

Foster Creek Conservation District

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Board Chair: Josh Koempel



State Legislative District #12
Congressional District #4

Feature 2013 Accomplishment:

Wildfire Restoration Cost-Share Program



Resource Challenge: The Barker Canyon complex fires—started by a thunderstorm on September 8, 2012—burned over 78,000 acres of private lands in Northern Douglas County. Resulting resource challenges included erosion control issues and loss of pasture, livestock, 565 miles of fencing, sage grouse nesting sites, and over 90,000 bio-control agents (bugs). The cost of the fire was an estimated \$2,290,268. The fire damage suffered by private landowners did not qualify for Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program assistance, and



the Emergency Conservation Program was not readily available.

Project Summary and Results: With monies secured from the Washington State Conservation Commission, we organized a cost-share program for the private landowners affected by the wildfires. The two focus areas for restoration efforts included cost-share for grass seed for fire line restoration and a weed control program on the fire area.

Fall 2012—approx. 28.5 acres of fire line was seeded. Landowners contributed approx. \$1,600 to the effort, and the Foster Creek Conservation District (FCCD) cost-share program contributed approx. \$4,700.

Spring 2013—both ground and aerial herbicide was applied to approx. 2,503 acres in order to control weeds. The landowners invested \$11,855.15 to the project, and FCCD cost-share program contributed \$35,565.46.

May/June 2013—approx. 73,000 bio-control agents (bugs) were released on approx. 32,200 acres in the burned area to control invasive species. Private landowner's contributed \$11,285.63 to the project, and FCCD cost-share program contributed \$33,856.88.

As a result of this project, 17 farms were given cost-share assistance for fire restoration efforts.

Key Project Partners: Douglas County private landowners and the WA State Conservation Commission.

More Work to Do!

- Finalize negotiations of the Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan with USFWS for 17 threatened, endangered, and/or species of concern on no-federal agricultural lands.
- Continue to implement invasive weed species control on approximately 25 properties in Douglas County.
- Continue implementing the watershed action plan for approx. 1.3 million acres in WRIA's 44 and 50.
- Participate in the Regional Envirothon for fifty area high school students.
- Continue Wheat Week education for 350 students.

Other Accomplishments

- In Douglas County, 345 conservation plans were developed, resulting in approx. 65,000 acres being enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). 
- An additional 65 conservation plans were developed (11,000 acres) and enrolled in the SAFE (State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement) initiative for sage-grouse.
- In a working relationship with the Bureau of Land Management FCCD  addressed several stresses on Douglas Creek riparian function. This included removing erosive flow from the Douglas Creek Road and the establishment of willow cuttings that will provide cover in the stabilized bank section. Douglas Creek is a perennial stream tributary to the Columbia River supporting rainbow trout and potentially redband trout.
- Installation of a permanent erosion control structure in the Wells Wildlife Area of West Foster Creek was completed. The purpose of this structure is to reduce the advancement of a headcut that was threatening to drain a 10-acre wetland meadow on West Foster Creek and impair downstream water quality and availability for anadromous fish.