



## A Message from Gus

“Back to School Sale”! You’ve got to be kidding! It can’t be time yet! There’s too much left to be done.

I’ve always thought the ‘back to school’ sales were the first sign that fall is on the way. It’s also a pretty good reminder that the end of the fiscal year is within sight. So all those things we wanted to get done before the end of the summer, and especially by the end of the fiscal year, need to be finished right away. There never seems to be enough time.

I spoke with a group of DCs recently. We were talking about the rate of change. One asked if anyone remembered using the same reporting tool in two consecutive years. Another said it is difficult to get enthusiastic about learning new tools when you know the replacement is already in the wings.

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I understand the frustrations. I share many of them with you. But we have to accept reality. Things change quickly. To survive, and to be effective, we need to be flexible and light on our feet and learn to adapt quickly. I think we simply need to accept that the rate of change will continue to increase. And deal with it.

Easier said than done!

But fighting change won’t slow it down. We might just as well embrace change and understand that some level of discomfort will likely be the norm for the future. How well we adapt to change will directly affect how efficiently and effectively we get conservation on the ground.

Now. Time to head out to that back to school sale and see if they have any new electronic toys that might be fun.

## Welcome

**Paul Gleason**, Student Trainee (Soil Conservation), Puyallup Field Office, effective 6/20/04.

**Ron Nichols**, reassigned from NHQ/Oregon to the Public Affairs Specialist, Spokane State Office, effective 7/25/04.

**Clare Flanagan-Lubinda**, Resource Conservationist, Renton Field Office, effective 8/8/04.

**Richard Fleenor**, Central Area Rangeland Management Specialist, Ephrata Area Office, effective 8/22/04.

**Gary Kuhn**, reassigned from the National Agroforestry Center to the State Plant Materials Specialist position, Spokane State Office, effective 8/22/04.

**Patrick Beres**, reassigned from NRCS in Texas to the Rangeland Management Specialist position, Goldendale Field Office, effective 9/5/04.

**Alicia Ewing**, Career Intern (Rangeland Management), Ritzville Field Office, effective 9/5/04.

**Crystal Briggs**, Soil Scientist, Mt Vernon Soil Survey Office, effective 9/5/04.

**Kevin Davis**, Conservation Agronomist, Zillah Field Office, effective 9/5/04.

**James Utley**, Soil Conservationist, Ritzville Field Office, effective 9/19/04

**John Kouns**, East Area Rangeland Management Specialist, Davenport Field Office, effective 9/19/04

**Donald Hanson**, Agricultural Engineer, Regional Design Team, Spokane State Office, effective 10/31/04

**Justin Mount**, Conservation Agronomist, Ephrata Field Office, effective 10/31/04

## Congratulations

**Chris Miller**, promoted to the MLRA Project Leader position in the Spokane Soil Survey Office, effective 5/30/04.

**Erica Fifer**, promoted to the Agricultural Engineer position, Mt Vernon Field Office, effective 6/13/04.

**Jessie Ham**, converted to a permanent Soil Conservationist position in Waterville, effective 6/13/04.

**Toby Rodgers**, promoted to the Soil Survey Project Leader position in the Mt Vernon Soil Survey Office, effective 6/27/04.

**Sarah Troutman**, Rangeland Management Specialist in Ellensburg, promoted effective 7/11/04.

**Erik Dahlke**, Soil Scientist in Mt Vernon, converted to a permanent position effective 7/28/04. Erik will also receive a promotion effective 9/19/04.

**Carl Boyd**, promoted, reassigned to District Conservationist, Chehalis Field Office, effective 9/19/04.

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## Reassignments Reassignments

**Paul Dorning**, reassigned to the Upper Columbia RC&D Coordinator position in Spokane, effective 5/16/04.

**Jen Bell**, Soil Scientist, reassigned from Toppenish to the Zillah Soil Survey Office, effective 7/11/04.

**Amanda Wright**, Soil Scientist, reassigned from Toppenish to the Zillah Soil Survey Office, effective 7/11/04.

**Tom Allen**, Agricultural Engineer, reassigned from Colfax, Washington to Moscow, Idaho effective 8/8/04.

**Ross Lahren**, detailed to the Easement Programs Division in NHQ, effective 8/16/04.

**Valerie Oksendahl**, reassigned as District Conservationist in Scobey, Montana, effective 8/22/04.

## Goodbye and Best of Luck

**Ralph Schmidt**, Civil Engineer on the Regional Design Team, retired effective 6/3/04.

**Betty Schmitt**, Public Affairs Specialist in the Spokane State Office, retired effective 6/3/04.

**Amy Simmons**, Student Trainee (Soil Conservation), Ritzville Field Office, effective 7/24/04.

**Amber Colcord**, Biological Science Aid, Plant Materials Center, effective 7/31/04.

**Larry Caudill**, Biological Science Aid, Plant Materials Center, effective 8/11/04.

**Isaac Gorton**, Biological Science Aid, Plant Materials Center, effective 8/14/04.

**John Wandschneider**, Biological Science Aid, Plant Materials Center, effective 8/21/04.

### Attention Retirees!!

We would like to hear how things have been since your retirement. Please send your letters to Georgia Sormun at the following address.

USDA - NRCS  
316 W. Boone Ave., Ste 450  
Spokane, WA 99201-2348

If you would like to receive your copy of Current Developments by email, please respond to the following address

[georgia.sormun@wa.usda.gov](mailto:georgia.sormun@wa.usda.gov)

## Hot Weather Safety Tips:

It's HOT out there! Summer heat can hurt you if you don't pay attention to the warning signs. Hot weather triggers a variety of medical emergencies. Even healthy people should take it easy during extremely high temperatures, and those with respiratory and other health problems must be especially careful.

Listed below are several tips for you to keep in mind when the mercury starts rising:

- **Slow down** - Strenuous activities should be reduced or rescheduled to the coolest time of the day.
- **Dress for summer** - Wear light-weight, and light-colored clothing and a cap or hat
- **Drink Plenty of Fluids** - Your body needs water to stay cool. Even if you don't feel thirsty, continue to drink water.
- **Don't get too much sun** - Sunburn makes the job of heat dissipation that much more difficult.
- **Spend more time in air-conditioned places** - Doing so makes the body's job of staying cool that much easier.
- **Do not drink alcoholic beverages** - The intake of alcohol only leads to further dehydration.

Heat-related injuries fall into three major categories:

### Heat cramps      Heat exhaustion      Heatstroke

- **Heat cramps** are painful muscular pains and spasms that occur when the body loses electrolytes during profuse sweating or when inadequate electrolytes are taken into the body. They usually begin in the arms, legs or abdomen, and often precede heat exhaustion.

Treatment for heat cramps is to rest in the shade, get near a fan, spray the person with water and massage the cramp.

- **Heat exhaustion** is a medical emergency. When a person is suffering from heat exhaustion, they will perspire profusely and most likely will be pale.

It is best treated by taking the patient to a cool place, applying cool compresses, elevating the feet and giving the patient fluids.

**Heat stroke** is the worst heat-related injury. The brain has lost its ability to regulate body temperature. The patient will be hot, reddish and warm to the touch. Their temperature will be markedly high and there will be no perspiration. This is a medical emergency, call 911.

The emergency care of heatstroke is to cool the body as quickly as possible. One of the best methods for cooling the body during a heat emergency is to wrap the patient in cool, wet sheets.

If you note any of these injuries be sure to get the appropriate medical care.



**Coming Soon to Your Field Office!**  
By June Johnson, Toolkit Coordinator

Known by several names---Toolkit Next Generation, Toolkit 5.0, and Toolkit 2004, the next version of the Customer Service Toolkit will be released October 1, 2004. The new Information Technology Service (ITS) has been charged with completing installation of Toolkit 2004 on all field users' machines by October 15.

The goals are for all NRCS conservation planners to have been trained and using Toolkit 2004 to create and manage conservation plan records by December 1, 2004. Weekly, 3-day training classes have been tentatively scheduled to begin October 19. The plan is to run sessions concurrently in the Spokane and Olympia computer training rooms.

The Colville Service Center is one of 16 offices nationwide chosen as a pilot test site for the new Toolkit software. The pilot offices will test the software to uncover any flaws so they can be corrected by the October 1 release date. Bob Gillaspay and Dave Brower will be traveling to Ft. Collins, Colorado the week of August 23 for training. Upon return they will train the Colville staff.

Toolkit Customers will be checked in and out using the Internet. Customers that have been checked-in with the Toolkit Check-In Wizard will be available for your use. (The Check-In Wizard will remain in use for about the next year so that Customers not already there may be checked into the National Conservation Planning Database (NCPDB) on an as-needed basis.)

Toolkit 2004 will look similar to version 4.1, but Outlook will be gone. The name/address information will be harvested from SCIMS. Also, ArcView GIS software will be replaced by ArcGIS 8.3. (ArcView will remain on the computers for use in applications outside of Toolkit.) The Toolkit Toolbar remains with the same functionality of the buttons present in Toolkit 4.1. The user will have the option of selecting a Basic or an Advanced ArcGIS setting. For most of us the Basic option will be selected and will provide enough GIS tools. The sophisticated GIS user may choose to use the Advanced setting.

Unfortunately, a few items will not be working with the first release. The Soil Data Viewer and a GPS tool (similar to MN-DNR Garmin) are expected to be released around January 1, 2005. The Wetland Core Extension and Easement Tools will not be offered with the first release since they were dependent on Outlook.

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## Senior Citizens Receiving Free Prescription Drugs from Local Coalition

*Submitted by Jerry Smith, RC&D Coordinator*



Volunteers and staff members working on the Senior Rx program.

The quality of life is improving for impoverished seniors in Southwest Washington. A coalition of local representatives has created a community development project called Senior Rx to assist senior citizens in receiving free prescription drugs.

Columbia Pacific Resource Conservation and Economic Development District (RC & EDD), in cooperation with state agencies, medical clinics, city officials, non-profit organizations and dedicated volunteers, developed a system to assist low-income senior citizens apply for and receive a broad spectrum of prescription drugs.

Senior Rx is based upon a very complex program, Patient Assistance Programs (PAP), offered by multiple pharmaceutical companies. This program enables

people with incomes below designated levels to acquire three month supplies of needed prescription medications.

Compassionate volunteers and state employees work with eligible applicants to meet the requirements and constraints of the PAP program. The PAP program requirements can change frequently and volunteers keep abreast of these alterations. The pharmaceutical companies have multiple application forms that are difficult to read and fill out for senior citizens. A person who qualifies may be taking multiple life-sustaining drugs and need to fill out different application forms for each of their prescriptions.

As required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, volunteers are trained in HIPAA compliance which protects the individuals' confidentiality and privacy. Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) provides HIPPA training at no cost. The Olympic Area Agency on Aging (O3A) provides office space and a dedicated laptop computer with internet connection for the volunteers use as potential clients are interviewed. CHOICE regional health network and Twin Harbors Pharma-Assist Network (THPAN), non-profit agencies dedicated to improving health care for low-income and minorities in SW Washington, are providing medical software and computer support for the program. These tools allow the volunteers to create and print completed forms to order medications, electronically post reminders when the prescriptions need to be renewed, and track and update changes in the PAP program.

Eligible patients for Senior Rx are referred to the program by medical professionals that have shared their information on patients with the HIPPA compliance trained volunteers and state employees. Senior Rx has been met with resounding approval by the medical providers. The medical community knows that the eligible patients will be getting served, and the workload in their offices will be reduced.

In the first three months of operation this coalition completed applications for 68 eligible individuals in SW Washington. These applications were usually for five to ten different prescriptions per person. For those who meet the criteria, the PAP program is far superior to the drug discount cards that are now available under the revised Medicare Bill.

Senior Rx is a pilot program that has been implemented in south Pacific County, Ilwaco, Chinook, and Long Beach. When running smoothly in these locations, Senior Rx will be expanded throughout southwest Washington in Pacific, Mason, Grays Harbor, and Wahkiakum Counties.

## **Cultural Resources Annual Meeting**

Each year, the Cultural Resources Specialists and Cultural Resources Coordinators for the NRCS meet to receive training and updates on cultural resource issues relative to the agency and our partners. This year the meeting was hosted by the American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association (AINEA) in conjunction with the Oneida Tribe. The session was held on the Oneida Reservation in Verona, New York. With opening remarks and welcome by Joe DeVecchio, New York State Conservationist, the meeting began on a positive note. Chief Bruce Knight's presentation and comments opened the AINEA portion of the conference.

Scott Williams, West Area Cultural Resources Specialist, was asked to attend to assist with the flint knapping portion of the meeting and to discuss Washington's State Level Programmatic Agreement during a session on SHPO programmatic agreements. Kathy Callum, East Area Cultural Resources Specialist, attended and assisted with new CRS and CRC orientation.

The first day consisted of CRC/CRS training. Six sessions followed which included the status of training needs for CRS/CRCs, TSP statements of work, state-level agreements, tribal consultation agreements and protocols, Farm Bill and partner programs and approaches to conservation of cultural resources on private lands. Twelve concurrent sessions on topics specifically requested by the AINEA board were also held.

The meeting was a success in that the tribal presentations and interactions between the NRCS CRSs was felt to be extremely productive. For our (NRCS WA) new CRSs it was also productive in being able to interact with counterparts from across the nation and to discuss issues with national office staff.

Next year's meeting will either be with the Society of American Archeology in Salt Lake City, Utah, or again with the AINEA folks on the Flathead Reservation in Montana.

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### **Multi-State Meeting**

*Submitted by Leigh Nelson, State Irrigation Engineer*

On July 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, the engineers and technicians from the Central Area were joined with engineers and technicians from Oregon, Idaho and Montana for a two-day training session. This started out as a monthly eng/tech meeting but ended up as a multi-state meeting at a local sprinkler irrigation manufacture. The Nelson Irrigation company agreed to work with the NRCS to provide a site and computers to do software training. This was held in Walla Walla, at the Nelson factory.

The session started with a tour of the factory. There are so many parts that go into a sprinkler, and some of them are very small. Next we went to the classroom and had training on Nelson's Overlap software which is used to calculate the uniformity of sprinklers at different spacing. We then received training on the NRCS Center Pivot Evaluation and Design (CPED) software. This can be used to calculate the uniformity of sprinkler packages on pivots. For a close-out we had the opportunity to look and play with other up and coming irrigation tools and sprinklers that Nelson has on the drawing board.

Overall the session was a great chance to work with private industry and see how we can develop a better working relationship in the future.

**WRP Partnerships Pay Off Big on Earth Day**  
Kathy Kilcoyne, Forester, Mount Vernon Field Office

The Klein Farm WRP in Snohomish County has had a hard life struggling with non-native plants and invasive poison hemlock. But recent events have turned the site into an instant forest. The landowner, Snohomish County Parks and Recreation, together with NRCS have partnered with the Stilliguamish Tribe Bank Savers Project and the Stilly Snohomish Fisheries Task Force to restore the wetlands and riparian areas. The planned work includes planting thousands of trees and shrubs, placing large wood in the stream and in the wetland, placing perch poles, and maintaining the newly planted trees until established.

Well, when these groups say they are going to plant some trees, stand back. The Bank Savers brought in hundreds of 3 to 4 ft native plants they grew in their nursery and planted them. The StillySno Task Force organized numerous volunteer plantings. The BIG one came the week before Earth Day. On Saturday, April 17, 117 volunteers dressed up in their finest layers for planting mostly threatening to rain trees and shrubs. After a short lesson on benefits to fish, the volunteers worked for 2-3 hours planting and a little bit about lanches and stayed all day. Everyone had a great time. Some are planning to come back next year and see how much "their" trees grew.



Volunteers at Klein Farm WRP

The list of volunteers included a 4-H teen group, a group from Boeing, several Girl Scout and Boy Scout groups, neighbors, a Community Service group and interested individuals. Oh yea, and even an ex-NRCS employee, who has been involved on this site since about a week after she left NRCS. Sharon Walker is now the Snohomish County Parks and Rec planner with responsibility for this site. At last count, over 3000 trees and shrubs and 100's of native cuttings have been planted this spring.



Planting trees and perch poles at Klein Farm WRP



Planting clumps of willow and dogwood

## Soil Data Warehouse/Soil Data Mart

The Soil Data Warehouse (SDW) and Soil Data Mart (SDM) were brought online December 17, 2003. The purpose of the SDW and SDM is to reduce workload, eliminate redundant databases, assure delivery of consistent information and provide a single source of official soil survey information. The information will be available to the general public, external customers and NRCS personnel. The SDW houses the current version of official soil survey information, both tabular and spatial, for each soil survey area and will maintain previous versions of official data. The SDM delivers only the current version of official soil survey information from the SDW, and is the point of access for agency users and public customers. The Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (EFOTG) can be linked to the SDM and all users and customers have the ability to run reports

and download SSURGO data directly from the SDM website at :

<http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov>.

Prior to the SDM, the primary source of on-line spatial soil data was the National SSURGO Website and the primary source of tabular data was the EFOTG. The SDM supersedes the National SSURGO Website, but this transition will be ongoing for most of 2004. During this period of transition, data for a particular survey area may reside at either site, but never at both sites simultaneously. If you can't find the survey area of concern in the SDM, please try: <http://www.ncgc.nrcs.usda.gov/branch/ssb/products/ssurgo/> for spatial data and <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/> for tabular data. If you have questions, please contact Ron Myhrum at 509-323-2982 or email at [ron.myhrum@wa.usda.gov](mailto:ron.myhrum@wa.usda.gov).

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### IMPLEMENTING WEED CONTROL THROUGH MULTI-SPECIES GRAZING

*Submitted by Andrea Mann, Big Bend RC&D Coordinator*

A partnership formed between private landowners, a sheep and goat owner, Washington State University (WSU), State and Federal agencies have joined forces to control weed infestations using unconventional methods. Weeds are typically controlled using herbicides, mechanical clipping and/or tillage. This project proposes the use of grazing by sheep and goats to control woody and herbaceous weeds as cost effective and sustainable.

The three-year implementation study is funded through the Sustainable Agriculture Research Education program (SARE). Participants of this study were involved in the 2002-2003 SARE, Professional Development Program in which the individuals were trained in holistic management, weed control, livestock body condition scoring, and vegetative monitoring.

This project tests and monitors for sustainability of the herd, grazing lands, economics and human resources. The objectives of the project are to provide hands on teaching, producer involved studies which evaluate sustainable enterprises, forage quality and livestock condition while treating the natural resources effectively and holistically.

Two field sites have been selected in Eastern Washington to manage and monitor starting this month. One site occurs in Benton County and has a management objective to control Russian olive seedlings and manage invasive wetland plants. The other site is located on State property along Sprague Lake which possesses an array of weedy species and adjoins an American Disability Act (ADA) interpretive trail and boat launch. The data collected will be dispersed through regional conferences, local and regional media, field tours and through scientific papers published in professional journals.

Partners include WSU, USDA-Agricultural Research Service, USDI-Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington State Department of Agriculture, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Big Bend Resource Conservation and Development Council, Barker Ranch and Hercules Ranch.

**Hispanic Outreach Effort  
Successfully Raises an Awareness of the Agency  
Submitted by Jessie Ham, Soil Conservationist, Central Highlands Team**

On Thursday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, a monthly meeting of the group of northern Okanogan County Hispanic growers at the Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Tonasket, Washington was held. The group, organized by Naná Simone, the program director for the Center for Agricultural Partnerships in Wenatchee, consists of about 15 producers who meet once a month to discuss current and pertinent agricultural issues and problems. There were ten in attendance at this meeting.

After everyone introduced themselves (there were and Nana made sure that everyone had cookies and juice), the meeting started at 1:00 p.m. with a Farm Service Agency (FSA) presentation over loans and various other FSA programs. Representatives from the FSA regularly attend these meetings and every grower in the room is involved with them in some way. They were all pretty familiar with the information and there were few questions over the presentation.

Next on the agenda was the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) presentation. Representing NRCS were Stan Janowicz, Forester; Jessie Ham, Soil Conservationist, and Sergio Paredes, Soil Conservationist. Although the growers were knowledgeable about FSA and their programs, none of them had even heard of NRCS, let alone our conservation programs. Because most of the growers speak some English but prefer Spanish (the only language for a small percentage), Sergio from the NRCS Yakima Field Office came to act as translator. The growers definitely kept him busy. The main focus of the presentation was supposed to be EQIP. They had allotted twenty minutes for it in the agenda, but twenty minutes stretched to about two and a half hours. They wanted to learn everything they could about the program and the various categories that would fit their enterprises. At 4:00 we finally had to cut off the questions, but it was evident that interest was high. The main points with which they were concerned involved: how they could belong to the Local Work Group, how leadership within the group was selected, and the times of the meetings; deadlines for program applications; EQIP criteria and the percentage of EQIP money they could receive; how they could be more informed about NRCS programs and meetings; and better placement of newsletters and pamphlets.

The concerns and requests of these growers are valid and should be addressed. The Hispanic population of this area is rapidly growing and as a result, so is the number of Hispanic producers. Many of these producers could greatly benefit from various NRCS programs, but in order to do that, they need information and outreach. One of the easiest ways to accomplish this would be to obtain a mailing list specific to this group, keep them updated on a regular basis, and possibly print the FSA newsletter in Spanish (which was specifically requested). There are many other ways in which NRCS could aid these growers. They represent a largely unheard sector of the population and deserve more representation in government programs.

## Global Positioning Systems (GPS) Training Sessions

By June Johnson and Chas Scripser, Geotechnology Team

Thirty employees recently completed three sessions of Global Positioning System Training held in Spokane at the State Office, with field exercises in Riverfront Park. The trainees learned the fundamentals of GPS, how to collect waypoints and tracks, GPS navigation, and transferring data from the GPS units into ArcView using MN-DNR Garmin software.



Students were required to navigate from the State Office to landmarks in Riverfront Park. Once in the park students used several methods to collect data. Back in the classroom the students learned how to download the collected data into ArcView to simulate field data collection for activities such as producing a conservation plan map.



The USDA Service Center Agencies purchased the Garmin GPSmap76 units with Common Computing Environment funds. The GPS units are supplied in two types of configurations. Configuration 1 includes the GPSmap76 and a differential correction radio beacon receiver, which provides for an estimated accuracy of 1-2 meters. Configuration 2 includes the GPSmap76 with an external antenna and has an estimated accuracy of 6-13 meters. Washington State NRCS will soon be upgrading many of the Type 2 configurations received to Type 1 configurations, so that at least one Type 1 will be available for use at each Service Center.

The students seemed to enjoy the class in spite of the hot weather and their overall comments were positive. The students will share their new knowledge with others in their field offices. Thanks to Travis Bouma, Ken Drecksel and Dave Brown for assisting with the instruction during these sessions.



### Earth Team Reminders

- ❖ With Fiscal Year 2004 coming to an end, just a reminder that we will soon be requesting information on your volunteers and the amount of time they have donated.
- ❖ Please be sure that you have a volunteer application for your Earth Team members or groups. Keep a copy of the application in your office and send the original to your Area Coordinator.

#### If you have any questions please contact:

Amy Rodman, Central Area Coordinator  
Cheryl Jacobson, East Area Coordinator  
Bev Burnley, West Area Coordinator  
Georgia Sormun, State Volunteer Coordinator

## WHIP and Oak Conservation Update

Submitted by Anitra Gorham, Lynden NRCS

In San Juan County, one group of landowners leads by example when it comes to oak conservation. These nine neighbors have chosen to preserve the oak on their properties, which total 143 acres on the south slope of Cady Mountain. This area was identified in a 1975 survey by the Nature Conservancy as one of the most important natural resources of San Juan County. Many now recognize the importance of the Oregon White Oak, or Garry Oak, woodlands as a unique, diverse, and vanishing habitat in Washington.



**Oregon White Oak *Quercus garryana* on San Juan County WHIP project. - T. Dring**

Led by the efforts of Thom Pence, a retired forester and San Juan Conservation District board member, the neighbors applied for cost share through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).



**Shooting star and Oregon White oak - T. Dring**

Thom Pence has been working for several years to restore his oak and to spread awareness of the species' plight in the

island for several years. He has helped to save oaks by clearing encroaching Douglas fir away from mature oaks. This has resulted in dramatic improvements in the health of the oaks. Pence has also discovered in the process of clearing that the oaks still have a second generation in the understory, which had been browsed into prostrate shrubs by the deer, overlooked, and shaded out.



**New growth on Oregon White Oak - A. Gorham**

The project received funding through WHIP in 2003. Initially, the landowners will take a two-pronged approach: removing young conifers from around the existing oak and surrounding the seedling oak with wire cages to protect them from browsing deer. The landowners then intend to plant local seed source seedlings to help replenish the stand. Thom and his neighbors would like to continue to involve the community in San Juan County, making their project not only a restoration effort but also an educational site. Thom has already used his property in several workshops to talk about the importance of oak restoration in light of his experiences, and has worked with local schools interested in using restoration of oak and prairie habitats in their field curriculum. For more information contact Thom Pence at [heartwoodtnt@netscape.net](mailto:heartwoodtnt@netscape.net).

**Living Legacy Honors Farmer and Public Servant**  
**Submitted by Jim Loiland, Soil Conservationist, Snake River Team**

“Stro and I always wanted our legacy to be a wildlife refuge. I hope to create a park in his memory someday.” Utilizing USDA/NRCS programs, Sherry Strohmaier is well on her way to establishing her goal.

Her late husband Gary “Stro” Strohmaier was born and raised on a 2,229-acre family farm. After a stint in the U.S. Military, the life-long Washington Wheat Growers Assn. member was selected to be the State Director of Agriculture for Washington. In 1989, Stro and Sherry returned to the family farm and began in earnest to address resource concerns. Early on, concerns about wildlife brought the use of pesticides to a minimal level and the use of fertilizers was reduced. Shelterbelts and tree rows were planted early on in their married life as no trees could be found along the Touchet River. These are now over 35 years old.



A dream of reducing reliance on production and increasing the benefits to wildlife gradually developed over time. Originally; a winter wheat / black fallow farm, slowly it has been converted to an oasis for wildlife. The farm is located in the transition zone between the Columbia Basin to the Columbia Plateau, an area of large acreages, huge fields and little rainfall. This makes it a critical area for salmonid species in the river, migrating waterfowl and neo-tropical species, and upland bird and wildlife species. The transition to the dream began with the conversion of 60+ acres of cropland to pasture many years ago and then the removing of cattle from the range. More recently, the Stromaiers' utilized the CRP program to convert the remainder of their dry-cropland to 'native' condition. The 1,548 acres of contiguous cropland now resembles the native shrub-steppe grassland of the Columbia Plateau. Within the CRP acreage, wildlife watering facilities dot the landscape and strategic clusters of sagebrush and other shrubs abound.

Just prior to Stro's death on February 7, 2004, an additional 23 acres along the Touchet River were enrolled into Washington Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Containing over 9,000 trees, these 1.24 stream miles tie the acreage together with other wildlife corridors. More importantly to the wildlife in the area, through Stro's influence and the success of this project, an additional 13.4 contiguous stream miles comprised of 294 acres have been enrolled in CREP Riparian Forest Buffers, on the lower Touchet River by Stro's neighbors. Over the years the Stromaiers have demonstrated to neighbors and agency folks alike the value and feasibility of applied conservation. Whether in cropping systems or in tree and grass plantings, they were never afraid to try as they progressed toward their goal.

With a fair return on the land now assured through USDA program assistance, Sherry can now direct her effort at continuing to develop the farm as a “living, thriving, wildlife refuge.” Just as Gary (Stro) and Sherry have dedicated their lives to agriculture and stewardship, their legacy will benefit all residents of Walla Walla County and the Touchet River Watershed.

### Washington's first CSP partners...



The McLean's (from left to right: Dean, Linda, Lee, Cheyenne, Bill and Bev), shown here at their farmstead near Coulee City, were recognized by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service as Washington's first Conservation Security Program (CSP) participants at a signing ceremony in Spokane, August 26<sup>th</sup>.

CSP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on Tribal and private working lands.

Regional Assistant Chief Sara Braasch, NACD Past President Read Smith, NRCS State Conservationist Gus Hughbanks and the McLeans signed the ceremonial first contract during the event at the NRCS state office.

Working farmland that has been in their family since 1898, the McLean's qualified for Tier III -- the highest tier of the program -- through their use of conservation practices including direct-seeding, prescribed grazing, annual soil testing, precise nutrient application, reduced pesticide application, integrated pest management using pest resistant plant varieties and noxious weed control.

#### **2004 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)**

Just a reminder that it is time for the Combined Federal Campaign. This is your opportunity to support the international, national, or local charities you care about.

You can pledge a specific amount to be withheld regularly from your pay beginning in January and continuing through December. One-time gifts are also possible.

For more information, contact your CFC Coordinator

## SUCCESS

To laugh often and much;

To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;

To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;

To appreciate beauty,

To find the best in others,

To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition;

To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.

This is to have succeeded.

by Unknown Author

## Spell Checker

I have a spelling checker  
It came with my PC  
It plainly marks fore my revue  
Miss takes I can not sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word  
And weight four it two say  
Weather eye am wrong oar write  
It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid  
It nose bee fore two long  
And eye can put the error rite  
Its rare lea ever wrong.

I've run this poem threw it,  
I'm sure your please too no.  
Its letter prefect in it's weigh  
My checker tolled me sew.

**U.S. DEPT OF AGRICULTURE**  
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