



from the GROUND up

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Our favorite annual volunteer event turns seven years old!



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A new friendly face in the front office at SCD



Vets on the Farm

The Learning Farm is now a reality and will produce crops this summer.



New funding for Greater Spokane River Watershed

The Spokane Conservation District (SCD) and its many partners secured \$7.7 million from the National RCPP program to help fund various conservation efforts across nearly 4 million acres between Washington State and Idaho. The partners are matching the USDA contribution which brings the total funds to be implemented for conservation to \$15.4 million. The projects will utilize the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs such as EQIP, CSP and others to focus improvements in water quality, soil health, habitat, and to benefit working agricultural and forested lands. Agricultural producers can participate in practices including direct seeding, mulch-till, riparian plantings and buffers, grass filter strips and more. Landowners can also qualify for lease payments for agricultural and forested easements.

The first program sign-up is scheduled for the fall of 2016. The project aims to implement approximately 150,000 acres of conservation and work with over 300 producers over the next five years. This project will introduce a new practice called the "Commodity Buffer". This is a variable-size buffer that will protect water quality, but will compensate the landowner for the loss of land placed under the program at the same value of the adjacent upland crop. The fully implemented project will help prevent approximately 600,000 tons of soil erosion throughout the Spokane River Basin. Water quality monitoring will be a critical component to the upcoming project.

Currently, the SCD has completed the draft contract with the NRCS and will soon begin to work with the partners to develop the program descriptions, requirements, and eligible practices. If you are a producer and would like to help review and provide input to this process, please contact the RCPP Coordinator, Charlie Peterson at 509-535-7274 or by email at charlie-peterson@sccd.org.



Learning Farm for Vets

Vets on the Farm builds farm with crowd-sourced loan funding

Thanks to the Emtman Bros. Farms, SCD will have a formal place to host hands on educational activities: The Vets on the Farm Learning Farm. The historic groundbreaking for this project began with a volunteer clean up day on Saturday, April 23 at the property on Ellis Road, off of the Old Palouse Highway. A crew of 30+ able bodied volunteers tore down and salvaged an existing barn, cleared trees and other natural debris, and cleaned out other existing outbuildings.

The next phase of projects for the Learning Farm will be installation of fencing and greenhouses, planting row crops, and planning for on-farm sales. Produce will be sold to local wholesalers.

SCD Director Vicki Carter's dream of helping Veterans in the Spokane region has quickly evolved into a reality with immense support from community businesses and other agencies. In its first year, Vets on the Farm offered several educational opportunities through Spokane Community College and WSU Extension Cultivating Success program. Scholarships were provided by Northwest Farm Credit Services. Education is the foundation of the Vets on the Farm program; it's essential that the next generations of farmers are trained and ready for their new mission.

The creation of the Learning Farm represents the beginning of a new era for Veterans in the Spokane region. They now have a place to gather and find a new future in farming.

Weed Alert: Rosette Stage



Have you noticed Rosettes on your property? This is your friendly WEED ALERT! The rosette season is upon us. Rosette is the beginning stage of weed development. Root development, storing energy, and the greatest level of vulnerability occur at this stage. Because they begin early spring, a plan should be made to use multiple methods for eradication. Act fast because weeds grow quickly, and get harder to remove the longer they have to establish. Check out the five common noxious weeds on our Weed Alert Quick Reference website and see the Spotted Knapweed info here:

Community Tree Management Institute

The Community Tree Management Institute (CTMI) is an intensive training and professional development course specifically tailored to the needs of those who have tree related responsibilities in their communities. Coursework covers technical, managerial, and administrative aspects of managing trees in cities. The purpose of CTMI is to provide participants with the information, skills, and leadership training to carry out their tree-related responsibilities more effectively.

CTMI consists of three retreat-style sessions according to the following schedule:

SESSION 1: Focus is on 'Community', Sept 12-14, 2016, Alderbrook Resort, Union, WA

SESSION 2: Focus is on 'Trees', Oct 11-13, 2016, Vancouver Hilton, Vancouver, WA

SESSION 3: Focus is on 'Management', Nov 8-10, 2016, Oregon Garden Resort, Silverton, OR

CTMI is appropriate for anyone who coordinates community forestry issues, reviews tree plans, issues permits, or inspects trees in urban and community forests. Participants come from the ranks of city planners, park management staff, public works employees, tree board staff, horticulturalists, campus arborists, and other similar job classifications.

For more information, or to register, please visit <https://ctmi-2016.eventbrite.com>

Meet Josie Bjordahl



New Administrative Assistant

Josie Bjordahl brings 25 years of experience in billing from Deaconess Hospital to her new Administrative Assistant position at SCD.

Josie is taking over duties from several existing staff members to allow for several new programs to come online: Voluntary Stewardship Program, Spokane River Watershed Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), and increased Vets on the Farm activity.

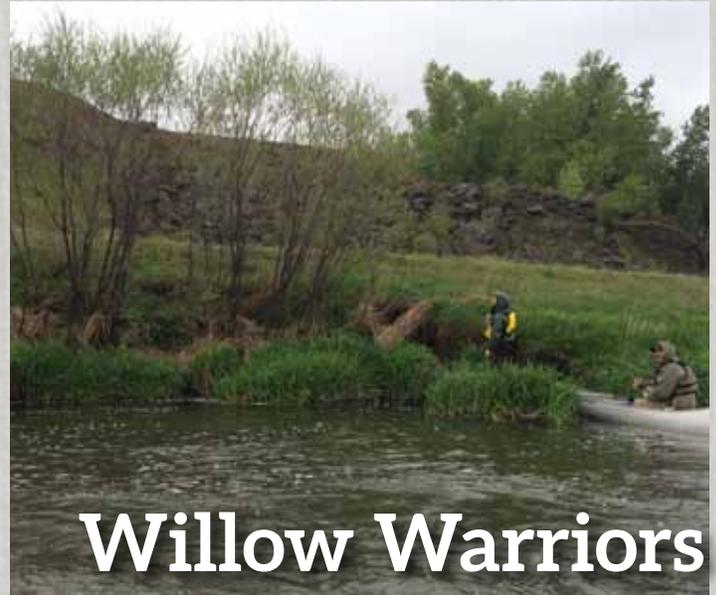
She is already impressing the staff with her efficiency, and ability to learn new assignments. But when she's not on the clock, Josie enjoys power walking, boating with her husband, and spoiling her grandkids and doggie. SCD staff also enjoy hearing stories from her upbringing in Germany.

Spotted Knapweed: Rosette is hairy and rough with a somewhat wooly appearance with deeply lobed leaves radiating from a common point.

Timing: March- May, August-October. Rosettes are formed the first year and appear in early spring and later fall

Mechanical: For small areas, hand pulling can be effective. After taproot is established or large areas, chemical methods are most effective for eradication. **Caution:** Chemicals found in Knapweed fibers are possibly carcinogenic, wear thick gloves before pulling.





Willow Warriors

First Willows are 20' Tall After Seven Years of Volunteer Event

Every spring since 2009, volunteers and SCD staff have been hopping into canoes loaded with willow cuttings. Then they float along degraded sections of Hangman (Latah) Creek, stopping frequently to plant these willows in the areas where the most extreme erosion is occurring. Volunteers have planted more than 20,000 mixed species of willow cuttings along two degraded reaches of the creek over the seven years since the first event was held. Many of the same volunteers return to participate in the event annually and it is encouraging for them to see a large portion of the prior year's plantings beginning to establish along these reaches. This year more than 3,000 additional willow cuttings were planted along the creek.

To be part of the planting team next year or hear about other volunteer events, contact Dan Ross at 509-535-7274 ext. 229 or email dan-ross@sccd.org. *Above left: Sometimes you have to improvise when you are one paddle short! Above right: seven years later, the first willows planted in this event are still looking great and are 20' tall!*

Tree School One Day Workshop: Physics

Join us on Monday, June 27 for a one-day intensive Tree School workshop taught by Brian Kane, Massachusetts Arborists Association and Professor at the University of Massachusetts. Arborists use physics every day they work in the trees. When pruning, cabling, rigging, and doing tree risk assessments, understanding some basic physics will help you work more safely and communicate to clients and co-workers why a particular pruning, rigging, or cabling technique might be safer or more effective at reducing the likelihood of tree failure. This workshop will cover some basic physics concepts and show how the concepts are related to different aspects of arboricultural practice.

Find the full agenda at www.SpokaneConservation.org and register soon! Pre-registration is required and scholarships for Veterans and Military Members are available.

