



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
OKANOGAN COUNTY EXTENSION

Okanogan Conservation District
WSU Okanogan County Extension

Resource Quarterly

Bonaparte Creek Implementation Project

– Okanogan Conservation District - By Kelly Kinney, OCD

Several years in the making, success came when the Okanogan Conservation District partnered with Whitestone Cattle Company to relocate a livestock corral and winter feeding area from the banks of Bonaparte Creek. Riparian plantings and other bank stabilization structures were also implemented to reduce erosion. The District used funding from multiple sources to reimburse the landowner and his contractor for moving the corral and installing the erosion control practices.



The project began in 2005, as the Okanogan Conservation District submitted a grant application to the Washington Department of Ecology to address elevated fecal coliform and sediment levels in Bonaparte Creek. Fundraising success enabled Conservation District staff to then work with private landowners to develop a plan to reduce sediment and coliform.

The Whitestone Cattle Company landowner contacted the District about their idea for moving the corrals and implementing conservation best management practices to reduce erosion from the banks of Bonaparte Creek where it flowed through his property. The District worked with the landowner and other agencies to plan, design, fund, and install the best management practices in 2009. Practices implemented included: development of a well located 950 feet from the creek channel to supply off-stream water for approximately 550 head of cattle, 5 stock tanks via 5,300 feet of associated pipeline, and a hardened rock watering point was also constructed as an alternate water source for

livestock. In addition, the corral was relocated approximately 550 feet from the channel.

The Okanogan Conservation District, as well as the landowner, recognized that greater benefits would be gained by increasing bank stability within the 2.5 miles of Bonaparte Creek by installing in-stream structures. Therefore, OCD solicited engineering assistance through the Washington Conservation Commission. In-stream structures such as live brush mats (277 feet installed) and associated anchoring hardware were placed in strategic locations to increase channel roughness and stop incising and bank erosion. In areas where plantings could take hold, 830 willows were also planted.

The Okanogan Conservation District staff served as the project coordinator. Other technical assistance partners included the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Kittitas County Conservation District, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Washington Department of

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Transportation. Funding partners included Washington State Department of Ecology, USDI Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee, and the Upper Columbia Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group.

The full impact of the practices implemented will not

be known for several years. However, the removal of the livestock corrals that were adjacent to Bonaparte Creek will reduce inputs of fecal coliform, sediment, and nutrients to the creek. Further, the practices installed to control stream bank erosion will reduce sediment loading in Bonaparte Creek which is a high priority for local resource agencies.



Forest Thinning Projects

By Laura Clark, OCD



What

Forest thinning projects restore forest health and add additional protection to structures from wildfires. This is done by reducing the amount of competing vegetation so the remaining plants can receive the natural resources necessary that are otherwise taken by other plants.

Why

Forest stands can become overcrowded with too many trees and shrubs which not only creates competition for their essential needs (water, sunlight, and nutrients), but also causes the entire vegetative community to be weakened. Trees can become victims of insect infestation, ivy, mistletoe, etc. due to their reduced health. Many of these trees are unable to increase in size with some forest stands producing very small diameter, consistently sized trees (even-aged stands) which reduces diversity. Some species of plants are unable to endure the competition and are eliminated completely, sometimes leading to extinction within a particular forest.

Who

Are you planning a forest thinning project on your property? Private landowners often don't know how to plan their project, where to turn for assistance, or even that assistance

is available. The District would like to help you attain your goals of forest restoration and reducing the threat of a wildfire destroying your home and other structures by aligning you with available planning and financial assistance.

How

The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has a landowner stewardship program. You can request free assistance in developing a forest plan for your property and/or having a Wildfire Risk Assessment completed. The stewardship program also contains a grant which offers 50% of the cost of non-commercial thinning projects up to \$250 per acre. For further information on this program, please contact Ron Wonch at (509) 429-0167.

The Okanogan Conservation District can provide a FireWise class to your community upon request. This class covers the various aspects of property and structures vulnerability to wildfires and shows the landowner how to evaluate their risk of destruction by a wildfire. More importantly, it will help you determine methods to reduce your risk. For more information, contact Laura Clark at (509) 422-0855 ext. 127.



Unveiling the Mystery Behind Alfalfa

Nitrogen Fixation

By Dan Olson, OCD



While molecular nitrogen (N_2) makes up about 78 percent of the atmosphere by volume, it is not directly available to plants. However, many naturally occurring bacteria are catalysts in the conversion of molecular nitrogen into ammonia, (NH_3) a usable form to plants and other life. Rhizobia are nitrogen fixing bacteria that form specific symbiotic relationships with legumes. In these relationships, the rhizobia enter the roots of the plant, where they stimulate formation of root nodules and synthesize. Once established in the nodules, the rhizobium utilizes carbohydrates produced by the plant. The legume gets the benefit of readily available nitrogen which it can utilize.

Alfalfa is host to a specific rhizobium called *Sinorhizobium meliloti*. This rhizobium may need to be introduced when first seeding alfalfa or even after a long rotation with another crop. This is easily done by purchasing seed that is inoculated with *Sinorhizobium meliloti*. It may take some time for the rhizobia to get established in nodules on the alfalfa roots. Because of this, a small nitrogen application will benefit the establishment of a new alfalfa crop. This starter fertilizer should be held to 30 pounds or less of nitrogen per acre. Once an alfalfa stand is established and the nodules are developed, the rhizobia are very efficient at fixing nitrogen for the alfalfa plant. These organisms are very capable of providing all of the nitrogen that an alfalfa crop will use. Adding nitrogen fertilizer can decrease the efficiency of the nitrogen fixation as the plant will not rely on the rhizobium for its nitrogen source, therefore inhibiting its nodulation and function. In addition, nitrogen applied to an alfalfa crop will stimulate the growth and establishment of weeds and grass reducing the alfalfa crop.

If an alfalfa crop shows signs of nitrogen deficiency, it is typically more economical to correct the issue that is limiting rhizobia function than to apply nitrogen fertilizer to the crop. Any stresses to the crop will also cause a reduction in nitrogen fixation. Adequate levels of phosphorus, potassium, sulfur, boron, zinc, iron, copper, and molybdenum are critical the health of the alfalfa and efficient nitrogen fixation. Get regular soil analyses and tissue analyses to ensure nutrient and mineral adequacy. Maintaining optimum soil moisture with proper irrigation water management is critical to a healthy crop. Soils that are too wet or too dry will impair crop health and nodule function. Also, excessive acidity can disrupt the rhizobium's efficacy, however this is rarely a problem in Okanogan County. If you are having doubts about your alfalfa's sufficient nodulation, pull up a plant. Many nodules should be clearly observed with the naked eye. If there are few nodules, the rhizobia may not have

been sufficiently populated in the soil or they may have been impeded by plant stresses. If they are pink or red in color, they are properly functioning. If they are mostly green, gray, or white they may be inefficient nitrogen fixers. In the event of inadequate nodulation, remove stresses to the crop and monitor crop condition. A soil analysis or tissue analysis would be ideal for monitoring nutrient content. If nitrogen concentrations continue to be low after providing optimal crop conditions, it may be necessary to apply nitrogen fertilizer to the crop. Also, as an alfalfa stand ages and is mixed with grasses, it may be beneficial to apply a moderate amount of nitrogen fertilizer based on the ratio of grass to alfalfa.

2010 Beef Management Calendar

MISC0396



Just in time for the new year and your winter planning, a 2010 Beef Management Calendar (MISC0396) is available to assist you in formulating a management plan for your beef operation. You can use the calendar to schedule various management practices and farm-related activities. It provides timely month-to-month management recommendations for both spring and fall calving herds in the areas of nutrition, animal health, reproduction, marketing, pasture and range management, and business or farm management. It can also be used as a record keeping tool for calving and breeding records that can ultimately be used for birth verification for mandatory country-of-origin labeling (mCOOL) requirements and age verification programs. The calendar also features a section that explains age- and source-verification programs and mCOOL. A bound printed version with color cover can be purchased at the WSU Okanogan Extension office for \$5 or ordered at <http://pubs.wsu.edu>. It can also be downloaded as a PDF document at the website.



Energy Efficiency in Your Building



AKA Energy Audit

By Laura Clark, OCD

Being energy efficient, whether at work or home, can seem a bit overwhelming since there are so many variables. However we often overlook the basics, thinking they can't possibly make that much difference. Going back to the age old drawing board and adding today's insights can shine a new light on the issue.

Being energy efficient is about conserving what we do have. We have heard most or all of these energy saving ideas, but are we doing them?



Be light smart



Even if you are only leaving the room for a few minutes, it is a few minutes saved. If you figured out how many of those "few minutes" you have across a day or week, you will see that it can add up to as many as 100 hours or more per year.

Most people are used to what is called "over-lighting". This is where an architect made sure a room was lit in every nook and cranny. Perhaps it is even your décor of lamps being over-utilized. And don't forget the size and type of your light bulbs affect your energy usage. Whatever the case, determine what is truly needed and either quit using the excess lighting or remove it.



Some appliances continue to use energy even when they are turned off.

In our high-tech world we have acquired more and more electronics and other appliances, especially in our homes. Try a test at home: Shut down your house as you would if you were heading out to work or somewhere else for several hours. Then go out and check your electric meter. The faster the black dot on the wheel returns to view, the more electricity you are using. It may surprise you to see how much electricity is being used when no one is home. The culprits could be any one or all of those appliances or electronics. The obvious ones are the equipment that has a light indicator still on once the item is turned off: computer monitors (the computer too, even if there is no indicator light), TVs, DVD and VHS players, your cable box, electronics chargers

(phone, etc.), battery chargers (including that electric razor, electric toothbrush, etc.), etc. The list can be quite extensive once you get looking. At the office this can get even more extensive when you multiply how many computers and other appliances are left on. Also, any appliance or system that runs on 220 volts is using electricity twice as fast as a 110 volts item. This includes your cooking oven, clothes dryer, and air conditioner which all run on 220 volts.



Check your equipment - is it running efficiently?

Many pieces of equipment should have regular maintenance. Don't forget "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Filters, oils changes, spark plug changes, lubricants, etc. can go a long way for bringing a piece of equipment back up to its optimum running capacity. If they are not running at their optimum, perhaps the savings could be found in replacing them.



Heating and cooling systems use a lot of energy.

You've heard it before – heat up to 68° F in the winter and cool down to 74° F in the summer. We need to determine whether or not we are interested in the comfort of the perfect temperature or whether we are willing to change our clothing to accommodate something more energy efficient. Is turning off the heaters or air conditioner while you are away an option? Another thing to watch for is if your heating and cooling systems are competing against each other. Depending on your temperature systems, it is possible to have both on at the same time causing the heating system to attempt to maintain a temperature of 72° F while the cooling system is attempting to maintain a temperature of 70° F. Check your settings/thermostat to be sure they aren't battling one another.

These are the basic usage areas where we may be wasting energy. Once you get looking you may find other ideas to save energy in your home or office. These could include confining usage of areas to the same time frame (the office day shift confined to certain hours only, etc.),

shutting doors and turning off heating/cooling to areas that receive little use, and multiple small refrigerators or other common appliances and equipment when one large one could be used by many people.

As you make the modifications to the systems and your habits, you will begin to realize a savings in your electric and energy bills. These savings can then be applied to bigger efficiency needs within your building such as insulation, energy efficient windows, a



new roof, replacement of inefficient equipment, large trees shading the building in hot months, etc. Get everyone in your building involved in saving energy. Provide training, install reminder signs by equipment and switches, and hand out reading materials explaining what can be done by each individual. The savings start in your pocketbook and end up benefiting us all.

For more information about energy audits and methods of electrical savings in your home or office, see www.energysavers.gov

Conservation Planning...

By Kelly Kinney, OCD

A Conservation Plan includes alternative actions a property owner can take to achieve their land use goals while protecting or enhancing their natural resources. The Okanogan Conservation District provides landowners with conservation planning assistance and can suggest various practices that have proven effective. The planning process takes into consideration the size of the property, type of soils, slope of the land, proximity to streams or water bodies, type of livestock or crops, resources such as machinery or buildings and available finances.

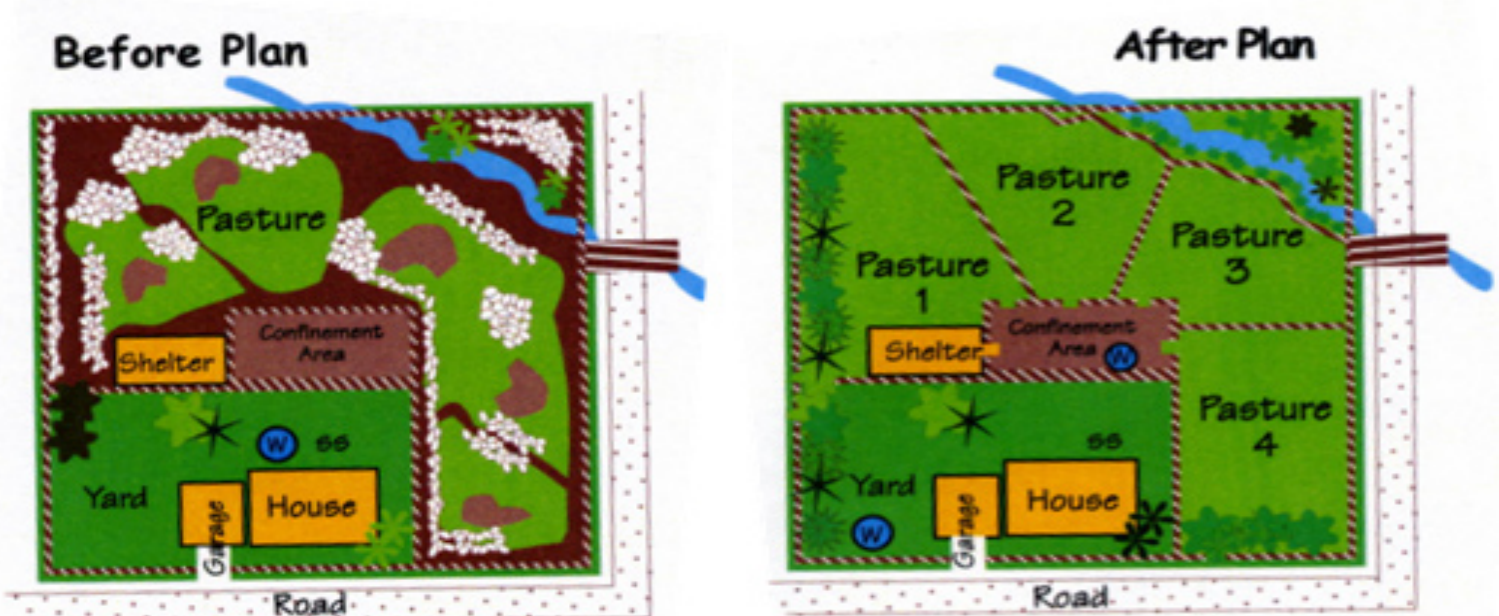
The District Conservation Planner looks at resource concerns that could improve or sustain farm productivity while reducing impacts on the property owner's natural resources. Some examples include streamside fencing and off-site watering for livestock, composting manure, weed management techniques, cross fencing and pasture rotation of livestock. The Conservation Planner can also offer technical assistance on questions such as what grasses to plant, how to build a

fence, or how to create a water wise lawn or landscape.

Once the property owner has decided which changes they'd like to make on their land, they work with the Conservation Planner to set a tentative implementation schedule. Revisions of the schedule and the plan can be made as the goals and needs of the property owner change. Often times there is some type of cost share monies available to the landowner that can be applied for to help implement practices identified in the Plan.

All aspects of the Conservation planning service provided by the District are free of charge and without obligation. The District works with property owners large or small, from backyard enthusiasts to commercial producers and everyone in between. The Okanogan Conservation District is a non-regulatory, non-enforcement agency.

For more information contact Kelly Kinney at (509)422-0855 ext. 105.





THOSE NASTY ELMS! HOW DO I GET RID OF THEM?

BY BOB CLARK, OCD

Weed - any undesirable or troublesome plant, especially one that grows profusely where it is not wanted.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SIBERIAN ELM

For many people, that pretty much sums up how they view the Siberian elm. Many refer to this invasive tree as the Chinese elm. While also a non-native tree, the Chinese or Lacebark elm is entirely different—it is a relatively well-behaved street tree with small, reddish-brown, pointed leaf buds and handsome, flaking bark of mottled grays with tans and reds. Also, Chinese elm flowers in late summer or fall. On the other hand, the Siberian elm, with round, black leaf buds and bark that is gray to brown with shallow furrows at maturity, is considered an invasive species. The Siberian elm flowers in spring before leaves begin to unfold. The fruits develop quickly and are disseminated by wind, allowing the species to form thickets of hundreds of seedlings in bare ground. Seeds germinate readily and seedlings grow rapidly.

Siberian elm is a fast-growing tree that was introduced to the United States in the 1860's. It was selected by the USDA for planting in shelter belts across the prairies in the aftermath of the Dustbowl disasters, where its rapid growth and tolerance for drought and cold initially

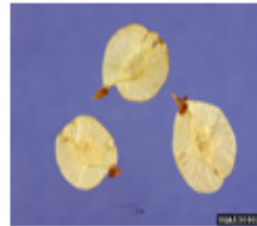
made it a great success. Native to northern China, eastern Siberia, Manchuria, and Korea, it is the hardiest of all elms and does well even in areas with cold winters and long periods of summer droughts. Because this elm tolerates a variety of conditions such as poor soils and low moisture, it is found in dry regions, along roadsides and railroads, and in pastures and grasslands. The tree also grows in moist soils



Chinese elm
Ulmus parviflora L. - Bark
R. Nijboen
Nijboen Collection, 2007



Siberian elm
Ulmus pumila L. - Foliage
Steve Dewey
Utah State University



Siberian elm
Ulmus pumila L. - Seeds
Steve Hurst
USDA NRCS PLANTS Database

along streams. It invades dry and mesic prairies, including sand prairies. It is now established throughout most of the lower 48 US states and Canada.

Besides being a prolific producer of seeds, dripping sap, and dropping limbs, Siberian elms form dense thickets that close open areas and displace native vegetation, thereby reducing forage for wild animals and livestock.

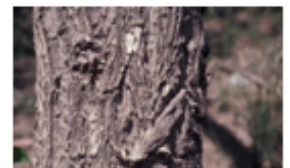
CONTROLLING SIBERIAN ELM

The Okanogan Conservation District has received a number of requests for help in removing and controlling Siberian elms.

Removal of Siberian elms

Mechanical Control: Girdling trees is the preferred management technique. Girdled trees die slowly over the course of one to two years and do not re-sprout. Girdle in late spring to mid-summer when sap is flowing and the bark easily peels away from the sapwood. When girdling, the bark must be removed in a band around the tree trunk just to the outside of the wood. If girdled too deeply, the tree will respond by re-sprouting from the roots. If re-sprouting should occur, the re-sprouts should be cut. On sites with few seed sources, the large trees can be cut down and re-sprouts trimmed.

Seedlings can be pulled out by hand, and small trees can be removed carefully with a grub hoe or weed wrench. Wind-dispersed elm seeds from nearby areas are often a greater threat than re-sprouting of established elms. Managers should eliminate nearby Siberian elms whenever possible.



Siberian elm
Ulmus pumila L. - Bark
John M. Randall
The Nature Conservancy

A regular fire regime should control Siberian elm in fire-adapted communities, although saplings older than a few years may not be killed by fire, and instead will require another control method, such as girdling.

Chemical Control: Glyphosate may be used as a cut-stem application for large trees and re-sprouts. The formulation of Glyphosate contained within Rodeo, rather than that of

Roundup, should be used in proximity to surface water sources such as lakes and streams*. A 10-20% active ingredient concentration has proven to be effective, and should be applied in the fall or winter. If herbicide is used, care should be taken to prevent contact with non-target species.

* *Mention of pesticide products does not constitute endorsement of any particular material*

FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE

Please contact the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Office, 1st Floor County Courthouse, Room 102, 149 3rd Street, P.O. Box 791, Okanogan, WA 98840; Phone # (509) 422-7165 for information about controlling Siberian elms or any other weeds. Contact the Okanogan Conservation District, 1251 South 2nd Avenue, Room 101, Okanogan, WA 98840; Phone (509) 422-0855 to see if any grant funds are available to assist in control.

OKANOGAN WATERSHED PLAN GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE ACTIONS

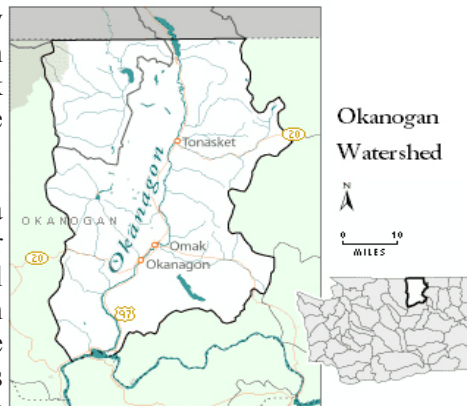
BY BOB CLARK, OCD

With anticipated approval by County Commissioners, the Okanogan Watershed Plan provides the groundwork for managing water resources in the Okanogan Basin to benefit all users.

The Okanogan River Watershed is a sub-watershed of the Columbia River Watershed located in north central Washington State. The Okanogan Watershed Plan primarily focuses on the watershed lying within the boundaries of State of Washington Water Resources Inventory Area 49 (WRIA 49) but also includes portions within the State outside of this administrative boundary that are directly or closely linked hydrologically to the watershed.

The Plan is the result of five years of work by the Okanogan Watershed Planning Unit, a group of local citizens representing various groups and use activities formed in response to the 1998 Watershed Management Act (RCW 90.82). This statute provided the framework for locally based watershed planning with a shared governance goal of giving local interests a voice and forum for collaboration on water resource issues. Through the planning process, stakeholders in the Okanogan Watershed have reached common ground in creating recommendations and strategic actions that address water quantity, water quality, instream flows, habitat, and multi-purpose water storage.

The mission of the Okanogan Watershed Planning Unit was to develop water management strategies that reflect the social framework and nature of the Okanogan Watershed. In keeping with this mission, a primary objective of this Plan is to keep water rights within the Okanogan Basin to be utilized in a wise and productive manner for the benefit of its residents.



Given the current state of the economy, it will be difficult for some of the recommendations to be implemented in the short term. Nevertheless, there are many recommendations that require no funding outlay—just community collaboration, rather than regulatory enforcement, that will lead to resolution of community resource concerns. Local residents will need to be proactively involved in the decision making process for prioritizing project implementation, identifying resource concerns, and maintaining quality conditions.

Among the early action items noted in the Plan, creation of a water exchange or bank has generated the most interest and support. This early action item calls for development of a detailed framework for implementation and operation of a water exchange in the Okanogan Basin for the benefit of both instream and out of stream uses as well as protection of potential future water uses in the watershed. The objective is to develop a mechanism to facilitate water management with some of the primary goals to prevent sale or lease of water out of basin and keep existing water rights in the basin, to provide additional water to meet needs (such as in drought years), to create a mechanism for people to maintain their water rights, to help prevent relinquishment, and to participate in water conservation. Other early action items include development of a water right education program, development of water conservation programs for home and businesses, and developing a map of potential aquifer recharge areas.

The plan can be read, printed, and downloaded by going to www.okanogancd.org.

New Conservation Practices Eligible for CREP Inside this Issue:

Get Paid for Planting Trees Along your Stream!

By Bob Clark, OCD

CREP Background

The Washington State Conservation Commission and the USDA Farm Service Agency have renewed their contract to provide funding to landowners in the state through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), a program locally administered by the Okanogan Conservation District. Several changes to the contract make more land and additional conservation practices eligible.

CREP is a voluntary program to establish forested buffers and now, similar practices (hedgerows, grass filter strips, wetland buffers) along streams to improve salmon and steelhead habitat. The buffers also prevent bank erosion,



cool water temperatures, and keep sediment and pollutants from reaching streams. Buffers provide a level of protection against endangered species “taking” actions and help farmers and ranchers to meet the water quality requirements established under Federal law and Washington’s water quality laws.

Land enrolled in CREP is removed from production and grazing under 10 or 15-year contracts. In return, landowners receive annual rental payments and are reimbursed for 100% of the eligible costs for planting and maintaining the buffer for the first five years. Additional reimbursements may be available for livestock exclusion fencing and watering facilities, and, in the case of small streams, for livestock crossings. Landowners also receive a bonus upon signing the CREP contract.

Technical assistance to design, install, and maintain buffers is provided by the Okanogan Conservation District. Sign-ups are accepted year round.

Important Changes to CREP

- *Soil rental rates*—the per acre amount of money a landowner receives each year during the contract period for providing the land upon which a CREP buffer is established *have increased 25% in Okanogan County.*
 - *Hedgerows are now eligible* for small streams that either support salmon or steelhead or drain into salmon streams. A hedgerow can include shrubs and/or trees at a buffer width of 15 feet.
 - *Grass filter strips are eligible* for ditches and streams that do not support salmon or steelhead, but have a water quality problem that can be helped by a filter strip. The watercourse must, however, be in a salmon or steelhead drainage.
 - *Wetland enhancement is now eligible*; reimbursement costs cover restoration, maintenance for the first five years, and rental payment on the buffer around the wetland. Costs are fully covered for cropland, but not for marginal pastureland.
- And, by far, the most significant change to the CREP for Okanogan County landowners is that**
- *Orchards, berry farms, and vineyards are newly eligible.* Water rights will not be impacted.



Contact Person:

If you are interested in enrolling your streamside lands in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, please call Bob Clark at (509) 422-0855, ext. 122.

Okanogan Conservation District partners with Americorps and the Northwest Service Academy

The Okanogan Conservation District would like to welcome Americorps team member Jenni Remillard. The Northwest Service Academy is an AmeriCorps program that addresses environmental needs in Northwest communities. Jenni will fill in as Conservation Educator until she completes her Americorps term in November. She will be working with schools, on outreach programs, and on the newsletter and website. Jenni is originally from Pendleton Oregon, and recently graduated with a Bachelor's of Environmental Studies from Portland State University in Portland Oregon. She also has an Associates of Fisheries Technology from Mt Hood Community College in Gresham Oregon. Jenni is excited to gain more experience not only in environmental education but also with conservation techniques in the area.



Manager's Note

- By Craig Nelson

With this issue of the Okanogan Conservation District newsletter you will see a new partnership we have embarked upon with the WSU Okanogan Extension office. We hope all of you reading this newsletter will like the combined efforts to deliver information.

We are working together to wisely use public funding to the greatest public benefit. If you have suggestions or ideas for articles or how we can better serve the public's need for information on our programs please call us.

Also, note the District is again updating our web-site with more information including offering this newsletter on-line. We are also using the social media site www.facebook.com to reach out to the public about our activities and programs. If you have a Facebook account feel free to search us out and become a fan.

On another note, the District is preparing to develop their Annual Plan of Work for 2011 and provide input to the Natural Resources Conservation Service on Farm Bill Programs for the coming year. If you would like to provide input into either of these processes please contact me by phone or e-mail. We want your ideas, knowledge, and suggestions.

Finally, we hope you will come to one of many events we have planned for 2010, our 70th year of operation in Okanogan County. We have much to celebrate and more to look forward to in the future.

MANURE EXCHANGE PROGRAM BEGINS THIS SPRING

The OCD is organizing a manure exchange program beginning spring of 2010. We are looking to add to our list of manure donors and manure seekers through the winter months. We can then connect those wanting to receive manure with those wanting to donate manure this spring.

More information is accessible on our website (www.okanogand.org), where you will find details about using manure as a soil amendment. Let us know if you would like to be added to the list of participants, or if you have questions or comments about the program



Call or e-mail The Conservation District at (509) 422-0855 or at ocd@okanogand.org.

Calender of Events

<u>Feb 26th</u>	<u>Ag Profit Workshop, Omak</u>
<u>March 2nd</u>	<u>OCD Elections</u>
<u>March 4th - 4pm</u>	<u>OCD Board meeting</u>
<u>March 19th and 20th</u>	<u>OCD Native Plant Sale</u>
<u>April 1st - 6pm</u>	<u>OCD Board meeting</u>
<u>April - 20th</u>	<u>Regional Envirothon</u>
<u>May 6th - 6pm</u>	<u>OCD Board meeting</u>
<u>April - TBD</u>	<u>Hay Producer Day</u>
<u>May 17th and 18th</u>	<u>State Envirothon</u>
<u>March 22 and 23 (tentatively)</u>	<u>Beef Information Days, Okanogan and Mansfield</u>

What are your plans for 2010?

Strategic Risk Management Planning

By Norman Suverly

WSU Okanogan County Extension Director

With the new year here and it being winter, it is appropriate to discuss strategic planning. This is a good time to look back on what you have done as a livestock owner, including what went right and what went wrong, and then plan accordingly for next year. This article won't focus on pounds of calf weaned per cow, lambing percentages, or utilization of pastures. Instead, it will encourage you to take some time and think about how you manage risk. There are some very good resources available to help livestock owners navigate through the risk management process. One of those resources is named "Risk Navigator, Strategic Risk Management Planning (SRMP)." Decisions about markets, production, or finances can affect your bottom line. Do you have a plan to manage these risks? The RightRisk™ Education Team developed a ten step risk management program to help you navigate a risk plan. The ten steps fall in three categories: strategic, tactical, and operational. This process is cyclical to remind us that risk management requires constant evaluation and adaptation. You could call this a "holistic" approach to risk management planning.

STEPS IN SRMP STRATEGIC PHASE

The first step involves determining your financial health. This would be where you metaphorically "read your vital signs" to see if you are in the state of health to proceed with your plans. Your financial health tells you the liquidity and solvency of your business, your repayment capacity, profitability, and financial efficiency of your business. This is done with a balance sheet, cash flow statement, income statement, and statement of owner equity. It is important to know how you arrived where you are today before proceeding on the journey. The second step is determining your risk preferences or tolerance — how much risk you are willing to take to achieve an investment goal. The Risk Navigator process is a tool to use to assess your risk tolerance. If you are afraid of or highly dislike taking risks, you are "risk averse." You prefer investments with lower payoffs due to less risk. You are "risk neutral" if you care more about the expected payoff and not the risk you take to achieve your investment goal. If you actively engage in risky investments, you are "risk-seeking." Step three is establishing risk goals. As Lewis Carroll said, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." But will it be the right road? The SRMP process will aid in setting goals. Goals will give you direction and allow you to evaluate how far you have come. This process will entail writing a mission statement, tactical objectives, and an operation plan.

STEPS IN SRMP TACTICAL PHASE

The second phase is tactical and contains the next four steps. Step four is determining risk sources and will enable you to identify, quantify, organize and prioritize risks, which allows you to assess what risks threaten your operation. Most agricultural risks fall in one of five categories: production (pests, weather, or events making yield unpredictable), marketing (changes in prices of outputs and inputs), financial (agricultural business management and securing operating capital), institutional (governmental or other regulations), and human resources (labor issues). The fifth step in the SRMP process is identifying management alternatives. There are four ways to manage risk: avoid risk (rent/lease equipment instead of owning), transfer it to someone else (futures and options), assume the risk (retain ownership), or reduce the risk (diversify your enterprise). Your best decisions will be made if you take the time to complete the first four steps. After you identify your management alternatives, you will want to know the probability of outcomes that



Figure 2 from RightRisk™ Education Team.
Used with permission.

result in making management decisions. The sixth step will help you estimate likelihoods. Risk Navigator can calculate the probability of each possible outcome for every management action under consideration by using your historical data to produce graphical representations of likelihoods for outcomes. Once you know your likelihoods, rank your management alternatives in step seven. Your choice here will depend on the work you did in the first six steps. SRMP provides tools to help you adjust for uncertainty and develop a farm management for your level of risk preference.

STEPS IN SRMP OPERATIONAL PHASE

We now enter the operational phase that includes the last three steps of SRMP. Step eight is implementing your plans. This is about getting your plan off paper and on the ground running. Implementing your plans is about managing resources. You acquire your resources (forages, buildings, feed, etc.) and figure how you will acquire them (cash, credit), then manage the flow of resources similar to a cash flow statement. Resources need to be at a manageable level when needed during the production year to maximize output and profit. Steps nine and ten of the SRMP process guide you through monitoring and adjusting your plans. You'll learn what worked, what did not, and then you'll go to the tenth step and re-plan to bring you back to the beginning of the planning process of step 1. This cyclical model and all of its steps can be studied in more detail at <http://www.rightrisk.org>. Under "Products," select "Risk Navigator SRM." Along with the planning model, you will find many online tools that will help you accomplish each step. We are at a new year. It's time to stop and clear your desk, make some coffee and check out this website and make some plans. Let's not jump into the new year without a clear direction of where you want to go and a well managed plan of what you will do and how it will be implemented. Put it down on paper. Our memories are limited. Include others in the planning process. What are your plans for 2010?

What should we call our new, combined newsletter?



Because we are combining newsletter forces with Okanogan County WSU Extension, we are asking you to give us ideas about what this new newsletter should be called. Is "Resource Quarterly" still appropriate, or would some other name be more descriptive or encompassing of the nature of the articles written by both the Okanogan Conservation District and Okanogan County WSU Extension?

Please contact either office with your ideas.

Okanogan Conservation District

Phone: (509) 422-0855, ext. 100

e-mail: go to http://okanogancd.org/contact_us.html

and fill-in the contact form there.

Okanogan County WSU Extension

Phone: (509) 422-7245,

E-mail: okanogan.county@wsu.edu

Welcome new OCD Board Member Jerry Asmussen!

The Okanogan Conservation District would like to welcome its newest board member Jerry Asmussen. Jerry is a life long rancher who has lived in Okanogan County for 40 years. He has a Bachelor's of Science in Animal Sciences and a Bachelor's of Science in Agricultural Economics. He has served with the Washington Cattlemen's Association and the Okanogan County Cattlemen in several positions. He is also the director for the Hamilton Youth Foundation and is on the Tonasket School Board. Jerry is excited to be on the Board and hopes that his time with OCD will help improve his knowledge while letting him serve the landowners of Okanogan County.



OCD District Supervisors

Ivan Oberg, Chair

Tom Doran, Vice Chair

Albert Roberts, Dist. Auditor

Craig Boesel, Member

Jerry Asmussen, Member

OCD Associate Supervisors

Monte Andrews

Ralph Longanecker

Mike McMillan

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OCD District Staff

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Kelly Kinney

Jenni Remillard

WSU Okanogan Extension Staff

Norman Suverly - County Extension Director

Ann Fagerlie - 4-H Program Coordinator

Heidi Schmidt - Food Sense Instructor

Brandye Diehl - Food Sense Instructor

Rita Jensen - Master Gardener Coordinator

Terri Williams - Receptionist

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www.okanogancd.org

WSU Okanogan County Extension
okanogan.wsu.edu

Welcome WSU Extension!



Beginning with this issue of the Resource Quarterly, the Okanogan Conservation District is welcoming articles from the Washington State University Okanogan County Extension. Due to budget constraints, WSU Okanogan County Extension will hence forth be getting the word out about its programs and activities through this newsletter and retiring their Gatepost newsletter. They will still send out the 4-H newsletter. That is why some of you may be seeing the Okanogan Conservation District newsletter for the first time. Welcome, enjoy the articles, and call us if you have any questions about what is covered in the articles or if you have any questions about how the District may assist you or if you have any comments about this new arrangement.

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

WSU Okanogan County Extension

Washington State University Extension engages people, organizations and communities to advance knowledge, economic well-being and quality of life by fostering inquiry, learning, and the application of research.

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.

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