

A Message from Gus



People keep telling me that spring is just around the corner. It's not that I distrust these folks, but it still looks pretty grey out there to me. But while the weather is not especially exciting, there are a number of issues on the horizon that will engage my attention for the next few months.

Most important from my perspective is the development of a new farm bill. The current farm bill expires at the end of this fiscal year. The Chairs of both the House and Senate have stated that they fully intend to have the new bill ready for the President's signature by that time. In order for them to meet that timeline, it appears they will have to have the basics in place by about May or June. So for springtime entertainment (in addition to baseball spring training), we should have the opportunity to hear farm policy debates in March and April.

The Secretary of Agriculture has developed a rather extensive proposal for what he'd like to see in this new bill. I've heard it said that this is the most fully developed proposal ever presented by a Secretary. While he doesn't have the responsibility or the authority to write the legislation, I'm sure his thoughts will be carefully considered as the legislators take up the effort.

Naturally, I'm particularly pleased to see a strong conservation title in the proposal. The Secretary has said that during the Farm Bill listening forums he held around the country, conservation was universally appreciated and promoted.

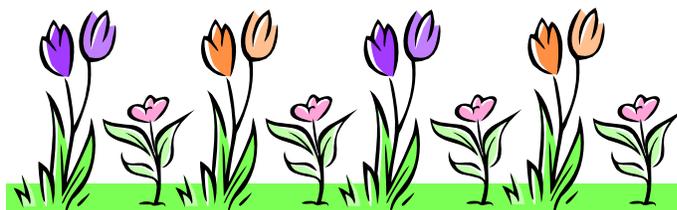
There is still a long way to go before a bill is placed on the President's desk. But I'm going to be watching the debate with a general sense of optimism. And it will be more fun than watching the rain drops streaking my windows.

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Celebrations to Remember

- First Day of Spring – March 21
- National Womens' History Month – March
- National Volunteer Week – April 15-21
- Earth Day - April 22
- Asian Pacific American Heritage Month – May
- Memorial Day – May 28



HR News

Goodbye and Good Luck!

Marlene Tilton, Rangeland Management Specialist, Ritzville Field Office resigned effective 11/29/06.

Herb Klug, Soil Conservation Technician in the Mount Vernon Field Office, retired effective 01/02/07.

Barbara Bolick, Resource Conservationist in the Prosser Field Office, retired effective 01/03/07.

John Gillies, Resource Conservationist in the Lynden Field Office, retired effective 01/03/07.

Ron Shavlik, Assistant State Conservationist in the Olympia Area Office, retired effective 01/03/07.

Ray Schuler, Resource Conservationist in the Chehalis Field Office, retired effective 01/03/07.

Rod Denherder, Civil Engineer, Renton Field Office retired effective 3/9/07.

The Employee Recognition Committee would like to acknowledge the following employees who have recently received awards

Spot, Performance

Doug Allen and **Justin Mount** each received a spot award "For exceptional assistance with the development and testing of the Conservation Security Program Water Quality Eligibility Tool."

Non-Monetary Awards

Martin Rodriguez – For a phenomenal example of teamwork in helping with HELC reviews in the Zillah Field Office.

Jeff Kuhlmann – For outstanding effort and contribution in the quality assurance of ABC data.

Kevin Guinn – For outstanding effort and contribution in the quality assurance of ABC data.

Alan Fulk – For outstanding effort and contribution in the quality assurance of ABC data.

Jeff Harlow – For outstanding effort and contribution in the quality assurance of ABC data.

John Kendig – For outstanding effort and contribution in the quality assurance of ABC data.

Mark Bareither – For excellent work with Douglas County contract holders in the Conservation Reserve and Conservation Security Programs during the fall and early winter of 2006-2007.

Michelle Mires – For excellent work completing engineering designs and specifications for livestock watering systems, terraces for dry land farmers, and windbreak drip/micro-irrigation systems during the fall and early winter of 2006-2007.

Linda Appel – For excellent work and diligence in completing the FSA Conservation Compliance Status Reviews in Okanogan County and providing excellent field assistance to Mark Bareither during CRP field reviews during the fall of 2006.

Will Keller – For excellent work & creativity in handling cultural resource review work in the upper Methow River Valley by working collaboratively with the BOR and the U.S. Forest Service. Using BOR funding and USFS cultural resources specialist, the cultural resource work on four NRCS EQIP contract holders was completed without cost to NRCS and much faster than NRCS cultural resource specialists could have with their workload.

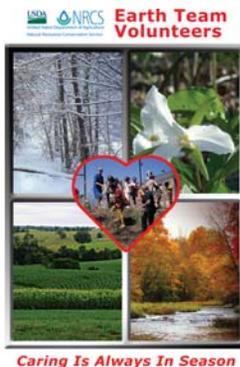
Stan Janowicz – For excellent work handling safety officer duties for the North Central Team. Also, his excellent mentoring of newer staff such as Linda Appel and Jessie Ham on practices such as Tree/Shrub Establishment.

Employee Recognitions...continued

Justin Mount – For developing strong working partnerships with the WSU Cooperative Extension Service Tree Fruit Resource Station and private pest management consultants to improve opportunities for EQIP and CSP contract holders and EQIP applicants. This resulted in a clearer understanding of pest management for orchards and how this can fit the EQIP program.

Jessie Ham – For excellent work providing assistance to Hispanic EQIP contract holders and for providing guidance and record keeping for cultural resource work to the North Central Team during the period following the retirement of cultural resource specialist, Mark Amara, and Kellie Green's arrival.

Martin Bales – For great strides in improving his ability to focus on priorities.



Celebrate National Volunteer Week April 15 – 21, 2007

In 2006, Earth Team volunteers in Washington State contributed over 5,000 hours toward our goal to conserve, maintain and improve natural resources and the environment

During National Volunteer Week, please take time to let the volunteers in your office know how much we appreciate their efforts.

You can contact your area coordinator for recognition items that may be available.

EARTH TEAM VOLUNTEER FACTS

- ❖ 45,000 volunteers provided time to NRCS offices in 2006
- ❖ 996,00 hours were donated in 2006
- ❖ Value of volunteer time to the agency in 2006 = \$17 million.
- ❖ Volunteers donated 478 staff years to NRCS during FY06

2006 NATIONAL STATISTICS ON VOLUNTEERING

(Based on Info Provided by Bureau of Labor Statistics of the
U.S. Department of Labor)

- ❖ 61.2 million people volunteered through or for an organization in 2006
- ❖ Volunteers spent an average of 52 hours on volunteer activities.
- ❖ About 43% of volunteers became involved after being asked



Conservation Essay Contest

Submitted by John Kouns, East Area Rangeland Management Specialist

Sawyer Hostetler, Nicole Phelps and Robby Diefenbach were all smiles when they received news that they were essay contest winners. Sixth graders from Adams County recently participated in the annual essay contest jointly sponsored by the Adams County Conservation District (ACCD), NRCS, and Adams county schools.

Each year in November the ACCD Board chooses a theme for the essay contest. This year's theme was *What Are the Benefits of Wildlife Watering Areas?* After a theme is chosen letters are sent to the schools which include Ritzville, Lind, Washtucna, and Benge announcing the contest. In December Gary Cook, NRCS Soil

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Conservation Essay Contest...continued

Conservation Technician visits each school's sixth grade classes and gives a presentation about the topic and encourages students to write an essay.

After a month of researching and writing, usually 70 to 80 students submit essays to the eight-member judging committee, which consists of NRCS and ACCD employees and district board members. The top three essays from each school are selected, and from these the top three overall are deemed the winners.

The winners' names are kept secret until the Annual Research in the Dry-land Cropping Area/ Adams Conservation District meeting. At the meeting the top three essays are read to the group and the winners are presented trophies for their efforts. This year's meeting was held on February 6th, where Sawyer Hostetler from Washtucna took first place honors, Nicole Phelps also from Washtucna won second place and Robby Diefenbach from Lind won third place.

Records show this annual essay contest began in 1992 with the theme *Breaking in the Wind—Windbreaks*. In the following years the topics centered around soil erosion, wetlands, pesticides, no-till seeding, riparian buffer zones, and water quality. The winning essay follows.

What Are The Benefits of Wildlife Watering Areas?

By Sawyer Hostetler

Wildlife is important to everyone because wildlife provides food and good entertainment opportunities. But, in order to stay alive, wildlife must obtain water, food, cover and nesting. These are all of the resources that wildlife requires to survive.

Wildlife obtains its cover from the native grasses, trees and bushes. Cover is where wildlife hides from predators and as well as nesting, so their young can blend in with born camouflage.

Wildlife requires food because it gives them energy and keeps their bodies running. If wildlife doesn't get enough food, they will starve, and Mother Nature or predators may claim them.

Water, though, is the most important element wildlife requires. The wildlife in Adams County gets their water from the Palouse River, Sprague Lake, Cow Creek and other small lakes or ponds.

Also, farmers and conservationists can help provide water to the wildlife by setting guzzlers in dry areas of Adams County.

But sometimes, birds cannot get to the water in creeks or rivers. That's where the guzzlers come in. They allow the birds to safely drink from its watering tank.

But where does the guzzler get its water? When it rains, water pours down creases in the roof of the guzzler, and fills the tank. There are roughly 600 guzzlers in Adams County.

Ranchers and farmers also provide another source of water for wildlife. But, birds cannot safely reach the water. The container is a large tank, filled with water by a windmill or hose. Deer, cattle and other wildlife may easily reach the water, but posts and sticks must be placed in the tank so birds can safely drink, without the risk of drowning.

These are all of the resources that the Adams County wildlife must have to survive. We must not endanger them, but must be at peace with all of God's creatures.

Irrigation System Upgrade

Submitted by State Office Engineering Staff (Leigh Nelson)

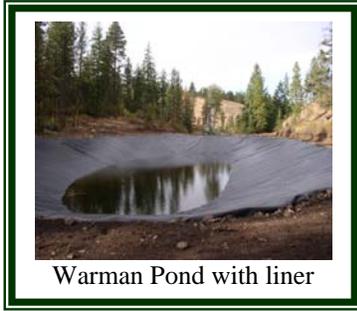
NRCS in Wenatchee has been working with landowner, Steve Warman, during the past two years, on a number of irrigation practices. This may not seem exceptional since irrigation systems in Wenatchee and the Central Basin are common practices. However Steve's location, water situation, and project complexity set him apart as worth noting.

The Warman EQIP site is about six miles south of Wenatchee. The land is situated high in the Colockum area with elevations of about 3,000 feet and faces south toward the Columbia Basin. The source for the irrigation water is a small spring flowing continually but with limited flow late in the season and during dry years.

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Irrigation System Upgrade...continued

Before Steve signed up for an EQIP contract, he used a small dug pit to store water. Unfortunately most of the water seeped into the ground and was unavailable for irrigation.



The main purposes of the EQIP contract were; 1) expand the pit into a pond, 2) line the pond to provide storage for supplemental irrigation late in the season, 3) install an inlet structure and trash screen to capture and clean the water 4) replace the leaky above-ground steel pipe, and 5) improve pressure for the wheel lines by installing a booster pump.

During the winter of 2005 and the summer of 2006, all the practices were completed. The project started with the installation of 2,500 feet of mainline. The pond was enlarged and then lined with an HDPE liner. Finally, the inlet structure was replaced at the spring site.

Steve was able to use the new system for his crops during the last growing season and was also able to provide more irrigation later in the season than ever before. He is further improving his irrigation efficiency by working with the NRCS on an irrigation water management plan. This project was such a success, that Steve has signed up for another EQIP contract involving his forest and grazing management practices.

Local Council lands \$1.6 million NASA grant

Dungeness and Elwha River Watersheds to benefit from imaging and stream flow forecast technology

Contact: Tony Ingersoll, USDA-NRCS, 360/452-8994, Ext. 105 or 360/981-6064 (mobile)

Why is the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) spending \$1.6 million on a project in Clallam County? Because they realized this region provides a unique opportunity to develop and demonstrate what they call a “Solutions Network”. This is a network of user groups, researchers and an operations center applying NASA tools (computer models) that utilize satellite imagery to address various earth science issues within a watershed.

NASA awarded the grant last April to the North Olympic Peninsula Resource Conservation & Development Council (NOP RC&D), a local, grass-roots, private, non-profit organization serving Clallam and Jefferson Counties. The first year of this project will be setting up a Solutions Network to implement NASA’s Hybrid hydrology model within the Dungeness River watershed in an effort to enhance water usage decisions among all the water users.

The Dungeness River Management Team (DRMT), the principal first-year user group of this Solutions Network, will be guiding the researchers on the Hybrid streamflow forecast model development within the watershed. The researchers are key scientists from the Pacific Northwest National Laboratories in Sequim and Richland, the Idaho National Laboratory in Idaho Falls, Olympic National Park, and Peninsula College. These scientists will consult with NASA scientists as they develop these tools for local use. The operations center to run these complex computer models, the third leg of this Solutions Network, will be established at Peninsula College.

According to NOP RC&D Council President Mike Doherty, who is also a Clallam County Commissioner, current stream flow forecasts only provide seasonal volume and statistics for monthly time step. “In order to meet the current and future management needs,” Doherty said, “new daily management tools are needed to forecast peak and low flows, and to provide other critical water management information.” County Commissioner Steve Tharinger, who serves on the DRMT, is also involved with this project.

Commissioner Doherty is also the Project’s Principal Investigator. “This Hybrid-model is needed to improve long- and short-term decisions, such as in-season flow forecasting, water allocation, establishing in-stream flow requirements and groundwater reserves, and for protecting shellfish beds and salmon runs,” Doherty said.

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Local Council lands \$1.6 million NASA grant...continued

In the project's second year, a Solutions Network will be developed in the Elwha River watershed. A different user group will network with the researchers to find a solution to an Elwha River watershed problem identified by that user group, perhaps an issue related to the dam removal. The researchers will then find an existing NASA tool that can address that issue and work with NASA scientists and the operations center to make that tool functional.

In year three, this Solutions Network will be presented to four other yet-to-be-determined watershed user groups throughout the Nation. The National Association of RC&D Councils in Washington, DC, will survey the 375 RC&D councils throughout the United States and its territories to determine which four watersheds will benefit most from a Solutions Network.

The grant project, a joint effort of more than 15 scientists and others from eight major partners, brings NASA imagery and computer modeling technology to two critical watersheds in western Washington. "The planning and grant proposal process began a year ago", said Tony Ingersoll, an employee of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and a liaison to the NOP RC&D Council. "The NOP RC&D Council is proposing to take a model out of the science lab and academia and put it to use at a local watershed level," Ingersoll said. "A working network is necessary to get the model functioning for a user group such as the Dungeness River Management Team, in order to be able to get reliable, usable information needed for critical water-use decisions on the river including irrigation, endangered salmon spawning, ground water recharge, etc.," he said.

The NOP RC&D Council, as grantee, hired Patti Morris to be the Grant Administrator. Mr. Jeff Ward, a scientist with Battelle at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Sequim, is the Project's Program Manager and Dr. Mark Wigmosta, Chief Scientist at the PNNL in Richland, is its Principal Scientist on this project. Dr. Bill Eaton and Dr. Dwight Barry at Peninsula College are the lead scientists for the operations center.

Mid-Toppenish Creek Has a new Face

Chris Johnson, Roger Amerman, Larry Cooke

Toppenish Creek and its watershed are located in the shadow of Pahto (Mt. Adams) and lies completely within the boundaries of the Yakama Indian Reservation, South-Central Washington. Toppenish Creek is 70 miles long and drains a 625 square mile watershed, discharging into the Yakima River near Granger. The lower 20 miles is in a broad, low gradient, agricultural valley. As a result of 100 years of manipulation, flood events, and irrigation projects, the creek took on many roles and many channels so that most people cannot remember the sequence of why and how the creek(s) ended up where they did.

The Yakama Nation (YN) has desired for many years to restore various segments of the creek. In Plateau tribal cultures, like the Yakama Nation, water (chush) is a sacrament. In the 1990's, the Tribe took on the ambitious task of restoration at the watershed scale. The Yakama Nation is now endeavoring to improve fish habitat in Toppenish Creek and its tributaries by reestablishing ecological processes on the watershed scale. Their established goals are as follows:

1. Restore natural riparian and upland vegetation patterns,
2. Reduce erosion,
3. Moderate the flow regime on fish bearing streams,
4. Improve aquatic habitat,
5. Improve wildlife habitat, and
6. Monitor changes in fish populations, watershed behavior and results of restoration treatments.
7. Enhance and restore traditional tule (bulrush) and other cultural plant gathering areas.

NRCS began conservation planning on lower Toppenish Creek in the 1990's on a 120 acre tract of land owned by the Tule Gun Club through the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). These planning efforts were done by

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Mid-Toppenish Creek...continued

Ivan Lines and Andrea Mann. The Tule Gun Club requested that their land be enrolled into WRP with a perpetual easement. The initial conservation plan included three shallow water wetland cells to be constructed to allow for management of desirable vegetation and create habitat for water fowl. One huge problem existed! How do we get Toppenish Creek water into these cells with about a negative eight foot elevation difference? Of course installing a pumping plant was an option, but for a perpetual easement? This was not the desirable alternative.

Now here comes Roger Amerman on the scene. In 2002, Roger was hired as a resource conservationist/Tribal Liaison located in the Tribal Office. Roger learned about the Tribe's desire to restore the hydrology in lower Toppenish Creek. Roger requested assistance from Frank Easter's staff to assist with the development of the Tule Gun Club's conservation plan. The initial team included, Roger, Larry Cooke, Tim Dring and Mark Schuller. Several meetings were held between NRCS and the Tule Gun Club's ownership group. Pumping water on a perpetual basis was not the desirable alternative for both the owners and NRCS staff. In 2004, the NRCS contacted the YN fish biologist and suggested that maybe water could be diverted farther upstream in a manner that would create more natural wetlands on the reservation, while supplying gravity-fed water to the Tule site.

Two YN biologists contacted NRCS and said they were eager to pursue such an idea. They hired Geomax Engineers, who were already looking at doing something like this, to do a feasibility study. NRCS paid Ducks Unlimited (DU) to develop an accurate topographic survey of the floodplain area upstream and downstream of the Tule site. Work that was done by these two groups resulted in the Mid Toppenish Wetland Restoration Project. NRCS signed a contract with YN in June 2004 to provide 75 percent cost-share for surveying and implementation of the project. NRCS prepared a conservation plan and the Tribe agreed with the schedule and planned practices. This expanded the original wetland restoration and enhancement project from 120 acres that required a pump to keep it viable, to almost 1,300 acres of restored floodplain wetlands with no need for pumps!

It took more than a year for the design to become finalized. In the meantime, the Tule Gun Club members became concerned that they would miss another waterfowl hunting season because their wetland cells needed dike repair and pumps needed to be screened. The DU engineer drew up a plan to fix the dikes and install three (3) water-control structures so cells could be filled during high flows without the need for a pump. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) biologist that NRCS had been consulting with on the Tule site agreed verbally that such a project could be done with "No Affect" on listed Mid Columbia steelhead; and because Toppenish Creek is totally on the reservation, there is no critical habitat designation. The Tule project was finished in early October 2005, in time for the club to hunt.

In 2006, The Tribe, DU and NRCS completed the survey and final designs for the 1,300 acre Mid Toppenish Creek restoration project. In July 2006, a Biological Assessment was submitted to NMFS asking for concurrence. NMFS responded with a letter of concurrence and allowed the placement of 28 structures in various channels of Toppenish Creek during the months of September and October.

The interdisciplinary team expanded to include, Chris Johnson, Leigh Nelson, Paul Majer and Rick Beck. DU provided day-to-day construction inspection and the NRCS group provided monitoring of construction during key times to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the NMFS and NRCS consultation.

Under Chris and Roger's leadership, the project was completed. The YN is pleased to have partnered with NRCS on this phase of their ultimate goal of "Toppenish Creek restoration at the watershed scale."

Washington unveils new exhibits

"The Wonders of Wildlife" is the theme of a new NRCS Washington exhibit, which made its debut during this winter's agricultural trade show season. The 8-foot by 10-foot exhibit was produced at the end of the 2006 fiscal year and is the focal point of a comprehensive, state-wide, wildlife habitat campaign that will eventually include program brochures, posters and radio public service announcements. The print and broadcast pieces have been written and designed, and are awaiting production – pending future funding.

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Washington unveils new exhibits...continued



The eye-catching “Wonders of Wildlife” Nomadic exhibit is available for loan to field offices for local outreach and promotional activities.



“Helping people help the land” is an 8’x10’ exhibit that features some of the people and places of Washington’s diverse conservation clientele.

Land trust, conservation district, state wildlife agency and NRCS representatives were among the conservation professionals who indicated a need for NRCS-specific program information for their use with landowners. Wildlife related information on NRCS’ Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Wetlands Reserve Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program are all featured in the new and planned informational products.

“This past year we heard from a significant number of partners and landowners in Washington that wildlife habitat development was among their top conservation priorities,” Ron Nichols, NRCS public affairs officer said. “The campaign is designed to increase the awareness of how NRCS programs and services can help landowners achieve their on-farm wildlife habitat objectives – and to motivate them to consider developing additional wildlife habitat on their land,” he said.

The new exhibit was the centerpiece of the trade show season for NRCS, which included exhibitions at the Washington Cattlemen’s Association, the Washington Association of Conservation Districts and the Ag Expo.

The public affairs staff has also produced “Helping people help the land,” a conservation technical assistance exhibit featuring some of the people and places of Washington’s diverse conservation clientele. Both exhibits are available for local field office outreach activities. Contact Georgia Sormun for availability, scheduling and shipping information.

Science, Snowmobiles and Signs

A Sonnet in the English style

Submitted from the Northeast Team

The wintry day was bright and blue of sky
Their helmet shields were frosted over
Bold scientists had come with careful eye
To measure weight and depth of snow cover

Thirty miles their machines had bore them
Through silent forest, snow drift and a trail
At last the snow course lay around the bend
Alas, their efforts had not prevailed

Bright signs they had placed in prior years
It was clear the site should be avoided
But these words and symbols had cast no fears
Snowmobiles left the snow exploited

Their ten sample points were now disturbed
A serious cussing was deserved



Forest Road Erosion & Sediment Impact to Water Quality

By Nick Somero, Resource Conservationist



It is well documented that forest road systems are the greatest contributor to stream sedimentation of any operation in the forest industry. Road erosion and the resulting sedimentation has been an erosion and water quality problem within the forest land of Southwest Washington for decades. NRCS is recently taking a more active role in treating this water quality resource concern through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Over the past couple of years, the Southwest Team Local Work Group has made an effort to focus their prioritization of the EQIP program toward specific surface water quality concerns. Small private forest land owners and associated forestry agencies have vocally supported participation by small private forest land owners in the EQIP program. Since Surface Water Quality is the primary resource concern of the Southwest Team Local Work Group, the sediment problem from forest roads was identified as the priority issue to address on forest land.

To identify the existence and extent of the road sediment problem for a forestry plan and resulting EQIP contract, Section III of the FOTG directs NRCS to use the Water Erosion Prediction Project (WEPP) model developed by the US Forest Service. So far WEPP has been consistent with field experience and seems to be a fairly accurate tool to quantify the resource concern. To better serve forest land owners, several NRCS employees will soon be attending a training session on WEPP to improve their proficiency with and understanding of the model.



After verifying and quantifying the resource concern, a detailed road inventory is undertaken. The inventory includes identifying particular road conditions such as scour on grades; sediment deposition at grade sag points; water ponding on the road; ditch scour; sediment trails to surface water; holes created by subsurface flows or failing water crossing structures; condition and installation of existing cross drains; seeps; slides; slumps; stress cracks; and road surface shape. Extensive experience with forest road maintenance is helpful to identify and evaluate the extent of these road conditions. Most all of these conditions indicate where water

on the road system is not properly managed. The objective of the treatment solution is to be sure the water on the road system is properly managed to reduce erosion and resulting sediment delivery to surface water.

In 2006, the Southwest Team completed its first contract of this nature with a producer on six miles of forest roads. The contracting process was quite cumbersome and difficult, prompting changes in the 2007 cost list. The new cost list now has a component under Access Road, PS-560, Road maintenance for erosion and sediment control- Structural, with the quantity unit in feet, a considerably less cumbersome and more efficient process to develop contract costs. This has been a real benefit as the Team is projecting a real possibility of ten contracts addressing this resource concern in 2007.

Stay tuned, as down the road a couple of years, the Southwest Team and the EQIP participants hope to see a success story with the implementation of treatment to address this muddy situation.

Tenth Annual Direct Seed Conference at Tri-Cities

Submitted by Dennis Roe, Soil Conservationist

The 10th Annual Direct Seed Conference, facilitated by the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association, was one of the best ever. New coordinators, Russ and Pat Evans, recently hired from the Alberta Conservation Association, used their skills well and everything went smoothly.

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Tenth Annual Direct Seed Conference...continued

Carlos Croveto, conservationist from Chile, was the opening speaker. Carlos has two books out, one of which is "Stubble Over the Soil." Carlos' believes that, "The grain is for the farmer, the stubble is for the soil." Another of his philosophies is that he manages the residue and it feeds the soil. He has learned to manage soil fertility and pH by managing his residue. He feeds the soil organisms and he states they feed the roots. His farm, however, receives 40 inches of precipitation per year. His greatest difficulty has been to restore condition of the soil with no topsoil to work with. He showed photos of topsoil created by soil microbial activity since he began no-till seeding in 1977. That was done in fields that were shaped with a bulldozer before 1977, due to the presence of classic gullies.

The second speaker was Warren Mason, manager of AgriNorthwest, a large farm in Benton and Walla Walla Counties that was the original U & I Sugar Farm in the 1950s. Warren stated that they have reinvented themselves with major changes. The primary rotation is potatoes, wheat, and corn on 60,000 acres north of the Columbia River from Umatilla, and at Eureka in Walla Walla County. He said that in the 1990s they became buried in red ink. At the same time they set objectives to reduce wind erosion and reduce N leaching. They accomplished part of this by shifting from tilled corn to striptilled corn on 16,000 acres. In the past when corn was planted into a tilled field in early April, they turned on the circle sprinklers to prevent the daily winds from blowing out the seeds or seedlings. Now they get the crop up with winter moisture, or pre-irrigate, and wait until May to water it. The 240 bushel corn residue and 160 bushel wheat residue holds the field. The N stays in the seed zone and root zone during that time. While they still till potato ground, they have reduced the number of operations by 39 percent among all crops in the three years. Warren has already seen an effect on soil condition and sees much less wind erosion.

The third speaker was Bill Horan, an Iowa grower. He is a principal in two biodiesel plants there using soybeans. Bill discussed the emerging public issue of whether crops will go for food or energy. Twenty percent of the 2006 corn crop has gone into ethanol. A larger share of the soybean crop went into biodiesel. He discussed how the market has gone global, with European countries, like Belgium, buying U.S. vegetable oil. He shared some views on how this might affect U.S. energy policy.

The balance of the conference was break out sessions that covered a dozen topics related to direct seeding. One of the topics was Oil Seed Crops in Rotation where Whitman Conservation District cooperators Mike Stubbs and Del Teade, together with Dennis Roe, presented and answered questions about oil seed production.

For more information you can visit the Direct Seed Association website at www.directseed.org



Looking for a NRCS brochure? Need to order a display? Have a question about the Earth Team? Then you need to contact LANDCARE. The LANDCARE office keeps inventory and processes orders for NRCS publications, forms and displays for NRCS employees and the general public. Orders may be placed by calling 1-888-LANDCARE (1-888-526-3227) or by visiting <http://landcare.nrcs.usda.gov/>

LANDCARE staff includes (L-R) Bonnie Allely, Volunteer Liaison; Michele Eginoire, National Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator; Venessa Alvarado, Office Assistant; Alan Bengé-Program Assistant

“From Slavery to Freedom-Africans in the Americas”

Submitted by Ronald Joyner, Black SEPM, Civil Rights Committee

Ms. V. Anne Smith, president of the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), shares her thoughts on this year's Black History Month (BHM) theme “From Slavery to Freedom-Africans in the Americas” at a February meeting held in the state office conference room. Ms Smith stated, “our 2007 BHM theme certainly provides comprehensive word imagery of the plague of oppression and the resiliency and perseverance of a people to overcome the forces of injustice. Her presentation was both informative and enriching as she shared “little known” facts about the origin of the NAACP; the history of national, state and local politics relating to people of color, and on-going community affairs and local concerns. She also strongly emphasized the NAACP will uphold the banner of social justice for all people irregardless of race, color, and national origin and is not just an organization which only addresses African-American concerns and issues. Ms Smith ended her presentation with a poem (see below) from Dr. Maya Angelou. Although Black History Month for 2007 has come and gone, commemoration by our nation's citizenry of the rich history and many contributions of African -Americans should be observed daily and appreciated always.

Million Man March Poem by Maya Angelou

The night has been long,
The wound has been deep,
The pit has been dark,
And the walls have been steep.
Under a dead blue sky on a distant beach,
I was dragged by my braids just beyond your reach.
Your hands were tied, your mouth was bound,
You couldn't even call out my name.
You were helpless and so was I,
But unfortunately throughout history
You've worn a badge of shame.
I say, the night has been long,
The wound has been deep,
The pit has been dark
And the walls have been steep.
But today, voices of old spirit sound
Speak to us in words profound,
Across the years, across the centuries,
Across the oceans, and across the seas.
They say, draw near to one another,
Save your race.
You have been paid for in a distant place,
The old ones remind us that slavery's chains
Have paid for our freedom again and again.
The night has been long,
The pit has been deep,
The night has been dark,
And the walls have been steep.
The hells we have lived through and live through still,
Have sharpened our senses and toughened our will.
The night has been long.
This morning I look through your anguish
Right down to your soul.
I know that with each other we can make ourselves whole.
I look through the posture and past your disguise,
And see your love for family in your big brown eyes.
I say, clap hands and let's come together in this meeting ground,
I say, clap hands and let's deal with each other with love,
I say, clap hands and let us get from the low road of indifference,
Clap hands, let us come together and reveal our hearts,
Let us come together and revise our spirits,
Let us come together and cleanse our souls,
Clap hands, let's leave the preening
And stop imposterism our own history.
Clap hands, call the spirits back from the ledge,
Clap hands, let us invite joy into our conversation,
Courtesy into our bedrooms,
Gentleness into our kitchen,
Care into our nursery.
The ancestors remind us, despite the history of pain
We are a going-on people who will rise again.
And still we rise.

U.S. DEPT OF AGRICULTURE
Natural Resources Conservation Service
316 W. Boone Avenue, Suite 450
Spokane, Washington 99201-2348