



State Legislative District #9
Congressional District #5

Palouse Rock Lake Conservation District

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Board Chair: Clinton O’Keefe

Other Accomplishments



Solar powered all-season piston pump for livestock off-site system



Ongoing direct seed education with Precision Spray Day



Cover crop demonstration program to create rotations to improve soil health

2014 Feature Accomplishment: Riparian poison hemlock weed control using biological methods

RESOURCE CHALLENGE One of the biggest challenges to overcome in adoption of riparian forest buffer programs is how to plant trees without having weed problems. Mowing weeds and using herbicides for control of poison hemlock have advantages and disadvantages. Herbicides can drift and may damage growing trees and shrubs, and steep slopes limit mowing. The challenge is to keep the riparian areas free of hemlock, which encourages greater riparian participation.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

By using multiple methods to control poison hemlock, Palouse Rock Lake Conservation District is improving adoption of riparian programs by landowners. Mowing cannot be used on steep slopes, and using herbicides has the potential to damage trees. Hemlock moth larva greatly improved weed control. The hemlock moth larva is safely used along the rivers while still not damaging trees. The district used this biological control to reduce poison hemlock within city limits of St. John along Pleasant Valley Creek. Roger Bly with the City said, “The success of the Poison Hemlock Biological Control Project allowed the reduction of the weed without the need for herbicides.”



Top: Poison hemlock along Cottonwood Creek prior to releasing the hemlock moth larva. Bottom: Poison hemlock stems after introduction of the hemlock moth larva.

KEY PARTNERS: Whitman County Weed Board; Washington State Department of Ecology Americorp Crews; Palouse Rock Lake Cooperators; City of St. John; and Washington State Department of Ecology.

More Work to Do!

- Utilize the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) to increase conservation projects
- Increase adoption of direct seed systems
- Continue soil health cover crop demonstrations
- Distribute the “Crawl-Walk-Run” riparian video found on You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8LKUo9Yce>