



OKANOGAN CONSERVATION DISTRICT

District Manager: Craig Nelson Board Chair: Ivan Oberg
1251 South 2nd Avenue, Rm 102 Okanogan, WA 98840
(509) 422-0855 x110 | ocd@okanogancd.org | www.okanogancd.org
Legislative District: 7, 12 Congressional District: 4

Other accomplishments:



Soil health cover crops help to conserve soil while protecting limited soil moisture for the cash crop. Photo by Leslie Michel



Chilwist community members discuss evacuation routes and placement of firefighting resources at their annual Firewise meeting. Photo by Kirsten Cook



Attendees discuss fire recovery at the 2016 Coordinated Resource Management executive task force tour in the Methow Valley. Photo by Allisa Carlson

2017 FEATURE ACCOMPLISHMENT

FACILITATING WILDFIRE RECOVERY AND RESTORATION

Resource challenge

The Carlton Complex fire burned 85 percent of the Benson Creek watershed in July 2014. That August, a 10-year storm event caused a 1000-year flood event. The flood breached two of five dams, deposited thousands of tons of sediment on farms, and destroyed roads, driveways, and irrigation systems. As the sole non-regulatory agency dealing with fire recovery in the area, Okanogan Conservation District helped facilitate landowner and agency meetings and the planning for recovery.



Failed spillway, following 2014 flash flood. Photo by Bob Clark

Project summary and results

Okanogan Conservation District staff facilitated meetings between irrigation users, residents, and agency partners. After months of perseverance and negotiation, partners secured the funding and commitments needed to repair the earthen dam, emergency spillway, and irrigation settling pond of the largest reservoir. The conservation district provided nearly \$400,000 in fire recovery funds, matched by over \$150,000 from the Community Foundation of North Central Washington. The project restored irrigation to 160 acres of agricultural land and many acres of residential land. Future projects are planned to improve water quality in Benson Creek.



Spillway finishing touches following dam reconstruction. Photo by Kyle McGovern

Key partners: Benson Creek Water Users Association; Washington State Conservation Commission; Community Foundation of North Central Washington; Okanogan County Long Term Recovery Group; Washington Department of Ecology; Farm Service Agency; Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife; Methow Conservancy; and most importantly seven private landowners

MORE WORK TO DO

- ▶ Engage with development and implementation of the Voluntary Stewardship Program.
- ▶ Implement water quality conservation projects in priority areas.
- ▶ Collaborate with cooperators on wildlife habitat conservation programs.