



Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District

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Legislative District: 9 Congressional District: 5

Other Accomplishments

- ▶ Assisted the Washington Department of Ecology with electro-fishing in the Palouse River for the Freshwater Fish Contaminant Monitoring Program to test pesticide and chemical concentrations in fish fillets for a follow up study of a 2005 monitoring effort.
- ▶ Successful Washington State Conservation Commission tour of conservation projects utilizing best management practices to improve water quality and wildlife habitat in Whitman County.
- ▶ On-site meeting with the Washington State Departments of Transportation, Ecology, and Fish and Wildlife; Whitman County Department of Planning; and the Whitman County Road Department to eliminate flooding surrounding the town of Ewan and farmland adjacent to Kamiache Creek.

2018 FEATURE ACCOMPLISHMENT

Enhancing Water Quality and Habitat on Cottonwood Creek



New native grass planted Spring 2018. Photo by James Schierman

Resource Challenge

Significant stream bank erosion has occurred on this three-quarter mile stretch of Cottonwood Creek since agriculture began in the area. This section of stream requires a full buffer of woody vegetation for streambank stabilization and erosion control. Cottonwood Creek is a fish-bearing stream that connects to Rock Creek below Rock Lake, which flows into the Palouse River. Erosion contributes to the sediment load of the Palouse River during high water events causing increased turbidity.

Project Summary and Results

This Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) project is in the implementation phase and began in spring of 2018 with the landowner seeding a successful grass stand. In spring of 2019, native trees and shrubs will be planted for streambank protection and stabilization. Four to six-foot willow poles and bundles of willow and dogwood whips will be driven into the toe of cut banks. This will reduce soil erosion entering Cottonwood Creek from both the streambank and adjacent cropland. This project will protect water quality while providing 33 acres of wildlife habitat and enhanced aquatic habitat for fish and invertebrates.



A three-quarter mile planned riparian forest buffer planted adjacent to Cottonwood Creek. Photo by James Schierman

Key Partners

USDA Farm Service Agency; Washington State Conservation Commission; Department of Ecology; Department of Fish and Wildlife

Priorities for 2019...

- ▶ Offer riparian commodity buffer cost share.
- ▶ Continue monitoring soil health and soil moisture content of cover crops with AquaSpy technology.
- ▶ Continue monitoring Kamiak Creek and Thorn Creek in paired watershed study.