

CONSERVATION CONNECTION

Summer 2017

Ferry Conservation District

Our mission is to safeguard the rural lifestyle and sustainable use of natural resources of Ferry County for present and future landowners, residents, and visitors by offering technical and financial assistance, outreach, and

Mark Your Calendar

- Ferry County Fair, Friday, September 1— Sunday, September 3. See you there.
- Voluntary Stewardship Program Meeting Wednesday, August 16 (Meetings every 3rd Wednesday at 6:00 PM . Tri-County Economic Development District office, Republic (see box pg. 4)
- Special Board of Supervisors Meeting, Wednesday, August 30 at 5:30. (Regular meetings every 4th Wednesday. No meeting 8/23.)

Getting Ready for Wildfire

As the weather gets hotter and drier, our attention naturally turns to fire season. Recent smoky skies are reminiscent the late summer of 2015, when the Northstar Fire threatened Republic from the south and the Stickpin Fire Complex burned thousands of acres to the north and east of town. Here in Ferry County, we were luckier than residents of Okanogan and Chelan Counties to our west, as we escaped without human injury or damage to dwell-

ings. The memory of that near-miss motivated many Ferry County residents to participate in the Firewise program recently offered by the Ferry Conservation District (FCD).

Firewise, a program created by the National Fire Protection Association and co-sponsored by the USDA Forest Service, the US Department of the Interior, and the National Association of State Foresters, “encourages local solutions for safety by involving homeowners in

taking individual responsibility for preparing their homes from the risk of wildfire.” The FCD initiated its program with three presentations by Guy Gifford of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

Twelve of the workshop attendees signed up for wildfire risk assessments and several expressed an interest in receiving cost-share funds for fuel reduction on their properties. (*Preparing for Wildfire, cont. on Page 3*)

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Do You Need Help Preparing Your Home and Property for Wildfire?

The Conservation District’s Firewise program has ended, but the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) still offers Firewise home assessments and may have funds for fuel reduction projects on your property. For information and an application, go to the DNR website at http://file.dnr.wa.gov/publications/fp_sflo_ewa_costshare_app.pdf

In addition, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) provides funding through its EQIP program for fuel reduction and a wide variety of other forestry-related projects. Applications are being accepted for the 2018 funding cycle. For more info call Patrice Beckwith at (509)775-3473 ext. 102.

Workshop Offers Variety of Perspectives on Curlew Lake

On a recent summer evening, more than 60 interested citizens gathered at the Fair County Fairgrounds to learn about Curlew Lake. Hosted by the Ferry Conservation District (District) and the Curlew Lake Association (CLA) this workshop offered a full slate of speakers and a panel of experts who updated us about the ecological health of the lake and its importance to Ferry County's economy.

The evening kicked off with a warm welcome from Bobbi Weller, CLA President, who shared a few of her lifetime experiences on the lake. Next was Madilane Perry from the Ferry County Historical Society who offered a thorough history of land-use activities around the lake.

Representatives from the Department of Ecology gave updates about the ecological Health of the lake. Will Hobbs, a limnologist, reported that Curlew Lake's clarity is good and the nutrient levels are fair.

Jenifer Parsons, an aquatic plant specialist who has surveyed the lake multiple times, reported that diverse native plants provide good habitat for the fish and for bugs which fish love to eat. The plants also provide habitat for birds and frogs.

The workshop then transitioned to a panel discussion about the economic importance of the lake to Ferry County. Panel facilitator, Jeff Koffel, of the Tri County Economic Development District, discussed how recreational opportunities offered by Curlew Lake attract visitors and provide health benefits.

Resort owners (Tiffany's, Fisherman's Cove, and Black Beach) spoke of the families who visit the lake for the relaxation and beauty it offers. Many of these visitors come from far and wide, and some return year after year.

Ric Sanders, Curlew Lake



State Park Ranger, reported on the recreational and economic value of the Park.

Keith Bell, representing the Ferry County Rail Trail, described how the handicapped accessible trail provides a new way for visitors to experience the lake by foot, bicycle, wheelchair, stroller or on horseback.

Gordon McIntrye (CLA) gave an update on fishing and the net pen project with Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Two hours later we all had gained more knowledge, made new connections, and had had an engaged conversation about the lake. That was the District's hope for this evening workshop.

"Two hours later we all had gained more knowledge, made new connections, and had had an engaged conversation about the lake."

**Coming soon to our website (ferrycd.com)!
An updated summary of Curlew Lake's water quality,
to be provided Ecology's Will Hobbs.**



WSU WISE (Water Irrigation Systems Efficiency)

Ferry County/ WSU Cooperative Extension Service has announced an innovative program to educate Washington State farmers about cost-effective equipment and practices that increase irrigation efficiency.

The WSU-WISE program will assist farmers by conducting tutorials, and providing evaluations, audits and technical support.

For more information, contact Extension at <http://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/wsu-wise>. For information on EQIP grants (possible funding for irrigation efficiency projects), contact Patrice Beckwith at (509)775-3473 ext 102.

Preparing for Wildfire (cont. from pg. 1)

FCD staff visited these landowners, offering suggestions to make their houses and properties more defensible in the event of a wildfire.

The inspector looked at the lay of the land, checking slope and vegetation, and making suggestions about thinning and pruning trees to remove ladder fuels. Recommendations were offered regarding maintaining a "lean, green and clean" zone closer to the houses, free of flammable vegetation, debris, firewood, etc. Access was evaluated, as well, with consideration for easy egress for residents evacuating and easy ingress for emergency vehicles.

The structures were then inspected, with an eye out for points of entry for embers, such as unscreened vents and places where debris could accumulate, such as in a rain gutter or behind a chimney, providing kindling for embers. All roofs inspected were made of metal, a good choice for our wildfire prone area.

In one case, the landowners' property had been assessed previously and suggestions for making the home more defensible had been implemented. These landowners now had a concrete patio and walkways, as well as a gravel border around the perimeter of their home. In addition, they kept their yard trim and irrigated. These measures greatly reduced the chances of embers igniting the siding of their home.



Lean, Green and Clean!

Another homeowner needed assistance with clearing flammable debris from around her home. FCD staff enlisted a crew of willing Curlew Job Corps students to volunteer several hours mowing and trimming vegetation and removing accumulated building materials adjacent to her house. The Brick Masonry trade, under the supervision of instructor Scott Porter, took great pride in making this resident's home "Firewise." The homeowner, now feeling much more secure as the fire season approaches, was very grateful for the help.

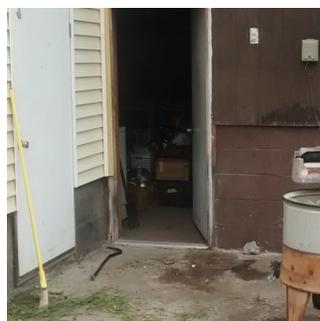
"The homeowner, now feeling much more secure as the fire season approaches, was very grateful for the help."



Lots of ignitable materials



Job Corps students get to work and...



...create Defensible Space!

The FCD provided cost-share funds to the owners of a home in Republic for removal and disposal of old flammable railroad ties used in a retaining wall attached to the house. In addition, the landowners had several trees cut to create a canopy separation (reducing the chance of a canopy fire reaching them). Other trees were limbed and much debris was cleaned up as well. Completion of this project resulted in a much more defensible home for this couple.

In addition, grant funds were used to purchase over 200 reflective signs, to help emergency vehicles locate county residents more easily. Funding for all of these projects was provided by the Washington State Conservation Commission.

Ferry Conservation District

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(509)775-3473 Ext. 5

Conserving Natural Resources Since 1947

We're on the Web. Visit us at :

<http://www.ferrycd.org>

Mark your Calendar

Ferry County Fair
Sept 1-3
"Kick up Your
Boots and Support
Your Roots!"
See you at the
Fairgrounds.

Agriculture, Water, & Local Control

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS ENCOURAGED AND NEEDED!

The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is the final step for Ferry County to opt out of the Growth Management Act (GMA). It is about making rules locally to fit local needs.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, August 16

6:00pm (every 3rd Wednesday)

T.E.D.D. office - Republic

For more information
Call (509) 775-3473 ext 5

Volunteering to participate means :

- We maintain local control, instead of following State mandated regulations.
- Our priority is to maintain the economic viability of Ferry County agriculture.
- Participation in the program is voluntary.
- The program recognizes the good stewardship of Ferry County's farmers, ranchers and land owners.
- There will be incentives provided to participants upon completion of the program report.



Board of Supervisors

Eric Bracken, *Chair*

Dave Konz, *Vice Chair*

Charlotte Coombes, *Auditor*

Dave Hedrick, *Member*

Vacant Position

Bowe Brown, *Associate*

John Hamilton, *Associate*

Carol Fugit, *Associate*

Staff

Lloyd Odell, *Manager*

Liz Carr, *Water Quality Specialist*

Candy Lammon, *Financial Administrator*

Bill Chamberlin, *Resource Assistant*

Patrice Beckwith, *NRCS Resource Conservationist*



Grouse in the Kettle Range

Ferry Conservation District is a non-regulatory agency. Our services are available to all without discrimination.