

Stevens County Conservation District

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State Legislative District #7
Congressional District #5

2015 Feature Accomplishment: Empowering youth through natural resources education

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Southern Stevens County is becoming more suburban with rapid development. There's a need to educate new and long-time residents about water quality issues in Lake Spokane, where phosphorous levels and algal blooms are becoming a concern, but the sources are not easily identifiable. Stevens County Conservation District hosted a couple of workshops on best management practices to protect water quality (including composting and management of pet wastes), but — due to low public attendance — the district recognized we needed to try a different strategy to reach local residents and empower them to help protect and improve water quality.



Jennifer Hickenbottom of the Colville National Forest uses a stream table to explain channel forming processes during a sophomore field day.



Lakeside High School 6th and 7th graders learn that pollution can cause a river to burn while the beavers look on.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS Our district water quality coordinator worked with teacher Terri Sardinia and her Advanced Biology class at Lakeside High School to promote natural resource education in the community. The students received instruction from various agency and environmental group professionals. In turn, they used the information they learned to develop lesson plans and activities that they presented to lower grades. This information also likely reached parents and filtered into the community. Topics included forestry, aquatic insects, groundwater, nonpoint source pollution, streamside vegetation, and beavers' role in water storage.

KEY PARTNERS: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Colville National Forest; Washington Department of Ecology; Lands Council; Washington Department of Natural Resources; North East Tri-County Health

Other Accomplishments



Co-sponsored 12th Annual Big Tree Contest, where youth learn about and raise seedling trees. Event included the Biggest and Best Auction, which raises funds for youth organizations.



Hosted the Washington State Forestry Contest – 1st place team Mount Baker High School pictured above with 7th District Representative Shelley Short and County Commissioner Don Dashiell.



Landowner tour after 2015 fires to help identify salvage logging needs for partially burnt trees.

More Work to Do!

- Use a Department of Ecology grant to partner with the USGS for further study and identification of sources of phosphorous in Lake Spokane.
- Assist landowners in the restoration of natural resources and productive ground after 2015 wildfires and wind storm.
- Continue support and development of the Upper Columbia Children's Forest Youth Natural Resources Education and Outreach Program in an effort to get kids outdoors.