



Douglas County, WA

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Fall colors on a golden currant.
(*Ribes aureum*)

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



DEPARTMENT OF
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Producer Spotlight

Direct Seed, Cover Crops, Soil Health, and Biosolids

Our Producer Spotlight series will highlight producers using innovative methods for their operation. We hope this will inspire and instill confidence in viable farming and ranching techniques. Want to volunteer yourself or nominate someone for a Producer Spotlight article? Contact Olivia Schilling at 509-860-2453 or oschilling@fostercreekcd.org.



Douglas Poole was featured in a REACCH Producer Profile this year, with an excellent article by Patrick Mazza, ©University of Idaho 2017. The article discusses Poole's tenacity for making no-till agriculture work in Douglas County, using cover crops, diversifying crops, improving soil health and pioneering biosolids applications. Poole stresses the importance of starting no-till as a group effort and credits his uncle for getting him where he is today. You can find the article by visiting our website or by going to the REACCH producer profile page: <https://www.reacchpna.org/producer-profiles>, then clicking on the link under "No-till agriculture in a low-moisture area".

Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)



Major strides have been made by the Douglas County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) work group in the past few months. The work group has completed, in draft form, protection benchmarks for the countywide VSP work plan. These protection benchmarks will be used to measure the success of the VSP in the future. They are based on the levels of participation in conservation activities by agricultural operators in the county. Their completion represents a major step in finishing the work plan as these protection benchmarks are a key aspect.

The end is now in sight for completing the work plan. Only two major topics remain to be discussed: adaptive management and implementation. Everyone is encouraged to attend work group meetings and contribute to the development of the work plan. For more information, please contact Aaron Rosenblum at 509-423-5990 or arosenblum@fostercreekcd.org, or visit the VSP webpage at <http://www.fostercreekcd.org/programs/voluntary-stewardship-program/>.

Make A Difference Day

On Saturday, October 28th, Foster Creek Conservation District hosted a volunteer event as part of the Greater Wenatchee Valley Make A Difference Day. Every fall, volunteers from around the country come together and participate in projects to better the community or the environment. This is the first year that FCCD has hosted a



Cindy installing browse protectors.
Photo by A.Rosenblum

Make A Difference Day event, and our office is proud to have offered one of the dozens of projects available to volunteers in the Greater Wenatchee Valley.

On the big day, eight volunteers showed up on a brisk morning, eager to get their hands dirty. The temperature quickly warmed into a beautiful fall day in North Central Washington. The volunteers planted about 500 native riparian trees and shrubs in upper West Foster Creek, south of Bridgeport. Browse protectors

were installed to keep deer from munching the newly planted seedlings. These efforts will help restore the proper riparian function and condition of West Foster Creek while providing valuable habitat for many wildlife species, such as rabbits, hawks, and songbirds.

Overall, the day was a huge success! FCCD is looking forward to hosting another Make A Difference Day event in the future. If you are interested in participating in future restoration volunteer events, please contact Aaron Rosenblum at 509-423-5990 or arosenblum@fostercreekcd.org.



Bonnie and Don installing browse protectors.
Photo by A.Rosenblum

Education and Outreach



Shoes off, boots on! Photo by O.Schilling

FCCD finished up the summer and began the fall with several fun water quality events. At the end of July, we helped teach kids about healthy rivers with Cascadia CD's Rolling Rivers Display at Entiat River Appreciation Day. In late August, we set up our display at the Waterville NCW Fair and taught interested folks about pollution in watersheds, pH testing, and soil texture composition. In September, we splashed around in Icicle Creek, looking for invertebrates with school kids at the Wenatchee River Salmon Festival, and we held a renewable energy workshop at the Waterville

library to inform residents of REAP grant benefits. In October, we talked about pollution in our watershed with the FCCD watershed model and through the Incredible Journey game (the journey of a water molecule) at an afterschool program at the Waterville Library. We also had a volunteer restoration event on Make a Difference Day, and planted about 500 riparian plants (see above article).



Kids in the Creek, Photo by O.Schilling

Looking ahead, FCCD will present a success story of their Multiple Species Conservation Plan at the IRIS Success Summit, and provide more volunteer events for restoration in the fall, weather permitting. We hope to see you out there!

Fall Water Quality Tip:

Take care of your septic system! Septic system problems can be disastrous for your home, property and local watershed, so it's best to stay on top of maintenance. Septic tanks should be inspected yearly and pumped every three to five years or when needed. In addition, use preemptive care: conserve water; don't put anything like grease/oil, harsh chemicals or any unnecessary solids into the system; keep traffic and other pressure off the drain field; don't cover your drain field with an impermeable surface; and don't use septic additives on a regular basis. Keep an eye out for septic odor (outside or inside), lush vegetation or wet spots on your drain field, issues flushing toilets, sluggish drains or even backed-up sludge water in sinks and tubs.

Featured Bird of the Season

Northern Shrike and Loggerhead Shrike



Loggerhead Shrike
Photo by Matthew Paulson

Lanius excubitor and Lanius ludovicianus

also known as butcherbirds

A change in the weather has spurred the annual fall migration for many bird species, including the easily mistakable Northern Shrike and Loggerhead Shrike. These similar species can be identified by their gray back, white throat and chest, black



Northern Shrike
Photo by Minette Layne

mask and wings, and a stout, black bill with a hook at the end. Both Shrikes are carnivorous and share common behaviors. For example, their diets consist of birds and reptiles in addition to agricultural pests such as grasshoppers, beetles, rodents or other small mammals. The small hook at the end of their bill is used to paralyze their prey, typically by jabbing the victim at the neck. These birds are also known to impale their prey on thorns, spines, or barbed wire. The prey may be consumed immediately or stored away in "pantries" to consume later when food is scarce, or when energy demands are high in the breeding season. Thus, the family name Laniidae is derived from the Latin word for "butcher" due to their brutal feeding habits. Both species rely on open country with short vegetation, riparian areas, and agricultural fields to survive. Maintaining cool, clean waters in our streams, ponds, and riparian areas through buffer zones planted with native vegetation will promote greater insect diversity for their carnivorous appetite.

Although similar in appearance and behavior, the Northern Shrike migrates south to Douglas County only during the winter season while the Loggerhead Shrike migrates north to Douglas County during the summer, or breeding season. Populations of Loggerhead Shrikes are permanent residents in southern Washington, such as Yakima and Benton County; it is plausible Douglas County has permanent residents pending the identifier has honed their skills to distinguish the pair.

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.