The Dirt

Asotin County Conservation District
Monthly Newsletter

October, 2026

www.asotincd.org

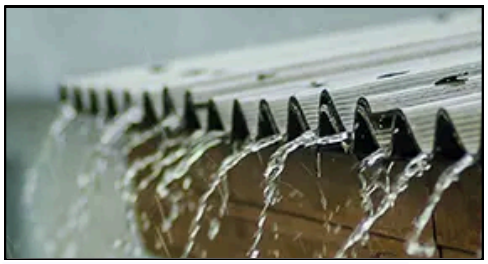
MUD SEASON IS COMING... IS YOUR FARM READY???



Above Photo: Muddy boots on the farm.

"Mud season" (aka: winter rainy season) is fast approaching, and if there's one thing that makes farm chores awful - it's mud. Uncontrolled runoff from roofs, driveways, barnyards, and pastures can contaminate watersheds with soil, pathogens, nutrients, and pesticides.

Excess water in livestock areas causes soil degradation and erosion, fosters breeding grounds for bacteria and pathogens, causes animal health problems, and creates unsafe slick-footing for both humans and animals. Mud management on the farm helps you, your animals, your neighbors, and everyone else downhill.



Above Photo: Rainwater dripping from roof, missing gutters.

Mud Prevention:

The best strategy to control mud is *prevention*. Installing a suite of conservation practices designed to fit your farm will address site-specific problems to maintain healthy livestock and helps protect our watersheds and natural resources. Keep mud from forming in the first place using integrated management techniques!



Above Photo: Muddy horse paddock, no drainage or runoff control.

Rainwater and Runoff Management:

Effective rainwater and runoff management will reduce the amount of water that runs through your farm, resulting in less mud to deal with in the first place. Redirecting water by installing gutters, French drains, downspouts, or rain barrels, and strategic plantings using permeable landscaping materials prevents saturated soils by using, conveying, and storing water more efficiently.



Above Photo: Muddy cattle in HUA, missing footing to stabilize soil.

Heavy Use Areas:

"HUA's", sacrifice areas, pens, or paddocks, are designated, high-traffic outdoor living areas for livestock. HUA's are essential farm management tools that confine animals to prevent compacting, overgrazing, and trampling wet pastures. Techniques stabilize soil in high-traffic areas by installing footings, drainage, and complimentary vegetative plantings that increase opportunities for infiltration.



Above Photo: Damaged pasture from overgrazing during wet season.

Pasture and Grazing Management:

Winter grazing is hard on pastures, and overgrazing causes long-term damage. Overgrazed pastures with exposed soil may not grow back without intensive management, leading to decreased forage quality, and even more mud in the future. Rotational grazing systems, pasture management practices, and confinement areas create the ability to control grazing to prevent damage from overgrazing, protects soil from erosion, and keeps pastures healthy.

Livestock Waste and Water Quality: Risks and Responsibilities

Livestock, animals, and agriculture are essential elements of our cultural identity and local economy. Commercial operations and small farms are high-risk for water quality pollutants like mud, nutrients, pathogens, and pesticides, and many are located near the wetlands, creeks, and rivers that provide drinking water to our communities.

If water runs off your property... it may be carrying your pollutants along with it. Even urban settings, residential homes, and backyards can contaminate our water supply through runoff and erosion.

Land managers and animal owners are utilizing every "tool in the toolbox" to conserve natural resources around their farms, ensure the health of their animals, protect our water supply, and to enhance farm efficiency into the future. We all share the duty of safeguarding our natural resources through best management practices.



Photo: Concrete manure bins, roof, and aeration system, Snohomish Cons. District.

Key Concepts for Water Quality Protection Near Livestock Operations:

- Runoff and stormwater management
- Setbacks from surface water and wells
- Safe manure storage, treatment, and usage
- Use pesticides with caution
- Soil erosion prevention
- Livestock exclusion from surface waters
- Riparian buffer enhancements





Manure Management Techniques:

Manure Collection and Control:

- Collection/removal of animal waste and bedding from pastures, stalls, and feeding areas
- Control manure near water and well heads with setbacks and fencing to limit livestock access
- Water conveyance practices (gutters, drains, grassed waterways, etc.) prevent erosion
- Feeding pads connect to manure storage areas

Manure Storage and Containment:

- Bin/bunker contains waste, prevents leaching
- Ideal storage is covered, contained, and composting
- Containment bins, roof structures, non-permeable footings (concrete, clay, etc.)
- **Free manure storage designs available at ACCD**

Manure Treatment and Composting:

- Proper composting reduces manure volume, kills pathogens and insect larvae, moderates foul odors, kills weed seeds, and balances nutrients
- Takes time, pile must be turned periodically

Manure Application as Fertilizer:

- Use as natural fertilizer and soil amendment
- Requires mindful, strategic application
- Test composted manure and soils for nutrient balance prior to field application
- **Manure screening and spreading equipment is available to rent at ACCD**



Photos: (Top) Running horses on rangeland.
(Bottom) ACCD Manure spreader applying manure to field, spreader is available for rent .

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY State of Washington
FUNDED BY WASHINGTON'S CLIMATE COMMITMENT ACT

Got Manure?
We can help with that.



Photo: Cattle with ear tags,

Effective manure management around the farm improves soil health, boosts crop yields, promotes livestock health, and protects our watersheds from nutrient run-off. Manure is readily available on farms, but specialized equipment is needed to process manure, especially in rocky areas like Asotin County.

ACCD has manure spreading and screening equipment now available for rent to land managers within the District's service area. Applying composted manure in the right amounts and at the right time will maximize the benefits on soil health and productivity, elevate animal health and welfare, and prevent runoff into streams.

Testing your Composted Manure:

It's easier than you think!

- Standard manure nutrient analysis reports nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, organic matter and moisture content.
- Prevents over or under-application.
- Identifies actual soil and crop needs for fertilizer.
- Protects soils from toxic chemicals, pathogens, and salt.
- Standard testing costs around $75

How it's done:

Take multiple scoops from the same pile and combine them as your sample. To accurately test your nutrient content, take several samples, mix well and send a portion for laboratory analysis.

soiltest farm consultants, inc.



Rental Equipment Available:

SCHEDULE YOUR RENTAL TODAY:

(509) 552-8117 - INFO@ASOTINCD.ORG

Large Manure Spreader:
Kuhn, Protwin Slinger SL/SLC 100 Series.
188 cu. ft, Side-discharge manure spreader.
Standard 540 PTO drive.
*Requires 90HP Tractor.
$50 Per Day



Revolver RT508 Screening System:
Portable trommel sorts rocks and chunks.
Trommel is 5' diameter x 8' long drum.
36" variable speed belt feeder,
Tier 4 diesel engine.
$10 Per Hour



Compact Manure Spreader
Frontier MS1108G, 2 cu. yard capacity.
Two-speed, apron drive
adjustable ratched drive.
*Requires UTV, or small tractor to tow unit.
$ FREE RENTAL





Considerations for Applying Manure on Crops and Pastures:

- Apply thin, uniform layers, base application rates on soil and manure tests, don't over-fertilize your crops!
- Not all manure is "created equal," each type of livestock manure contains different nutrient and chemical properties, not all manure is suitable for crops or pastures.
- Recommended Timing for Manure Application:
  - Every season is different, application windows may vary based on weather and soil conditions, the following timing recommendations align with historic seasonal patterns.
  - **Spring Application (March – May)**: Apply as grasses start greening up and growing, typically when forage reaches 4"-6"in. when plant uptake of nutrients is optimal.
  - **Early Fall Application (September – October)**: Apply while soil is still warm and before hard frosts or heavy winter rains set in. This allows forage roots to absorb nutrients without washing away manure.
  - **DO NOT APPLY: (November-March)**: Do not spread manure on saturated frozen, or snow-covered ground to prevent soil compaction and rutting, nutrient runoff, loss of nitrogen, and water pollution.

Noxious Weed Spotlight:
Dalmatian Toadflax *Linaria dalmatica*

CLASS 'B' Regulated Noxious Weed
Control is Recommended.






Photos: Dalmatian toadflax plant and flowers, WA Noxious Weed Control Board, Jennifer Andreas, Greg Haubrich WSDA.

Noxious Weed Profile:

Impacts
Dalmatian toadflax, aka: "wild snapdragon," forms dense monocultures that crowd out desirable grasses and native vegetation, reducing overall pasture productivity. Stems and leaves hold an acrid, bitter-tasting liquid that makes the plant unpalatable and has no value as forage. It can be toxic to cattle if consumed in large quantities, however, livestock usually avoids grazing it unless other feed is scarce.

Habitat
Establishes in areas with full sun and limited water and can grow in poor rocky soil. Limited distribution in Asotin County, scattered infestations along the Snake River (especially Buffalo Eddy area) and the Grande Ronde. Also found at the P.U.D in Clarkston, the Port District, Cloverland county gravel pit, USFS and County ROW on Cougar Ridge Rd, Field Springs State Park, Pintler and George Creek.

Identification
- Erect stems that grow up to 3 feet tall
- Multiple narrow stems from a single woody base
- Leaves and stem are waxy with a bluish cast
- Leaves are usually heart shaped but can range in shape
- Flowers are 2-lipped and ¾ to 1½ inches long with a long spur and are bright yellow with orange-bearded throat
- Flowers resemble snapdragon flowers

Biology
- Perennial weed that reproduces by seed and through extension of horizonal roots
- A mature plant can produce up to 500,000 seeds per year
- Seeds may remain viable for up to 10 years
- Flowers from May through August
- Most above ground growth dies back in the fall, leaving short prostrate stems that survive through the winter

WHAT IS "INTEGRATED WEED MANAGEMENT"?

IMW combines various control strategies to keep weed populations below economically damaging levels. Instead of relying solely on herbicides, it uses a "many little hammers" approach to protect crops, prevent herbicide resistance, preserve soil health, and to minimize environmental impacts.

How to Control it:

Prevention / Cultural
When any ground disturbing activity occurs, seed/plant the appropriate native vegetation immediately. Use proper pasture management techniques to ensure competitive grasses thrive. Toadflax is toxic to cattle, but sheep and goats can graze it safely.

Manual
Hand pull or dig up plants, removing as much root as possible to avoid resprouting. This must be continued for3 to 10 years to exhaust all root fragments and have this weed under control.

Mechanical
Mowing will not reduce toadflax populations because of the large, horizontally spread, root reserves. Cultivation, however, will control toadflax. Tillage must be done every 7 to 10 days for the first year and at least 4 or 5 cultivations the second year. Inconsistent tillage will spread root fragments and expand the infestation.

Biological / Cultural
There are many biological controls for Dalmatian toadflax. The toadflax flower-feeding beetle, the toadflax moth, the toadflax root-boring moth, the toadflax seed capsule weevil, and the toadflax root-galling weevil have shown inconsistent results for toadflax control. However, the toadflax stem weevil (Mecinus janthinus) has been released in parts of Washington and Oregon with good success. As of 2005, this weevil is abundant enough to produce nursery sites that can be used to distribute the weevils to other populations of toadflax.

Chemical
- Chemical control of toadflax is difficult due to the waxy leaves, requires an oil based or silicon surfactant to be effective.
- Spray toadflax at beginning of the flowering stage, usually May.
- Follow all applicable laws and regulations for herbicide use.
- Follow all chemical label instructions for application. Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, shoes, and eye protection.
  - Dicamba, picloram, imazapic, and 2,4-D
  - Chemical control must be maintained for several years to exhaust the seed bank.



Need help managing your noxious weeds?
Contact the Noxious Weed Control Board at ACCD:
(509) 552-8119 - weeds@asotincd.org
www.asotincd.org

FREE WORKSHOP:
MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR HORSE PROPERTIES

Saddle up and join ACCD conservation planners for a free stewardship workshop tailored for horse property management. Discover innovative strategies to simplify your tasks, enhance the beauty of your ranch, promote your horse's well-being, and safeguard our shared natural resources.

Workshop Topics Include:

- Mud control and water quality protection
- Maximize your rain water
- Manure management techniques
- How to use the power of nature to fight pests
- Creating wildlife habitat in small spaces
- Pasture seeding, weeding, and grazing



FREE IN-PERSON WORKSHOP
VIRTUAL OPTION AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Thursday, Nov. 19th 2026
5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

LOCATION:
Asotin County Conservation District Office
1397 Port Drive, Clarkston, WA 99403

REMINDER:
BOARD MEETINGS ARE HELD DURING THE DAY BETWEEN NOVEMBER AND FEBRUARY

Important Upcoming Events:

ACCD Board Meeting: Nov. 5, 2026, at 12 pm
ACCD Board Meeting: Dec. 10, 2026, at 12 pm
ACNWC Board Meeting: Dec. 15, 2026, at 1 pm

ACCD Office Closed:
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 11TH - VETERAN'S DAY
NOV. 26TH AND NOV. 27TH - THANKSGIVING 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: George Washington loved compost. He cared so much about the health of the soil that he performed experiments to find the best way to turn dung into fertilizer. G.W.'s Dung Repository (aka: stercorary) at Mount Vernon is the first known structure in the USA built specifically for composting. (Source: www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/dung-repository)