



SCD Winter 2014 Newsletter

IN THIS ISSUE

Annual Tree & Shrub Seedling Sale:
Order online today!

SCD Elections:
SCD Supervisors are elected and lead conservation from the ground up!

Faces of Conservation:
Morning Star Boys Ranch starts conservation quest.

Direct Seed Program:
Recap of past success and a look at next season.

Save the Date:
Backyard Conservation Stewardship Program, Wednesdays in March. Register today!

Copyright 2011

Spokane Conservation District
509.535.7274 | info@sccd.org

Annual Tree Sale: Order Online Now!

Place your order for the Annual Tree and Shrub Seedling Sale now through March 14, 2014. Pick up days are April 4 from 8am-5pm and April 5 from 9am-1pm. The 2014 tree sale will be exciting for three reasons: online orders, an emphasis on edible species and not one, but two featured species!

The Spokane Conservation District online store allows customers to browse species by categories, like Native Shrub or Native Deciduous, or sort by characteristics like drought tolerant and full sun. Customers can complete their online order with any major credit card. Orders may be placed online with credit card, in the mail with a check, or in person with credit card, check or cash (exact change).



As you browse the 2014 Tree Sale Brochure, you'll notice a new symbol to mark species that are edible. Many of the edibles are native species with great historical significance, but are not quite palatable today. Nonetheless, they are marked edible and some brief eating suggestions are listed. We hope that new old fashioned ideas like eating Kinnikinick berries will inspire our customers to broaden their tastes and create a food forest in their backyard. We also have Heritage Everbearing Raspberry for customers looking for more conventional backyard food sources, 5 canes for \$10.

The featured species this year are Giant Chinese Silver Grass, a tall ornamental grass, sold in a one gallon pot for \$8 each and Rocky Mountain Juniper superstock, sold in a 20 cubic inch plug for \$3 each. Both species are great for making screens, prefer full sun, are drought tolerant and are highly adaptable.

With great selection and prices, plus the convenience of online ordering, we anticipate the stock to sell out faster than ever; visit www.sccd.org and place your order today.

For more information on the Annual Tree and Shrub Seedling Sale, email treesale@sccd.org or call 509-535-7274.



Heritage Everbearing Raspberry, Giant Chinese Silver Grass, Rocky Mountain Juniper

**FROM THE
GROUND UP**



SCD Elections

Public Notice of Election

The 2014 Spokane Conservation District annual Board of Supervisors election will be held on Tuesday, March 11, 2014, from 8am to 5pm.

Results of the election will be announced during the regularly scheduled Board meeting at 5:30pm, at 210 N. Havana, Spokane, WA 99202.

The Board of Supervisors is comprised of five members, each serving a three-year term without compensation. Three of the five members are elected by registered Spokane County voters - excluding the residents of the City of Deer Park. The other two positions are appointed by the Washington State Conservation Commission.

For more information, please contact: Jim Armstrong at 509-535-7274 or jim-armstrong@sccd.org



Conservation Efforts Pay Dividends



Left: Conventionally prepared soil has been worked into a fine powder that will easily erode during a rain event or wind storm. Right: The seed and fertilizer are being placed through the residue from the previous crop.

Even with the combined efforts of nearly 3000 conservation district's nation-wide, soil erosion from farm lands continues to be an issue. Whether the erosion is a result of severe winds whipping thousands of tons of topsoil into huge dust storms or streams and rivers carrying millions of tons of topsoil away from the farm, the effect on the environment and the farms where the soil came from is devastating. Setting aside the environmental issues created off the farm, the reduction in productivity on the farms is in itself a national crisis

In 1995, the Spokane Conservation District began an innovative program to help farmers make the transition from conventional farming to no-till and direct seed farming. No-till and direct seeding are methods of placing seed and fertilizer in the ground through the residue from the previous years' crop without disturbing the soil. This technology allows farmers to establish a new crop in a field making just one trip, eliminating as many as six trips that would be required in a conventional system of farming. The savings in time and fuel alone are significant but couple that with potentially higher yields with increased soil moisture, the benefits clearly support a stronger bottom line for the farmer. One major hurdle to overcome is the cost of the equipment that would allow the farmer to do direct seed or no-till.

Utilizing the Department of Ecology's State Revolving Fund, we began a low interest loan program to make it easier for farmers to afford to make that transition. To date, we have made 469 loans for a total of nearly \$24 million, virtually stopping erosion on nearly a half million acres in Eastern Washington and the taxpayers get the money back...with interest.

Another way to look at the effectiveness of this program is in terms of soil saved. Being very conservative, stopping erosion on that half million acres has kept a minimum of two and a half million tons of soil on the farm and out of the air and water. That amount of soil would fill almost 167,000 dump trucks; lined up end to end they would stretch from Spokane to Portland to Bellingham!

For more information, contact the District at 509-535-7274 or visit www.sccd.org.



Faces of Conservation

Morning Star Boys Ranch



The Morning Star Boys Ranch has partnered up with the SCD to complete several conservation projects on their property.

The first project began with a free Firewise assessment. As a result, fuels reduction work was completed. The forested land on the property is now healthier and less likely to spread wildfire to Morning Star Boys Ranch buildings or neighbor's buildings.

Next the Morning Star Boys Ranch will tackle Livestock & Land improvements to the horses' winter paddock and more.



SCD Expands Direct Seed Program

The Production Ag Department at the Spokane Conservation District has expanded the no-till program once again.

In order to cover more acres per season, the SCD Cross Slot drill will be operated by Travis Willson of St. John. The drill was previously operated by SCD staff who had other duties as well.

"Travis is a great young man with an amazing aptitude for farming and has all of the key elements needed to successfully operate a no-till program. His farm background and mechanical abilities make him a great addition to the program. We are excited to have him running our custom seed program and look forward to working with him," said Ty Meyer, Production Ag Manager for the SCD.

Travis has purchased a Caterpillar Challenger MT865C and the SCD will contract with him to pull the SCD owned Cross Slot drill. "I felt very strongly that we go a different way with the tractor for a few reasons one of which was to save the producer money on fuel. The Challenger will save producers up to 20% in fuel costs and does not require the use of DEF liquid or Urea to meet emissions requirements and should further reduce the amount of compaction done by the tractor with the large tracks and wide stance" said Travis.

His tractor will be equipped with the latest technology in precision ag using the Raven Envisio Pro system with Slingshot to provide producers the ability view maps of the work done on their land. It will provide us the opportunity to stay in touch with Travis while in the field and to provide producers with very accurate information on product applications and acreages. In addition to the precision ag equipment on the tractor, Travis will be pulling a new Cross Slot drill currently being built by AgPro Manufacturing in Lewiston, ID. The drill is being updated to a 30 ft. drill and has additional seed and fertilizer capacity and will utilize the original Cross Slot designed toolbar system.

The SCD drill has been used on everything from no-till fallow and one-pass CRP in the dry regions of Ritzville, Lind, and Washtucna, to very high residue crop seedings in the high rainfall regions of South Spokane County and Northern Idaho. The new program structure will keep the drill in operations for more hours per season and keep pushing the boundaries of what no-till can accomplish.

For more information on the program and to inquire about having Travis (Twill Custom No-Till) and the SCD drill do some work for you, please contact Travis Willson at 509-330-0536 or Ty Meyer at 509-995-1220.

At right: Travis Willson, Twill Custom No-till, and his Caterpillar Challenger MT865C.





Backyard Conservation Stewardship Program Wednesdays in March

The Backyard Conservation Stewardship Program (BCSP) is back by popular demand! Sign up today at www.sccd.org/education.html. Advance registration is required and registration will not be available at the door. The cost is \$25 per person, and a limited number of scholarships are available for Veterans.

The BCSP will be held at the SCD, 210 N Havana, Spokane, WA 99202, every Wednesday in March from 5:30pm-8pm.

This program will feature tips for landscaping with native plants, xeriscaping, soil health, permaculture, trees, organic gardening, composting, attracting pollinators, landscaping for wildlife and more! Training is provided by local experts from several organizations.

For more information and to sign up, visit www.sccd.org/education or contact Stacey Selcho, stacey-selcho@sccd.org.



Irrigation Efficiency Program

The pursuit of irrigation efficiency should be the highest priority for all public and private facilities responsible for irrigated areas. This program provides funding to evaluate current use and improve the efficiency in public irrigation facilities. It focuses on irrigation systems of schools, cemeteries, golf courses, parks, etc. The program offers professional irrigation audits, new and upgraded irrigation designs, retrofit designs, high efficiency controllers, and outreach/awareness to all residents. The program also includes cost-share for construction and materials. To date, two locations have participated in the program with the purpose of improving public systems and showcasing the water savings to the Hangman Watershed community. One of these projects was at Freeman High School.

Freeman High School Football Field: 2.25 Acres:



- Audited existing irrigation system to identify problem areas
- Provided design for new, efficient system
- Installed more than 2,200' of new piping, 46 pop-up heads, and valves with pressure regulators
- Educated operators in proper scheduling for the field considering environmental factors

- Project saves 51,525 gallons per week during the watering season; 200,000+ gallons of water saved per year!
- Total Project Cost: \$11,000

Additional funding for irrigation efficiency projects is available in the Hangman Watershed. Contact Lindsay Chutas for more information at lindsay-chutas@sccd.org or 509-535-7274.

SPOKANE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Gerald (Jerry) Scheele, Board Chair

Randy James, Board Vice-Chair

Jaki Shrauger, Board Auditor

Tom Miller, Board Member

Mary Sullivan, Board Member

The Spokane Conservation District is located on the southwest corner of the Spokane Fairgrounds at: 210 North Havana Street, Spokane, WA 99202

Our office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00-4:30pm. 509-535-7274 | info@sccd.org

All SCD programs and services are offered without discrimination.

FROM THE
GROUNDUP