



SCD Spring 2014 Newsletter

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Spokane Conservation District

509.535.7274 | info@sccd.org

Financial Assistance for Septic Systems

On May 1, the Spokane Conservation District (SCD) will begin implementing the On-site Septic System (OSS) Assistance Program to provide financial aid for correcting failing septic systems and connections to sewer. The program is made possible through a Washington State Department of Ecology Loan and Grant. The OSS Assistance Program offers low-interest loans (3.6% to 5.6%) and grants to all eligible property owners in Spokane County (residential and small commercial).

The focus of the program is to protect both ground and surface water from failing septic systems. Eligible applicants must own the residence and provide documentation from the Spokane Regional Health District that their system is failing. The program cannot be utilized to install new septic systems for homes. In addition, the funding can assist property owners who must connect to the County Sewer System. Eligibility will be based upon household income.

If you would like to receive more information regarding this program, or to get your name on the waiting list, please contact Walt Edelen or Rick Noll at the SCD today (509) 535-7274. More information will be available on the SCD website in late-April. www.sccd.org.

Climate Change & Horse Keeping Conference: April 25 from 8:00am-3pm

Join your friends and neighbors along with the Spokane Conservation District (SCD) for a satellite viewing of "Climate Change and Horse Keeping – Managing the Uncertainty".

King Conservation District (KCD) and Alayne Blicke of Horses for Clean Water have put together a fantastic conference intended to help landowners "future-proof" their animals and grazing crops. During this live-stream presentation, experts will discuss potential impacts of climate change on the Pacific Northwest environment and agricultural community, and how these impacts can be managed for land and horses.

SCD will hold a live-stream, satellite conference with local experts on hand in addition to the programming KCD will present.



Date: April 25th
Time: Registration 8:00 am – 8:30 am
Presentation 8:30 am – 3:00 pm
Location: Enduris Washington Building
1610 S. Technology Blvd., Airway Heights, 99204
Cost: \$15 - Please pay at the door.
Lunch, coffee, and beverages will be provided.
RSVP: Before April 24

For any questions or to **RSVP** your attendance to our satellite conference, please contact Charlie Peterson at charlie-peterson@sccd.org or 509-535-7274.

FROM THE GROUND UP



SCD Election Results

Incumbent supervisor, Randy James, was automatically re-elected on March 11, 2014. By reason of being the only person filing for the position by the filing deadline (February 11, 2014), the March 11, 2014 election was cancelled and incumbent Randy James was automatically re-elected to serve a 3-year term as SCD Supervisor. No poll site, absentee balloting or mail balloting was performed pursuant to WAC 135-110-370.

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



Five Years of Aquatic Vegetation Management on Eloika Lake

Eloika Lake is an approximately 660 acre, relatively shallow, lake located in northeast Spokane County. Known for its year-round sport fishery and recreational opportunities, Eloika's water quality has been impacted over the years by eutrophication, caused in part by a variety of the land uses around the lake. Eutrophication is what occurs when excess nutrients like nitrates and phosphates are carried into the lake through soil erosion, leaking septic systems and fertilization of adjacent fields and lawns. The nutrients can cause excessive aquatic plant growth and sedimentation. The SCD, in partnership with the Eloika Lake Association (ELA), began working to address these concerns in 1990 with the first Centennial Clean Water Fund Program grant the District had received. Much has been accomplished since then, leading to the development of an Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan (IAVMP) in 2009. Development of the plan was supported by funding from a Washington Department of Ecology Aquatic Weed Management Fund (AWMF) grant. The primary goal of this project has been to restore the beneficial uses of the lake and return the system to a more natural balance.



Historic and recent plant composition surveys documented the presence of five invasive plant species: Eurasian Water-milfoil, Curly-leafed Pondweed, Yellow Flag Iris, Reed canary-grass and Purple Loosestrife. Through the IAVMP process, Eurasian Water-milfoil control was designated as the highest priority. In 2010, implementation of the IAVMP began with the first herbicide treatment on a 60+ acre infestation of Eurasian Water-milfoil (EWM), again supported by an AWMF grant and matching funds from the ELA.

With the help of hundreds of volunteer hours and various funding sources, the EWM infestation was reduced to less than 10 acres within three years! The current funding from the AWMF will expire in 2015 after one more season of EWM treatment around the lake in 2014. While the efforts over the last five years are considered to be a great success, there is much yet that needs to be done in the area of implementing long-term management strategies. Continued implementation efforts will help to maintain a homeostasis of invasive species suppression and ensure impairment-free beneficial uses for future generations.



Soil Testing Season



The SCD now offers two options for soil tests: Basic Lawn and Garden, \$30 per sample, and Small Farms, \$35 per sample. The basic test includes pH, potassium, phosphorus, nitrogen and organic matter. The Small Farms test is appropriate for 5-25 acre farms and includes everything in the basic test, plus sulfur. The SCD soil scientist, Eric Choker, returns results in two weeks or less and is available for all soils questions.

For information on how to take a soil sample, visit our website, www.sccd.org. You will also find the soil test forms and other resources related to soil health and gardening.

For more information, contact Ericchoker@sccd.org or 509-535-7274 ext 219.

Seven Years of Success with Seedlings

Gunlis Alaintalo and Brown MacKenzie started buying seedlings from the SCD Annual Tree and Shrub Sale seven years ago. At the time, they had just purchased a classic farm house with a barren backyard containing two dying elms and two rhubarb plants. They might have had more wildlife at their Seattle condo!

After seven years of buying from the SCD Tree Sale, Gunlis and Brown are enjoying the improved scenery and wildlife. Now they regularly spot owls, birds, raccoons, deer and a variety of birds.

“You get started just diggin in the soil, but then you get addicted!” said Gunlis, “You want more and more!”

Brown and Gunlis describe their journey to a better backyard as a joy. If you also see the joy of gardening with help from our seedling sale, send your story to treesale@sccd.org and you might see your story here or on Facebook!

Photos from 2008 and 2013 show the progress and beautiful fall color.



2014 Annual Seedling Sale Recap



It was another successful year for the SCD Annual Tree Sale. There were almost 550 pre-order customers and even more customers participated in the Surplus Sale during the Pick Up Days, April 4 and 5. More than half of the pre-order customers used our new online ordering system.

From pre-order customers alone, 53,000 trees and shrubs will be planted in the region. That's a lot of carbon

sequestration, animal habitat, shade, lumber, Christmas trees, and tasty berries and nuts! Thanks to our loyal customers and new customers for making this conservation opportunity a success. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding the tree sale, please let us know by emailing treesale@sccd.org.



Firewise Communities Workshop, May 29-30

The SCD is hosting a FREE Firewise Communities Workshop May 29-30 at the Quality Inn Valley Suites in Spokane Valley, WA. The workshop is designed for several groups of people such as landowners, homeowner's association officers, landscape architects, emergency managers, planners, small forest landowners, fire professionals, developers and more.

Attendees will learn about the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, the recent history of the Valley View Fire, an introduction to fire behavior, creating defensible space, and, resources for funding and expertise.

There is no cost to register, but space is limited and pre-registration is required. The first 20 registrants will receive free lodging at the Quality Inn Valley Suites. All attendees receive lunch both days, a t-shirt and class materials.

Visit www.sccd.org to register today.



Funding to Improve your Irrigation

The irrigation efficiency program is back and expanded for 2014. This program provides funding to evaluate current use and improve the efficiency in public irrigation facilities, such as school systems, cemeteries and parks. The SCD has grant funding to offer professional irrigation audits for existing systems, create new and upgraded irrigation designs, and provide high efficiency controllers for systems throughout the Hangman Creek Watershed. Funding is available!



Our most recent project was at City of Tekoa's park, Gymkana Grounds. The 1.1 acre grounds were previously watered by hand which was very inefficient in both staff time and water use. The SCD installed a Rainbird smart weather station controller, over 1,700 feet of new irrigation pipe, valves and 41 pop-up heads. The system is now automatic and requires significantly less staff time to maintain. The water savings will be calculated at the end of the 2014 water year, but are expected to be significant.

We are looking for a few more projects for this summer. If you have a public irrigation system that you think could use some upgrades or a new smart controller that will help you save water and energy, or if you are still watering your grass and trees by hand, give us a call. We can help save you time, energy and water. If you are unsure if an irrigation improvement is for you, schedule a free audit. Contact Lindsay Chutas for more information at lindsay-chutas@sccd.org or 509-535-7274 ext. 236.

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