The Dirt

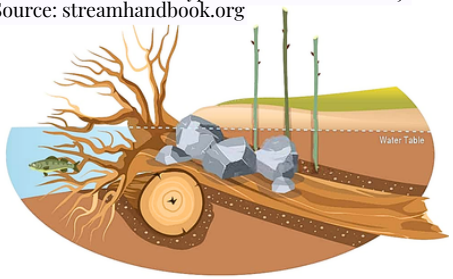
Asotin County Conservation District
Monthly Newsletter

August, 2026

www.asotincd.org



Above; Photo of excavator installing bank-attached ELJ structure for Steelhead habitat.
Below: Illustration of typical bank-attached ELJ.
Source: streamhandbook.org



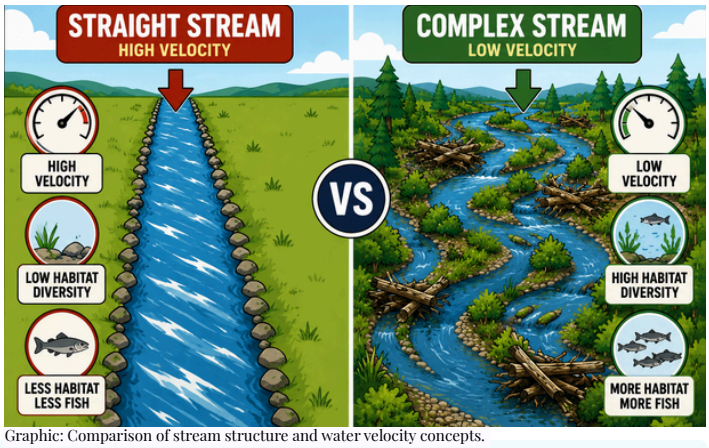
Instream Habitat Restoration Projects: Partners in Watersheds and Working Lands

This summer ACCD implemented four priority in-stream restoration projects across three watersheds to improve habitat for Snake River Steelhead. These projects allow working lands in Asotin County to provide fish and wildlife habitat while maintaining agricultural productivity. They enhance riparian functions including improving water quality, reducing flood impacts, and providing habitat for fish & wildlife. Projects are implemented by partnering with livestock producers, streamside landowners, and funding partners including Bonneville Power Administration, Snake River Salmon Recovery Board, and WA Department of Ecology.

Projects primarily aim to restore stream conditions for the fish, but every project is designed with livestock, agriculture, and our community in mind. Asotin County needs our farms and livestock just as much as we need clean, reliable water sources to sustain them. Agricultural sustainability as primary outcome of restoration projects creates opportunities for integrated land management that benefit fish, natural resources, and humans.

Why is ACCD Putting Logs in the Creek?!?

When stream channels are straight and fast, our seasonal water supply runs downstream and out of the watershed before we can use it. Restoration projects like Engineered Log Jams (ELJ's), and floodplain/channel reconnections help slow rushing floodwaters while dispersing the water across larger areas. Spreading the water out buffers flood impacts by reducing stream velocity and forcing the water to infiltrate the water table. These high-impact projects are designed by engineers that account for watershed characteristics, historic conditions, infrastructure, and community risks.



Graphic: Comparison of stream structure and water velocity concepts.



Engineered Log Jams (ELJ's): Add complexity by simulating natural fallen trees.

- Site specific, engineered habitat structures are built using large logs and woody debris to mimic natural log jams. Such structures are secured using log piles, ballast rock, or buried.
- Primary goals: Slow water velocity, buffer flooding, prevent erosion, provide spawning habitat, create pools for fish to hide, and restore natural flood inundations.



Floodplain/Channel Reconnection: Modify stream, restore historic channel conditions.

- Site specific, engineered channel modifications to restore historic stream conditions and reinitiate natural inundations of floodplains and low-velocity channels during high-flow events.
- Primary goals: Increase habitat complexity, support native food webs, buffer flood impacts, filter pollutants, increase floodplain interaction, support riparian vegetation, support seasonal stream flow, facilitate groundwater recharge.

THE ASOTIN RIPARIAN ASSESSMENT PROJECT

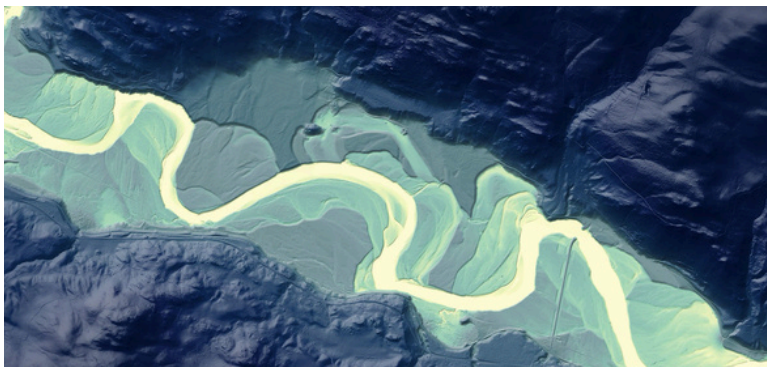


Graphic: Conceptual "Asotin Creek Floodplain Pinball game" showing healthy watershed and riparian habitat concepts. Complex elements (pools, engineered log jams, etc.) are obstacles that keep water in our watersheds longer into the season and maintain water quality.

Floodplain Pinball: Keep the water here as long as possible.

Spring rain and melting snow fills our streams with the water we need to sustain our riparian ecosystems and watersheds for the rest of the year. If the water runs out early, our creeks will be left "high and dry" in summer when we need it most. Keeping the water on our landscape as long as possible sustains water quality, supports groundwater infiltration, filters pollutants, and maintains a reliable water supply for fish, humans, wildlife, and vegetation.

Complex elements slow water velocity and spread the water out, forcing it stay on the landscape longer... kind of like a "floodplain pinball game." Nature creates complexity naturally through fallen logs, meandering channels, geologic diversity, and dynamic floodplains that change over time. Keep the water here as long as possible, and we all win!



Common Physical Elements of Stream Complexity:

- Large Woody Debris / Fine Woody Debris
- Diverse, Multi-Age Riparian Vegetation
- Floodplain Connections / Side Channels
- Boulders, Banks, and Geologic Substrate
- Wetlands and Floodplain Inundation
- Pools, Riffles, Runs and Flow Deflection

Floodplains can be mapped in detail using Lidar imagery, Lidar stands for "LIght Detection And Ranging." Subtle river features, such as historic flood channels, terraces, and levees can be identified. Image above shows the dynamic interaction between primary channels and floodplain. Image source: Bare earth lidar image of the Kettle River floodplain and surrounding bedrock of the Okanogan Highlands, Washington Geological Survey, WA DNR.

Check out WA State lidar maps for free at: https://lidarportal.dnr.wa.gov/

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY State of Washington

FUNDED BY WASHINGTON'S CLIMATE COMMITMENT ACT

DO YOU LIVE NEAR A STREAM OR WETLAND?

ACCD is working with landowners to complete assessments of riparian areas in Asotin County. Please contact us today for your free on-site assessment!



Contact Brad Riehle for more information:
Brad@asotincd.org (509) 552-8121

Noxious Weed Spotlight:
Mediterranean Sage *Salvia aethiopis*

CLASS 'A' Regulated Noxious Weed
Eradication is Required.
Asotin County Designated "EARLY DETECTION RAPID RESPONSE" (EDRR)




Photos: Mediterranean Sage, WA Noxious Weed Control Board, Sue Bird



Photos: Mediterranean Sage. Tom Getts

Noxious Weed Profile:

Impacts
"Med sage" is highly competitive, unpalatable for livestock/wildlife, and aggressively spreads into dense monocultures in dryland pastures and rangelands. Heavy infestations will degrade soil and vegetative productivity, reduce the carrying capacity of grazing lands, create wildfire hazards, and require intensive treatment.

Habitat
Typically found in disturbed areas including rangelands, roadsides, ditches, cultivated fields, and waste areas. In Asotin County the only known infestations are along Meyer's Ridge Road on WDF&W lands, and along Highway 129. Grows in dryer, disturbed sites, open rangelands, and degraded sagebrush communities. Prefers South-facing slopes with loose, gravelly soils.

Identification
- Aromatic biennial, or short-lived perennial with a stout taproot
- Year 1: large, showy rosette of grayish/bluish leaves, covered in dense wooly hairs; As plant matures, the pubescence will shed
- Year 2: wooly, upright, single-stalked plant with multiple branches that resemble a candelabra, tipped with clusters of white flowers; up to 3' ft. tall
- Lower leaves have petioles, coarsely toothed and grow 4"-12" inches; Upper leaves smaller and clasp the stem
- Crushing leaves produces a strong sage-like smell

Biology
- Spreads ONLY through seed
- Each plant produces up to 100,000 seeds
- Mature plants break off at the base to become tumbleweeds

Legal Listing: Class A Noxious Weed, Eradication Required
In WA, 'Class A' weeds are defined as a non-native species whose distribution in Washington is still limited. Preventing new infestations and eradicating existing infestations are the highest priority. Eradicating weeds means getting rid of the plants altogether, including plant roots.

Washington State Quarantined Species
Mediterranean sage is on the WA State quarantine list. It is prohibited to transport, buy, sell, offer for sale, or distribute plants or plant parts of quarantined species into or within the state of Washington or to sell, offer for sale, or distribute seed packets of seed, flower seed blends, or wildflower mixes of quarantined species into or within the state of Washington. (WAC 16-752).

How to Control it:

Prevention
Med Sage still has a limited distribution in Asotin County, the "Early Detection and Rapid Response" is critical to preventing this weed from overtaking our rangelands as it has in Oregon and Idaho. Learn to identify Med sage, and monitor fields and rangelands frequently to halt any new infestations. Seed/plant disturbed areas with desirable vegetation immediately. ACCD and the Asotin County Noxious Weed Control Board are currently inventorying and treating known infestations. If you observe this weed, please report it to ACNWCB at ACCD.

Mechanical
Cut, pull, or hand-dig plants at least 2"-3" inches below the crown of the plant (into the tap root) to prevent resprouting. Pull plants in spring before flowering, destroy/remove the entire plant.

Biological / Cultural
The Mediterranean sage root weevil, *Phyrdiuchus tau* is a biological control agent that has been used in ID and MT. However, this biological control is typically not suggested as it does not eliminate the weed as is required in Washington.

Chemical
- Herbicide may be useful for large, dense infestations. If the site is wet or along the water's edge, it may require a permit issued by the state Department of Ecology.
- Follow all applicable laws and regulations regarding herbicide use. Follow chemical label instructions for application. Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, shoes, and eye protection.
- Follow chemical label instructions for application.
  - Picloram, clopyralid, or aminopyralid used with 2,4-D and a surfactant may be effective.
  - Chemical control must be maintained for several years to exhaust the seed bank.

Have You Seen This Weed???

Please contact the Asotin County Noxious Weed Control Board at ACCD to report it. We are inventorying, monitoring, and treating known infestations, and can assist with the identification and control of Med Sage.



(509) 552-8119
weeds@asotincd.org
www.asotincd.org

A message from our partners at the Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA):

Climate Smart Farm Equipment Grant Opportunity

Washington's farms feed the world and sustain our communities. The Climate Smart Farm Equipment Grant supports WA producers, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving soil health, and increasing agricultural resilience. Funded by Washington's Climate Commitment Act, this program reimburses commercial agriculture and aquaculture operations for a portion of the cost of eligible equipment used in on-farm production. Applications are processed first-come, first-served until available funding is exhausted.

Eligible Costs:

Only commercial, for-profit farm businesses are eligible. Farms operated by public entities, NGOs, or non-profits are not eligible. Funds may be applied toward the purchase cost of equipment used in on-farm production.

Eligible Equipment Includes:

- Equipment/items that decrease greenhouse gas emissions during production, or increase soil or vegetative carbon storage. Examples include, but are not limited to: No-till drills, electric tractors, compost spreaders, electric pumps, GPS precision ag equipment, and drone sprayers.
- Equipment supporting innovative or emerging practices with scientific evidence of GHG reduction potential.
- Delivery costs associated with eligible equipment.



WSDA

Grant Timelines:

Applications open: 9/4/2026 at 8am PT
Applications close: 10/19/2026 at 5pm PT
Eligibility decisions issued: Nov./Dec., 2026
Equipment must be paid/received: 6/1/2027

For more information or to apply, visit the WSDA website:
https://agr.wa.gov/services/grant-opportunities/climate-smart-farm-equipment-grant
For questions about the Climate Smart Farm Equipment Grant, contact WaSHI@agr.wa.gov

Important Upcoming Events:

ACCD Board Meeting: Sept. 10, 2026, at 6pm
ACCD Board Meeting: Oct. 8, 2026, at 6pm
ACNWC Board Meeting: Oct. 20, 2026 at 6pm

ACCD Office Closed:
SEPTEMBER 7TH - LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

Asotin County Conservation District
1397 Port Drive, Clarkston, WA 99403
Phone: (509) 552-8117 Email: Info@asotincd.org
Website: www.asotincd.org

Fun Fact: When a sagebrush plant is attacked by predators like insects, the plant emits volatile organic compounds that neighboring sagebrush plants can sense and react to by producing defensive chemicals that make them unattractive, or even poisonous, to the attackers. And other plants, like wild tobacco, can eavesdrop on this and ramp up their own defenses, significantly lowering damage from feeding animals. (Source: https://appliedeco.org/five-things-you-didnt-know-about-sagebrush/)

WGS WASHINGTON GREEN SCHOOL

WASHINGTON GARDENER CERTIFICATION COURSE

Classes Begin: October 5, 2026

Where: Fully Online and Flexible

Registration Opens:

August 17 - September 30, 2026.

Course Topics Include:

- Basic Botany and Plant ID
- Pests and Diseases
- Flowers and Pollinators
- Composting and Soil
- Vegetables, Fruits, and Berries

A message from the Washington Master Gardeners, and the WSU Extension Green School:

Love gardening, but find it challenging in Washington's unique climate?

The Green School is a WSU Extension Course for anyone interested in earning a Washington Master Gardener Volunteer Certification, or a Washington Gardener Certificate Course. The certificate will help supplement your resume, grow your gardening knowledge or promote your business.

More Information and Registration:

https://greenschool.extension.wsu.edu

Email: mgardener@asotincountywa.gov

Asotin Extension Office: 509-243-2009.

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Emergency Management Awareness Month

Emergency preparedness is not just about responding to disasters—it is about building a stronger, more resilient Asotin County before disaster strikes. For landowners, farmers, ranchers, and residents, being prepared is critical for protecting people, property, livestock, and natural resources.

Sign up for Emergency Alerts

SCAN ME

GET PREPARED NOW:

- **Sign up for emergency alerts.**
  - Sign up online at www.hyper-reach.com/waasotinsignup.html, scan the QR code with your cell phone, or text "Alerts" to (509) 800-5227.
- **Know your risks. Have a plan.**
  - Understand the hazards most likely to affect your family. How will you communicate with family members, where will you go if you need to evacuate, and how to evacuate livestock and pets.
- **Be ready to evacuate.**
  - Keep important documents, medications, electronics, pet supplies, and medical equipment ready to go. Act early, follow directions from public officials.
- **Prepare for extended outages.**
  - All residents should consider backup power, alternate communications, and store enough food and water for 3 days. Livestock water sources should also be considered.
- **Help your neighbors.**
  - Check on elderly residents, people with disabilities, and others who may need help.