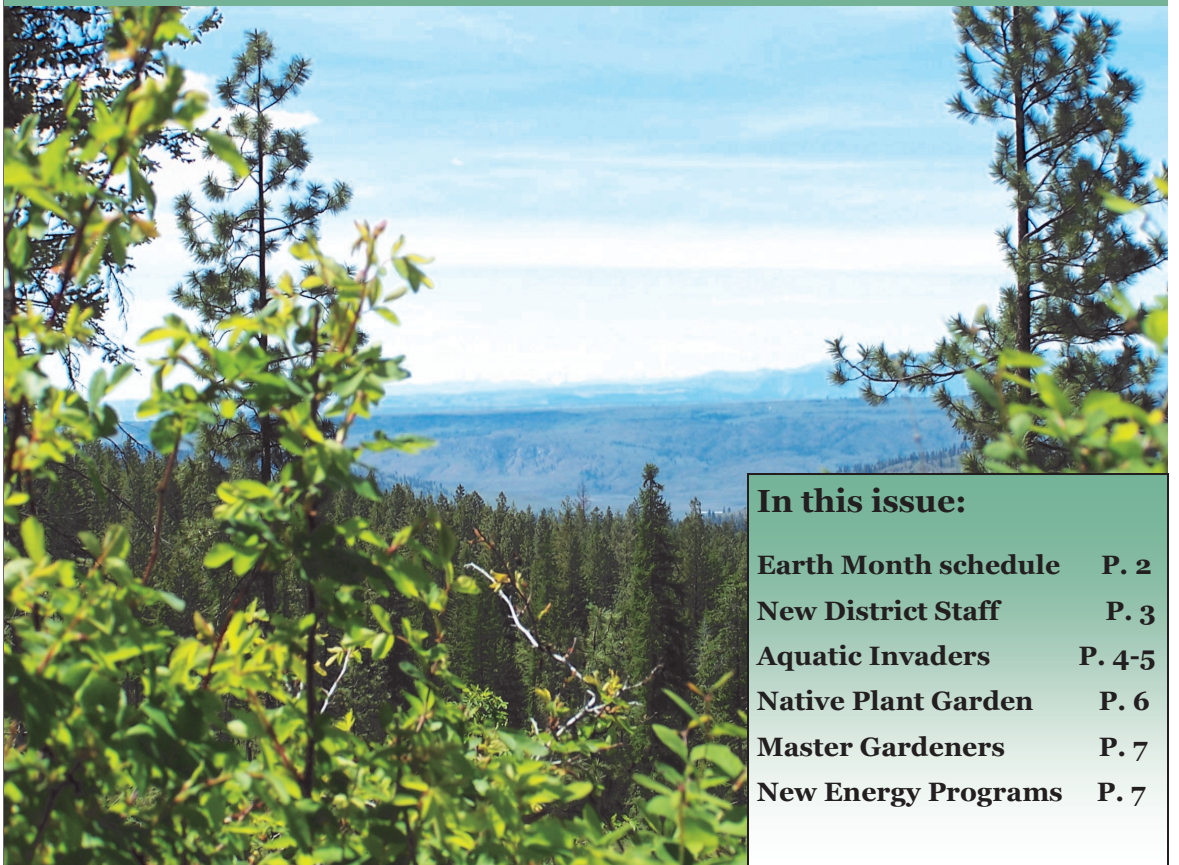
At the Okanogan Conservation District, we take pride in addressing the natural resource concerns of our constituents, the landowners and lessees of Okanogan County. Whether it's a small backyard or a vast ranch, our mission is to help cooperators achieve their conservation goals.

All our programs are voluntary and non-regulatory. As such, we rely on input from the community to help us target the natural resource issues of highest concern. We hope that you will take a moment to fill out our online survey and let us know your thoughts on our programs and services. We value your opinion!

You can also go to our website for a direct link to the survey. If you would like a hard copy of the survey mailed to you, please contact the office at (509) 422-0855 ext 100.

2012 Natural Resource Priority Survey

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GKFKSPB>



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Earth Month and Beyond!

Kirsten Cook, Okanogan Conservation District

The Okanogan Conservation District is gearing up for a busy Spring season with lots of outreach and education opportunities for the community. You'll find us at several different events, particularly around Earth Day, April 22. We invite you to stop by and see what we are up to!

Friday April 20:

🌍 **Colville Confederated Tribes Earth Day Celebration** in Nespalem. Free and open to the public. Lots of booths, door prizes, and more. Starts at 10 a.m.

🌍 **Wenatchee Valley College Green Fest** in Omak. Free and open to the public. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Features a variety of activities on sustainable living and environmental issues.

Sunday April 22:

🌍 **Green Okanogan Earth Day Alternative Faire** at the Community Cultural Center in Tonasket. Doors open at 9:30. Booths, food, and e-cycling of old computers, monitors, and TVs.



We're also busy with school programs up and down the Okanogan Valley, from Brewster to Oroville. We provide programs for nearly all of the school districts in the area who attend 6th grade camp. Thanks to funding from the Washington State Department of Ecology, we are able to teach about watersheds and water quality to over 500 students each spring.

On May 30 and 31, Okanogan Conservation District will be hosting the **State Envirothon** competition at Lake Wenatchee YMCA Camp. This contest will bring together the top high school teams across the state to see who has the strongest environmental and natural resource knowledge. The winning team at this event will go to the Canon Envirothon in Pennsylvania to compete against the top teams from the United States and Canada. Volunteers are needed for the state event; let us know if you are interested!

On June 9th, you'll find us at the annual **Kids Fishing Day** at the Winthrop Fish Hatchery. It's a great place to learn about local fish, their habitat, and how to wield a fly rod should you want to try to catch (and release) one.

If you know of community events that the Conservation District should be a part of, please let us know!

District Welcomes New Conservation Planner

Laura Clark, Okanogan Conservation District

We welcomed Terri Williams to our staff in February as a conservation planner. Terri received her degree in Horticulture/Landscape Management from Brigham Young University in 2003. She has previously worked as an assistant nursery manager, handling wholesale plant orders. She was also involved in a native plant restoration project in Utah for two years.



Terri is a Master Gardener. She worked in the office at the Okanogan WSU Extension for a year and spent three years as the Master Gardener Coordinator, where she also helped train new Master Gardeners.

Terri has spent the past six years managing a 35-acre farm where she raises sheep, cattle, and chickens. She sells sheep, beef, eggs, and hay. She recently completed a sheep shearing class, which will help her in her spinning, knitting, and crocheting.

Terri will be responsible for our livestock programs. If you have a livestock project with which you need assistance, please feel free to contact her at (509) 422-0855 ext. 105 or terriw@okanogand.org.

Manager's Note...

Craig Nelson, Okanogan Conservation District

Communication. It's a word we hear more and more in the digital age. Yet, the more we hear the word, the more we hear there isn't any communicating!

The Okanogan Conservation District can certainly sympathize. We struggle with how to get information out to the public in a cost-effective and useful manner. Then we wonder if we are hitting the mark. Some tell us we are, others tell us we aren't, and the majority is silent.

We began putting more information out a couple of years ago using our webpage, increased the quantity and diversity of content in our newsletter, and hired a full-time conservation educator who goes out to organizations, schools, and communities to inform and educate on district activities and conservation issues.

We continue to work to find the right level of effort and expense for communicating our activities, natural resource information that is important to our community, and other organizations' activities. Most of our funding sources want only limited funding used for outreach. That's what they call communication in the grant-funded natural resource world.

What value do you place on communication? We would like to hear what you think we are doing well and what we could do better in our effort to communicate to all.

Please fill out our survey or send me an e-mail directly at craign@okanogand.org

Ready to have some fun out on the water?

Anna Lyon, Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board

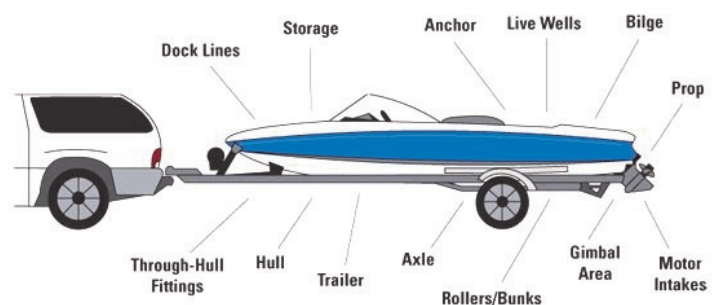
Spring is finally here and for many of us that means that it's time to take our boat or personal watercraft out of storage and head out to the lake for an enjoyable day on the water. But, before you head out for your day of fun on the water, you need to be aware that spring is also the time of year when aquatic noxious weeds such as **Eurasian Water Milfoil**, **Purple Loosestrife**, and **Yellow Flag Iris** are starting to grow again. And, aside from aquatic noxious weeds, there are also other invasive aquatic organisms such as: **Zebra Mussels**, **Quagga Mussels**, and **New Zealand Mudsnails** that we all need to be aware of and keep a sharp eye out for.



Whether we are heading out to our favorite fishing hole, taking the kids water skiing, or just cruising the lake we all need to do our part to stop the spread of these invasive aquatic organisms. One simple step that we all can, and should, do to reduce the spread of invasive aquatic organisms is: before entering and after leaving the water, check your entire boat, trailer, and other equipment for signs of aquatic hitchhikers. When inspecting, you should pay particularly close attention to areas where plant fragments or aquatic organisms can become trapped or hidden on your boat or trailer. For more information about aquatic invasive species, please contact the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Office at (509) 422-7165.

In an effort to reduce the spread and impacts of aquatic invasive species in Okanogan County, the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Office is tentatively planning an aquatic invasive species seminar for sometime in May. At the seminar, the Weed Office will be featuring presentations on identifying aquatic noxious weeds and other invasive aquatic organisms. The seminar will also feature a lot of useful information on ways to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species, as well as information about who to contact if you should happen to come across them. And, for those of you who have a pesticide applicator license, the seminar will also be worth credits toward your pesticide license recertification.

Before launching and before leaving...
Inspect everything!



To assist in planning for the aquatic invasive species seminar, the Noxious Weed Office is asking that those who are interested in attending the seminar please contact the Noxious Weed Office as soon as possible. Noxious Weed Office staff can be reached by telephone at (509) 422-7165, by email at noxiousweeds@co.okanogan.wa.us, or in room 102 of the Okanogan County Courthouse.

Keep an eye out for these invasive species!



Eurasian Milfoil



Zebra Mussels



Yellow Flag Iris



Purple Loosestrife



New Zealand Mudsnails

Native Plant Garden Takes Root at TwispWorks

Rob Crandall, Methow Natives

2012 will bring some new additions to The TwispWorks campus. Located at the old Forest Service complex, TwispWorks will welcome a native plant garden and celebrate the opening of the Methow Valley Interpretive Center on June 9.

TwispWorks was founded in 2009 to promote a vibrant community partnership, supporting economic vitality, local agriculture, arts and culture, and innovative educational opportunities. The Methow Valley Interpretive Center (MVIC) was established a year later, and immediately began renovating an older house in

the northwest corner of the campus to accommodate its vision. MVIC's mission is to create an interpretive center that recognizes the pre-European native inhabitants and portrays the geology and natural history of the Methow Valley. To this end, MVIC contacted Methow Natives to explore a partnership establishing a native plant garden to support these goals.

The Native Garden at TwispWorks will serve as a gateway for the Methow Valley Interpretive Center, drawing visitors to the Center, inspiring them to learn more about the natural history of the Methow Valley. The garden will serve as a regional center for native plant education, highlighting native habitats, restoration, local geology, and cultural uses of native plants.

The Red Shed Garden, a program of Room One, will be simultaneously developing a sustainable agriculture garden adjacent to the native plot. The two gardens will work closely together emphasizing the balance between our agricultural needs and conserving native habitat. The native garden will be designed to compliment and integrate with all other programs and outdoor spaces at TwispWorks.

The TwispWorks Native Garden will be designed around multiple habitats, with shrub-steppe, riparian, montane, and subalpine habitats all having designated areas. Over 150 species are expected to be planted. While there are a few public gardens in eastern Washington that have small sections dedicated to native plants, the region is lacking a comprehensive public native garden. Education will be the central focus of the garden with ample information on specific plants as well as ecosystem themes. Ethnobotany, water conservation, non-native species, and restoration will be among the topics covered.

Plans are to break ground this spring with planting slated for October 2012. Volunteers are welcome: there will be lots of great opportunities to help build the garden and learn more about native plants! Please contact Rob Crandall, Methow Natives (509-341-4060); Carolyn Schmekel, MVIC (509-997-4904) or Kelleigh McMillan, Room One, (509-997-2050) for more information.



Master Gardeners Dig Deep

Terri Williams, Okanogan Conservation District, on behalf of the Master Gardener Foundation

The WSU Okanogan County Master Gardeners sharpened the most important tools in their toolboxes – their minds – by attending the first Master Gardener Advanced Training Event on March 17th.

The keynote speech, “Gardening with a Sense of Humus”, by Penny Simonson, former Spokane County Master Gardener Coordinator, kicked off the Training with a humorous and informative look at what it means to be a true “Master Gardener”.

Terri Williams, Master Gardener Foundation president (and Okanogan Conservation District planner), spoke on “Xeriscaping”, landscape design and maintenance focusing on water and other resource conservation. Jim Bone, past Master Gardener Foundation president and Washington State Master Gardener of the Year (2006), spoke first about composting (a great way to protect the soil and add organic matter and nutrients to the soil) and then conducted a class entitled “Growing Berries in NCW”. He covered strawberries, blueberries, black and raspberries, as well as rarities such as hardy Kiwi fruit. Door prizes, great food, and networking with other MGs rounded out the program.

WSU Master Gardeners are trained volunteers charged with the task of helping gardeners and home horticulturists. They can identify garden and landscape pests and diseases. They teach community classes on many garden-related topics. They generally support and promote research-based solutions to horticulture problems. To consult with a Master Gardener about your garden and landscape questions, call (509) 422-7245 or visit the WSU Extension Office Clinic in the main Okanogan County Courthouse, Rm. 101, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from May through October. You can also find a friendly Master Gardener at a local Farmer’s Market near you!

Two New Programs Support Energy Efficiency on the Farm

Here at the District we have been telling you all about the **Save Water Save Energy** program that provides rebates through local utilities when you adopt certain energy efficient measures like low-flow nozzles for your irrigation system. We recently learned of two other programs that may be able to leverage the dollars from Save Water Save Energy and provide you with additional funds to make your project idea a reality.

NRCS ENERGY INITIATIVE:

The 2012 On-Farm Energy Initiative provides technical and financial assistance. This is a continuous sign-up program, so you may submit an application at any time. Learn more at www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov or call the Okanogan field office at (509) 422-2750.

RURAL ENERGY DEVELOPMENT FOR WASHINGTON:

This program can help small business owners and farmers find grants, tax subsidies, and financing support to purchase new energy-efficient equipment or to install small-scale renewable energy systems. This is a partnership program between Washington State Department of Commerce and Northwest Sustainable Energy for Economic Development (Northwest SEED). Call (360) 725-5038 or visit www.nwseed.org/ruralrenewables.asp.

Okanogan Conservation District

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www.okanogancd.org

WSU Okanogan County Extension
www.okanogan.wsu.edu

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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WSU Okanogan County Extension

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Resource Quarterly

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