



The Dirt is intended to provide a monthly summary of recent activities and inform you of upcoming events and important information. We have other mailing lists that target specific land uses or topics and communications are sent throughout the year. If you are interested in receiving additional information from ACCD, please contact us at info@asotincd.org or 509-552-8117.

FFA LAND JUDGING

On Wednesday, October 6th, roughly 150 students in FFA from 11 different schools from around the region competed in FFA land judging contest in Asotin County. This is the second year ACCD has hosted a location in the county. Land judging serves as a tool to teach about the field of soil science and the management of soils. The program is designed to guide them toward understanding the importance of basic soil properties. It also helps prepare them to make soil management decisions that benefit soil health and clean water.

WILDFIRE COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Asotin County was hit extremely hard with wildfires starting on July 7th. Local resources agreed there was a dire need for wildfire education. ACCD, Dept of Natural Resources (DNR), NRCS, Blue Mountain Fire District, and Asotin Co. Fire District all joined together for two meetings (October 12th & 13th) with forest and rangeland/rural-urban interface landowners. Discussion topics included how to prepare your home and property from wildfire loss, forest health and management practices, rangeland health and management practices and how fire protection works. Local fire districts explained how they utilize their resources during a fire and how they can better assist those who have good Firewise practices around their homes and properties.

LAMPREY AND STEELHEAD

This past month ACCD assisted in a Pacific lamprey (*Entosphenus tridentatus*) survey on the South Fork of Asotin Creek with EcoLogical Research and the Nez Perce Tribe. Nearly 100 lamprey amocetes (juvenile lamprey) were collected during electrofishing surveys. 80 of the lampreys caught were large enough for collection of "fin-snip" genetic samples. At the same time, a Steelhead electrofishing survey was also conducted which yielded a few hundred steelhead parr (juveniles <3 years old). The steelhead were all fitted with PIT (Passive Integrated Transponder) tags for tracking future migration movements. Surveys like this, and the future data gained from PIT tags will assist natural resource managers in their understanding of habitat utilization, migration, and population dynamics of Pacific lamprey and steelhead in Asotin County.

NRCS UPDATE

NRCS would like to express their sincere thanks for the community's continued patience and understanding during this time of transition to new employees and supervisors. While there have been a few bumps in the road since the start of the transition 15 months ago, NRCS has never faltered in our mission to help you help the land.

Over the last 15 months NRCS has funded almost \$4,000,000.00 in conservation activities in Asotin County through our various programs:

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Over \$347,000.00 of funding was obligated in Asotin County since June of 2020. Funding covers about 4,270 acres. Practices implemented include but are not limited to:

Forest Stand Improvement (666), Woody Residue Treatment (384), Tree/Shrub Pruning (660), Critical Area Planting (342), Brush Management (314), Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315), Structures for Wildlife (649), Spring Development (574), Livestock Watering Facility (614), Prescribed Grazing (528), Pasture Planting (512)

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

Over \$3,610,000.00 of funding was obligated in Asotin County since June of 2020. Funding covers about 56,356 acres. Enhancements implemented include but are not limited to:

Nutrient Management (E590 series), Pest management (E595 series), Cover Crop (E340 series), Conservation Crop rotation (E328 series), Field Borders (E386 series), Prescribed Grazing (E528 series), Tree shrub Establishment (E612 series), Wildlife Friendly Fence (E382 series), Herbaceous Weed Control (E315A)

**If you would like to learn more about these programs and practices or enhancements, please call NRCS at the contact info below!

That's not all, there is more good news related to our continued improvement in serving Asotin County...we have an additional employee at the Clarkston office now! Mitch Ruchert comes to us from Pomeroy Grain Growers. Mitch will be the Asotin County Resource Conservationist and the face of the office. We look forward to the community getting to know Mitch and all he has to offer.

We can't help you help the land if you don't give us a call! ~Angela Williams

- Mitch Ruchert, Asotin County Resource Conservationist: 509-552-8116, mitch.ruchert@usda.gov
- Andres Castellanos, Snake River Team Forester: 509-404-3087, Andres.castellanos@usda.gov
- Angela Williams, Snake River Team Rangeland Management Specialist: 509-552-8101, Angela.r.williams@usda.gov
- Tracy Hanger, Snake River Team District Conservationist: 509-956-3752, Tracy.hanger@usda.gov

NEW NRCS RESOURCE CONSERVATIONIST

My name is Mitch Ruchert. I am the new Resource Conservationist for the Snake River Team in the Clarkston office. I was born and raised in Pomeroy, WA. I graduated from Pomeroy High School in 2012, I then went on to WWCC where I earned two associates degrees. One in Agribusiness and one in Plant and Soil Science. I have had a passion for Agriculture since an early age, my grandfather, great grandfather, and great-great grandfather raised cattle and grew dryland crops in Garfield County spanning from about 1910 to the late 90's. My Dad has worked for an Ag retail cooperative for almost 30 years, the same facility I have spent the past 7 years of my career as a Crop Advisor. I am excited to have the opportunity to help producers in the Snake River Region build and improve upon their Conservation practices. Looking forward to meeting and working with all of you.

UPCOMING DATES

- **Monthly Board Meeting: November 4th at 12pm**– In person and virtual options available. *The meeting link is available upon request.*
- November 11th, Veteran's Day – Office Closed

FUN FACT!

The life cycle of Pacific Lamprey can take up to 11 years to complete. They spend 3-7 years in freshwater streams, filter feeding on algae, plant material and poop from insects and fish. They act as the "clean-up crew," cleaning the mud and sand on the bottom of the stream as they eat. They then move toward the ocean, growing slowly into their adult form. They stay in the ocean for 2-3 years, then return to fresh water, where they hunker down for a year or more before finishing the migration to the place where they choose to spawn.