

Foster Creek Conservation District

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Board Chair: John McLean



State Legislative District #12
Congressional District #4

2016 Feature Accomplishment

Direct Seed Program improves agricultural management practices



Wheat

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Foster Creek Conservation District (FCCD) received a water quality grant from the Washington Department of Ecology to implement a Direct Seed Program. Direct seed refers to a tillage system that allows farmers to fertilize and plant fields in one pass. This limits soil disturbance and retains residue from previous crops, resulting in reduced water and wind erosion. The FCCD Direct Seed Program provides cost-share assistance to dryland producers in Douglas County and adjoining counties, enabling them to either rent direct seed equipment or have their parcel custom seeded. After signing up for the program, which runs 2016-18, 12 producers have started direct seeding on over 2,500 acres.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

A second water quality grant from Ecology, confirmed for 2017-19, will increase the number of direct seed operators in the program from 12 to 24 participants. Each program includes a water quality monitoring component and a cost/benefit analysis report for participating producers. FCCD will introduce a soil testing and monitoring component with the second grant that enables the district and producers to see any changes in the soil relating to direct seed. Multiple intended benefits include reduced soil loss, improved water quality, improved soil health, and reduced fuel and labor costs.



Sagebrush bluebells,
Mertensia oblongifolia

KEY PARTNERS:

Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association

Other Accomplishments

Foster Creek Conservation District is coordinating the Douglas County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) workgroup:

- VSP is a voluntary, incentive-based program representing an alternative approach for counties to meet state Growth Management Act requirements.
- VSP uses a watershed-based process to protect five types of critical habitat areas, including fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, wetlands, frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, and critical aquifer recharge areas used for potable water.
- FCCD is developing a workgroup to establish the goals and benchmarks towards VSP implementation within Douglas County.

More work to do!

- Biological weed control
- "Farmed Smart" certifications
- Voluntary natural resources conservation plans