



A Message from Gus

You know, that ‘Task List’ thing on my computer really works great. The only flaw with it is that you have to use it, and you have to pay attention to it. So I’m rushing to get this written because I didn’t pay attention, and Georgia has reminded me that I’m late.

So what does that have to do with ‘Current Developments?’

Well it reminds me to be disciplined in my time management. I’m betting all of you need a periodic reminder as well. There are so many demands upon us these days that we must strive to use our time wisely. Making wise use of your time will reduce your stress and get more work done. It sometimes seems contradictory, but if you take time to think through the process, the job almost always get the done faster and better.

I can tell by the way the EQIP process was handled this year that most of you had done an excellent job of managing your time. We are in the top quarter of the states for having our EQIP funds obligated in a timely manner. Those states that don’t have their funds committed will suffer for the remainder of the year. We are now prepared to move on with CSP and the other programs. Well done, folks. Thank you.

And I promise to do a better job scheduling and managing my time. Mostly.

PMC Discovery Science Channel Documentary

On June 11, The Discovery Science Channel will be highlighting the dedicated work of the NRCS Plant Materials Program in its ongoing battle to restore the eroding Louisiana Delta.

Details on this documentary can be found on page 12.

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Welcome

Richard Edlund, District Conservationist, Spokane Field Office, effective 4/3/05.

Heather Huffman, Purchasing Agent, Spokane State Office, effective 5/1/05.

Maria Momiyama, Voucher Examiner, Spokane State Office, effective 5/1/05.

Cara Fisher, Biological Science Aid (Plants), Plant Material Center, effective 5/15/05.

Isaac Gorton, Biological Science Aid (Plants), Plant Material Center, effective 5/15/05.

Peter Venable, Biological Science Aid (Plants), Plant Material Center, effective 5/15/05.

Marlene Tilton, Student Trainee (Rangeland Management), Colville Field Office, effective 5/29/05.

Ashley Bouck, Student Trainee (Soil Conservationist), Chehalis Field Office, effective 6/12/05.

Maria Tribelhorn, Biological Science Aid (Plants), Plant Material Center, effective 6/12/05.

Josephine Kamkoff, promotion and reassignment, to Student Trainee (Soil Scientist), Mount Vernon Soil Survey Office, effective 6/29/05.

Congratulations

Chris Bove, promotion and reassignment, Resource Conservationist, Ellensburg Field Office, effective 4/3/05.

James Shawley, promotion, Civil Engineering Technician, Pomeroy Field Office, effective 4/17/05.

Anitra Gorham, promotion, to Resource Conservationist, Longview Field Office, effective 5/1/05.

Kimberly Galland, promotion and reassignment, Student Trainee (Soil Conservationist) Ephrata Field Office, effective 5/15/05.

Bela Espinoza, promotion, Office Automation Assistant, Spokane State Office, effective 05/15/05.

Reassignment

Rob Ryan, Agronomist, Renton Field Office, effective 4/3/05.

Amanda Wright, Soil Conservationist, Zillah Field Office, effective 4/17/05.

Kyle Stephens, Soil Survey Project Leader, Spokane Soil Survey Office, effective 4/17/05.

John Kouns, Area Rangeland Management Specialist, Ritzville Field Office, effective 5/1/05.

James Davis, Student Trainee (Engineering), East Area Office, effective 5/15/05.

Linda Appel, Student Trainee (Rangeland Management) Okanogan Field Office, effective 5/29/05.

Danielle Rohde, Student Trainee (Soil Conservationist), Dayton Field Office, effective 5/29/05.

Goodbye and Best of Luck

Julie Henning, Student Trainee (Biology), Montesano Field office, effective 3/23/05.

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ELDER CARE

Submitted by Eileen Jackson, Human Resources Specialist

We're seeing an increasing number of questions come into Human Resources involving elder care. The average American spends 18 years caring for aging parents, and with the population of those who are 85 and older increasing three times faster than the general population, sooner or later most of us will face the challenge of caring for aging loved ones. With that in mind, I thought it might be useful to list some of the resources that could be helpful to those facing elder care situations:

- The Employee Assistance Program (EAP): This free, confidential service is available to all NRCS employees through the Sand Creek Group, Ltd. You can talk directly with a counselor regarding specific elder care issues (1-888-243-5744), or browse their website and find articles on a variety of elder care topics such as home care options, caregiver support, legal and financial issues related to care giving, information on specific illnesses, etc. There are also links to a wide range of community resources and a wealth of other helpful information. To access the elder care section of this website, go to www.sandcreekeap.com, click on 'Member Login', enter Username 'FALL' and Password 'Preview', then use the 'Web Advantage' link and select 'Older Adults' from the menu on the left side of the screen.
- Long Term Care Insurance: Your parents, parents-in-law, and step-parents may be eligible to sign up for Long Term Care insurance through the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program. Long term care insurance helps defray the costs of assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing and dressing. It also includes the kind of care you would need if you had a severe cognitive impairment like Alzheimer's. It covers skilled, intermediate and custodial care in the home, an adult day care center, an assisted living facility, a nursing home, or a hospice facility. The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program also covers home care from informal providers such as friends, neighbors and family members who didn't normally live with you at the time you became eligible for benefits. See the FLTCIP website at <http://www.opm.gov/insure/ltc/index.asp> to find out if this resource is right for you or your family members.
- Leave Programs: NRCS employees enjoy very generous leave policies and have access to a variety of leave programs to help them through occasional care-giving situations and extended family emergencies. See the NRCS Leave Policy at http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/GM/gm_360_415.htm and/or check out the OPM guidance on leave at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/leave/index.asp>.
- The Internet: They don't call it the world wide web for nothing! Pick any search engine (Google, Yahoo, etc.), type in 'Elder Care' and be ready for more information than you can handle!
- The Phone Book: For those who prefer a more old-fashioned approach, go to your local phone book. You can search the Government Pages or Community Pages for agencies/organizations that help with Elder Care issues, and can find a variety of related listings in the yellow pages under 'Elder Care'.

Whatever resources you end up using, just remember you are not alone. Help is out there, so do your research, tap into the resources/options you think will help, and don't forget to also take care of yourself while taking care of your loved ones!

Tired of paying high cost for commuting? If you would like more information on the transit benefit program contact kathleen.dickerson@wa.usda.gov

Don't Wait - Do It Now!

When was the last time someone said thank you for a job well done? Whether it was a cash award, a non-monetary award (like a jacket), a positive email message, or one of those shiny gold coins you've seen lately, didn't it feel good to be acknowledged for your contribution? If so, why not pass that good feeling on to someone else that has done a great job and helped you?

The recently released employee recognition bulletin explains the numerous options available to recognize employees. In addition, the newly formed employee recognition committee has been spreading the word about the importance (and rewards) of employee recognition and has been emphasizing the impact of *immediate* recognition for significant accomplishments. Don't wait, do it now!

This state is full of awesome employees and the committee knows you are full of great ideas about the best ways to recognize superior performance. Please share them with one of the committee members: Doug Allen, Ralph Christiansen, Frank Easter, Sherre Ingle, Cheryle Miller or Paul Rogers.

Ron Nichols was recognized by the Spokane Public Relations Council with an Award of Merit for the "It" e-blast campaign that accompanied distribution of the gold coins. Congratulations Ron!

Look Who Else Has Been Recognized in February, March, and April 2005!

Jeff Swotek, Civil Rights Award, NRCS Washington

Lisa Naylor, Carol Mercer Inspiration Award – Class XXVI

Eileen Jackson, Spokane Federal Executive Association's Employee of the Year for NRCS Washington

Earth Day Celebrations Around Washington

Submitted by Kelly Sprute, Public Affairs Specialist

Earth Day is a great time to get outside and experience Mother Nature first hand. NRCS helped at two Earth Day Celebrations this year: one with Tom Christensen, Deputy Chief for Programs for the NRCS, and the other with the men and women of the U.S. Air Force at McChord Air Force Base (AFB).

The weather was a perfect spring day for planting. Tom Christensen came out from Washington D.C. to help plant over 1,500 trees and shrubs at the Portage Creek Wildlife Sanctuary. He did not do it all alone, for over 145 volunteers came out to help. Young and old, families, and community groups turned out to help improve fish habitat and plant a tree that will one day be part of an old-growth grove.

The other Earth Day event was with McChord AFB. This was our second year to educate our troops and their families about conservation. The theme of this year's event was "Sustaining the Environment for the Future." It felt good to be out informing people about NRCS and our conservation efforts. We had many people interested in the Earth Team. Let's hope we get more volunteers.



Volunteers help improve nature.....

Young Earth Day planting crew getting instructions on the proper way to plant. Their efforts helped to restore the natural wetlands of the Portage Creek Wildlife Sanctuary in Snohomish County.



Digging in.....Tom Christensen, Deputy Chief for Programs for NRCS, and Rick Noble, West Area Conservationist for Washington NRCS, are helping to restore wetlands at the Portage Creek Wildlife Sanctuary Wetland Reserve Project in Snohomish County, Washington.

An Effort to Reduce Field Office Workload

Submitted by Ross Lahren, ASTC - Programs

Washington NRCS will be facing many challenges in the next few years in implementing the Farm Bill Programs. In addition to receiving potentially \$30 to 40 million of financial assistance funds annually, we will also need to provide technical assistance to assist program participants in implementing their program contracts. We do not anticipate having an opportunity to hire additional employees to assist with this increased workload. The activities that NRCS will need to complete over the next few years will place a tremendous burden on the entire staff in Washington State and the State Leadership Team has been searching for ways to reduce the workload burden on our staffs.

One of our efforts to reduce this workload is to leverage our FY05 Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funds with the Landowner Incentive Program being administered by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). We have developed a cooperative agreement with WDFW to assist us in implementing WHIP this year. WDFW will develop wildlife habitat development plans, obtain contract information and signatures, implement and certify WHIP practices funded with the FY05 WHIP allocation. Washington NRCS will complete the Cultural Resource, NEPA and ESA responsibilities for WHIP contracts funded in FY05. The State Office Program staff will enter the necessary data in Protracts and coordinate activities between the NRCS Field Offices and WDFW.

Once we have completed this process, we will evaluate the effectiveness of this method of leveraging funds and technical resources between federal and state agencies, as well as the impact on services provided to our program participants. The program staff will be working with the State Leadership Team to determine whether to continue with the process used this year or to develop another process.

ENGINEERING “SWAT TEAM” SWARMS CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Submitted by Joe Lange, Central Area Engineer

It was clearly evident with the completion of the 2005 EQIP contracts that the workload from practices that were planned to be installed in FY 2005 far surpassed the workforce of the Central Highlands Team. The question came down to how can we get more done with the same amount of people? The answer is; we can't. In the short term, however, we can get more people to help. This won't completely solve the problem, but it will reduce it. Therefore, it was decided to detail a highly trained “SWAT TEAM” of technicians and engineers into the Central Highlands Team. The “SWAT TEAM” was composed of Oscar Tobias, Martin Rodriguez, Paul Majer, and Rod Lobos, with assistance from Will Keller, Roy Schwilke, and Joe Lange. Their mission was to complete as many designs as possible within a five-day period. In actuality, only three days were available for design work after subtracting travel time from the team member's duty stations to Okanogan and back.

The team met on the morning of April 26th at the NRCS office in Nespelem. Team members were assigned projects and shown each project site in the field. Thirteen designs were completed during the three-day period of April 26th through April 28th. These included seven cattle guards and six spring developments. Ten of the thirteen designs were for the Colville Confederated Tribes. All thirteen projects are funded through EQIP and scheduled to be installed sometime during FY 2005.

The “SWAT TEAM” detail was successful because the team was composed of good, qualified members. The planners were available to review the project sites and needs with designers. Similar projects in the same proximity to each other were selected and standard drawings and specifications were used as much as possible.

Hands on Teaching of Soils to Teachers from South Central Washington

Submitted by Ken Drechsel, Resource Soil Scientist – Central Area



On April 25th and 26th teachers from South Central Washington received training on soils. Using curriculum developed by Jim Landon (Selah Alternative H.S. teacher and part time Central Washington University Professor) and Ken Drechsel (NRCS Area Resource Soil Scientist), they learned about soils by doing hands on interactive learning. Jim utilized many of the teaching methods the teachers themselves would use to achieve a fun, memorable learning experience. Ken assisted Jim with the training, imparting soils knowledge and providing assistance whenever possible. At the same time, Ken learned from Jim first-hand about the “learning cycle” and hands on teaching methods, which should result in enduring understanding about the

important Soils unit concepts. The first stage of the 4-part learning cycle is to “**focus**” the group. This was done by asking what the group already knew about soils, and what they would specifically like to come away from the training knowing about soils. The second stage is to “**explore**” or investigate, sometimes as individuals, small groups, and the whole class. They investigated with hands on methods: what soil is made of, where they come from, how they form, what size particles are in soils, particle size percentages and texture of their sample, how their soil sample behaves when wet, and infiltration and permeability rates of their samples.

The third stage is to “**reflect**” on what was discovered by discussing results, analyzing findings, drawing conclusions and making inferences. This was done as individuals, within small groups, between groups, and as a class, by answering the instructors’ or each others questions. The fourth stage is to “**apply**” the knowledge. This was done with a case study from Jim’s former home of Seward County, Nebraska (Gus, did you ever work there?) where certain aquifers are polluted with nitrate and others aren’t, based on soils, topography and subsurface strata. An understanding of soils, texture and water movement was required to complete the study by answering a list of questions. A 3d model of the county was assembled from paper and to better see what was going on. In the end, Jim reviewed the list of what the teachers wanted to come away with in their understanding of soils. In most cases their objectives were met.

This training for teachers is coordinated by Louise Fayette, Educational Service District-105 Science Cooperative. Approximately 190 2nd grade teachers in south central Washington will go through the Soils unit training over the next 2 years, which supports the state adopted science standards for elementary students (K-6). The ESD 105 Science Coop districts are part of the South Central WA LASER Regional Alliance. The Alliance has adopted a regional K-6 Curriculum Program using a curriculum called Science and Technology for Children, which includes 19 inquiry science units including the second grade Soils unit. Students will experience Soils 2 days per week for eight weeks, over 16 lessons. We have helped train these teachers to more effectively teach soils to approximately 4000 students each year. It is exciting to know that our youth will have a basic understanding of this important natural resource. Are there any aspiring Soil Scientists out there, who want to get their application in very, very early to NRCS for becoming a SCEP student?

"Out of a long list of nature's gifts to man, none is perhaps so utterly essential to human life as soil." -Hugh Hammond Bennett, First Chief, Soil Conservation Service, 1939

Who are those folks....?

Your NRCS Washington Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) met with the State Leadership Team (SLT) on May 10, 2005 at the State Office. This was the annual face to face meeting between all CRAC members and the SLT. This meeting is used to bring the leadership up to speed on CRAC activities, discuss the status of the current years' business plan, and discuss the development of the coming FY business plan.

In discussions with the SLT, the CRAC felt that there seemed to be a lack of knowledge on the part of all Washington NRCS employees as to who is on the CRAC and what position they hold.

To that end, with this article, we have included a contest which consists of a group picture of the current CRAC. **You must identify the person in the picture and match the name of the person with the position they hold on the CRAC.** The positions include:

- West Area Rep
- Central Area Rep
- East Area Rep
- State Office Rep
- Asian Pacific Islander Emphasis Program Manager (APIEPM)
- Black Emphasis Program Manager (BEPM)
- American Indian & Alaska Native Emphasis Program Manager (AIANEPM)
- Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager (HEPM)
- Federal Women Emphasis Program Manager (FWEPM)
- Disabilities & Veteran's Emphasis Program Manager (DVEPM)

There will be a plethora of prizes! Individuals who connect all the CRAC folks with their position will have their names placed in a hat. The CRAC Chair will draw three names on July 7, 2005. The SLT, field representatives that attended the May 10, 2005 SLT meeting, and CRAC are not eligible for the contest.



Starting from the left side of the picture in the back row going clockwise, name the individual and what position they hold on the CRAC.

Answers should be sent to Georgia Sormun at Georgia.Sormun@wa.usda.gov by close of business June 24, 2005.

INDIVIDUAL

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
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6. _____
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8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

POSITION

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News from Upper Columbia RC&D

Submitted by Paul Dorning, RC&D Coordinator

The Upper Columbia RC&D has been working for several months now with EnSave Energy Performance, Inc. located in Vermont, to develop a grant proposal to the EPA. We were initially approached by EnSave this winter after a referral from Dennis Roe. They expressed a desire to establish a diesel fuel reduction program targeted to farmers in eastern Washington – basically a financial incentive to encourage the adoption of ‘NoTill’ technology to reduce the amount of fuel burned and the resulting air pollution. EnSave has apparently utilized the 501(c) (3) status of other RC&Ds around the country in developing proposals to various state and federal entities. This represents their first foray into our part of the country.

As we discovered during our first substantial conversation with EnSave, they really did not understand agriculture in this part of the west. So, instead of just using the RC&D as a “pass through” to gain access to the EPA grants program, EnSave readily agreed to work with the RC&D to build a grant proposal that fits the NW agricultural environment and the local producers.

The original proposal specified that an Ag producer must verify purchase or lease a NoTill drill in order to participate in their program. The proposal also indicated that the fuel reduction program would cover nearly all of eastern Washington. When the program director learned that one NoTill drill might cost as much as 2/3 of the total grant request, we suggested a different approach – establish a per acre incentive payment with a cap. Require producers to meet the NoTill *or* Direct Seed NRCS standard, but do not specify any particular drill or implement. If the intent is to reduce the total number of trips around a field, thereby reducing diesel consumption, *the standard to be met* will drive the selection of implements.

We were notified by the regional EPA representative that they were very interested in our approach and in helping to establish a fuel reduction program; however the total grant dollars available had been reduced. The RC&D worked with EnSave to revise the proposal by limiting the program area to the dryland farming portion of Upper Columbia and Blue Mountain RC&Ds, respectively. This allowed for a more meaningful cash incentive of \$4.00/acre up to a cap of \$5000/applicant. The producer must apply direct seed/NoTill on acreage not currently farmed with direct seed/NoTill, and must commit to a one (1) year agreement with EnSave. Budget limitations will not allow a large number of participants this year, but EPA has indicated a likelihood of funding the proposal as a pilot program this year, and intent of expanding the program in future years. Upper Columbia RC&D will work with EnSave staff over the next couple of months to design an application and ranking process, and may arrange the quality assurance spot checks after the seedings are completed, starting this fall.

The folks at EnSave have been very appreciative of the assistance we’ve provided in helping them build a good proposal, and quite responsive to our suggestions and ideas. Hopefully we can provide another reliable source of ‘risk reduction’ for growers in eastern Washington as they begin to adopt these new technologies.

Stay tuned! Hopefully the Upper Columbia and Blue Mountain RC&Ds will be providing details of the program to NRCS and Conservation District staffs, other partners, and potential applicants soon.

DISTRICT HELP INSURES EARLY SUCCESS WITH CSP

Submitted by Dave Brown, Area Resource Conservationist

Once again, the success of an NRCS program is bolstered by the help of local conservation districts. In January, the WA NRCS decided to hold public meetings to educate producers about the upcoming Conservation Security Program (CSP). Within the East Area there are three CSP watersheds selected for participation this year: Colville Watershed in Stevens County, Crab Creek Watershed in Lincoln County and

Rock Watershed in Whitman County. The combined number of producers in these three watersheds is approximately 3,500 and that’s a lot of folks to reach with a public relations campaign, especially one that is pulled together in very short order. But with the help of our district partners, our meetings were very successful.

District Help Insures...

The meetings were designed and held in two phases. Phase one meetings provided a general introduction to CSP. The districts played a major role in setting up venues for the meetings, publicity and even providing refreshments. Topics covered at these first meetings included the purpose and goal of the program, basics of land and producer eligibility, CSP tier structure, the self-assessment and application process, payments and enhancements. This was presented using a PowerPoint presentation. Following the formal presentation was a time for questions and answers. In an effort to make the message as consistent as possible across all watersheds, Dave Brown, Area Resource Conservationist was the presenter at all phase one meetings. The total count for phase one meetings was; Colville-2, Crab Creek-5 and Rock-4. Participation ranged from a low of just a few to a high of around 80.

Phase two meetings were usually held within a week or so of the first meetings. Each watershed held two of these meetings. In the phase-two meetings our focus was an explanation of the Self-Assessment books. We reviewed each section of the self-assessment books and provided a question and answer time to help clarify any areas where producers needed more information. At these meetings the NRCS technical discipline specialists were the main presenters and included: Ann Swannack, Area Agronomist; John Kouns, Area Range Conservationist; Dennis Roe, Agronomist and Chad Dunnahoo, Program Specialist from the state office.

We hope to see the payoff from the great attendance and success of these meetings as we move into the sign-up phase of the program. Many producers already have a good knowledge of program and application requirements and this should help reduce our workload during the hectic sign-up period. In fact, we plan to hold additional public meetings during the sign-up period to help provide answers to those producers who are just now finding out about the program.

CSP roll-out sees mixed reviews from farm community in Rock Watershed

Grower associations, USDA news releases, industry consultants, and “coffee-shop” talk had spread word statewide by late 2004 about the Conservation Security Program (CSP) Pilot watersheds in Washington. Post harvest farm work and crop prices temporarily distracted agricultural producers in the fall, but USDA’s announcement that the Rock Watershed in the Palouse area was selected for the 2005 Conservation Security Program brought out inquiries and requests for program information to NRCS offices. The announcement also began an intensive self-education process for NRCS personnel and partners.

Early in 2005, local NRCS CSP teams were formed and the grassroots outreach and information phase of CSP was planned for release in a series of public meetings. Despite incomplete and changing information, NRCS program and subject specialists teamed up with NRCS Public Affairs Specialists and affected conservation districts in both Washington and Idaho to strategize about public outreach in the multi-state Rock Watershed.

There was both anticipation and uncertainty in the air as people gathered for the initial meetings in community centers and Grange and Masonic halls. Most were pleased by the novel goals of the CSP that focused on recognizing stewardship and conservation already on the land. Many also knew that the CSP was directed to benefit only the “best” of conservation management, and were keenly interested in the guidelines for selecting producers for CSP contracts since there is a solid proportion of producers in the Palouse who have adopted conservation techniques such as reduced-tillage and waterway practices through USDA Conservation Compliance requirements or incentive-based programs such as EQIP. Some producers were aware of the self-assessment approach NRCS was using to begin the CSP application process. Others had questions about the rules pertaining to one contract per operator, the definition of operating units, formal land leases versus traditional “handshake” leases, recordkeeping requirements, or CSP contract terms and payouts. When conservation district supervisors welcomed the large audiences and introduced NRCS personnel the CSP outreach process was underway!

CSP rollout.....

Using program brochures, Powerpoint projections, and handouts, the CSP was explained by NRCS personnel in regards to its goals, structure, eligibility requirements, and Tiered-funding approach. A key requirement, it was explained, was completing the Self-Assessment workbooks and Water Quality Screening questionnaires for land uses to be enrolled in CSP. Farm Records were also critical for documenting conservation work especially soil tests and pest management practices. The Question-and-Answer period helped some producers decide that CSP was not worth pursuing while others found the lack of answers to detailed questions to be frustrating. Many of the Self-Assessment and Records Workbooks were handed out, mailed, and downloaded from the NRCS website. As the Public Meeting process went on and producers looked at the Workbooks and talked with neighbors the realization grew that the CSP represented a radical departure from previous USDA program experiences.

By the time of the latter public meetings in April, attendance waned a bit. The atmosphere in the public meetings had shifted however, with producers mostly knowledgeable about CSP and looking for answers to specific “make or break” questions to help them decide whether to fill out the workbooks and apply to CSP or forget it and instead catch up with spring field work. NRCS personnel at the latter meetings mostly concentrated on detailed aspects of CSP eligibility, devoting much of the meeting time to Q&A. The attendee’s response reflected their reaction to the new expectations of the CSP. A very vocal few made their opinions clear by commenting or asking rhetorical questions and then leaving the meeting. Others opined about eligibility requirements and self-assessment versus traditional program application procedures. Reconvening after a meeting break, it was obvious by the half-empty room that many producers had had their questions answered and left.

In the month since public meetings ended, producer inquiries have continued with some producers only now hearing about CSP for the first time, but for most, the decision about whether to apply to CSP or not appears to have been sealed through the outreach and public meeting process. Most of those making appointments for first interviews are informed about eligibility requirements and are thoroughly prepared. Until the May 27 end of signup and then contract selection at the National Headquarters, there is no way of proving speculation about “less than 10%” of producers qualifying for the 2005 CSP, but weekly reports of contacts and meetings by NRCS Field Office personnel thus far bear out that relatively few producers feel qualified and are willing to conduct CSP Self-Assessment. Difficult as it has been for the conservation partnership, the new approach and stringent requirements for CSP participation appear to have been successfully communicated through the public meetings and outreach campaign. Looking to the 2006 CSP, the Palouse Local Working Group used feedback from communities and results from the Rock Watershed in formulating criteria to select watersheds for next year’s program.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Submitted by Dennis Robinson, Forester

On the road again. Only if travelers are able to actually get down the road. That is the premise of “Living Snow Fences,” allowing the use of a highway during winter blowing and drifting snow periods.

NRCS and the National Agroforestry Center collaborated with several entities to install a living snow fence along Washington State Route 25, north of Davenport, Washington. Because of the success of that installation effort, team members consisting of Jim Schroeder, RC, and Courtney Smith, RMS, Clarkston, Lisa Naylor, Blue Mountain RC&D Coordinator; Gary Kuhn, Plant Materials Specialist; and Dennis Robinson, Forester, worked with the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, the WA Department of Transportation and most importantly, Rod Hostetler, landowner, to install a living snow fence along Washington State Route 126, just south of Anatone, WA. The stretch of roadway from Field Springs State Park to Anatone is notorious among WA DOT snow removal folks as a stretch of highway that needs constant attention during the winter. A piece of snow removal equipment has to be constantly on hand at this stretch of roadway during winter months to keep it open for travelers. When the living snow fence

On the road again...

becomes mature and begins to function, it will provide considerable savings in time and funds for DOT and Washington State taxpayers.

Mr. Hostetler conducted site preparation in the fall of 2004, and then worked the ground again early this spring. Planting was to begin as soon as possible following the installation of fabric mulch by the WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. The week of fabric installation found four inches of new snow at the site. Installation was postponed twice. On Thursday, April 28th the site was dry enough to move equipment to the property and the fabric was installed. Planting of the approximately 250 oak leaved sumac, 250 Rocky Mountain juniper and 125 ponderosa pine was then scheduled for the following Tuesday, May 3.

A crew consisting of Terry Larson, Jason Earl, Dennis Moss, and Kenny Thornton, WA Dept of Transportation employees; Eric Gatlin, Doug Adams, and Fabian Luna, Dayton High School volunteers; Jim Shawley, Jim Manring, Pomeroy Field Office; Toots Ekholm and Jim Loiland, Walla Walla Field Office; Laren Nalder, Pasco Field Office; Jim Schroeder, Courtney Smith, Clarkston Field Office; Frank Gariglio, Lewiston Field Office; Lisa Naylor, Blue Mountain RC&D office; Gary Kuhn and Dennis Robinson, State Office planted the three rows of shrubs and trees on the 1500 foot snow fence. All plants were installed, Vexar tubing applied to the pine trees; the fabric mulch was further secured by installing 10 inch steel staples to hold it in place, and by 4:30 PM the afternoon of May 3 the planting was completed..



What is the APIO?

The Asian Pacific Islander Organization (APIO) was established in May 1998, to provide a forum for employees of the USDA-NRCS to exchange ideas, network, mentor, train, and add value to the agency by being a linguistic, cultural and ethnic bridge to our Asian-American partners and communities and other employee organizations.

The APIO will focus attention on the under-representation of Asian Pacific Islander Employees and serve in an advisory role to address methods of recruitment, retention, and promotion. In assisting the NRCS to achieve workforce diversity goals, the APIO will help to enhance outreach, as well as promote access and delivery of agency programs to historically under-served communities.

Vision & Mission

Vision: A committed Asian Pacific Islander leadership to improve the way the NRCS does business with the Asian-Pacific Islander work force and community.

Mission: Establish an Asian-Pacific Islander leadership council to enhance program delivery and staffing such that the API community would promote legislation of new programs that would link our rich cultural heritage to other groups.

What is APIO....

[APIO National Council – Western Regional Representative](#)

Ron Hemmer, State Economist, Arizona, represents the Western Region on the APIO National Council. Employees wishing to join the APIO, or renew their membership, may contact Ron at (602) 280-8789 or via E-mail: duffers1@cox.net for the 2005 APIO Membership Application. The application is also available at the APIO website: www.apio.org

[Upcoming Training Opportunity!](#)

Mark your calendars. The 7th Annual APIO Training Conference will be held this year from August 8-12, 2005, in Wichita, Kansas. The theme, selected by the 2005 conference planning committee is “Diversity in Conservation, a World in Harmony”. The training will cover topics such as government management issues and human resource issues as well as technical issues such as water conservation and GIS.

NRCS Plant Materials Program Highlighted in Discovery Science Channel Documentary

Submitted by Mark Stannard, Plant Materials Manager

The Discovery Science Channel will be highlighting the dedicated work of the NRCS Plant Materials Program in its ongoing battle to restore the eroding Louisiana Delta. Every year an area bigger than the island of Manhattan disappears under the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. At this erosion rate, the entire delta, one of the largest wetlands on earth, will be gone resulting in disastrous economic and environmental consequences for the nation.

In the documentary to be aired June 11 on the Discovery Science Channel, Plant Materials Specialist Gary Fine of the Golden Meadows Plant Materials Center, located in the heart of the Louisiana delta, will talk about what types of plants work best in halting this catastrophic erosion.

What: Discovery Science Channel

Who: NRCS Plant Materials Program’s Gary Fine

When: June 11, 2005 at 8 pm on all Discovery Science Channels nationwide

Why: The Louisiana Delta erosion crisis

Where: Gary Fine was interviewed for this documentary on site in the Louisiana delta region

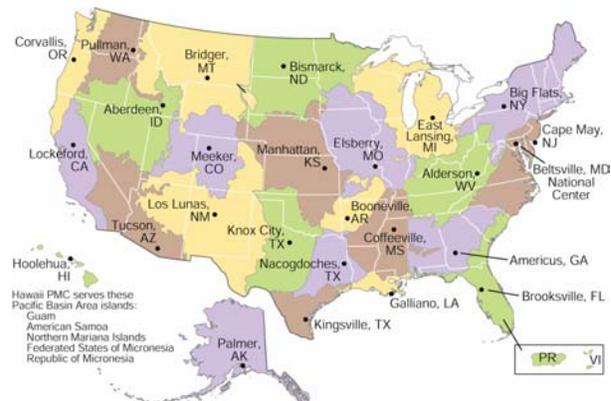
For more information about the documentary please visit:

http://www.2theadvocate.com/stories/042105/new_coastal001.shtml

For more information about the NRCS Plant Materials Program please visit:

<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

The USDA NRCS Plant Materials Program consists of a network of Plant Materials Centers (PMCs) and Plant Materials Specialists located throughout the United States. For over 70 years, PMCs and Specialists have provide essential and effective plant solutions for critical habitats, environmental concerns, management practices, and key farm and ranch programs. There are 26 PMCs with service areas defined by ecological boundaries.



REGIONAL DESIGN TEAM AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Submitted by Mike Deering, Regional Design Team Leader

Technology Transfer is a major component of the Washington State Regional Design Team (RDT) mission. One avenue for transfer is through formal training sessions, requested either by individual states or through regional offerings. The NRCS has enjoyed a rich history of technical innovation and a reputation of engineering competency. The RDT is proud to have the opportunity to advance these engineering capabilities regionally and nationally.



The RDT conducted an “*Introduction to Hydraulics*” training session on March 22-24, 2005, in Spokane, WA for NRCS personnel from Oregon and Idaho. The training session addressed fundamentals of open channel flow concepts and properties of water at-rest and in motion, pipeline hydraulics appurtenances, water measurement and pumps. Basic hydraulic fundamentals were supplemented by class problems and laboratory exercises conducted at the Gonzaga University Hydraulics Laboratory. An introduction to HEC-RAS and EPA NET software was also presented.

In June 2005, the RDT will conduct a training session for Idaho NRCS personnel to cover the principles of “*The Design of Pumps and Pump Stations*.” This training will focus on pump sizing and selection, pump station layout, power requirements and pumping economics. The course agenda includes “dissecting” a centrifugal pump, class problems and the construction of a classic hydraulic ram pump. The training will be conducted in Boise, Idaho on June 7-9, 2005. For those interested in using the hydraulic ram pump for demonstrations at fairs, school, etc., please contact Don Hanson at 509-323-2949, email: donald.hanson@wa.usda.gov.



The RDT has participated in other training efforts with regional and national coverage including “*The Fundamentals of Structural Design*” (March, 2004), *New Professional Engineers, Geologists and Landscape Architects* (Chaired 2 sessions - January and March, 2005) and *HEC-RAS Water Surface Profiles*.

Please contact Michael Deering at 509-323-2950, email: michael.deering@wa.usda.gov for additional information or to schedule these or other engineering training.

Diagram by Vitruvius, Marcus Pollio, "*Vitruvius: The Ten Books on Architecture*," translated by Morris Hickey Morgan. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1960

Colville Tribal News

Submitted by Martin Bales, Tribal Liaison

The Tribal Conservation District is having their first tour on the Colville Reservation June 17th. The tour, which will begin at 10 a.m., will feature a visit to a solar well, and a winterized water trough system. The system is designed to provide water to livestock that are up in the hills, allowing more widespread forage utilization.

For more information on the tour or the project, contact Angie Bales or Dale Smith at (509) 634-2320.

In other news, the Tribal Conservation District is also putting together a PowerPoint presentation to take before the Tribal Council to get more seed money to hire a secretary part-time.

News from the Southwest Team

Submitted by Carl Boyd, District Conservationist

The 2005 EQIP program year is the first year The Southwest Team does not have at least one new dairy operation under contract. This year poultry, beef and horse operations shared the lime light.

To date we have obligated approximately \$ 400,000 to two poultry operations, nearly \$300,000 to two beef operations and about \$56,000 to one horse operation. We are hopeful that additional funding will become available to allow the team to obligate an additional 54,000 for two additional horse operations.

With the EQIP contracting period over, efforts have been refocused to the Willapa Watershed CSP program. Carl Boyd and Nick Somero have taken on this challenge and the team members salute them.

On the team personnel picture, we had to say good bye to Tim Kellogg and wish him the best at his new position in Gillette Wyoming and give a warm hearty welcome to Anitra Gorham, our newest team member who will be taking care of Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties out of the Longview Field Office.

Salmon Run

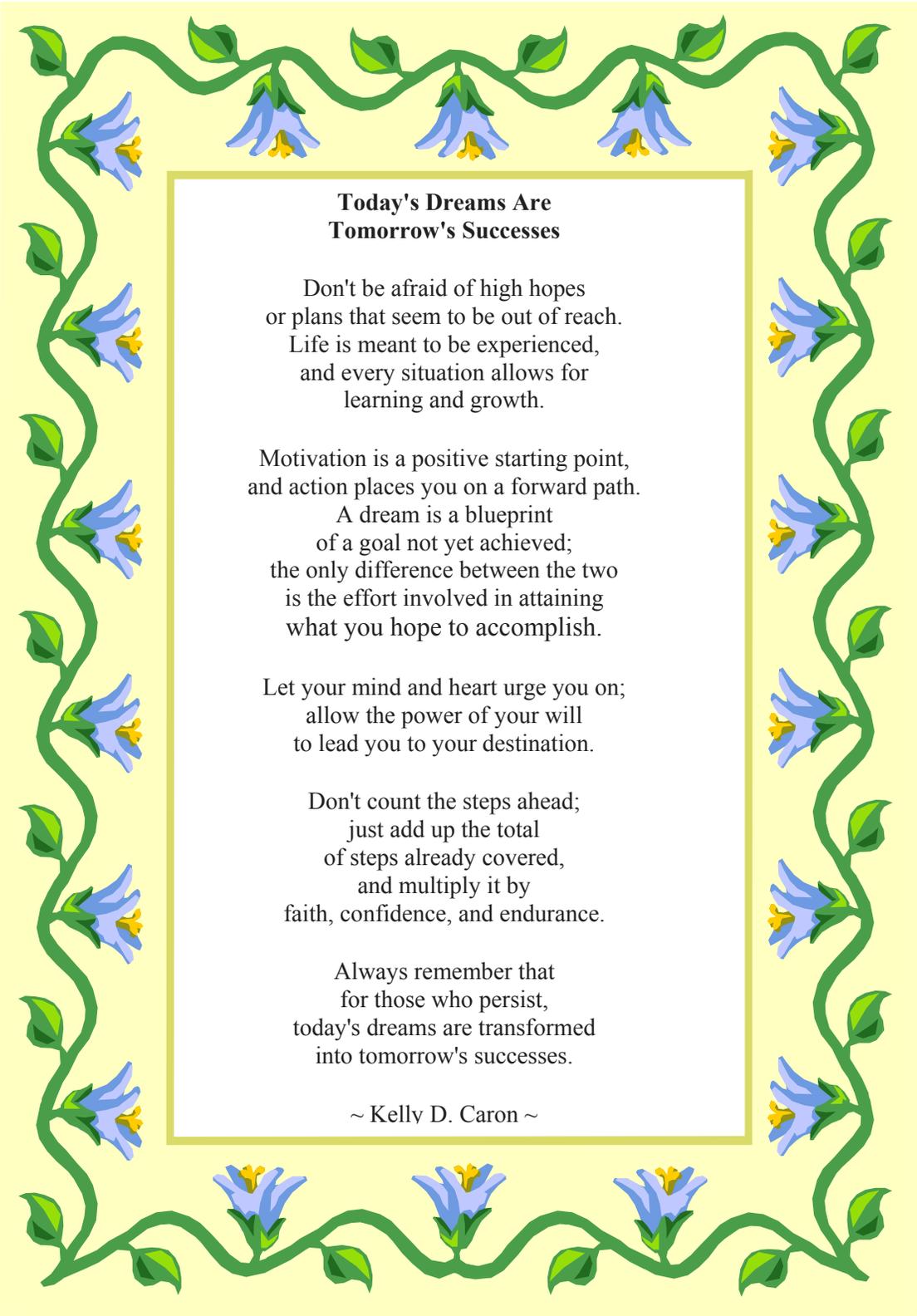
Submitted by Jim Shawley, Civil Engineering Technician, Pomeroy

On March 4, 2005, the sixth grade class and art specialist Sherry Curnutt proudly unveiled their “Salmon Run” exhibit in front of the entire student body of Pomeroy Elementary. Salmon is a big part of the community of Pomeroy which is located close to the Lower Granite Dam on the Snake River.

Three and half months of research and design went into their realistic vision of a salmon run. Students worked with paper mache, pieces of driftwood and water-colored glass. Countless hours were spent sketching, cutting, sanding and painting the exhibit which is set on a six-foot concrete base. Students gained a broader appreciation and knowledge of this species in the class room and at 6th grade environmental camp. They were very pleased with the outcome their art piece.

Funding of the project was made possible by the Shepherd Foundation. Mr. Dean Burton made the concrete form for the base. The cost for his work was one homemade pie from Mrs. Curnutt!





**Today's Dreams Are
Tomorrow's Successes**

Don't be afraid of high hopes
or plans that seem to be out of reach.
Life is meant to be experienced,
and every situation allows for
learning and growth.

Motivation is a positive starting point,
and action places you on a forward path.

A dream is a blueprint
of a goal not yet achieved;
the only difference between the two
is the effort involved in attaining
what you hope to accomplish.

Let your mind and heart urge you on;
allow the power of your will
to lead you to your destination.

Don't count the steps ahead;
just add up the total
of steps already covered,
and multiply it by
faith, confidence, and endurance.

Always remember that
for those who persist,
today's dreams are transformed
into tomorrow's successes.

~ Kelly D. Caron ~

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