



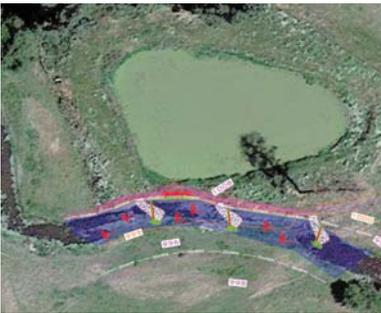
Whitman Conservation District

District Manager: Brian Bell Board Chair: Gary Luft
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Legislative District: 9 Congressional District: 5

Other Accomplishments



Provided cost share for a tractor GPS navigation system so there's more precision and efficiency when seeding and applying chemicals.



Coordinated and developed plans for a project on Union Flat Creek that will stabilize the streambank and protect a fishing pond.



The first Department of Ecology-funded buffer in Whitman Conservation District has been underway and is near completion.

Photos by Brian Bell

2018 FEATURE ACCOMPLISHMENT

Grazing Cover Crop on Traditionally Fallowed Fields

Resource Challenge

Maintaining economically viable soil on fallow fields is a tricky business. As an alternative, grazing cover crops provides many opportunities to recoup costs by increasing the soil health capital due to the cover crop itself. It defers the grazing and feeding of livestock that would otherwise occur and provides an organic source of fertilizer. Incorporating cover crops and grazers into commodity farming systems is a viable path to simultaneously increase profits and soil health.

Project Summary and Results

The Whitman Conservation District has been working with a producer who planted two experimental 40-acre cover crops in his chemical fallow field. The cover crop was grazed upon maturity and then planted with a winter wheat crop in fall. The cover crop trial performed so well that the landowner requested more funding. The District submitted a successful grant proposal to the Washington State Soil Health Committee and was able to provide assistance to a new producer with an interest in cover crop trials. The ability to provide cost share to keep these trials going is vital to changing farming practices.

Key Partners

Washington State Conservation Commission; Soil Health Committee



Left: Cover crop mixture of clover, plantain, radish, brassica, and cabbage on a field that would have been fallowed. Right: Cover crop after rotationally grazing the livestock to increase utilization. Photos by Brian Bell

Priorities for 2019...

- ▶ Provide cost share for soil electrical conductivity mapping so custom nutrient applications can be performed to reduce inputs and the potential of nonpoint source pollution.
- ▶ Continue cover crop trials and outreach among dryland wheat producers.
- ▶ Continue work under 34 contracts through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (WRIA 34).