

the CONSERVATION

VOICES

Winter 2011-12

A quarterly newsletter produced by the Foster Creek & South Douglas Conservation Districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service

Foster Creek Conservation District Water Quality Monitoring Update

By Tim Behne

Since June 30, 2010 the monitoring of our streams, lakes and wells has been reduced or put on hold until funding can be found.

No lakes were monitored in 2011. Our *Quality Assurance Project Plan* for Jameson and Grimes Lakes calls for continued monitoring every three years so no sampling is scheduled for these lakes until 2013. Jameson and Grimes lake levels continued to be recorded; this data is collected when we download our well monitors (the lakes use the same monitoring equipment as the wells).

An attempt was made to set up and

equip a voluntary monitoring program for the Rock Island Lakes but the equipment grant was not approved and this program is on hold.

We currently have seven stream flow measuring stations in Water Resource Inventory Areas 44/50: Foster Creek, West Foster, Pine Canyon, Douglas Creek, McCartney Creek, Rattlesnake Spring and Rock Island. These stations have been in operation since 2001-2002. In addition we have three more streams where we take measurements and samples: Dutch Henry Draw, Sutherland Springs and Rock Island Spring.

Our stream stations were visited

only twice in 2011, once in the spring and once in the fall. The flow logger data was collected and measurements were taken with our Hydrolab but no samples were sent in for analysis. The Hydrolab measures: Temperature, Specific Conductivity, pH, Dissolved Oxygen and percent saturation of Dissolved Oxygen, Salinity and Turbidity. The samples, when taken, are for nutrients (different forms of phosphorus and nitrogen) and fecal coliform.

A sampling for heavy metals (cadmium, lead, chloride and arsenic) is usually taken in the spring in our lakes and streams to monitor for changes in background levels. This sampling was not conducted in 2011.

We currently monitor Groundwater levels in 28 wells and two lakes (Jameson and Grimes). The well loggers are installed in the Foster Creek basin, Lower and Upper Moses Coulee including Rimrock Meadows, Badger Mountain, Chelan Hills, Chelan Springs and in the Jameson Lake area. This program began in 2003 and new wells have continued to be added since that date.

Well data is normally collected in April and October. This year we were only able to collect the spring data. These monitors can run ten years on a battery and have room for several years of data, so missing the fall download was not critical. Individual graphs of the water level over time since monitoring began in the well are usually sent to each of the well owners after the fall download; this was not done in 2011.

The Foster Creek Conservation District has submitted grant applications to the Washington Department of Ecology for continued monitoring and will continue looking for other funding sources for our monitoring programs.



Tim Behne, FCCD Water Resources Coordinator, accomplishes flow monitoring in the Foster Coulee watershed fall 2011. Also pictured is Yogi, his canine helper. Photo by Kristine Desgroseillier



Erin Kaczmarczyk is replacing long-time NRCS Resource Conservationist Mark Bareither. She is now the go-to gal for all questions relating to NRCS programs. **Welcome, Erin!**

On December 5th, 2011 the Waterville Agricultural Services Center welcomed its newest employee, Erin Kaczmarczyk. Erin was selected to fill the vacancy left by the retirement of Resource Conservationist, Mark Bareither.

Erin grew up on a Western Wash-

A New Face Around the Waterville Conservation Offices... Meet Erin!

ington family farm working side by side with her two brothers and brings to her job a life-long passion for conservation. She worked for the Department of the Navy in Spain doing natural resource work and has since moved to Eastern Washington to work for the Okanogan Conservation District and then the NRCS Ephrata Field Office.

Erin learns by doing; tackling a watershed-water quality plan, implementing state and federal conservation programs, taking on cultural resource duties, easement programs and other Farm Bill Programs along with getting up to speed with orchard pest and nutrient management as well as intensive irrigation. Erin is committed

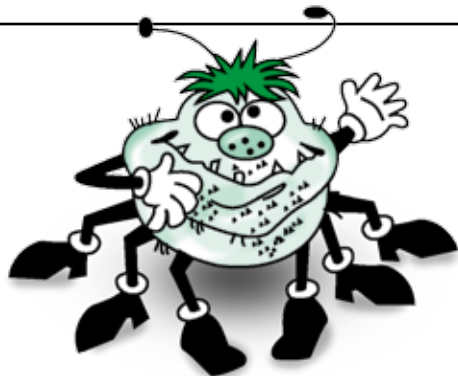
to building a rapport with producers to better serve their needs and build solid relationships.

Erin enjoys a menagerie of outdoor activities and juggles family and a commute to take on this new challenge. Her personal best for fishing is a 30 pound Chinook Salmon caught on the Columbia River (undisclosed location, you know how fisher women are). When you are in Waterville



Erin (left) proudly displays a recent catch.

please stop in and meet Erin! Working with her is so much easier than spelling her last name!



Biological Control Insects for 2012!

Bugs offered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Sign-ups also available at: Conservation Districts' Annual Meeting in Mansfield, January 25th, the South Douglas CD Annual Tree Sale in April, and a meeting will be held in Mansfield later in 2012, date to be determined-watch your mailbox for information!

To get signed up or for more information for insects to help control noxious weeds, contact:

Kristine at the District offices, (509) 754-8362 ext 3 or email: kristine-desgroseillier@fostercreek.net

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

By Michel Ruud, Farm Service Agency

The sign-up for 2010 crop losses in the SURE program has begun and runs through June 1, 2012. SURE provides benefits for farm revenue losses that occurred due to natural disaster (weather related) conditions. SURE is available to eligible producers with qualifying losses on farms with at least a 10% revenue loss on at least one crop, since Douglas County was designated under a Secretarial disaster declaration. Please contact the FSA office to sign-up, (509) 745-8561.

Raven

(Corvus corax)

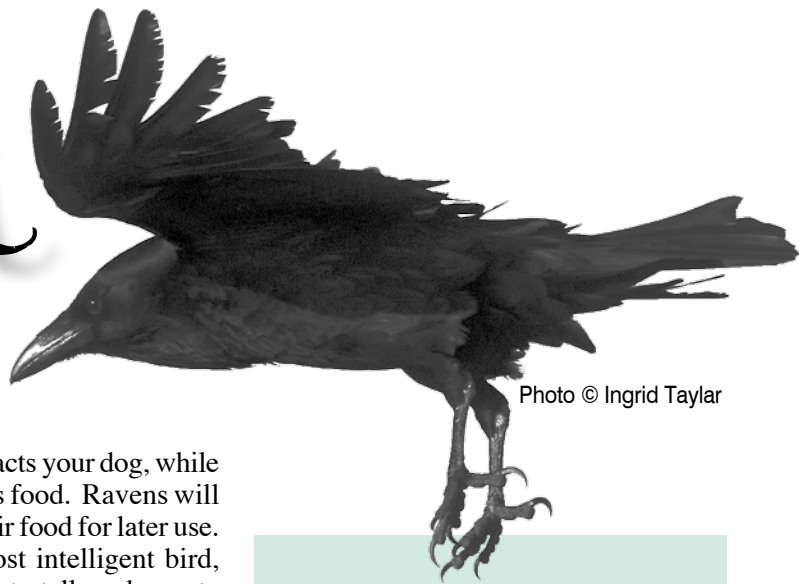


Photo © Ingrid Taylor

By Carol Cowling

The Raven is the largest bird of the crow family. Twice as heavy as the common crow, it weighs in at three pounds and has a wingspan of almost three and a half feet. Their long wings enable them to soar, tumble and roll through the air. The dark, black bird can live 40 years in the wild and up to 70 years in captivity. They are found everywhere in the northern hemisphere and adapt from deserts to mountains.

Long portrayed in literature, the Raven has been mentioned in the Bible and by William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, J.R.R. Tolkien and Edgar Allen Poe's poem, "The Raven." Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest Coast and mythology from many countries portray the Raven as both good and evil.

Ravens feed on fruits, nuts, seeds, fish, carrion, small animals, and garbage; just about anything. They often follow tractors plowing or weeding in the summer, watching for mice and gophers the farmers disturb. They sometimes act in

pairs – one raven distracts your dog, while the other one steals his food. Ravens will also hide and store their food for later use. Thought of as the most intelligent bird, they have been taught to talk and count.

Ravens mate for life, and build large bulky nests out of twigs and branches lined with moss, roots, wool and rags. They usually lay in late February, early March – average of 5 light blue to greenish blue eggs. Incubation is 18-21 days, with a sitting female and the male bringing food to the nest. The young ravens fledge at 35-42 days, are fed by both parents and stay as a family for six months. Normally seen by humans in pairs or family packs, non-breeding groups as large as 100 birds have been spotted.

If you are fascinated by ravens you may be a **corvidologist**. But if you fear ravens, you have **corvophobia**. Thought of as pests, ravens are actually beneficial to farmers. In one study a single family of ravens devoured over forty thousand pests in one nesting season. In the animal world, their natural enemies are the great horned owl and red tail hawk.

All ravens are crows, but not all crows are ravens. They differ in several ways:

Size: Ravens are the size of hawks, crows the size of pigeons.

Call: Ravens are low, harsh calls; crows are higher pitched, nasal sounding.

Tail Feathers: A Raven tail is wedge shaped; crows are fan shaped.

Habitat: While both can live together, Ravens prefer wilder areas; crows don't mind living in town.



Annual Tree and Shrub Sale coming up!

Just when all the yard work is done for the year, my thoughts start to focus on what to plant next year. The South Douglas CD sponsors the tree and shrub sale each spring and the catalogs are starting to be organized. We order from several smaller companies, trying to keep our purchases as local

as we can. Specializing in native and adapted plants, the catalog offers descriptions of evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs suitable for North Central Washington. Plants for windbreaks, wildlife habitat, native gardens, specimen trees, erosion control and good fall color are featured. Most of our plants are in one or two gallon pots, although we do have bare root and can special order if needed.

We do offer gift certificates for Christmas or other special occasions. One customer plants a tree for each grandchild

born that year. Some of our customers have ordered for years until their yard is full.

If you ordered last year, you will receive a catalog in February 2012. Our plants are pre-ordered, but we do have some available at the sale. We also have other vendors at the sale, selling vegetable and flower starts, gardening supplies and related items. Sale day is April 7.

For more information, call Carol at 745-9160.



Composting Chicken Manure

By Kristine Desgroseillier

Do you have chickens? At a loss for what to do with all the manure they produce? Fresh eggs are great, but dealing with all the manure can be a definite chore! The average sized hen can produce one square foot of manure every six months. Multiply that by the number of chickens you have and that's one big pile of manure! But don't worry, that manure can be a great asset to the home gardener!

The key to using chicken manure on home gardens is to let the manure "mature" by composting it. If you were to put the manure straight from the coop to the bed, it would most likely burn the plants and cause damage. Another good reason to compost first is that chicken manure may contain disease organisms that could contaminate your crops. Composting correctly eliminates this risk.

Having the correct Carbon to Nitrogen balance in your compost is important so the microbes are able to break down the

organic material. When combining coop bedding and chicken manure the ratio of C:N will vary depending on the type of bedding you use. As a general rule, most composters use a one part brown (hay, old leaves, sawdust) to two parts green (manure or grass clippings for example). However, since chicken manure is so high in nitrogen, you may be more successful using a 1:1 ratio or even a 2:1 ratio.

And the benefits are great: provides a great soil amendment, increases the water holding potential, and encourages beneficial organisms in the soil. It also acts as a good fertilizer by providing Potassium, Phosphorus, and Nitrogen (more so than steer, horse, or cow manure) to your garden.

There are a lot of online resources for learning more about composting; for more information on composting chicken manure check out: <http://seattletilth.org/learn/resources-1/citychickens/compostingchickenmanure>.

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS' ANNUAL MEETING

Foster Creek and South Douglas Conservation Districts Annual Meeting is January 25, 2012 at the Mansfield Grange Hall in Mansfield, WA. Speakers will talk on a variety of topics ranging from managing herbicide-resistant weeds to State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program forb seeding strategies. Two pesticide credits, free well water testing, and sign-ups for FCCD's Biocontrol Insect program will be offered. Please join us! Contact the District offices for an agenda at 509-745-8362 ext 3.

County Newsletters to Return in January

By Michel Ruud, Farm Services Agency

Beginning in January, the Douglas County FSA office will again publish newsletters. However due to budget constraints, they will be electronic only. The newsletters will also be posted on the state FSA website <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>. Producers should contact the county FSA office at (509)745-8561 to provide an email address in order to sign-up to receive electronic notifications.

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

South Douglas and Foster Creek Conservation Districts have gift certificates available. These can be used towards the Tree Sale or for our Biological Insect Control program. Get yours today by contacting the CD offices at 509-745-8362 ext 3.

Book Review: *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver.

By Kristine Desgroseillier

This is a great read that portrays how the author's family decided to live off food either produced on their own property or in the surrounding community. Not only does this emphasize the importance of eating locally produced food in season, but is also an eye-opener on what the true cost is for all our "convenience" in the market. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in producing their own food, supporting lo-

cal farmers and producers, and keeping their dollars in the local economy. Featured in the book are essays written by her husband and teenage daughter along with some great-sounding recipes of foods that are in season. Now, whenever I go to the grocery to buy bananas, I think about what a luxury they are here in Washington and what all went into getting that piece of yummy yellow goodness here to my table.

What is the RC&D?

By Carol Cowling

The North Central Washington Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) is a non profit organization dedicated to providing support and capacity building for resource conservation and community development in Douglas, Okanogan and Chelan counties, including the Colville Confederated Tribes. A grass roots group, membership includes representatives of cities, counties, Tribes, Public Utility Districts, educational groups, conservation districts and other non-profit, federal and state agencies. The NCW RC&D has been in existence since 1996.

Prior to May of this year, the coordinator for all RC&Ds in the nation was funded by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Due to funding shortfalls, the coordinator position was eliminated. The NCW RC&D still has an administrative assistant to do much of the work required, but the organization realizes that to remain in existence

we must have projects and funding. The RC&D has had many success stories. Several forestry projects in the Okanogan have been completed. The Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board began as a committee of the RC&D. IRIS (Initiative for Rural Innovation and Stewardship) and the NCW Economic Development District also began as committees. The Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition, which promotes forestry health in Chelan County, is currently a committee. Other projects involving irrigation water management, environment, tourism, transportation and conservation have been completed.

With the NRCS support gone, the RC&D is now looking in a new direction. Without overlapping what other agencies are doing, new projects and members are being pursued. People interested in conservation, environment and economic stability of the area are encouraged to see what the RC&D can do. For 2012, they will meet quarterly in Chelan, the second Wednesday of the month. More information can be found at www.ncwrcd.org.

The website is being revamped to better serve the membership and interested parties. Go to the website and see what the RC&D is doing. Contact one of the members or staff to learn more. The meetings are open to the public. You may have a natural resource or economic project in mind that you want to pursue. The RC&D can provide support, help you find funding or point you in the right direction.

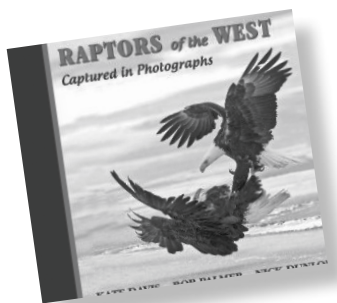
Save A Tree- Get this newsletter electronically!



Email Kristine, Editor, to be added to our electronic mailing list at Kristine-desgroseillier@gmail.com or call the District offices at 509-745-8362 ext 3. Your recycle bin will thank you.

Great Birds of Prey Identification Books - A Review.

By Carol Cowling



Raptors of the West – Captured in Photographs

This book, by Kate Davis, Rob Palmer and Nick Dunlop is fantastic. Full color photographs of hawks, eagles, and owls depict the birds in their native habitat – flying, nesting, hunting, fighting and eating. Almost every bird shown is found in the North Central Washington area and the photos are incredible. Published in 2011, it is available at your local library,

but you may have to buy it for your coffee table. I don't have a coffee table, but I bought one anyway.

A good companion to *Raptors of the West*, is;

Hawks from Every Angle, by Jerry Liguori.

Again, lots of colored photos and more text than the first book, this will help you identify that hawk flying overhead. Most of the photos are taken from the ground up – the way you see most hawks. Again, this book is available from your local library. Or with your own copy and a good pair of binoculars you can hike through the local shrub steppe identifying the hawks you see.



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Please contact Kristine Desgroseillier, Editor, if you would like to be added to our mailing list.

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Article contributions and ideas are also welcome.

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INSIDE...
Water Quality Monitoring
Meet Erin Kaczmarczyk
What is the RC&D?

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