



### A Message from Gus

The end of the federal fiscal year is rapidly approaching. This time of year always brings with it a bit of angst. There is always too much to do and too little time to get it all done. Some of our computer snafus haven't helped. There are a few remaining problems that are causing considerable frustration. Hang in there. It will get better.

FY05 will remain on my list of "Most Complicated Years." There have been a number of issues that have been challenging. We implemented our first statewide Conservation Security Program (CSP) sign-up. We received a performance bonus for EQIP that resulted in writing additional contracts. We negotiated an agreement with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to write Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program contracts. We got additional funds to deal with Threatened and Endangered species, salmon and sage grouse. We got a new Progress Reporting System. We have a revised ProTracts and Toolkit. The list goes on.

Whew! What a year!

My thanks to all the folks that worked so hard this fiscal year. We obligated a record amount of financial assistance. Those funds will allow a number of good conservation systems to be applied. We are doing great things for the natural resources in Washington State. Good work, guys! You make me proud.

Now. Don't rest on your laurels. You've still got a couple weeks left in the year. Back to work!



**Fall Back!**  
October 30<sup>th</sup> is Daylight Savings Time  
Don't forget to set your clocks  
backward one hour

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## Welcome

**Eric Harwood**, hired under the Career Intern Program as a Plant Materials Specialist in the Pullman Plant Materials Center, effective 5/29/05

**John George**, reassigned from NRCS in Ontario, Oregon to the Rangeland Management Specialist position in Colville effective 7/10/05

**Joy Hawley**, hired as a Soil Conservationist in the Lynden Field Office, effective 8/21/05

## Promotions

**Jessie Ham**, Soil Conservationist, Waterville Field Office, effective 6/12/05

**Toots Ekholm**, Soil Conservation Technician, Walla Walla Field Office, effective 6/12/05

**Paul Gleason**, Student Trainee (Soil Conservation), promoted and reassigned to the Lynden Field Office, effective 6/26/05

**Nick Somero**, promoted and reassigned to the Resource Conservationist position in South Bend effective 7/24/05

## Reassignment or New Location

**John Gillies**, reassigned to new duties as Resource Conservationist, Lynden Field Office effective 6/12/05

**Jeff Swotek**, reassigned to new duties as Resource Conservationist, Olympia Field Office effective 6/12/05

**Sergio Paredes**, reassigned to new duties as Resource Conservationist, Goldendale effective 7/24/05

**Kimberly Galland**, Student Trainee (Soil Conservation) reassigned to Colfax Field Office effective 8/21/05

**Danielle Rohde**, Student Trainee (Soil Conservation) reassigned to Pullman PMC effective 8/21/05

## Goodbye and Best of Luck

**Kyle Moore**, Rangeland Management Specialist, Okanogan Field Office, selected for a Rangeland Management Specialist position with the Forest Service in Ashton, Idaho effective 1/23/05

**Tim Kellogg**, Resource Conservationist, South Bend, selected for a Soil Conservationist position with NRCS in Gillette, Wyoming effective 4/16/05

**Robert Gillaspy**, Rangeland Management Specialist, Colville Field Office, selected for a Rangeland Management Specialist position with NRCS in Portland, Oregon effective 5/15/05

**John McClung**, Hydraulic Engineer, Spokane State Office, selected for a Hydraulic Engineer position with NRCS in Temple, Texas effective 5/29/05

**Rod Lobos**, Civil Engineer, Zillah Field Office, selected for an Environmental Engineer position with the Environmental Protection Agency in Richland, Washington effective 6/12/05

**Treg Owings**, Resource Conservationist, Goldendale Field Office, selected for a District Conservationist position with NRCS in Lewiston, Idaho effective 6/12/05

**Alicia Ewing**, Rangeland Management Specialist, Ritzville Field Office, resigned 6/25/05

**Paul Scales**, Soil Conservationist, Spokane State Office, selected for the State Resource Conservationist position with NRCS in Hawaii effective 7/24/05

**Travis Bouma**, Soil Conservation Technician, Lynden Field Office, resigned 8/12/05

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**Josie Kamkoff**, Student Trainee (Soil Science) in the Mount Vernon Soil Survey Office, placed on leave without pay effective 8/12/05

**Marlene Tilton**, Student Trainee (Rangeland Management) in the Colville Field Office, placed on leave without pay effective 8/14/05

**James Davis**, Student Trainee (Engineering) in the Spokane Area Office, on leave without pay effective 9/11/05

### Items of Interest

**Rebecca Hofmann**, Soil Scientist in the Okanogan Soil Survey Office, has changed her name to Rebecca Morris. Congratulations on your marriage, Becky!

**Jennifer Bell**, Soil Scientist in the Zillah Soil Survey Office, has completed her internship under the Career Intern Program and was converted to a permanent position effective 6/15/05. Congratulations, Jen!

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### TIPS FOR MANAGERS

*(Reproduced with permission of FED manager)*

Federal managers who could have known or should have known about misconduct of employees (such as fraudulent time and attendance sheets), but did nothing to discover or correct the misconduct, might be held accountable in some manner for the acts of their employees. One possible result is that the manager could be found negligent in carrying out his or her duties. In today's climate, such inaction also could, in extreme cases and under circumstances where the manager really should have known better, be construed as engaging in a criminal conspiracy to deprive the government of the effective use of its services. The legal theory is that the manager exhibited willful blindness toward the misconduct. The manager's pleas of ignorance about what was occurring in his or her own department may not be enough of a defense.

To avoid these situations, federal managers should communicate important rules and policies clearly to all employees – orally and in writing. They also must establish and encourage an open door policy so employees can discuss their concerns about policies, as well as any violations of these policies.

Ideally, these practices can fulfill several purposes: (1) they allow managers to be secure in the knowledge that their employees are fully informed as to what is expected of them; (2) they encourage employees to be proactive in spotting these issues and conveying any concerns to management; (3) they discourage employees from purposefully deviating from these policies; and (4) they give federal managers an opportunity to reinforce in the employees' minds the long-term mission of the department and the context of that mission within the larger mission of the agency.

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### ☀☀☀ WE HAVE THREE WINNERS! ☀☀☀

**Georgia Sormun, Doug Fenwick, and Shelly Lassiter** all correctly identified the members of the Civil Rights Advisory Committee and their roles. Each received a really cool stainless steel coffee thermos (with logo) for their effort.

Thanks Georgia, Doug, and Shelly!

Remember that the committee is here to serve you. If you have any concerns that you would like the committee to address, please contact any one of us. Our chair is Nancy Allison in Montesano at 360-249-2267 and our vice chair is Jen Bell in Zillah at 509-829-3003.

## **CSP – What an event!!**

*Submitted by Ralph Christiansen, East Area Conservationist*

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) in the East Area has been a very challenging, frustrating, yet rewarding program to work with. In FY 2005 there were three watersheds approved in the area. The entire East Area Team has been able to meet this challenge and managed to keep all other programs in check. A total of 153 contracts were signed in the East Area. Payments have been made on all contracts for approximately \$2.6. This is 53% of the entire State's budget of \$4.9 million for CSP. I would like to recognize the field office staffs who worked on these watersheds in the Northeast, Palouse and West Palouse Teams. I would also like to recognize the field office, area office, state office and district personnel that worked on this program in the three watersheds. We would not have been able to meet the deadlines of the program without involvement and commitment of all NRCS personnel in the Area; whether directly involved in CSP or maintaining field office operations while fellow staff members were working on CSP.

The Upper Crab Watershed was by far the most challenging watershed in the Team. There were 136 applications, of which 98 became contracts. The 98 contracts represent a little over \$2 million. Under the leadership of Les Hannemann, DC; Dave Brown, ARC and Ann Swannack, Area Agronomist, the challenge of 136 applications was met and conquered. This was a true team effort involving the field, area and state offices and district personnel. I would like to especially recognize the Lincoln County Conservation District. The District Board, manager and staff have been involved from the announcement of the watersheds to making the payments for FY2005. The District has been a very important part of the partnership in completing the process in this watershed. They have been instrumental in the whole process from helping to arrange meetings, getting information out, making appointments, answering phone calls, running RUSLE 2 runs and helping get signatures. Without the commitment and involvement of the Lincoln County Conservation District we would not have been able to meet the program deadlines.

It is truly amazing what we can accomplish when we roll up our sleeves and work together to accomplish something like this, which benefits everyone in the community.

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### **LIVING SNOWFENCE WORKSHOP**

**October, 4-5, 2005**

**Spokane, WA, Oxford Suites Hotel**

Snow... What Snow? We had very little last winter. We all know when we do; coming around a turn with a snow drift in the road can make for a precarious experience. That's where well designed living snowfences are beneficial. Living snowfences can also be used to benefit wildlife, livestock, farmsteads, and community facilities. A multi-agency workshop will address how to coordinate, install, and maintain an inter-agency living snowfence project.



Highway 25 living snowfence. Rocky Mt. juniper in 3<sup>rd</sup> growing season, August 2005.

The workshop will be held in Spokane Oct. 4-5, 2005 at the Oxford Suites Hotel in Spokane, Washington. An afternoon field trip on the 5<sup>th</sup> will feature the Highway 25 living snowfence project near Davenport, Washington. On-site topics will include weed/mice/vole control, site preparation, fabric mulch installation, and design alternatives. The indoor session will feature a variety of speakers that have been involved with living snowfence projects in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

Visit the web site for more information and registration

[www.cfr.washington.edu/research.smc/hanley/index.htm](http://www.cfr.washington.edu/research.smc/hanley/index.htm)

## BIG BEND RC&D CO-HOSTS SUCCESSFUL SARE TOUR



Over 30 participants attended the August 16 field tour highlighting the effects of multi-species grazing on invasive vegetation at the Barker Ranch near West Richland. Participants were made up of neighboring landowners, University representatives, County Weed Board Staff, State and Federal Agency personnel and private consultants. This project involves a joint partnership of private landowners, a goat producer, Washington State University, and state and federal agencies. The tour provided interactive, participant driven tours of vegetation management trials, discussion of methods used in vegetation management, and testimonies of grazers and land managers. The tour enabled participants to apply what they learned immediately after the session.

The research team summarized their data from the first year and began their second year of the three-year grazing study. 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 important observations were made during the first few years of the study. They are:

- Goats have to learn to utilize new foods in their diet.
- A large number of animals in a small enclosure result in significant effect on Russian olive.
- Goats and sheep will utilize bulrush if timing is managed to address palatability issues.
- Cattle, goats and stubble mowing in combination were effective in opening an area choked by bulrush.



Field experts included Don Nelson, WSU-Department of Animal Sciences, Craig Madsen, Owner-Healing Hooves, Michael Crowder, Manager-Barker Ranch, Skip Stonesifer, Wildlife Biologist-USFWS, Kevin Guinn, Range Conservationist-NRCS and Amy Hummer, WSU-Graduate Student.

Participant comments and evaluations indicated that the networking and sharing of technical information was most valuable to the participants. USFWS agreed to place progress and results of this study on their website for access by staff and the public.

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

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### News from the Puget Sound Team

#### EQIP funding in King County keeping agriculture a productive enterprise

King County farmers and ranchers continue to benefit from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). In 2005 the Puget Sound Local Work Group (LWG) divided their \$1,089,306 allocation among participating counties, King, Pierce and Thurston and they developed EQIP contracts with the highest ranked applicants receiving funding for their stewardship needs.

King County received 27 applications for EQIP in 2005 and their top three applicants made little work of spending their allocation of \$265,502. EQIP contracts were developed with a forestry and beef operator for the implementation of forestry and agronomic practices in Auburn. A dairy producer in Carnation received funding for implementation of manure storage structures and pasture renovation. A rancher in Enumclaw who produces pure bred Angus beef is implementing conservation practices that will protect water quality and improve pasture production.

The distribution of contracts throughout King County demonstrates the resilience of productive agriculture to remain in the county which is also supported in part by local commitment to protect agricultural lands.

## Earth Team Student Interns Volunteer on Marietta Slough WRP

*Submitted by Kathy Kilcoyne, Forester, Northwest Team*



Earth Team volunteers Jennifer Bryan and Paula Keeler measuring wetland plant growth at Marietta Slough.

Marietta Slough WRP is a special place that draws people of all interests. There is the riparian area along the old dike on the Nooksack River that brings runners and walkers all day long. Then there is the wetland area fed by Silver Creek and the tidal backwater slough off the Nooksack River, which draws the waterfowl hunters in season and the bird watchers the rest of the year. Well, that is how it has gone this first year after the tidal slough was restored and lengthened to its historic, (1930's) proportions. Marietta also draws student interns looking for data to collect and analyze.

Two students spent the worst of the mosquito season counting hydrophytic plants, counting birds and looking at cattail growth. Earth Team volunteer Jennifer Bryan spent her summer quarter from Western Washington University taking plots and measuring plant growth as the hydrophytes returned to the areas that were stripped and de-leveled last year. Jennifer spent over 300 hours

collecting data and writing a report that satisfied the last item to receive her Master's degree. Results from transects she established have shown us the rate and amounts at which the 46 species have returned to the site. Jen started measuring her plots when there was about 50% bare soil and continued into the end of July when the diversity and growth had reached its maximum for the season.

Earth Team volunteer Paula Keeler, an undergraduate at Skagit Valley College, chose to look at several bird habitats and their use in the wetland and riparian areas and to monitor cattail growth in a couple of the small basins that were restored to tidal inundation. Paula spent her early (5 am!) mornings monitoring birds and after a rest would begin the cattail count for the day. Paula is also picking up on an end of season survey of Jen's plots now that Jennifer is graduated and moved to Maryland.

The data that these two wonderful people have collected for their internships is invaluable to NRCS and others. We are very grateful to have such talented, dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers.

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### National Earth Team Awards

Now is the time to start considering nominations for Earth Team Awards. This is a great way to recognize our volunteers and the NRCS employees and conservation districts who work with them. A bulletin will be sent in the near future with details on how to nominate individuals/groups. Nominations will be due in October and will include the following categories:

- **Individual Volunteer Award.** Presented to an outstanding volunteer who has helped accomplish the mission of NRCS
- **Group Volunteer Award** Presented to an outstanding volunteer group that has helped accomplish the mission of NRCS
- **NRCS Employee Award.** Presented to an NRCS employee who has been successful at identifying volunteer jobs, recruitment and has maintained a quality volunteer experience for all Earth Team members.
- **National NACD/NRCS Earth Team Award.** Presented to the most effective Earth Team in a conservation district that demonstrates shared leadership among district officials, NRCS employees and Earth Team volunteers.
- **RC&D/NRCS Earth Team Award.** Presented to the most effective Earth Team that demonstrates shared leadership among RC&D council members, NRCS employees and Earth Team volunteers.
- **Chief's Cup.** Presented to the state that most creatively uses volunteers to meet the NRCS mission.
- **Chief's Field Award.** Presented to one office located at the field level in each region that utilizes volunteer resources.

## CONGRATULATIONS!!!

The State of Washington did very well at the NEPA Workshop held in Sacramento, California.



The Golden Eagle Award was presented to Dennis Robinson for outstanding contributions to the cultural resources discipline.



Washington's ECS staff was presented with the only group award. The award was given for development of an outstanding CPA-52 Environmental Evaluation Form and NEPA compliance training in the state.

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### Geotechnology Team Update

*by June Johnson, Dave Brower, and Chas Scripser*

#### Toolkit 2004, build 67, Service Pack 1

The software developers in Ft. Collins have been hard at work creating fixes for the current configuration of Toolkit 2004, build 66. It is called Service Pack 1 (SP1). Users in 11 states, including Washington, have been testing it. We started with build 3 of SP1 and are now up to build 16. If build 16 does not have any fatal errors, it may be released this week.

What will SP1 do for you?

- It provides a menu option under Tools called "Reload Domain Data". Clicking this resynchronizes your computer with the most current data available at Ft. Collins for practice narratives and Conservation System Guides. You will no longer have to delete your personal geodatabase to refresh this information.
- In ArcGIS, some of you have experienced planned land unit lines that go south to Mexico, or the South Pole. SP1 fixes this.
- The link to tabular feature works on a consistent basis regardless of the number of fields in the plan.
- Deleting a field no longer erases all of the tabular information from the Land Unit Tab and the Practice Schedule. It just changes it from "mapped" to "unmapped".
- The problem with splitting fields that have inclusions in them is fixed. It is no longer necessary to merge the inclusion with the field, split the field, and redraw the inclusion.
- The Build Your Own polygon layer now has an acres column in the attribute table and the Attribute Tool is now enabled for it.
- The Toolkit Data Cleaner is part of SP1 and is found by going to Start→All Programs→Customer Service Toolkit→Toolkit Data Cleaner, but you should not have to use it after SP1 is installed.
- The Unlock Folder has been removed from the Folders Tab. It is now in the Tools menu.
- The practice schedule will now accept less than 1 acre.
- A planning date entered in PRS will now appear when the customer is checked out in Toolkit
- Known issues have been fixed that caused a folder to change to read only.

## **Geotechnology Team....continued**

ITS will be instructed to load SP1 when it becomes available. It is probably best to have your customers checked in, but installation of SP1 should not affect them.

SP1 will affect your ArcGIS preferences. It resets the ArcGIS normal.mxt file to Basic ArcGIS mode, so if you prefer Advanced, you will need to resave your ArcGIS preferences.

### **GPS News**

Two copies of ArcPad software have been received. They will be used for testing live GPS tracking on a laptop computer. The Dayton Service Center has volunteered to help us with this effort.

Minnesota DNR has developed a version of MN DNR Garmin that can be used with ArcGIS. It is currently at the IO Lab awaiting CCE approval before it can be installed on USDA computers.

### **National Conservation Planning Database Integration Team**

June Johnson and Paul Taylor have been chosen to participate on this team led by Harry Slawter, Financial Assistance Program Division, Washington, DC. The plan is to integrate our tools, e.g. Toolkit, ProTracts, and PRS, to minimize the number of entries, especially for progress reporting.

Currently, Toolkit and PRS are linked. Information changed in either application will appear in the other. Toolkit can upload contracts into ProTracts, but ProTracts does not feed back to Toolkit or PRS.

The team has been meeting by teleconference. Please let Paul and June know if you have ideas on how best to integrate these Tools.

### **GIS for Engineers**

On August 8-10, 2005, the Geotechnology Team provided a GIS for Engineers training session in Spokane. The course introduced ArcGIS and ArcView concepts ranging from the use of GIS templates to creating and printing finished map products. Other topics were tailored to specific engineering needs. These included:

- Advanced GIS analysis of high-resolution LIDAR elevation data to derive contours, slope, aspect and shaded-relief
- How to work with the NRCS Hydro hydrologic modeling software
- An overview of available GIS datasets for use in engineering projects
- How to project GIS data from one coordinate system into another



You may have noticed the button above on the Field Tools tab of My.NRCS. When available, the link will take authorized users to an application for managing practice codes, names, units, national standards, state and local practices, practice narratives, and things like enhancements and other activities for CSP and TSP.

There will be National, State, and Local Data Steward roles. When a new practice is approved and a notice is issued for the National Handbook of Conservation Practices, the National Data Steward will add the practice to the list of available practices, but it will not be turned on. The State Technical Guide committee will decide whether, or not, to use the practice within our state. If the decision is made to use it, the State Data Steward can turn it on so it will be available.

When CPS comes online, the 700 codes available in Toolkit and PRS will only be those that are used here in Washington State. We will no longer see all of the 700 codes for the nation.

Practice life spans are also shown at this website and can be edited by a State.

The software is expected to be released on August 17, 2005.



## NATIONAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

*Submitted by Jan Carlson, State Resource Inventory Coordinator*

**2005 Rangeland Field Study:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the field study is well underway. The sites selected this year are in Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, Lincoln and Whitman Counties. We are currently working in Columbia and Garfield Counties and expect to finish by the end of August. The Field Office staffs in those counties have assisted me in obtaining permission and access to the 56 sites. A big **‘Thank You’** goes out to them for their invaluable help. The phrase ‘you can’t get there from here’ was used only a few times. The terrain has varied from not so steep to ‘yikes’. The actual data collection was contracted out minimizing the impact on the Field Office staff – that is for the range conservationists. Once all the data is collected and analyzed, trends on how the rangeland resource has changed in the past 20 – 30 years will be identified. This study is expected to last for another 2 years.

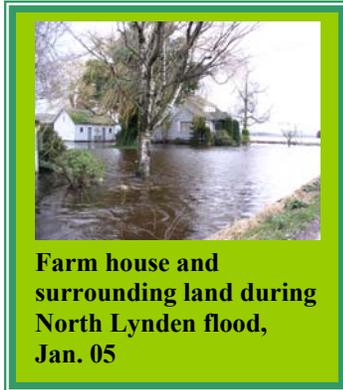
**Material transfer to Portland:** The Remote Sensing Laboratories have started receiving state NRI materials as the transfer of data collection responsibilities takes shape. Shipping materials that will be used to pack all the ‘stuff’ is sitting in the ‘NRI cubical’ so it is a little more cluttered than normal – some say there is not much difference than before it arrived. Packing and shipping will occur in September. Once that happens our access to the NRI support material including all imagery will be by electronic means only. Since it is still considered confidential material it will be password protected. The data collection/review tool to accomplish this is currently under development.

### Upcoming events:

- **Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP)** – National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in partnership with NRCS will be conducting an assessment of the environmental benefits and effects of the conservation programs associated with the 2002 Farm Bill. The 2005 sample sites have already been selected with most of the owner/operator information obtained from the Farm Service Agency’s County Office Common Land Unit digital layers. NASS enumerators will obtain any missing ownership data by visiting the County Office sometime this fall. Primary farmer surveys will be conducted in October through December. NASS will be contacting the Field Offices during this same time period for assistance in completing the NRCS Supplemental Survey (same process as last year). Since the farm operators are responsible for field delineation used in the survey, the NRCS Supplemental Survey should not be completed until the primary farmer survey has been conducted. This year’s survey involves 287 points on 208 sample units throughout Washington. The time needed to assist NASS in this joint endeavor should be minimal.
- **Crop History & Erosion Factors** – As the Remote Sensing Labs start the data collections for 2004, 2005 and 2006 sometime this fall/winter they will be requesting that each state provide them with crop histories and cropland erosion factors. The exact order of this request and the timing has yet to be determined. A window’s based data entry program is currently being developed so all data collected will be transmitted electronically.
- **Rangeland Field Study** – 2006 will be the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the range study. While the sample units have yet to be selected it is expected that most of them will be in Central Washington – Okanogan to Klickitat Counties. There will be approximately 56 PSUs and 112 points involved with data collection starting in May. The amount of Field Office participation should be limited to assistance in identifying landowners and obtaining access to the sites. Contractors have been doing the actual data collection for the past 2 seasons.

## North Lynden Drainage, Flooding and Fish Issues

### A Community Problem Solving Process



Last winter both farmers and city dwellers were hit by severe weather that caused damaging flooding in the North part of Whatcom County. Since then the Whatcom Conservation District (WCD), in partnership with NRCS and the Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) brought together representatives from Washington Dept. of Ecology, Whatcom County Public Works, the City of Lynden, the Lummi and Nooksack Tribes and many local property owners to discuss alternatives, develop plans and initiate actions to address flooding, drainage maintenance, fish protection and water quality needs in north Whatcom County. Engineering technician Bill Bonsen assisted the CD throughout the initial planning phase of the project. Bill's knowledge of the area and familiarity with the producers and resource issues proved invaluable. Bill grew up on a farm in the area and has worked for NRCS in

Whatcom for the past 29 years.

Beginning in March of 2005, District Manager George Boggs and WDFW agent Mike Bierley convened a series of public meetings and small-group work sessions that have continued through the summer with the goal of developing guidelines for managing natural, modified and man-made watercourses in a way that will allow adequate drainage and also ensure the necessary requirements for healthy fish habitat and water quality are practiced and in place. The willingness of agencies, tribes and farmers to look at solutions has brought progress towards a plan for improving drainage on agricultural lands to minimize and reduce flooding, all with careful consideration of water quality and fish habitat.

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### Soil Survey News

*Neil Peterson, State Soil Scientist*

We have had many accomplishments by some of our soil scientists over the past few months that are certainly landmarks for the future of soil survey work in Washington. Jen Bell of the Zillah MLRA Soil Survey Office was selected as one of three people who will be participating in the Leadership Development Program. Jen will be helping ready the NASIS database of Kittitas County for certification. To do this she is developing a work load analysis and a work plan for how to best accomplish this effort.

Way to go Jen!!!!

On the westside, Toby Rodgers has completed the soil survey manuscript for the San Juan National Historical Park. This is the first of several that we will be completing for the National Park Service (NPS) over the next few years.

NPS has contracted with the NRCS for completion of soil surveys on all of their lands in Western Washington. The wilderness areas such as the North Cascade National Park Complex (NOCA) will be completed utilizing a soil computer model that uses several proxies to emulate the five soil forming factors. The model is called **Remote Access Soil Proxy** or RASP. This model has been developed by Toby Rodgers and Crystal Briggs, both out of the Mt. Vernon MLRA Soil Survey Office. Toby is the project leader for the NPS efforts. The model was a product of Toby's and then Crystal's Master of Science degree obtained at WSU with NRCS financial assistance. We are very proud of the work they are doing with the NPS lands. Jon Hemple, Director and Amanda Moore, both of the National Geospatial Development Center in Morgantown, WV, were in Washington in June to view the model and discuss how they will be able to support this effort. Jon has pledged their support both technically and financially.

So... way to go Toby and Crystal !!!!

## **EQIP Success Story from Yakima Valley**

*Submitted by Ron Nichols, Public Affairs Officer*



Yakima Valley producer Erasmio Cerda made the transition slowly – first converting 10 acres of his vineyard from rill irrigation to sprinkler irrigation. When he saw the dramatic improvement in his irrigation efficiency, he converted another 40 acres. Then another 25 acres.

All told, Mr. Cerda has now converted more than 100 acres to sprinkler irrigation.

“I wanted to use my first experience as a learning one,” he says, “It started with an idea that I wanted to make a change in my irrigation system,” Mr. Cerda says. His next

step was to call the Natural Resources Conservation Service for some help and some advice. “I talked with Oscar Tobias about it,” he says. “And he treated me really well.”

Like dozens of other Yakima Valley producers, Mr. Cerda applied for and received funding to help him install and manage the new irrigation system through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Through the program, producers can receive up to half of the cost of installing the system.

And in addition to a marked improvement in his irrigation efficiency, he’s also noticed some other environmental benefits. “With the sprinklers,” Mr. Cerda says, “there’s almost no erosion and no sediment in the tail water.” The result is having a positive impact on improving water quality in Sulfur Creek.

Another benefit of the new system he says is time savings. “It used to take almost 24 hours to complete the irrigation of his vineyard and asparagus fields. “Thanks to the sprinklers,” he says, “I’ve cut that down to about 12 hours and now I’m not spending time clearing ditches like I used to do with the old system.”

Mr. Cerda estimates that he’s improving his irrigation efficiency by nearly 50 percent, and the energy costs associated with water delivery and system maintenance has been dramatically reduced, too.

“I’d recommend that other producers take a look at getting assistance from the NRCS,” he says. “I’ve told friends that if they see something they’d like to improve, to give the NRCS a call and ask some questions,” Mr. Cerda says. “It’s really easy to get the help you need,” he says.

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