



# Spokane County Conservation District Putting Conservation on the Ground









# Sources the Spokane District has utilized for grant and discretionary funding

## Local

**Special assessments** - providing discretionary funds by assessing local landowners

**Utility companies** - for sediment reduction in waterways

- riparian restoration

- stream bank stabilization

- Energy conservation

- urban shade trees for residences and businesses

- wind and solar applications

**Environmental and wildlife organizations**

- Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, Lands Council

**Homeowners associations**

- matching funds for hazard fuels reduction





# State

## **Fish & wildlife mitigation (WDFW)**

- construction and repair of bridges
- removal of fish passage barriers
- pipeline construction across rivers and streams
- habitat protection and restoration

## **Water quality related grants (DOE)**

- watershed planning and implementation
- project specific implementation
- livestock off-site watering and stream-side buffers
- state revolving loan program benefiting water quality

## **Forestry related grants (DNR)**

- wildfire hazard fuels reduction
- wildfire risk assessments



# Federal

## USDA

### **Natural Resources Conservation Service**

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

Agriculture Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI)

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

Technical Service Provider (TSP)

### **US Forest Service**

Forest Health Initiative

Wildfire Prevention Programs including hazard fuels reduction



Granting agencies on state and federal levels are beginning to move away from providing administrative costs within grants which will further reduce the capacity of districts without alternative discretionary funding.



In 1989, the Washington State Legislature revised the law governing conservation districts to allow the county legislative authorities to impose a land-based special assessment on behalf of the districts to provide discretionary funding for the activities of the districts. The Spokane District was the first of the 49 districts in the State to request that assessment. In 1991, the District began collecting revenue from the assessment, a momentous occasion that quite literally changed our operations forever. With more than **\$8million** collected since then, our ability to provide services to the citizens of the district and put conservation on the ground has increased exponentially, opening up other avenues for funding that would not have been possible without the assessment





Without the discretionary funding provided by the Special Assessment and other sources, and having to rely on grants for program funding, every program area within the Spokane District would either be severely limited or eliminated.

Forestry 2 FTE's plus seasonal **eliminated**

Soil Science 1 FTE+ **eliminated**

Environmental Education and Outreach 1+ FTE **eliminated**

Policy, Communications and Special Projects 1+ FTE **eliminated**

Water Resources 5+ FTE's **limited**

Production Agriculture 1+ FTE's **limited**

Small Farm Assistance Program 1+ FTE **eliminated**

District Operations Staff Support 4 FTE's + **limited**



The District began a tree and shrub seedling sale in 1970. Since that time, more than **3 million seedlings** have been distributed and planted in the Spokane area. The sale generates approximately \$50,000 annually.





## Conservation Education

The Spokane District in cooperation with Franklin CD in Pasco, Washington is participating in a educational outreach program that is in place throughout Eastern Washington. During the 2009-2010 school year, **50,517** K-7<sup>th</sup> grade students were presented these engaging lessons by district educators.

- **Wheat Week**
- **Water on Wheels**
- **Salmon in the Classroom**



Teacher workshops are an important element in this program; training the teachers extends the effectiveness of the program

- Project WILD
- Project WET
- Project Learning Tree
- WILD about Salmon





# Production Agriculture and Loan Program





*There are 371,511 acres of cropland in Spokane County. A very conservative average of 6.8 tons of topsoil are lost through erosion per acre every year totaling 2,652,000 tons of topsoil. 30% of that total or 795,000 tons of topsoil washes into this county's perennial streams each year.*



*Because very little if any erosion occurs when using direct seeding and no-till practices, the annual erosion rates can be reduced to an average of 2.4 tons per acre which will prevent 500,000 tons of soil from reaching our perennial streams each year.*





The Direct Seed Loan Program has been one of the best conservation tools ever designed, anywhere. Since 1995, the District has loaned out **\$17, 580,000** in **382 contracts** for the purchase of conservation farming equipment with a special emphasis on direct-seed and no-till drills. The loan program has purchased the best possible conservation on more than 500,000 acres and the taxpayers got the money back with interest! The program has been extended into 17 conservation districts in 14 Washington counties and one district in Idaho.





The loan program also provides **\$300,000 in interest income** to the District. Approximately \$100,000 of that goes to administration of the program with the balance going into the general fund as discretionary revenue which helps support other program areas.





With over 400,000 acres of forest land, the Spokane area is very susceptible to wildfire and with increased growth in the urban/rural interface, more homes are in the path of the fires. This 2008 fire occurred less than a mile from a major business corridor near the District office, burning over 1,000 acres and destroying 11 homes.





Our forestry department is providing wildfire risk assessments and concentrating on hazard fuel reduction in housing areas located in that urban/rural interface.







Our two certified arborists are busy providing technical assistance to local cities and towns and landowners with tree problems. They are also working with a local utility to plant trees where they would provide shade for the homes and reduce energy consumption. 86 large diameter trees have been planted in various projects in 2010 with another 50 scheduled for fall of 2010





## Water Resources

### Conservation on the ground:

- 15 RMS farm plans
- 4,450' of bio-engineered stream bank stabilization in 10 projects
- 4 wetland restoration projects on 165 acres
- harvested 30,000+ willow & cottonwood whips
- 25,000' of grassed waterways in 10 projects
- 135 riparian projects with 23.7 miles of riparian plantings of 358,210 trees and shrubs
- 60,400' of riparian fencing
- 22 off-creek stock watering facilities
- 13,350' of irrigation pipe







## Fish Passage Barrier Removal

9 projects since 2007

Opened 17 miles of new spawning and rearing habitat **\$600K**

**\$200K** more in 2011 in 4 projects

Funding provided by WSDFW





After a 12 year long process, a new soil survey in Spokane County has been completed and is in the process of being published. Our soil scientist on staff will provide accurate on-site soils data for any land user requesting assistance. In addition, the District is establishing an in-house soils testing lab which will greatly enhance our newly formed small farm assistance program





















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