



Douglas County, WA

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Upcoming Public Events

Come say hi to us and our partners at the following events:

July 29 – Entiat River Appreciation Day

10am-2pm at Entiaqua Park

August 24-27 – North Central WA Fair

Waterville Fair Grounds

Sept. 13 – FCCD Board Meeting

5:30-8:00pm at St. Andrews Grange

Sept. 19 – Renewable Energy Workshop

5-7pm at the Waterville Library

¿Quiere leerlo en Español? ¡Mándenos un mensaje a info@fostercreekcd.org!



sagebrush mariposa lily
(*Calochortus macrocarpus*)

A big thank you to our sponsor for helping fund this newsletter!



DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Direct Seed Update



FCCD's Direct Seed Program is about to expand, with a third round of sign-ups expected to be ready within the next couple of months. As with the two previous rounds, program participation is limited. Cost-share will be \$28.00 per acre for up to a maximum total of 750 acres, over three crop rotations. Cost/benefit analysis and basic soil monitoring options will again be available to operators. The monitoring data collected by FCCD will enable us to compare soil characteristics such as organic matter, moisture, bulk density, compaction and acidity between the new direct seed system and the previous conventional tillage practices. For further information or to sign-up, please contact Amanda Ward, Natural Resource Specialist at award@fostercreekcd.org or (509) 449-2158.

Water Quality Monitoring



Foster Creek Conservation District will be conducting water quality monitoring as part of our Douglas County Water Quality Improvement Program. The goal of this program is to improve water quality by improving overall stream health to benefit fish, wildlife and humans alike. Such improvements include reducing sediment and nutrient inputs, and increasing shade and habitat complexity. This monitoring effort is coordinated with several restoration projects and direct seed implementation. The goal of this monitoring is twofold: to see if our projects are improving the quality of the surrounding creeks and lakes, and to target areas for future restoration projects. FCCD will be monitoring temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, pH and conductivity. These aspects were chosen due to impairments such as lack of riparian vegetation, erosion, and nutrient runoff near the chosen sites.

Biological Weed Control Report



Larinus minutus eating knapweed

FCCD provided 13,700 biocontrol insects to control four types of invasive weeds. *Mecinus janthiniformis*, a foliage feeding and stem boring weevil for Dalmatian toadflax, was the top seller at 12,400 weevils, followed by 800 *Larinus minutus* for knapweed. FCCD would like to give special THANK YOU to all those that participated!

Contact Elizabeth Hanwacker at ehanwacker@fostercreekcd.org or 509-888-6372 if you are interested in purchasing biocontrol insects for 2018.

Weed Control in Riparian Restoration

Controlling invasive weeds is an integral part of every restoration project. If left uncontrolled, weeds will outcompete the newly planted native vegetation for resources. A riparian ecosystem provides a complex set of processes and functions that provide numerous benefits to both landowners and wildlife including water storage, water filtration, and habitat. When invasive weeds overrun natural riparian ecosystems these processes and functions are degraded or destroyed.

Foster Creek Conservation District prefers to take an integrated approach to weed management whenever possible. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a process consisting of the balanced use of mechanical, cultural, biological, and chemical procedures that are environmentally compatible, economically feasible, and socially acceptable to reduce pest populations to tolerable levels.



Reed canarygrass. Etch by Hippolyte Coste

One of our current riparian restoration projects exemplifies the IPM strategy well. Part of the project area has a dense infestation of Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), and creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*). We placed weed mats around the newly planted shrubs to inhibit weed growth through shading. Unfortunately, these invasive weeds are tenacious and find ways around and through the mats, which is why FCCD staff make regular visits to the sites with a brush cutter to mow the weeds down. Ideally, weeds will be mowed down at least three times a year. Each time mowing occurs, the weed will have to use energy stored in the roots to regrow aboveground biomass, and over time, this will weaken the weeds. After several years of mowing, typically 3-5 years, herbicides can be applied to the weakened weeds with greater success and lower rates than if herbicides *only* were used at the site.

Invasive weed management takes a dedicated, persistent and integrated effort over time. If you are interested in technical assistance or securing cost-share dollars to combat invasive weeds on your land, please contact Aaron Rosenblum at 509-423-5990 or arosenblum@fostercreekcd.org.

Education and Outreach



Foster Creek Conservation District has had a lot of fun in the last few months at various education and outreach activities. In May, FCCD presented on restoration and the Multiple Species General Conservation Plan at the Washington Native Plant Society's stewardship course. That month we also helped at the Triple Creek field trip (*pictured below*), the Kids in the Creek Habitat Sense Station and Chelan PUD's River of

Power. In June, FCCD held a botanical collection day and tested water quality with high school students for the Hydropower STEM Career Academy at Rocky Reach Dam.

Come join our events! FCCD will be participating in Entiat River Appreciation Day on July 29th at Entiaqua Park. You can also find us at the North Central Washington Fair in Waterville, August 24th-27th.



Are you interested in renewable energy project funding for your farm or ranch? Get the scoop at our Renewable Energy Workshop Sept. 19th, 5-7pm at the Waterville Library.

Spring Water Quality Tip:

Water in the early morning! Watering your lawn or garden in the heat of the day results in high water evaporation. That's water you pay for that never actually goes where you want it. Why not save time, water and money with a more efficient watering schedule? Early morning watering is best because the evaporation rate is low, but the leaves will dry off soon afterward, preventing fungal infections. Don't have time in the mornings? Try a sprinkler with a timer, then you don't have to worry about remembering or fitting it into your schedule. And remember, watering more deeply and less frequently encourages deep roots and healthy plants that can better withstand drought.

Featured Bird of the Season

Sage Thrasher

Oreoscoptes montanus

When the day is done, or just beginning, and those diesel engines are switched off, pause for a moment and listen. Do you hear anything? If you are adjacent or within the sagebrush shrub-steppe, you may be hearing the Sage Thrasher, nicknamed "mountain mockingbirds" for their mimicry of other birds. Sage



Sage Thrasher nest with eggs. Photo by O.Schilling

Thrashers nest under the tallest, densest sagebrush – a familiar occurrence in Douglas County. Their nest entrances are often oriented eastward to capture solar heat in the cool mornings and to

shade the eggs in hot afternoons. Sage Thrashers primarily feed on terrestrial insects, such as ants, grasshoppers, and ground beetles. Developing an Integrated Pest Management plan, reducing herbicide use, and seeding organically-certified crops will help support Sage Thrasher populations along with many other insect-dependent birds.



Sage Thrasher on sagebrush. Photo by G.Bartley 2014

Sage Thrashers remain relatively common; however, their melodies are heard less frequently due to habitat loss and fragmentation. *How can you help?* Help conserve them by providing healthy, continuous sagebrush shrub-steppe habitat, for example, eradicating cheatgrass and crested wheatgrass. Foster Creek CD has opportunities and funding to assess and improve rangeland habitat. If you are interested in learning more about conservation stewardship or enhancing degraded habitat, contact us today at (509) 888 – 6372.

Source: Cornell Lab of Ornithology, All About Birds



Monthly VSP meetings are held in the Hearing Room at the Superior Court of Douglas County Building, 203 S Rainier St, Waterville, WA 98858. **Next meeting is Wednesday, August 16th at 6PM.** For more information check out the VSP webpage at www.fostercreekcd.org/programs/voluntary-stewardship-program/ or contact Aaron Rosenblum, VSP Coordinator, at 509-426-5990 or arosenblum@fostercreekcd.org.