

Columbia Conservation District

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Board Chair: David Carlton



State Legislative District #16
Congressional District #5

Feature 2013 Accomplishment:

pH/Soil Nutrient Management



Top: WSU graduate students taking soil samples in direct seed winter wheat.
Bottom: Student taking soil sample in spring wheat

Resource Challenge: Soil acidity is gradually increasing in the upper soil profile (specifically in the top six inches) as a result of ammonia type nitrogen applications. This gradual reduction of soil pH is not new but has been exacerbated with the reduced tillage practices. Although no-till and direct seed best management practices (BMPs) substantially reduce surface and rill erosion, the concern is to what degree does this also reduce the mixing of deeper soils with shallow soils that may lead producers to increase tillage methods to minimize reduced pH effects ensuring production levels. Additional tillage increases potential soil erosion and water quality degradation.

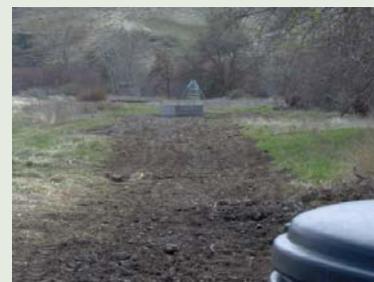
Project Summary and Results: The project goal is to demonstrate that acidification associated with no-till/direct seed can be managed with monitoring and nutrient management. Implementation of this three-year cost-share program with incentives for producers to implement

intensive soil testing and apply practices and strategies to manage nutrient balances should enable the continued usage of no-till/direct seed practices. This project provided seasonal work for three graduate students (0.11 FTE) and contracted with two separate soil labs to perform 86 sample analysis (76 sites plus 10 controls) involving 35 producers.

Key Project Partners: Private landowners; WA State Conservation Commission; and Washington State University Extension.

Other Accomplishments

Tucannon Off-Set Dike Auxiliary Project Installation



The district installed five off-site livestock watering systems to reduce impacts along 3.2 mile section of the Tucannon River.



Setting the wet well



Solar power used to pump water to troughs.

More Work to Do!

- Develop producer leadership to address current political economic issues in Production Ag and natural resources.
- Implement priority habitat projects to meet the 17 percent gap for Endangered Species Act recovery in the Tucannon River Basin.
- Technical and cost-share assistance to landowners addressing restoration projects identified in the district's annual and long-range plans.
- Secure funding for project implementation.