

CONSERVATION CONNECTION

Fall/Winter 2020



Early Snow on the Kettle River.

Mark your calendar:

- **Conservation District Board of Supervisors Meeting, Wednesday, Jan 27, Time: TBD. Call-in only. 509-775-3473, ext 100 for information.**
- **VSP Work Group—Visit our website: ferrycd.org for next meeting date, time and location.**
- **2021 Spring Plant Sale order starts 1st week of January**

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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 education through partnerships.

Manager's Message:



The Ferry CD is responsible for implementing the Voluntary Stewardship Program for Ferry County. It is a program that balances the impacts of agriculture on critical areas with maintaining the viability of agricultural producers. We are now in the process of putting together the Five-Year Report for the county that will go to the State Conservation Commission.

It turns out that landowners have done a great deal of work to reduce the impacts on critical areas and conserve natural resources. This is fairly easy to document in acres or feet of a particular practice. For example, the number of feet of fence that protects the riparian area of a creek.

The agricultural viability part of the report is much more difficult to put into terms that reflect all the challenges that come with critical areas, endangered species, and the like.

It is an important story to tell and we are working hard to make sure that people outside our county appreciate the work that is being done by our landowners to support conservation.

Dave Hedrick

Plans are Coming Together for 2021 Spring Plant Sale



Our 2020 Spring Plant Sale was on the calendar long before COVID was a household word. When the pandemic hit, we had to do some serious scrambling. While some conservation districts around the state canceled their sales and others decided to go ahead and have their customers pick up their plants as usual, we split the difference—going ahead with the sale, but delivering plants directly to customers.

We were very pleased with the results. The logistics involved with personal delivery were much more complicated, but our small staff all pitched in and everybody got their plants. An added bonus was that we got to see all the beautiful hidden-away spots where you - our customers - live and grow the plants we sell you!

Now that we know we can handle most any situation, we have not skipped a beat in scheduling a 2021 Plant Sale. Again, we will be offering native and ornamental trees and shrubs, fruit trees and berry plants. This year we will sell lavender plants and Colorado blue spruce trees! While we have tentatively planned for April 16/17 plant pick-up days, we are confident that we can shift to home delivery if the COVID situation so dictates.

Republic, Malo, Curlew and Danville residents, look for our flyer in your mailbox just after the New Year. As usual, we will take orders during the month of January. We will also post the flyer and more information about all of the plants on our website: ferrycd.org. Stay posted.

Orcas in the Inland Northwest? Local Students Make Connections.

Everything is Connected

The Kettle River flows out of Canada into Ferry County, then spills into the Columbia on its way to the Pacific.



Photo Credit: Pfly

Near the coast or far inland, all Washington waters are part of a healthy food web for orcas.

The water quality of the Kettle River will have an effect on this orca food web.



With these connections in mind, Ferry Conservation District funded local school water quality education.

“The Conservation District provided 12 pairs of very high quality waders, boots that fit over them, and some updated probes.”

Last spring the Conservation District offered assistance to Curlew School science teacher April Barreca.

Ms. Barreca’s response:

“Of course I accepted. In years past I have focused on water quality, but the probes and the interface I used were very out of date, and we only had one pair of donated waders that sprung an uncomfortable leak years ago. The conservation district provided 12 pairs of very high quality waders, boots that fit over them, and some updated probes.”



Connections

In her ninth-grade biology class, Ms. Barreca started with a lesson about the concept of watershed, which culminated in student-created models of watersheds. This hands-on project helped them better understand the connection between the water quality here in Northeastern Washington and the water quality where the Columbia empties into the Pacific Ocean - home to orca whales.



Getting their feet (waders) wet.

The biology class next walked to the nearby Kettle River. Here, at the confluence of Curlew Creek and the Kettle, they tried out the new waders and water chemistry equipment.

They tested for temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH and nutrient levels.

Moving Upstream...

Curlew Creek originates at Curlew Lake, the largest lake completely in Ferry County. During this past summer and fall the Ferry Conservation District has been gathering data on water quality of the lake, in preparation for the possibility of applying for grant funding for mitigation efforts. The District invited Ms. Barreca's class to the lake to learn more about our efforts...

...to Curlew Lake

....and do water chemistry work of their own.

Tying it all together

Students have had a chance to look at the data collected by the Conservation District, compare it to their own data and draw some conclusions about the water quality in Curlew Lake, Curlew Creek and the Kettle River and its effect on Orca whales. Ms. Barreca's students will continue to make connections throughout the school year.



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Outstanding Volunteers—We offer our special thanks to these folks for their important assistance with the Conservation District's Curlew Lake work.



Joann Marshall - Curlew Lake advocate extraordinaire.

A longtime Ferry County resident, Joann moved with her husband, John Hageman, to their Curlew Lake shorefront property several years ago. She immediately became involved in the protection of the lake's water quality. She is a member of the Curlew Lake Association and has been working closely with the Conservation District to ensure that the lake is a focus of our new five-year plan. This past summer, Joann generously gave her time to assist in the lake water monitoring project, joining us for most of our sampling events. Thank you, Joann!

Gordon McIntyre - Keeper of the net pens and Curlew Lake veteran.

Gordon and his wife, Nancy, are longtime Curlew Lake residents. As a member of the Curlew Lake Association, Gordon has actively worked for the betterment of the lake for 25 years. He devotes many hours each spring, summer and fall maintaining the lake's net pens, where as many as 75,000 trout are raised annually. Without Gordon's help this past summer, the Conservation District would have struggled to complete its Curlew Lake water sampling. Gordon selflessly and enthusiastically provided his boat for our five sampling events, jumping in and doing a lion's share of the sampling work during the voyages, as well. Gordon, we appreciate everything you have done for the lake!



We're on the Web. Visit us at:
<http://www.ferrycd.org>

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