



# Conservation in Washington: Powered by People



## MAKING AN IMPACT:

- *Four landowners with contiguous property along Lincoln Creek installed riparian buffers.*
- *59.6 acres of riparian buffer planted along Lincoln Creek and two tributaries.*
- *Buffer lengths totaled about 2.4 miles along Lincoln Creek and 1.9 miles along the 2 tributaries.*

## LEWIS COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT - LANDOWNERS REESTABLISH VEGETATION ALONG LINCOLN CREEK

Over the years, land managers have cut most of the trees and shrubs out of segments of Lincoln Creek. This is a large-scale concern for water quality in the basin. Lewis County Conservation District began working with landowners in early 2000 to restore vegetation on the banks of the creek as part of an on-going restoration effort.

**FINDING A COMMON PATH** The solution was to get landowners to sign up for Washington State’s Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC), CREP offers landowners financial incentives for restoring and protecting riparian habitat (areas in and around rivers and streams) on their property. From 2002 to 2013, Lewis County Conservation District had four landowners with contiguous property sign up for CREP, which allowed the District to replant riparian buffers (vegetated borders along streams) from 35 feet to 180 feet wide.

**RESULTS ON THE GROUND** A total of 59.6 acres of riparian buffer were planted along Lincoln Creek and two tributaries. The lengths totaled approximately 2.4 miles along Lincoln Creek and 1.9 miles along the 2 tributaries. The trees and shrubs have not all been established at this time, and the District will require funding to monitor the site for water quality improvements. However, the accomplishments of the District and landowners will keep domestic livestock out of the streams. And, the buffers are essential for utilizing any nutrients and trapping sediment that may runoff during normal agriculture activities. The ability to be flexible with the widths of these buffers made this a success. The landowners had areas where they were not willing to plant 180 foot buffers. Reasons included proximity of the stream to the county road and buildings. In addition, flexible buffers allow for straight fields along the meandering streams. Being able to implement down to 35 feet kept these buffers contiguous with the four separate landowners.

“Without the ability to plant riparian zones from 35 to 180 feet in CREP, these restoration projects would not have been as successful,” said Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District Manager. “We would have had to stop and restart in segments and contiguous buffers would not have been planted.”

Property before (left) and after CREP buffer was planted (right)

