



A Message from Gus

The end is in site! Well, maybe not the end, but at least a breather. We are down to the last 30 (or so) working days in the fiscal year. After October 1, we can at least slow down for a few days to catch our breath.

I'm reminded of my days running the mile in competition. The race itself often seemed both interminable and yet ending before I'd accomplished what I set out to do. But at the end of the race, all the runners gathered their remaining energy for a sprint to the finish. We were always tired, out of breath, and usually hurting. But the finish line was just ahead.

It's a reasonable analogy for where we are today. Tired, hurting, and gasping for air. But we need to put on that sprint to the finish. We must ensure we've done everything we can to get conservation contracts and easements signed and into the hands of our producers. Additionally, we need to use the allotted TSP funds wisely and effectively. I know you can do it. We'll make this work.

By the way, I was not a very good miler. They could time me with a sundial. But I always finished higher than I started. If I can do it . . .

"Walking forward or backwards
makes no difference as long as you're
moving ahead."

-author unknown

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Well...I'm off to good old St. Louis Missouri, where I'll be welcomed by mosquitoes, hot humid days, muggy evenings, water bugs, tons of traffic, and a losing hockey team! Yuck!

What was I thinking when I took this job? There is SOME good news...I hear the St. Louis Cardinals are in first place, and the football RAMS are expected to do great things next season! The best news of course are those two wonderful little granddaughters that are anxiously waiting for their Grammy to take them to the zoo, to read them bedtime stories, to play tea party with them. It just doesn't get any better than that!

With all of the moves I have made in my career, I have never been faced with such a difficult decision. This is by far the most fun and rewarding job I've ever had. I have never worked with a more professional group of people than all of you in Washington State. You are extremely dedicated to conservation and to making the world a

better place to live in. It's so great to be part of an organization dedicated to passing on a safer world to our children and grandchildren. It's also great to be involved with an organization that is really dedicated to taking care of its employees.

Sometimes we think that the leadership does not make wise decisions, that support is lacking for the guy in the field, that employees are not treated fairly. Yes, there may be times when all of these things are true. However, these times are rare compared to other organizations that I have worked with. If I could pass on one thing to all of you it would be to have an appreciation for what a great organization you work for.

It truly has been fun working with all of you. I will miss you greatly. Thanks for being such a supportive bunch of folks!

Linda Llewellyn

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Personnel Actions

Congratulations to the following employees:

Mike Regan was promoted to the MLRA Project Leader in Mount Vernon Soil Survey Office, effective 6/29/03.

Sarah Troutman was promoted and reassigned as the Rangeland Management Specialist in Ellensburg Field Office, effective 7/13/03.

James Loiland from Oregon NRCS was reassigned as the Soil Conservationist in the Walla Walla Field Office, effective 7/13/03.

Ray Schuler was reassigned as the Resource Conservationist in the Chehalis Field Office, effective 8/10/03.

New to the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) in Washington.

Julie Henning, Student Trainee (Biology) in the Chehalis Field Office, effective 7/7/03.

Best of Luck to the following employees:

Linda Llewellyn, Human Resource Officer, Spokane State Office reassigned to the Rural Development in St. Louis, Missouri, effective 7/12/03.

Teresa Kunch, Soil Scientist, Mount Vernon Soil Survey Office resigned to take a position with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Ron Cook, Soil Conservation Technician, St. John Field Office, retired effective 7/26/03.

A New Arrivals



Congratulations to Chris & Carol Miller!

James Russell Miller arrived from Korea on July 5th. He was born on 1/21/03 and is now just over six months old. He's been adjusting to life in America just fine. After about a day to get over his 20 hour jet trip, he was all smiles and ready to play with his new siblings.

Congratulations to Gus Hughbanks



Gus proudly announces the birth of his first granddaughter. Samantha Elizabeth Agnew was born on August 5th. She was 7 pounds 14 ounces and 19 inches long.



Earth Team Volunteers Flourish in King County

Submitted by Erica Fifer, West Area Volunteer Coordinator

Earth Team volunteers assist with projects in most conservation district and NRCS offices throughout the State. Local schools provide a great source for volunteers. Any student who is 14 or older is eligible to sign up as an Earth Team volunteer. In western Washington, King Conservation District (KCD) found an innovative way of partnering with a middle school to create volunteer opportunities in their county. The following article was contributed by Debbie Meisinger, Project Assistant with KCD.



A volunteer stands among hundreds of KCD donated salt marsh plants on the banks of the Duwamish River.

Over the past five years, the KCD has maintained a strong partnership with a junior high school in Kent. As part of the Northwood Junior High School 8th grade science curriculum, the students are required to do at least four hours of environmental science based community service. During the 2002-2003 school year alone, 222 8th grade students and parents contributed an amazing 782 hours of volunteer labor to the KCD, both through the Wetland Plant Cooperative Nursery and other conservation projects.

The work performed by Northwood Jr. High School volunteers at the KCD nursery involved propagation of native trees, shrubs and wetland plants and is of great importance to local stream and wetland restoration efforts. Their many hours of service provided thousands of plants to numerous projects this year including large-scale nearshore salmon habitat restoration projects on the Duwamish River Estuary as well as the Thea Foss Waterway off Commencement Bay. As a result of the students' hard work and dedication, the KCD was able to donate over 5,000 trees, shrubs and emergents to these and other restoration projects in King County so far this year.

Why Be A Volunteer - author unknown

It's not for fortune
It's not for fame
It's not for only personal gain
It's not for love of fellowman
Or just to lend a helping hand
It's not for medals worn with pride
It's for the feeling deep inside
Of helping others far and near
That makes you want to volunteer

The Suffrage Movement and Women's Equality Day, August 26

Lisa Naylor, Washington State Federal Women's Program Manager

Tuesday, August 26 is Women's Equality Day. A look at its history is rich with determined women and men. It is a reminder the liberties we enjoy today came through the great toil and dogged persistence.

On July 13, 1848, five women met for tea in upstate New York. After commiserating about the lot of women in American society, they did something brash...they sent off a notice to the local newspaper announcing "a convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious conditions and rights of **woman**" to be held just six days later in Seneca Falls, in upstate New York.

"Declaration of Sentiments" is Drafted

Elizabeth Cady Stanton used the Declaration of Independence as the framework for writing what she titled a "Declaration of Sentiments." In what proved to be a brilliant move, Stanton connected the nascent campaign for women's rights directly to that powerful American symbol of liberty. The same familiar words framed their arguments: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

In this Declaration of Sentiments, Stanton carefully enumerated areas of life where women were treated unjustly. Eighteen was precisely the number of grievances America's revolutionary forefathers had listed in their Declaration of Independence from England. Stanton's version read, "The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world." Then it went into specifics:

- *Married women were legally dead in the eyes of the law*
- *Women were not allowed to vote*
- *Women had to submit to laws when they had no voice in their formation*
- *Married women had no property rights*
- *Husbands had legal power over and responsibility for their wives to the extent that they could imprison or beat them with impunity*
- *Divorce and child custody laws favored men, giving no rights to women*
- *Women had to pay property taxes although they had no representation in the levying of these taxes*
- *Most occupations were closed to women and when women did work they were paid only a fraction of what men earned*
- *Women were not allowed to enter professions such as medicine or law*

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Equality - continued

- *Women had no means to gain an education since no college or university would accept women students*
- *With only a few exceptions, women were not allowed to participate in the affairs of the church*

One of the resolutions called for universal women's suffrage. One hundred women and men from all walks of life signed that Declaration. Only one, nineteen-year-old Charlotte Woodward, lived to see women win the vote.

On August 26, 1920, after a 72-year struggle, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the U.S. was finally ratified, granting women the right to vote nationwide.

President Carter designated August 26 as Women's Equality Day, as a reminder of women's continuing efforts for equality.

We've come along way since 1920. And it really wasn't that long ago.

SEEKING SOLUTIONS FOR THE ODESSA AQUIFER DEPLETION

Andrea L. Mann, Big Bend RC&D Coordinator

The Big Bend RC&D, working in partnership with the Columbia Basin Development League and the Big Bend Economic Development Council, are co-sponsoring a series of educational forums to explore the depletion of the Odessa Aquifer and the proposed expansion of the Columbia Basin - East High Irrigation Project as a potential solution.

The first forum is scheduled for **November 18, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Moses Lake Convention Center**. This forum will feature the history, background and economic impacts of the existing Columbia Basin Project. The second and following forums are proposed for early spring 2004 and will feature work sessions and facilitated break out groups to develop an action plan for the community. Building capacity in the local people to address the concerns with the depleting Odessa Aquifer is the driving force behind the forums.

The existing Columbia Basin Project currently provides irrigation water to approximately 552,000 acres in the Columbia Basin providing water for more than 60 crop varieties. These crops amount to approximately 25% of Washington's agricultural base and provide a market value of approximately \$520 million per year.

Congress originally authorized the entire Columbia Basin project to irrigate an additional 538,000 acres in the Columbia Basin extending into Grant, Lincoln, Adams and Franklin counties in the 1930's. As provided under the legislation and laws covering the Columbia Basin

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Project, irrigation is the primary purpose for the Project, and electric power revenues derived from Grand Coulee power plant generation are used to cover most of the Project's primary headworks and water delivery system costs.

Many areas of these counties were granted ground water irrigation permits, which allowed withdrawal of Odessa Aquifer waters until the expansion of the Project was completed. Recent hydro-geographic studies indicate the Odessa Aquifer is being depleted by water withdrawal from these deep water wells.

The Bureau of Reclamation developed a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in the 1980s which went through the public comment period. Due to a lack of agreement by various agencies in the state, the DEIS was placed on the shelf, never to be completed.

The depletion of the Odessa Aquifer at an alarming rate in recent dry years and the impacts to community water systems, and declining agricultural and community economics of this area, have restored the drive and interest in the local people to take action.

The BBRC&D has given this project top priority for the area believing it meets their mission and goals of empowering local people to work together to make a difference in their communities.

WRP Construction Can Be Heavy Work!

Dave Kreft, District Conservationist, Colville

Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) restoration activities often involve more than "kicking dirt in the ditch and walking away". Sometimes extra measures are needed to fully restore a drained wetland. Where we have large acreages of prior converted cropland (200-600 acres) we often use "de-leveling" to create a myriad of potholes, shallow ponds, sloughs, etc.- something to break up the even surface of the farm field. In Stevens County we often employ a combination of earth movers (scrapers), bulldozers and excavators. They are teamed up to provide a potent combination to move soil - lots of it and fast!



We currently employ teams of 3-4 scrapers, along with a bulldozer. A good combination involves two smaller scrapers (14-17 cubic yard capacity) with a larger scraper (30+ cyds). A D-8 size bulldozer is used to push the scrapers so they can fill faster and shorten their turn around time. And, yes, to help them get out of "sticky" situations.

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WRP continued



De-leveling complete

The smaller scrapers are able to move into tighter spaces, creating sharper contours to the edges of our ponds and potholes. They are also able to dig deeper into wet subsoils without getting stuck-usually. The large scraper adds more over-all production to the team during the initial excavation stages of a pond. The excavator (50,000 lb tracked backhoe) is then used to create smaller and deeper holes within the pond area to create a diversity of water depths. They are also able to reach into wetter sites without getting stuck. Very wet sites need the use of a dragline and tracked flotation dump trucks.

The key is finding a contractor with the right combination of equipment and experience. The contractor in the pictures used in this article is on his third WRP easement. The rapport that has built up benefits the NRCS in a couple of ways. The contractor has been able to hone his cost estimates and is consistently the lowest bidder on our WRP projects. This means we can stretch our restoration budget farther on each easement. Secondly, this contractor has become very self sufficient, or in terms of relationships - "low maintenance". NRCS staff time is minimal in staking out the work and making construction checks. We have both become more efficient. No, I'm afraid you can't have his name or phone number and he's too busy to work elsewhere.

We also do "lite" wetland restoration with plantings, ditch plugs, breaking drain tile, etc. But the heavy metal version sure can be fun!



WRP wetland one year later



Diverse wetland habitat on former cropland

**58TH Annual Soil and Water Conservation Society Conference
held in Spokane**

By Larry Cooke, Co-Chair

Over 900 conservationists from around the world attended the 58th annual conference of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. The conference was held in Spokane July 26-30th.

The session opened with two locals singing both the U.S. National Anthem and the Canadian National Anthem. NRCS Chief, Bruce Knight, was introduced by our very own, Gus Hughbanks! Chief Knight addressed the audience with a discussion focused on "The 2002 Farm Bill - One Year Later."

The Conference continued with three Plenary Sessions and more than 60 concurrent sessions, technical tours and workshops. The technical tours were well attended and included touring the Palouse area, Hells Canyon, Grand Coulee Dam, the Silver Valley, and forest management in Pend Oreille County.

Conference attendees were impressed with the natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest, friendly people, conservation practices and of course they loved our summer weather! (Should we hold the next conference in the months of February or March?)

Attending an international conference opens up your perspective on many issues to a global scale, hear world leaders impressions of the state of affairs and see how these leaders are forecasting the future. It is an excellent opportunity to network with other resource professionals, learn about new procedures and technological advances as well as socialize with friends. Next year's SWCS conference will be held in St. Paul, Minnesota, July 24-28, 2004.

The NRCS employees who worked on the Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) for the past 2 1/2 years include: Dennis Roe, Larry Cooke, Valerie Oksendahl, Betty Schmitt, Larry Hooker, Steve Durgin, Maggie Addington, Mike Klungland, Shawn Woodard, Ann Swannack, Ron Myrum, and Shelly Lassiter.

The majority of the on-site volunteers were NRCS employees and retirees. The NRCS family always pulls through and we thank you all.

Everything you ever wanted to know about RC&D but were afraid to ask.

Submitted by Jerry Smith, Coordinator, Columbia-Pacific RC&D

Columbia Pacific Resource Conservation and Economic Development District update.

The RC&EDD is a registered 501(C) 3 non-profit corporation with the State of Washington. Our office moved from Aberdeen to the Montesano Service Center last January where we share a roof with FSA, NRCS, Grays Harbor Conservation District, plus an addiction treatment center. (I began my career with SCS in the Chehalis Field Office over a liquor store, and I'm now working for NRCS under an addiction treatment center. Is this career progress?)

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Because the RC&D program is "grass roots" directed, the membership of the governing council represents a wide spectrum of local interests in the council area. The membership of Columbia Pacific is made up of counties, cities, port districts, public utility districts, Indian tribes, economic development councils, conservation districts, transit systems, a community action social agency, a bank for high-risk borrowers, and other non-profit organizations.

Columbia Pacific RC&D has joined with the four Economic Development Councils from Grays Harbor, Mason, Pacific and Wahkiakum Counties into an Economic Development District which works closely with the Economic Development Administration of the Department of Commerce.

What do those people do?

Most of the RC&EDD's work is gathering local input on issues of high concern in the area, and trying to find solutions to those issues through partnerships. The acceptable solutions frequently involve money, and Columbia Pacific council employees a full-time Development Director, Terry Fernsler, who is an expert grant writer and fund raiser.

In this age of information overload, a lot of the coordinator's job is sharing information about opportunities and developing partnerships. We work extensively with local, State, and Federal government agencies, along with the private sector companies and foundations. Two USDA agencies that provide many funding opportunities to rural communities are Rural Development and the Forest Service. In addition, the Washington Office of Trade and Economic Development is very helpful in providing economic development opportunities.

To back up the information sharing component of the job, I have included the following website on grant funding opportunities through USDA Rural Development Valued Added Grant due to be released in August. The grant is for agricultural producers and organizations. The following website includes an application template for both planning and working capitol grants, along with the necessary format, forms and an example of a successful application. <http://fpc.unl.edu/marketing/grant.htm>. If you have a producer or group of producers who could use this information, please make them aware of the opportunity and offer to help them through the process.

Personal Observation

The most significant observation I have made since coming to work as an RC&D coordinator is that the economic prosperity along the I-5 corridor, has not spread into the rural areas of western Washington. The Columbia Pacific area has a long history of being economically dependent upon resource extraction industries. The decisions about those resource extractions are no longer made at the local level, but at national and international levels. The impacts to local economies no longer carry as much weight as in past decades.

Soil Surveys with the National Park Service

Submitted by Neil Peterson, State Soil Scientist

The NRCS soil survey program in Washington has entered into a project with the National Park Service (NPS). Our soil scientists in the Mount Vernon MLRA Project office have started the process with mapping of the San Juan National Historic Site on San Juan Island. Mike Regan, MLRA Project Leader and Toby Rodgers, Soil Scientist, will have the site surveyed by the end of August. They will then be preparing a soil survey report that the NPS will use as the bases for their revised Resource Management Plan of the San Juan Historic Site.

The survey of NPS lands has presented several new aspects to mapping. For example, all proposed sites for any kind of excavation had to be located via GPS and presented to the NPS cultural resource specialist for review and clearance.

This project on San Juan Island is the beginning of a long relationship between the NPS and NRCS as we will be completing soil surveys on all NPS lands in Washington over the next few years. As has been stated by Pete Biggam, NPS National Soil Scientist, "The National Park Service recognizes they have vast natural resources that need to be managed. We have been managing visitors to the parks for years, but never managing our resources as we should. Having a soil survey as the bases for natural resource management planning is essential."

Much of the mapping in remote areas such as North Cascades National Park will be accomplished utilizing a soil mapping model. Toby Rodgers developed this model in the process of mapping wilderness areas administered by the Forest Service in the Okanogan-Methow Highlands Soil Survey Area.

We are excited about this project with the National Park Service and look forward to the finished products that will result.

Keep the Faith

We all have our own separate pathways to take
Our own destinations to choose,
We all have our contributions to make,
Our own special talents to use-
We all have our own kind of life to pursue,
Our own kind of dreams to be weaving,
And we all have the power...
To make wishes come true.
As long as we keep on believing.
-Amanda Bradley

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