



A Message from Gus

I'm sitting here on Presidents' Day writing this note. Coincidentally, I recently finished the book *1776* by David McCullough. The book chronicles challenges George Washington faced during that critical year of our history. While I found his courage and tenacity impressive, I was more struck by another story.

McCullough does a good job of putting the reader back in that time. The Colonies were moderately prosperous. Given the communication difficulties, there wasn't a huge amount of direct interference from Britain. So the average farmer or merchant had a pretty good idea of what they could expect year in, year out.

Then along comes this band of rebels. They talk of liberty and the rights of self-government and self-determination. Certainly these ideas fill the mind. But in those days, it was important to make sure you could fill the belly at the same time.

So imagine the courage it took for those average farmers and merchants to leave the safety of what they knew and strike out on a new path. They couldn't have known what was down that path. They had no assurance that they could successfully establish an independent country. They couldn't be certain they could manage such a country even if they were successful. They risked everything – their lives, their children's lives, their property – all for an ideal.

For me, it puts our challenges today in perspective. Oh sure, the budget is pretty tight, but we'll make it through. We're going to have to change the way we do things, but we are still doing the right things for the right reasons. So these challenges seem a little more manageable in that context.

And besides . . . Spring is just around the corner. Things always look better in the Spring.



Spring Forward!
April 2nd
Set your clocks
ahead one hour

Upcoming Events!
National Volunteer Week
April 23 – 29
Earth Day
April 22

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HR News

GOODBYE AND GOOD LUCK TO THE FOLLOWING EMPLOYEES:

- Jennifer Bell**, Soil Scientist, Zillah Soil Survey Office, resigned effective 12/10/05.
- Paul Dorning**, RC&D Coordinator for Upper Columbia RC&D, retired effective 12/30/05.
- Bill Bonsen**, Civil Engineer Technician, Lynden, retired effective 1/3/06.
- Larry Hooker**, District Conservationist, Walla Walla, retired effective 1/3/06.
- Micky Lewis**, Forester, Colville, retired effective 1/3/06.
- Clay Midkiff**, Program Liaison-West Area, Olympia, retired effective 1/3/06.
- Dennis Robinson**, State Forester, Spokane, retired effective 1/3/06.
- Clark Bishop**, Office Automation Clerk, Plant Materials Center, resigned effective 1/7/06.

WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW EMPLOYEES!

- Bradley Duncan**, promoted and reassigned from NRCS in Idaho to the Assistant State Soil Scientist position in the Spokane State Office, effective 3/19/06.

CONGRATULATIONS TO FOLLOWING FOLKS WHO HAVE RECENTLY RECEIVED PROMOTIONS!

- Kyle Stephens**, Soil Scientist (SSPL), Spokane Soil Survey Office, promoted, effective 01/08/06.
- Sue Merrell**, Budget Analyst, Spokane State Office, promoted, effective 01/22/06.
- Tim Riebe**, Soil Scientist, Spokane Soil Survey Office, converted to permanent position, effective 1/25/06.
- Danielle Rohde**, Soil Conservationist, Prosser Field Office, converted to permanent position and promoted, effective 2/5/06.
- James Davis**, Civil Engineer, Puyallup Field Office, converted to permanent position and promoted, effective 2/5/06.
- Laren Nalder**, Soil Conservationist, Pasco Field Office, promoted, effective 2/5/06.
- Ashley Bouck**, Student Trainee, Soil Conservationist, Renton Field Office, promoted, effective 2/19/06.
- Carrie Gaines**, Tribal Liaison, Taholah Field Office, promoted, effective 3/5/06.

Have you checked out the Employee Personal Page (EPP)?

Did you even know that the EPP exists? Have you used it? What a great tool it is for you. Many times in HR we get calls from employees wanting information or wanting to make changes that they can get or do themselves.

The EPP provides a wealth of information. You can access your payroll, leave, travel, health and life insurance, savings bond, W-2 Wage and Tax Statement, and other personal information. You can make changes to your residence address, federal and state tax withholdings, financial allotments, direct deposit information, other personal information and connect to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) so you can view your TSP account.

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Employee Personal Page (EPP)....continued

You can:

- Save time by accessing information at your convenience
- Save money by eliminating postage to mail in forms
- Amend and update your personal information, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- View and validate the accuracy of your personal information
- Eliminate paper, if you choose the paperless option for services, including your pay statement and employee benefits statements.

If you have not signed up to access EPP, please visit the website and follow the instructions for new users. You can access EPP by going to the my.nrcs website or link to https://www.nfc.usda.gov/personal/ep_warning.asp. If you do make changes, you might want to print out a confirmation of the change you made.

If you have questions feel free to call Kathy Dickerson at 509-323-2933.

Telephone Calls of a Personal Nature during Official Travel

Employees traveling for two or more nights on government business may be reimbursed for long-distance telephone calls placed to the official duty station commuting area. If available, employees should use agency provided phone cards, government issued cell phones or a government provided telephone system whenever possible. When government provided services are not available, commercial services may be used.

The maximum aggregate amount that may be approved for each travel period cannot exceed the amount equal to \$5.00 multiplied by the number of lodging nights. Employees may claim the actual expense each day. For example, an employee makes a phone call the first night for \$6.50 and the second night the cost is \$2.75. The employee will claim \$6.50 on night one and \$2.75 on night two. This is allowed since the employee is not exceeding the aggregate amount allowed (amount allowed is \$5/night times 2 nights = \$10). If employees do not make personal phone calls on commercial phones or privately owned phone or calling cards, they are not entitled to receive any reimbursement.

The amount allowed does not include access charges for telephone usage from the hotel. Access charges may be claimed as a miscellaneous travel expense. Employees do not need to provide documentation of their personal telephone calls in order to be reimbursed. However, they do need to keep documentation in their personal travel files as the voucher may be audited and employee will be required to provide the documentation.

Saying “thank you” is so easy!

The Employee Recognition Committee is proud to “roll out” the new non-monetary award system for employee recognition. Details about the Terryberry awards, which are one option for bestowing recognition, were sent via email. Many of you have already used the program. If you’ve misplaced your email with the instructions, or you have any questions at all, please contact one of these committee members: Doug Allen, Ralph Christiansen, Frank Easter, Sherre Copeland, Cheryle Miller or Paul Rogers.

Although the budget is extremely tight and cash awards are not being approved for FY 06, the work is still there to do. In times like these, it’s even more important to thank those employees who do an extra good job. And, if possible, do it in a setting in front of their peers. Word is that recipients are really impressed with the quality of Terryberry awards and the ease with which they can be ordered.

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Saying thank you is so easy!...continued

This State is full of awesome employees and the committee would like to thank each of you for the hard work you do every day.

Look who has been recognized so far in FY 06!

Time Off, Spot or QSIs:

Kathy Dickerson, Eileen Jackson, Clay Midkiff, Kyle Stephens,
Tim Reibe, Erik Dalhke, Toby Rodgers, Chas Scriptor

Non-Monetary:

Bela Espinosa, Dennis Robinson, Chas Scriptor, Dave Brower, Rachel Maggi, Lisa Naylor, Ann Swannack, Chandra Neils, Bev Burnley, Gary Mitchell, Jason Outlaw, Bari Williams, Rhonda Brasch, Joe Gasperi, Don Hanson, Steve Durgin, Sergio Paredes, Crystal Briggs, Cheryle Miller

Capturing Conservation

Coming soon: a new way to submit conservation successes

By Kelly Sprute, Public Affairs Specialist

NRCS personnel help address resource concerns across Washington by implementing quality conservation practices that also protect our environment. Conservation success begins when conservationists review the needs and concerns of landowners.

But our success doesn't end when we implement a conservation plan. An important aspect of conservation success includes "showing-and-telling" others about the work we've accomplished – and the resulting benefits.

But putting pen to paper and actually writing that success story is not something some employees relish. Fortunately, the Public Affairs team is developing a success story web page that will make submitting these success stories in the future much easier – and, perhaps, a little less painful.

"Capturing Conservation" submission process will start by filling out a web-based modular form. The form will be laid out in a manner to facilitate capturing the key aspects of our accomplishments. Upon completion, the story will be submitted to the Public Affairs team who will place it into a new conservation success story database. If the story highlights a unique landowner, partnership, problem, or success – the Public Affairs team will follow up on the story crafting it into a "Conservation Showcase" feature article.



In case you haven't visited the site, you can view the "Conservation Showcase" page at

<http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/news/conservationshowcase.html> or

click on the "Conservation Showcase" icon located on the right side of Washington's homepage.

Currently, the "Capturing Conservation" web page is under construction – but we plan on having a "grand unveiling" in March.

To help tell the many conservation success stories to the news media, legislators, partner organizations and others, we need to continually highlight the great conservation work that's happening throughout Washington. Our goal with the "Capturing Conservation" web page is to make it easier for everyone to identify, record and retrieve those stories.

Volunteer Program at Work

Submitted by Jim Shawley, Soil Conservation Tech, Snake River Team



I would like to introduce you to Mr. Jim Manring. Jim is retired after 30 years, as a junior high school math and science teacher. He also has a MS in agriculture and one of his hobbies is maintaining his green house.

Jim has been an Earth Team volunteer since January 10, 2000, working for the Pomeroy field office. He also provides his services to Garfield, Asotin, Columbia, Walla Walla, Adams and Frankin counties. During this time he has donated a total of 585 hours assisting with outdoor activities related to conservation.

Jim has been involved in projects such as assisting in surveying all structural practices related to dry land farming and buffer strip layout, and in-stream projects and monitoring surveys. He has spent time working with CRP, CREP stem inventory and has helped at the 6th grade environmental camp.

The enjoyment of his company and his professional concern for his volunteer work make the time he shares very much appreciated in the Pomeroy field office.

South Central Washington RC&D and the Conservation Security Program

Submitted by Dave Myra, RC&D Coordinator

South Central Washington RC&D is assisting with the implementation/sign-up for the CSP in the Naches Watershed west of Yakima. The RC&D developed the “outreach” plan to identify media contacts, grower groups, minority contacts and large fruit packing facilities who would have contact with growers in the watershed. The plan was developed with basically two components. The first effort was to develop the plan, obtain outreach materials in both English and Spanish and conduct preliminary work with the media contacts. The secondary component of the outreach effort is now being initiated since the announcement has been made of the sign up dates. Workshop dates and locations have been set for both informational meetings and work sessions to assist growers with applications to the program. Also included in the second outreach phase is a mass mailing to approximately 1200 individuals in the watershed who have parcels at least 10 acres in size. This data base was generated by working with the Yakima County GIS personnel who were able to come up with the names and addresses and these were furnished to a local printing business who will deliver the CSP message for about 41 cents apiece including postage.

The effort is a partnership between local NRCS staff, North Yakima CD and the RC&D. Chris Johnson and Dave Myra have created a “missionary” team to meet with groups or packing houses in the area and have had real positive interchanges when discussing the merits of the CSP. The message of an entitlement program for good stewardship in dealing with the natural resource base utilized by the growers is being well received. With the Naches watershed being the only one in Washington for FY 06, the opportunity for the growers in the area is quite unique and they are beginning to realize their good fortune.

It is hoped that the outreach effort will bring the word to all possible applicants and that the effort will result in a substantial number of contracts which will support the producers in the area and add to the overall economic well being in the Yakima area.

SOAP LAKE HIGH SCHOOL GEAR STUDENTS BUILD KIOSK FOR OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Press release submitted by Andrea Mann, Big Bend RC&D Coordinator

(Ephrata, WA –February 2006)



When Soap Lake Gear Up Adviser John Turner made a request for his students to receive “hands on” training in various fields of study, it didn’t take long for local resource specialists to line up a variety of projects for the students to work on. For resource specialists, planning a shrub steppe outdoor classroom southwest of Ephrata on Highway 28, it was just the boost that was needed to move the project forward. The project was in need of a local volunteer group to adopt and assist in the development of the outdoor classroom to carry it on into the future.

The project started by a USDA staff member in 1998, who was transferred to another location, was passed on to another staff person who eventually moved on as well. The genesis staff developed a site plan, prepared the soil, planted shrub steppe habitat grasses, forbs and shrubs, installed an irrigation system, and installed an ADA trail with memorial benches to two fallen staff members who were involved in the project.

The project is currently being coordinated by the Big Bend Resource Conservation and Development Council which has secured tremendous support from partnering agencies and staff, funding from local and community foundations, materials from Washington State Fish and Wildlife, top soil and inmate crew labor from Grant County, a basalt column and equipment use from the Columbia National Wildlife Area, and dollars from the US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners Program.

Building and installing the kiosk was needed in order to display an educational pamphlet developed last winter using community foundation grant funding. The kiosk will include a map of the area and other interpretive information intended to educate the public about the benefits and values of shrub steppe habitat.

The Soap Lake Gear Up student adviser, John Turner, has been asked to identify students who could assist in the design and lay out of the kiosk materials. They also have been asked to assist in the development of the education curriculum intended to be used for visiting classrooms. The original vision of the shrub steppe area included hosting a local shrub steppe festival featuring walking tours and stations hosted by local resource specialists sharing their knowledge of the intrinsic values of shrub steppe habitat for wildlife, soil and water erosion protection, and for the enjoyment of all people.

For more information, please contact Andrea Mann at 509-754-2463 x115.

SUSTAINABLE RURAL ENTERPRISES CONFERENCE

Press release submitted by Andrea Mann, Big Bend RC&D Coordinator

(Ephrata, WA –January 2006) A conference and tour funded by the Sustainable Agriculture Research Education (SARE) program will be held May 23-24, 2006 in Ritzville, Washington at the La Quinta Inn and Sprague Lake. The conference will feature speakers with experience in developing rural enterprises focused on sustainable livestock and resource management strategies. Registration is estimated at \$25 and will include two lunches and a pitchfork steak fry.

Dr. An Peichel, Tennessee State University, will set the tone as key note speaker, discussing livestock grazing behavior in relation to invasive vegetation management, creating niche markets and enterprise development. Rural Enterprise producers including Dave Billingsley and Chuck Perry, Country Natural

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Sustainable Rural Enterprises Conference....continued

Beef; Joel Huesby, Thundering Hooves; Craig Madsen, Healing Hooves; and Julie and Dave Dashiell will discuss marketing, sustainability and the holistic nature of their operations.

The conference will feature a Pitchfork steak fry prepared by the Adams County Cattlemen and social hour intended to encourage networking and sharing by other viable rural enterprise owners and legislative sharing by local elected officials. The planning team will display a project poster presentation created specifically for the International Society for Range Management meeting held in Vancouver, B.C. February 2006.

The field tour will take place at the Sprague Lake invasive vegetation field trials located at the Washington State Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) boat launch on the south shore of the lake. The tour will feature a field review of invasive vegetation management using goats, a discussion regarding the WDFW interpretive trail program, a review of USDA Farm Bill programs, and a historical perspective on land use of this area.

The SARE Implementing Weed Control project is a joint partnership involving private landowners, a goat producer, Washington State University, WDFW, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Big Bend Resource Conservation and Development Council and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. This study, funded by the Sustainable Agriculture Research Education (SARE) program, is intended to observe the effects of multi-species grazing on weed control in wetlands and upland environments in eastern Washington.

Several parameters were evaluated during the study. These parameters included Enterprise Evaluation, Forage Quality, Livestock Management and Treatment Effectiveness. Our target species in the treatment areas include knapweed, china lettuce, perennial pepperweed and other weedy forbs. The producer is evaluating the feasibility of adding additional enterprises such as hair sheep, cashmere fiber producing goats, and meat goats.

For more information, please contact Andrea Mann at 509-754-2463 x115.

“May I have Mustard on that?”

Submitted by Justin Mount, Conservation Agronomist, Big Bend Team

This article is not about some new techno-rig or computerized variable rate irrigation system but rather an ancient technology that has been reintroduced on the landscape with great success and results. What is it? Mustard green manure crops.

The primary uses for these green manure cover crops are threefold: 1.) Pest management for nematodes, weeds and soil borne diseases; 2.) Improve water infiltration in the top 3-6” of soil and 3.) Aggregation of soil to improve structure and minimize wind erosion.

The Columbia Basin in Central Washington is a diverse and technologically advanced production irrigation agriculture area blessed with plentiful, high-quality water and affordable power. The primary mustards used in the Basin are the oriental (*Brassica juncea*) and white mustard (*Snipasis alba*). Acreage in Grant County, Washington has increased from very little to over 20,000 acres in recent growing seasons.

Typically the mustards are planted following wheat and may be aerially seeded or narrow-row drilled at 10-15 pounds of seed per acre. Volunteer wheat is a legitimate weed concern and it may require spray to eliminate competition with young mustard plants. Mustard germination and growth are rapid. On a dry matter basis mustard can produce from 6,000-10,000lbs/acre. Generally, the green manure is flailchopped and disked into the soil for thorough mixing, then wetted with 0.3-0.5 inches of irrigation water.

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May I Have Mustard....continued

Incorporating fresh green plant material into the soil changes the soils' biology through a transfer of energy. Energy from the sun and nutrients, stored in plants, is made available to soil microorganisms through green manuring. As these fungi and bacteria digest the plants, certain species (usually beneficial) increase in number because they are best suited to use this energy. The increased numbers of these beneficial species can then suppress pathogens through a number of potential mechanisms such as the interference of chemical signaling between the plant and the pathogen, predation, parasitism and competitive exclusion. Glucosinolates are active compounds in the mustard plant that are believed to be responsible for its pest suppression attributes. Increased biologic activity also produce sticky substances which help glue the soil together producing an extremely effective wind erosion management strategy.

Washington NRCS' Big Bend Team is promoting this technology through cost-share programs such as EQIP. The Big Bend Local Working Group has encouraged this technology by offering substantial ranking points for both mustard and sudan grass cover crops. Results of mustard cover crop research conducted by Andy McGuire of the Grant County Extension Service are available online at:

http://grant-adams.wsu.edu/agriculture/covercrops/green_manures/index.htm



Reducing and incorporating green mustard in mid-October planted into wheat stubble in early August under sprinkler irrigation.

Source: McGuire, Andy, WSU Extension Publication "Agrichemicals and Environmental News." June 2003, Issue No.206 pages 4-9.

Washington Engineering Webpage

Submitted by Larry Johnson, State Conservation Engineer

Our engineering webpage has been revised and updated in an effort to make it easier to use. The Washington National Engineering Manual (NEM) supplements are now available at www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/ENG/nem/index.html. Also, if you have not checked out the Washington State Irrigation Guide, you can now find it along with all of the supplements at http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/ENG/irrigation_guide/index.html

Soon we will have all of the Washington supplements to the National Operation and Maintenance Manual (NOMM), Agricultural Waste Management Field Handbook (AWMFH) and other National Engineering Handbook (NEH) sections available on our website as well. My hope is that the engineering webpage helps make your jobs easier in the field when planning, designing and installing engineering practices. Please let me know what other enhancements would be beneficial to you.

Thanks to Rhonda Brasch for her work on the updated webpage!

Virtual Incubator

Submitted by Nancy Allison, RC&D Coordinator, Columbia Pacific RC&EDD

As reported in the Montesano Vidette, Feb. 23, 2006, By Lew Pumphrey, Vidette Reporter

A learning experience for two women from Elma may turn into a high-tech business stimulant for Grays Harbor County.

Chrissie Zepp and Sherrie Howard, who will both graduate this spring from Grays Harbor College, are completing a feasibility study for a business incubator with a twist. They are dealing with business incubator experts to ponder the probabilities of a virtual incubator, where seminars, workshops and advice are dispensed not in a physical location, but instead through the Internet to each business client's office or home. It would be "an incubator without walls," said Howard.

Incubators are not new. Zepp and Howard have visited the long-established incubator in Tacoma, and have communicated with similar incubators in Idaho, Hawaii and Colorado. In their traditional sense, a small-business incubator is an economic-development tool that helps fledgling companies with such common problem areas as tax advice, business law, marketing plans and income projections.

Typically, a small-business incubator is operated as a nonprofit corporation and is located within a big enough complex to provide these new businesses with their own workspace. The incubator provides the kinds of services that all businesses need—central receptionist, conference rooms and photocopying machine. The idea behind providing these necessities is to let the new business owner focus on the product while learning about business.

"It would help with the business aspects," Zepp said of incubators in general. "They don't always know about the business. They just know how to make whatever they're selling."

Howard, thinking big, feels that Grays Harbor County can benefit from a physical incubator with virtual features. In other words, the best of both ideas.

Creating a virtual incubator in cyberspace isn't as easy as just fine-tuning the plans for a physical incubator.

For one thing, a Web hookup obviously can't provide the photocopier or the conference room.

But it would work wonderfully for classes, workshops, frequently asked questions, one-on-one advice and, when channeled through a teleconference, can also provide plain old general meetings.

The new businesses in Grays Harbor can benefit from the advice of experts anywhere in the world. A fashion designer in Paris can theoretically give advice to a tailor in Satsop.

A feasibility study a few years ago, Howard said, didn't light any fires in Grays Harbor County. The general conclusion of that 1980s study was that new business owners on the Harbor wanted to just strike out on their own.

Strike out might be a key phrase, because, Howard said, some 80 percent of new businesses are destined to not survive. She even found that calling business numbers printed in the most recent phone book resulted in a lot of "no longer in service" recordings.

Some of the "old school" incubator professionals aren't convinced there can be a cyber version of what they offer.

But Howard and Zepp are going to ask questions and test their findings on a much bigger stage. They'll both attend the National Business Incubator Association annual meeting in St. Louis in late April.

Adding what they learn there to what they've already come up with, the two will write a final report by the end of June for the feasibility study sponsor, the Columbia-Pacific Resource Conservation and Economic Development District. That long title is to a non-profit corporation that wants to light a fire under the idea of a business incubator for its four counties—Grays Harbor, Pacific, Mason and Wahkiakum.

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Virtual Incubator....continued

Zepp and Howard—both 20, both graduates of Elma High School and both ready to graduate from Grays Harbor College at the end of the spring quarter—will go separate ways after this project is done. Zepp is getting her Associate of Arts degree in accounting, and wants to go to work. Howard is getting her AA in business management, and plans to attend Western Washington University in Bellingham.

Previous projects by the Columbia-Pacific RC&EDD include developing a regional economic development strategy, and then working to implement the strategy. It helped create the Julia Butler Hanson White-Tailed Deer Refuge and the Skamokawa Vista Park, both in Wahkiakum County. It has done flood-control projects on both the Wynooche and Satsop rivers, and has worked on beach erosion control at Westport and Ocean Shores.

It recently completed a study of fish barriers on Grays Harbor streams, and helped with the construction of Friends Landing, a partnership with Trout Unlimited that resulted in the park along the Chehalis River, which happens to be one of the few full-access fishing areas for people with disabilities.

One Good Drink of Water

Submitted by Shawn Woodard, Soil Conservationist, West Palouse Team



Oh boy – Another program! Who’s going to get stuck with this one? I’m sure this was running through a few field office employees minds when they heard of FSA’s Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) being approved in the spring of 2005. The ECP was approved to provide funding to alleviate problems brought on by recent drought conditions in the western states.

In Lincoln County we had 52 project applications from 26 producers scheduled in the summer of 2005 requiring an estimated \$78,000 of cost-share from FSA. John Kouns and Jerry Robeson were saddled with the majority of the workload created by the newly funded ECP program. One of the biggest hurdles was that all of the practices had to be approved, planned, installed, and certified by the end of 2005 fiscal year or lose the funding. This kind of turnaround is unheard of since the passing of the old ACP program. What about prioritizing the engineering practices, or worse yet the cultural resource work? In order to meet such a short time constraint we had to streamline the process in certain areas. When the dust settled we assisted in the installation of 46 separate ECP practices designed to help area ranchers get through the drought without having to sell their herd.

Quinault Indian Nation & NRCS PARTNERSHIP

By Carri Gaines, Quinault Tribal Liaison

I am the new tribal liaison to the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN). I have been the liaison here in Taholah for just short of a year. I worked on the Quinault Reservation for about 7 ½ years prior to signing on with NRCS. I give regular presentations at the Quinault Department of Natural Resources staff meetings and from time to time I write articles for their newsletters. My talks or articles always start out with a little history. Understanding the lessons of the past helps to keep us on the right path today.

As you all remember, the NRCS started out as the Soil Erosion Service (SES) in the Department of the Interior. The SES implemented demonstration projects for soil and water conservation on farms and selected watersheds. The SES would furnish equipment and materials and the CCC or workers hired by the SES would do the actual labor. One of the early projects was on Navajo land. According to **Conservation and Culture: The Soil Conservation Service, Social Science, and Conservation on Tribal Lands in the Southwest**, “The federal conservationists attempts at development, which were ignorant

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Quinault Indian Nation & NRCS PARTNERSHIP.....continued

of or indifferent to the society and culture of the American Indians, used models based upon an entrepreneurial form of economic organization entirely inappropriate to the predominantly communal societies of the reservations in the Southwest. This failure to comprehend the basic structure of American Indian societies in the federal planning process resulted in substantial social disruption with only meager economic returns. Lessons from these early projects help to solidify the requirement to consider the needs of the individual as well as the social structure of the community at large in the conservation planning process. With voluntary programs, consideration of the human elements can be pivotal to the success or failure of projects. So an awful lot of my work includes understanding the governmental and social structures of the Quinault people.

The QIN is a wood fiber (timber products) producer and a producer of fin fish and shellfish products for commercial distribution, as well as subsistence. The reservation also supports commercial ventures in guided fishing and hunting. Although most of the NRCS' work off reservation is with farmers and ranchers, a couple of their programs are adaptable to the Quinault Reservation. Two programs that QIN has chosen to participate in are the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). Currently, NRCS is working in partnership with the QIN on 13 projects. Four are WHIP projects and nine are EQIP. Most of the projects have to do with fish passage and stream habitat restoration. The Quinault Reservation has an extensive road system. With such an extensive road system comes many stream crossings. Although the culverts and their installations were appropriate for their time, the natural and human forces may have damaged them, caused blockages, became perched or in some way created a barrier to fish passage. Most of these projects are designed to restore fish passage in these areas and restore the upstream habitat for fish use. Furthermore, several projects also have an upland wildlife component.



The partnership between QIN and NRCS has successfully completed one project so far, another one is complete except for weed control over the next two years and hopefully, we will have major components of six other projects completed by the end of the calendar year. The completed project is called the



9115 road project (see before and after photos). Originally at this site, two culverts were installed to allow the stream to flow and fish to pass. However, as time passed the culverts became blocked and the stream on the upstream side would flood. The fish could no longer pass freely up and down the stream at this point and the flooding caused sediment to wash into the stream. QIN, in partnership with the NRCS, was able to replace these blocked and damaged culverts with a bridge. This project included tree planting in the area that had flooded and timber stand improvement thinning in stands adjacent to the site. Now the stream and the fish flow freely.



The project that only requires weed control for the next two years before it is complete is a wetland habitat restoration project near Moses Prairie. In order to restore the hydrology, we rerouted the 4600 road and removed a failing bridge and about ¼ mile of road prism. Through re-vegetation efforts of QIN's Forestry Department and natural seeding, the wetlands are reclaiming the area.



Four of the projects scheduled for this year are old bridge/culvert removals and road abandonment for stream habitat enhancement, along with seeding for elk forage. Two projects are culvert removals with bridge installations for fish passage. The remainders of the projects are schedule in 2007 and mostly include improvements to stream habitat and fish passage

Range Management Reduces Livestock Poisoning

Patrick Beres, Rangeland Management Specialist, South Central Team

Most native range communities contain poisonous plant species that create risks to grazing livestock. Plants produce poisons so animals will avoid eating them. Even though most poisonous plants are unpalatable, they have caused significant problems for the livestock industry on rangelands and pastures with an estimated livestock loss exceeding \$20 million in Washington annually. Wise poisonous plant control begins with correctly identifying the plant species which saves you time, money, and peace of mind. An ounce of weed prevention will control the spread of poisonous plants because once poisonous plants are established, they are difficult to eradicate. Identify the plant with an identification guide such as: *Weeds of the West* – by T. Whitson or *Poisonous Plants of the U.S. and Canada* by J. Kingsbury. Some plants are even relatively safe to graze part of the year, but then will become lethal as the season changes and their toxin levels rise. The amount of toxin in a plant will vary due to soil mineral imbalances, excessive moisture, fertilization, drought and herbicides. Take the following steps to prevent animal poisonings:

1. Inspect pastures in spring before turning animals out and avoid overgrazing.
2. Provide adequate salt to prevent salt cravings.
3. Provide supplemental feed in drought when poisonous plants are the only green pasture.



Western false hellebore ([Veratrum californicum](#)) caused birth defects in sheep in mountain valleys in Idaho and was the first identified case of a dietary factor causing birth defects and found it was dangerous for only a short part of the reproductive cycle. If a ewe consumes it on the 14th day of gestation, cell migration is disrupted, causing a cyclopic or monkey-faced lamb. Simply reversing the grazing pattern so that the pregnant ewes were not in the *Veratrum* patches during early pregnancy can prevent poisoning.



Lupine ([Lupinus](#) spp.) has been one of the largest causes of sheep poisoning in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming causing neurologic problems in sheep and acute death. Lupine seeds and pods contain high levels of alkaloids and are succulent and relatively palatable. A management strategy was developed to avoid grazing dense patches of lupine in the late summer and fall as the pods develop and ripen. Lupine has been linked to “crooked calf disease” in cattle in which calves are born with crooked necks, spines, and legs. Research determined that crooked calves were born when their mothers grazed

lupine during days 40–70 of gestation, causing the limbs and spine to develop in abnormal positions. A simple management solution was proposed to stagger grazing so that the susceptible period of gestation (40–70 days) does not overlap the flower and pod stage of lupine growth when the poison concentration is the highest. In eastern Washington, cattle begin eating lupine in July, when annual grasses dry up and weedy forbs mature. Lupine is a deep-rooted perennial that remains green and succulent later into the summer. The traditional breeding season begins May 1 and runs through July. This puts the susceptible period of gestation from June 10 to October 8. Since lupine consumption occurs during the susceptible period of gestation, producers should either alter the breeding season or deny cows access to lupine from July to September.

NRCS Assists Poultry Growers through EQIP

Written by Richard Bachert, Resource Conservationist, Southwest Team

The raising of poultry as “fryers” or “broilers” has been an active farming enterprise in Southwest Washington for many years. Unfortunately, it has also been a rather underserved sector of agriculture by NRCS, due in part to attention being focused on dairies and other livestock operations in recent years. The poultry industry certainly has its share of resource problems. But last year, through the efforts of the Southwest Local Working Group, NRCS was able to extend assistance to poultry growers through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Mr. David Welsh, who currently has an EQIP contract, is a typical broiler operation and raises between 90,000 and 100,000 birds per flock cycle which is about six weeks long. This means over a half million birds are raised every year which translates to roughly 600 tons of waste produced annually. Another concern is flock mortality which ranges from 3 to 5 percent. What do you do with 15,000 dead chickens? And all of this occurs on a farm with a land base of about five acres.



Typical west-side poultry farm:
Large quantities of waste near
surface water and on limited acres.

These situations definitely call for some innovative creative approaches. First step was to install a waste management system where waste could be collected and stored safely without impacting water quality. This typically involves constructing a roofed building over an impervious surface.

The second piece of the puzzle was how to plan for managing all the nutrients generated by the farm. Because there is virtually no land on which to field-apply the waste, it was determined all litter must be exported from the farm. Through the help of NRCS’ Waste Utilization practice, Mr. Welsh has found customers who see the waste as a resource and are eager to take it. They include farmers, homeowners, topsoil

manufacturers, and developers. A local rendering plant takes all the poultry mortality produced. On other poultry farms, composting is being installed as an alternative means of treating mortality, through NRCS’ Animal Mortality Facility practice.



Waste Storage Facility with concrete
block walls

Thanks to the efforts of the Southwest Local Working Group, poultry growers now have as good a potential along side the dairies, beef operations, horse facilities, timber growers, and cranberry producers of Southwest Washington, to receive NRCS assistance through the EQIP program. The FY06 EQIP application ranking in the Southwest Team already indicates that a couple more poultry growers will likely be offered contracts. These growers are dealing with the same resource issues as Mr. Welsh’s EQIP contract did, waste storage, water runoff management, animal mortality and how to properly dispose or it should be said utilize all those excess nutrients.

If any eastside RC&D coordinator or NRCS team is considering contracting for Waste Utilization and can come up with a sensible means of transporting a valuable organic product across the mountains for use as a good organic soil amendment, the poultry industry in Southwest Washington is probably ready for a conversation.

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