



# Okanogan Conservation District

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Legislative District: 7, 12 Congressional District: 4

## Other Accomplishments

- ▶ We provide conservation planning and cost share for the Working For Wildlife program. Our goals are to help landowners conserve critical habitat for sharp-tailed grouse, mule deer, and lynx in an important migratory corridor.
- ▶ We provided technical assistance and cost share to more than 50 property owners to improve their home and properties' fire resilience through Firewise-like programs.
- ▶ We continue to support the natural resource education of K-12 students through classroom and field-based learning, including the award-winning Ecology of the Okanogan program.

### 2018 FEATURE ACCOMPLISHMENT

## Cover Cropping in Dryland Winter Wheat

### Resource Challenge

Producers in Washington are increasingly interested in cover crops and soil health to meet long-term production goals. A four-year study was initiated in 2015 at 16 direct-seeded sites to determine feasibility and effects of cover crops in large, on-farm trials in low-rainfall, wheat-fallow production systems. The main objectives were to determine water usage by cover crops, season and species mixtures, effect on winter wheat crop and soil properties, and educate producers on cover crops and soil health.

### Project Summary and Results

The project demonstrated feasibility and impacts of cover crops during fallow and the possibility of diversification to wheat-fallow rotation. Producers have a better understanding of species and timing that work in the region and effects on moisture and yield. Through this project Okanogan Conservation District hosted seven field days and presented at 27 events on soil health. Approximately 2,000 producers and agricultural service providers were educated on soil health and cover crops. Additional funding was received to work with farmers with cover crops and grazing. Producers continue to express interest in cover crops.

### Key Partners

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Meter Group; SoilTest Farm Consultants, Inc.; Washington State University



Cover crop providing soil erosion protection before termination to protect water availability for the cash crop. Photo by Leslie Michel



District staff, Rachel McClure and Chelsea Trout, take soil samples to measure soil biodiversity in project area. Photo by Leslie Michel

## Priorities for 2019...

- ▶ Provide technical assistance to 10 livestock producers.
- ▶ Implement soil erosion practices on 10 landowner properties affected by flooding.
- ▶ Provide natural resource conservation education to 1,000 K-12 students.