August 2010
Nez Perce Soil & Water Conservation District
www.nezperceswcd.org

Forever Soil & Water

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Unless otherwise noted, all articles are written by Whitney Garrison, and all photos courtesy of Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District.

Nez Perce Soil & Water Conservation District
SINCE 1941

Cover photo courtesy Brenda Boyer

Orange Hawkweed. Photo courtesy UI Weed Diagnostic Lab

Orange Hawkweed Inventory Project

Orange hawkweed inventory is one of the latest summer projects that the Conservation District is taking on. District staff completed more than 50 acres of inventory of the noxious weed. Project goals are to help control Orange hawkweed's spread and to eradicate it where it is most dense.

Orange hawkweed is a perennial with bright orange flowers that resemble dandelions. Its leaves are bristly and stems are long and appear hairy. It is often found in meadows, rangelands, pastures and open forest. It can be difficult to control as well because it is so easily spread. Its seeds can disperse more than 250 yards in the wind.

For more information, contact the District at (208) 843-2931.

District SVAP Training

District staff pulled their waders on and headed out to Lapwai Creek last month to receive stream assessment training. Using the Stream Visual Assessment Protocol (SVAP), staff learned how to conduct pebble counts, measure cross-sections and identify stream invertebrates.

Pebble counts allow us to determine the condition of a channel. Staff practiced by collecting rocks as they crossed the stream from one bank to the other, toe-to-toe. They measured and documented each rock's size. Pebble counts provide valuable information about the stream's habitat and hydrology.

Then staff members dipped nets into the stream to collect insects. They carefully emptied their nets into trays. The group identified what types of stream invertebrates were found by comparing them to pictures and descriptions in their SVAP training packets. Findings included more than a dozen stoneflies, several caddisflies, snails and aquatic worms. Identifying insects in streams helps to determine water quality.

Just before finishing the training, the staff practiced measuring cross-sections. A cross-section is a location for measuring channel form and stream discharge.

District staff are currently completing stream assessments in Cottonwood, Catholic, Hatwai, Pine and Bedrock Creeks. For more information, contact Tim Robinson at the District (208) 843-2931.

District Conservationist Bob Finnell

"The farm was a great place to raise a family," Bob Finnell said as we sat in his home overlooking the Clearwater River.

Retired farmer Bob Finnell, 69, was born in Lewiston, Idaho, September 24, 1940. His father, who had farmed since he was about 17, owned land in the Gifford area and it was there on a farm where Finnell and his family were raised. Finnell attended grade school in Culdesac and graduated in 1958. After high school he married wife Sharon and the couple moved to Spokane, Wash. where he attended community college. For about five years, Finnell worked as a certified welder for the Spokane school district in the maintenance department. Finnell returned to the Culdesac area in 1966.

"I came back to farm in Gifford and Culdesac, and I also worked for Herndon Farms," said Finnell. "In 1972, I first leased and purchased my own land."

Finnell farmed mainly fall and spring barley and wheat, lentils, hay, rapeseed, peas and garbanzos over the years. He also raised purebred Simmental cattle for 21 years that were bred by A.I. Throughout his career, Finnell completed several conservation practices on his land.

"Early on I did some tile work and CRP," he said. "Later I worked with NRCS [Natural Resources Conservation Service] to lay test strips, and for about the last eight to ten years I went minimum-till."

Finnell also included food plots on his land. Various crops were left for the benefit of birds and pheasants. Every year he said the food plots made up about two to five spread out acres. Finnell worked with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game on the project.

Finnell said he enjoyed farming for several different reasons.

"I liked the independence, being my own boss, and being in the outdoors. It was a good place to raise a family and teach the kids work ethic." Finnell laughed. "Though they may not have liked that part," he said.

Finnell and wife, Sharon, who he often calls "Mom", have been married for 51 years. They have a son who is 50 and a daughter, 46. Pictures of their two grandsons, granddaughter, and other family members filled their home.

Finnell is enjoying all of his free time as it was hard to find in the past. He served on countless committees and boards until retirement. And, he says there is good reason for why he no longer serves.

"I think boards should be made up of those people that are currently involved and actually doing the work," he said, "I am a firm believer in that."

For years Finnell worked in the 4-H sales ring at the Nez Perce County Fair as a ring attendant. He assisted the auctioneer with the livestock sales. He also served on boards such as the Nez Perce County (NPC) Cattlemen's Board, Agriculture Extension Crop and Weed Committees, Farm Bureau Insurance Board and Idaho Simmental Association Board. He was also a member of the Nez Perce County Sheriff's Mounted Posse for several years. It wasn't until a home accident on his horse which left him in the hospital for several days that he gave up riding.

"I liked the independence, being my own boss, and being in the outdoors. It was a good place to raise a family and teach the kids work ethic." Finnell laughed. "Though they may not have liked that part," he said.

Now Finnell enjoys his spare time in other ways.

"I like to trapshoot and fish," he said. He glanced at his wife in earshot over in the kitchen putting dishes away. "And also yard work," he added smiling. Sharon laughed.

Finnell said farming has evolved a great deal since he first began.

"No-till is probably the biggest accomplishment and the most drastic change," he said. "It is getting a lot less erosion into creeks." He said precision agriculture is another big advantage because it will save a farmer's money in the long-run while not nearly wasting as much chemical.

Finnell made his mark in local agriculture conservation by applying practices that protect and sustain our natural resources. The work he completed in the past helped to maintain our soil today. The District thanks Finnell for that dedication to natural resource sustainability.

Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District

District Board meetings held the third Thursday of each month

Forever Soil & Water

Published by the **Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District** ©2010

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Tracy Hill, Vice Chairman
Kyle Wilson, Treasurer
Lisa Swanson, Dale Nichols,
Todd Wittman, John Hermann

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All Conservation District Staff in Culdesac

Just a reminder, there is no longer any District staff working in the Lewiston office. All District staff can be reached in Culdesac.

Contact the District at:

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Poison Hemlock

Poison hemlock, Conium maculatum, is the most poisonous plant in North America and it's growing right here in the Lapwai Valley.

Poison hemlock was first brought into the States from Europe before people realized it was in fact a noxious weed. The weed can grow up to nine feet tall and has bundles of small, white, umbrella-shaped flowers clustering from the stems. Hemlock flourishes along roads and often in pastures, fields, ditches and riparian areas. In Lapwai, it can be seen right from the road.

Hemlock is extremely poisonous to both humans and animals. Humans have been poisoned from it by mistaking the plant for parsley and eating it. In the news just recently, a woman from the northwest added hemlock to her dinner salad apparently not knowing what it was. She was found dead in her home the next morning.

Hugh Jacobs, weed superintendant for Nez Perce County, said that even contact with the plant, and especially the root as it is most toxic, can make one extremely sick.

"Many people are sensitive to hemlock and will get ill if they are in close proximity to it or touch it. People who are sensitive need to avoid all contact with it," Jacobs said.

There are two different avenues to take when aiming to control poison hemlock. The first is by way of chemical control. Chemicals such as Escort and Telar may be sprayed in early spring to get the best results. Heavy clothing, gloves, and eyewear should be worn for safety. Another method is through biocontrol. The defoliating hemlock moth (Agonopterix alstroemeriana) larvae can consume leaves, young stem tissue, seeds and flowers. Biocontrol works best when application is from March to July.

Jacobs warned that those who are trying to eradicate the plant should take precautions.

"In my opinion, it is not a plant that can be attacked safely. Don't take chances with it. I would not burn it. The best way to dispose of the plant is bagged and in a landfill."

"In my opinion, it is not a plant that can be attacked safely. Don't take chances with it. I would not burn it. The best way to dispose of the plant is bagged and in a landfill."

Jacobs said killing the plant can be tricky. "If you kill the plant and leave it, it will dissolve into the soil. You will probably find it growing again next year because this is an annual plant that produces many seeds. The seeds will last at least three years and depending on soil conditions, may last longer."

For the last three years, hemlock has been targeted by Nez Perce County for destruction on right-of-ways in the Lapwai area. Jacobs said that any private landowner who would like their property checked for the plant can contact him to visit the site or to get recommendations for destroying it. Landowners may also contact the District for more information.

For more information and/or assistance, contact Hugh Jacobs, Nez Perce County Weed Superintendant, at the Nez Perce County Weed Department (208) 799-3066 or the District at (208) 843-2931.

NOTICE OF FILING DEADLINE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That declarations of candidacy for the office

of Board Supervisor (name of office) **of the** Nez Perce (name of district) Soil and Water Conservation District

must be filed with district clerk/secretary whose address is 27880 Chambers Road Culdesac, Id 83524 **no later than 5:00 p.m. on the** 1st **day of** September, 2010.

Such declarations are available at the district office at

27880 Chambers Road Culdesac, Id 83524

or at the office of the County Clerk.

Individuals who run as write-in candidates must file a declaration of intent no later than 5:00 p.m. on the 25th day prior to the election.

Whitney Garrison

Clerk/Secretary of Taxing District

Anadromous Fish Species

Steelhead (Oncorhynchus mykiss):

Steelhead typically leave the ocean and begin their migration up the Columbia River between May and July, with the first fish arriving at Lower Granite Dam in late July to August. Some steelhead will arrive as late as October. These salmonids usually overwinter in Lower Granite Reservoir and the Clearwater River until early spring (February-April), at which point they travel up Clearwater tributaries to begin spawning. Hatching approximately 2 months after adult spawning activity, juvenile steelhead typically spend two years in freshwater streams before a spring migration to the ocean.

Unlike salmon, steelhead do not die shortly after spawning. Although uncommon, steelhead may live to spawn a second or even a third time. Such steelhead are called kelts.

Fall Chinook Salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha):

Named for the time of their upstream migration, fall chinook usually leave the ocean in August or September, arriving at the Clearwater from September through December. Fall chinook begin spawning as early as October, primarily in the mainstem Clearwater River. Both male and female salmon die shortly after spawning. As with spring chinook, fall chinook hatchlings emerge from the riverbed gravel in the spring, in April to May. However, unlike spring chinook, these juvenile salmon typically begin migrating out to sea in June to August of their first year. Fall chinook average in size from 15-20 lbs., but occasionally exceed 35 lbs.

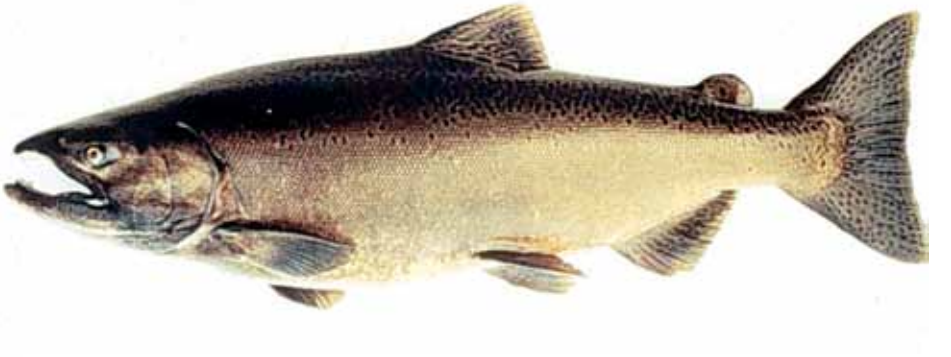
Pacific Lamprey (Lampetra tridentata):

Pacific lamprey, otherwise known as lamprey eel, begin migration into freshwater between May and September. These fish overwinter in freshwater before spawning the following March or April. Like the salmon, lamprey die shortly after spawning.

The young lamprey hatch about 2 to 3 weeks after spawning and then swim to backwaters with soft, muddy bottoms. The newly hatched lamprey then burrow into the mud, where they remain for 4 to 6 years before becoming adults. The adults emerge from the mud and begin migrating to the ocean in late winter

Spring Chinook Salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha):

These highly prized salmon begin their upstream migration in the spring, reaching the Clearwater River between April and July. These fish typically make their way to headwater tributaries before spawning in August and September. Both male and female salmon die shortly after spawning. While the eggs usually hatch by December, the newly-hatched chinook stay in the gravel until early spring. These juvenile salmon remain in freshwater for 1 year, migrating down to the ocean the following spring, usually in April to May. As with fall chinook, males may return to freshwater after 1 year as immature fish but spring chinook usually stay at sea for 2 to 5 years before migrating back to the stream of their birth. Spring chinook average in size from 15-20 lbs., but occasionally exceed 35 lbs.



Coho Salmon (Oncorhynchus kisutch):

Although native, coho salmon had become extinct in the Clearwater Subbasin until they were reintroduced in 1995. Coho salmon leave the ocean in late summer or fall (August through September) and reach Lower Granite Dam by September or October. Spawning occurs from October through December. Both male and female coho die shortly after spawning.

Like the spring chinook, coho juveniles emerge from the spawning gravel in the spring and typically spend a year in freshwater streams before beginning a spring flow migration to the ocean. The young salmon then spend 1 to 2 years feeding in saltwater before beginning their upstream migration as adults. Averaging in size from 6-8 lbs. Coho may exceed 10 lbs.

through early spring. After 2 to 3 years in the ocean, Pacific lamprey restart the cycle and begin their upstream migration to spawning areas. Lamprey can reach up to 30 inches in length.

All images courtesy Idaho Dept. Fish and Game

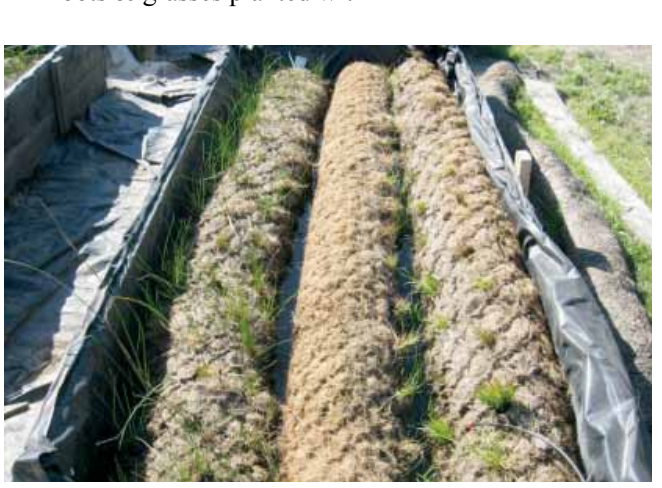
What Are Biologs?

Biolog boxes adjacent to District office

If you've ever driven out to the District office in Culdesac, you might have wondered what the rows of plant logs are next to our building. When visitors stop by, we often get lots of questions. These are our Biologs! Biologs are used for wetland site restoration projects and temporarily maintained at the District office until a planting site is located. Biologs are a unique and important erosion tool produced by the District since 2004.

Did you know…

- Biologs fight streambank & shoreline erosion
- Promote healthy waterways & enhance wildlife habitat
- Made of 100% biodegradable coconut fibers bound tightly together
- Absorb wave energy
- Slows fluctuations in stream flow velocities while allowing time for vegetation re-growth
- Once Biolog degrades, eroded area is restored, stabilized by the vigorous roots & grasses planted within



Biolog installed on streambank

Preparation and Installation:

Biologs are placed in a container full of water and various wetland plants are planted within the coconut fiber. These plants are left to grow until the roots and plant are well established. Once an appropriate site is selected, a trench is dug near the waterline for the Biolog to be placed in. After it is securely in place, the log is covered partially with soil to ensure it will remain stable during high flow times.

If you are interested in participating in an erosion project utilizing Biologs or for general information, contact the District (208) 843-2931.

Eroding banks along Vollmer Road

District Project Briefs

Tammany Road Erosion Project

DEQ 319 funded

District staff and Nez Perce County staff finalized designs for Vollmer Road and selected tentative construction date of November 2010. Look for project updates and final schedule on the District Web site.

In addition, staff began contacting landowners to obtain permission to access land for a stream inventory. Staff plans to conduct inventory work in the months of August through October.

For more information, contact Kayla Dau at (208) 843.2931.

Catholic Creek Project

Pacific Salmon funded

Field inventory work began this summer. The lower part of the watershed had never been explored until District members inventoried in July.

Goals: identify watershed needs and fish habitat and water quality projects.

Landowners interested in this project are encouraged to contact Brenda Boyer at (208) 843-2931.

Catholic Creek

continued on page 6

Checkout the District Web site:

www.nezperceswcd.org

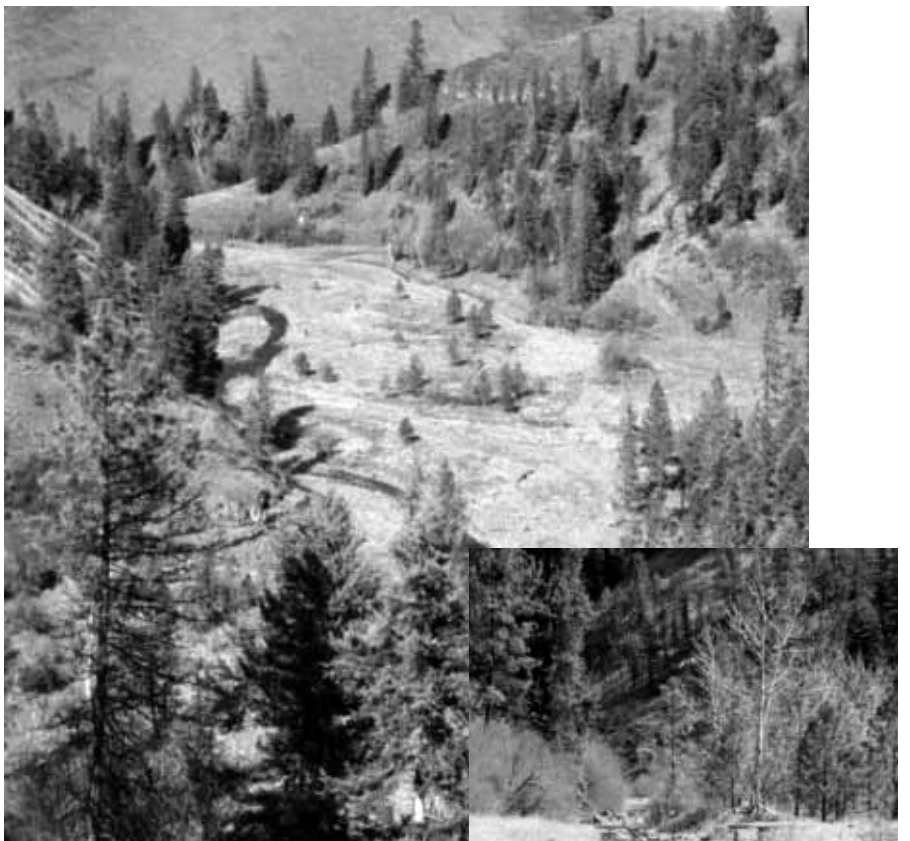
- *Meeting Announcements*
- *Publications*
- *District Projects*
- *Natural Resource Data and Information*
- *Public Comment Opportunities*
- *Employment Opportunities*

District Project Briefs, *continued from page 5*

Big Canyon Creek Project

Pacific Salmon funded

Currently working on weed control, fencing, tree plantings and streambank stabilization.



Big Canyon Creek

Cottonwood Creek

SRBA funded

District staff are completing a stream inventory for Cottonwood Creek. Landowners interested in this project can contact Kayla Dau at (208) 843-2931.

Lower Clearwater Forestry Project

SRBA funded

This fall, activities include tree plantings and inventory work.

Landowners remember: this project has cost-share opportunities for tree plantings, livestock water developments, fencing and road improvements. For more information contact Tim Robinson at the District (208) 843-2931.

Lapwai Creek watershed

Lapwai Creek

BPA funded

Projects this summer and fall 2010 include streambank restoration activities, tree plantings, fencing and weed control activities. Landowners remember: this project has cost-share opportunities for tree plantings, livestock water developments, fencing and road improvements. For more information contact Tim Robinson at the District (208) 843-2931.

WAG News

The Tammany/Lindsay Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) met last May to discuss the TMDL report for Tammany Creek.

No future meeting dates have been set for Tammany, Lindsay or Cow Creek WAGs. For more information, contact Whitney Garrison at (208) 843-2931.

Nez Perce County Flood Hazard Areas

Information courtesy Nez Perce County

One of the most notable natural hazards in Nez Perce County is flooding. Flood hazard areas include:

- The Lapwai Valley and the Big Canyon Valley around Peck: had extensive flood damage in 1965 and 1996. Lapwai, Big Canyon, Sweetwater, and Mission Creek valleys have historically been the scenes of extensive flooding.
- The Potlatch River valley from Kendrick to the confluence with the Clearwater River is also flood prone. This valley in most areas is quite narrow, with limited acreage available for development. The largest housing concentration is adjacent to the northern corporate limits of Juliaetta.
- The lower reaches of Hatwai and Cottonwood Creeks.
- The Cow Creek valley, in the northwest corner of the county south of Genesee.
- Lindsay Creek, running through a narrow valley along the eastern boundary of Lewiston, serves as the major drainage for most of the east and central Lewiston Orchards. Many homes have been built along Lindsay Creek, regardless of the possibility of flooding. Increased runoff, and constricted floodway in the lower portion, make frequent flooding probable in the lower reaches.

Cottonwood Creek bridge damage, February 1997

The major flood danger in Nez Perce County results from warm winter rains on a heavy snow cover, where the drainage basin is extensive and the stream carrying capacity is relatively low. Tammany Creek to the south of the Lewiston Orchards is an example of a stream with low carrying capacity considering the large drainage basin that it serves.

District Staff Releases 3,000 Insects for BioControl

In June, District field technicians obtained landowner permission to access properties at 30 sites in order to release biocontrol agents for yellow starthistle control. In just one week, District staff collected and released more than 3,000 insects! For more information on Biocontrol, contact Kayla Dau at the District (208) 843.2931.

left: Yellow Starthistle

above: Starthistle weevil

Photos courtesy UI Weed Diagnostic Lab

Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District
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Attention Landowners!! Have a project in mind?

Are you a landowner with a project in mind, but need to cut down the expenses? The District would like to help!

By contacting the District, landowners have the opportunity to apply for a cost sharing project. The District is provided funding through various sources and as funding becomes available, projects are selected on a first-come, first-serve basis. Don't forget to plan ahead because issues like cultural resource protection may hinder the timeliness of project completion. The District encourages landowners interested in a cost-share project to think ahead and apply today!

Contact the District for more information at (208) 843.2931.