



**Soil & Water
Conservation District**

UMPQUA

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Volume 11, Issue 1

Winter 2011

Conversations about CREP

By Laura Smith, Assistant Conservation Technician, Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District



Cattle graze in pasture that was historically prairie, surrounded by native oak woodland habitat.

This is a summary of my recent conversation with Rick Shepherd of Elkton, Oregon about his experience with the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). For those unfamiliar with CREP, it is a voluntary US Department of Agriculture conservation easement program which provides financial benefits to farmers and ranchers for the conservation of resources on their land. This program has been very popular in some parts of the country, although there are relatively few CREP cooperators within the Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District.

Shepherd, whose land borders Elk Creek, enrolled approximately 31 of his 75 acre ranch in CREP in 2007. Shepherd's enrollment in CREP allowed him to install fences and off stream watering facilities to keep his cattle away from sensitive riparian areas. CREP also funded the planting of approximately 9,000 trees within riparian buffers.



CREP funded off-stream watering facility.

While touring his land to view the CREP funded improvements Rick stops to pull a stray Scotch broom plant. I mentally note that I have not seen a single Armenian (Himalayan) Blackberry plant on his place. "They (CREP) paid to remove blackberries" said Shepherd, who sprays his blackberries in the fall. It is clear that a lot of work has gone into this piece of land "The work was too much for me" Shepherd admits, but "you can hire it out with CREP, it saved time and money...it's financially better to hire it (out)" noted Rick, who also works as a forester.

I asked if CREP improved the productivity of his land. "It (CREP) has made production more profitable" says Shepherd. Before CREP, Shepherd ran 22 head of cattle on 40 acres; today he runs 15 head of cattle on 22 acres. However, Shepherd has been able to significantly increase the productivity of his pasturelands, increasing his hay production from 14 tons to 65 tons. Shepherd had help with pasture improvement through another conservation program called EQIP that is run by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). "I would advise people to work with multiple agencies to get the best outcome" said Shepherd. And, while CREP has taken some of his acres out of production, he gets financial incentives to keep those acres out of production.



Rick Shepherd stands amongst trees planted in CREP.

I was curious whether Rick Shepherd would recommend CREP to his neighbors and his answer was a resounding "Yes". Although the transition away from more conventional agricultural practices was not easy, "working with the government is incredibly slow" warns Shepherd. The thing that sold Shepherd on the CREP program was that "It dawned on me that the restoration could be funded."

"CREP is financially expedient for controlling noxious weeds, planting back to natives, and providing extra income for the farm" He also believes that in the long term both fish and wildlife will benefit from the conservation practices that he has implemented on his ranch.

OSU Manure & Mud Management Program

Mud and Manure Management can be quite a problem, but it is also the name of an Oregon State University Small Farms program that can help you deal with the mess that seasonal rains can bring. Earlier this fall we had a Manure and Mud program in Roseburg, and the folks from the Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District have invited us to present it in Elkton this January 20 at the Elkton Community Learning Center, 6:30 to 8:30 PM.

The earlier program in Roseburg set some of us up for acting on the problem in time to head off the impact of mud in and around our livestock, and certainly inspired me to finally be proactive in preparing my barn area. I'm telling you, it sure is nicer this year than in previous years. The animals are better off, I'm not wading through the mud, and my boots are cleaner!

It is too late for you to fully act on all the tips for this year, but there actually are some things you can still do. All is not lost; wintertime is an excellent opportunity to learn more, make observations, and plan. Here is how you can act now for next year's muddy mess.

Start by coming to this January's program and learn about sacrifice pastures, vegetative buffer strips, wetlands plants and pasture tiling; diverting clean water using rain gutters, down spouts, French drains, and ditches on and around your barns and pastures; and comparing different hardened surface areas (concrete, rock, and various wood chip materials) for lessening the impact of rain and livestock. We will discuss the value of manure for fertilizing, manure storage and composting tips to facilitate the use of your livestock's valuable by-products, and proper fertilization of your pastures to ensure you are not over or under applying resources to your land. This will benefit your pocketbook and the environment. We have put together a nice PowerPoint presentation and a large packet of information with lots of technical specifications for you.

Next, you can make some careful observations on where water is coming from and what are your most problematic areas. Take measurements and lay out plans on land areas, forage resources, and buildings. You can also start work on your protected, productive pastures; including soil testing for fertilizer needs and exploring new forages to plant that are appropriate for your area.

Finally, you can gather, purchase, or save up for materials you will need when the weather improves enough for work to be done so YOU will be prepared for the next onslaught of manure and mud.

OSU Manure & Mud Management Workshop

January 20, 2011 from 6:30-8:30 PM

At the Elkton Community Education Center

15850 Highway 38 W, Elkton, Oregon

Hosted by Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District

Speaker:

Shelby Filley, OSU Extension Regional Livestock Forages Specialist

Winter is already here and livestock in small pastures, paddocks, or other confined spaces may already be up to their knees in mud. Now is the time to identify those areas that need treatment such as high traffic areas and roof drip lines. If you want to reduce mud around your cattle, sheep, horse, or other livestock pastures this year, you don't want to miss this class.

Composting and fertilizer value of manure will also be discussed.

The cost of this class is \$10.00 and pre-registration is due by Tuesday, January 18th. For more details or to register, call (541) 672-4461.

Please come join us for a wonderful evening!

Refreshments will be provided.

Let us know you are interested in attending the upcoming class so we can prepare enough handouts and refreshments. There is a \$10.00 fee for the class and pre-registration is requested by January 18. Please call the Oregon State University Extension Service/Douglas County at 541-672-4461 or 800-883-7568, or email rainsippy@oregonstate.edu. Raini is the new Small Farms and Natural Resource Instructor working to bring you some new and interesting programs. Raini and Shelby Filley, Regional Livestock and Forage Specialist, will be teaching the class, and Rhonda Black from the Umpqua SWCD will be providing her expertise on soils and water for the program. For further assistance, you can contact Shelby at shelby.filley@oregonstate.edu or visit the Regional Livestock and Forages Website at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/douglas>. The website is packed full of information and winter reading to help you improve conditions around your small farm or larger ranch and improve the efficiency of your livestock and forage production.

Other OSU programs coming soon include:

Animal Nutrition and Grazing Basics
January 5, 2011, 6:30-8:30 pm. Courthouse Annex (Extension Building) in Roseburg.

Douglas County Weed Day
February 2, 2011, 8 am to 5:30 pm. Douglas County Fairgrounds in Roseburg.

About the District

The Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District was formed in 1953. The District's boundaries encompass 600,000 acres of northwestern Douglas County and include the communities of Reedsport, Gardiner, Winchester Bay, Smith River, Tahkenitch Lake, Ash Valley, Scottsburg, Elkton and Kellogg.

A seven member Board of Directors elected in the general election serve without pay to administer District activities.

Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation

District Board of Directors

King Phelps – Chair

George Black – Vice Chair

Tom Black – Secretary/Treasurer

Rod Brandon

Paul Dailey

Bob Sharp

Meetings are held the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. during daylight savings time and 6:00 p.m. during standard time. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend meetings, which are generally held at the Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District office, located within the Reedsport Coffee House and Bistro, 2285 Longwood Drive in Reedsport.

SWCD Staff

Rhonda Black – Conservation Technician/
District Manager

Laura Smith – Assistant Conservation
Technician

“The mission of the locally led Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide assistance to any individual, group, or agency in applying natural resource conservation practices for the wise use of their natural resources.”

Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District ANNUAL MEETING

By Conservation Technician/District
Manager Rhonda Black

The Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District annual meeting was a great success. The meeting was held on November 18, 2010 at the Reedsport Coffee House & Bistro where everyone visited with friends and enjoyed a delicious buffet of hors d'oeuvres followed by presentations and awards.

Guest speaker David Chain, District Conservationist from the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service provided information on Natural Resources Conservation Service programs available to District residents and gave a presentation showing various projects in the Elkton and Roseburg areas of Douglas County.

Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District Conservation Technician/District Manager Rhonda Black gave a presentation on the history of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, what a Soil and Water Conservation District is and an overview of current and past Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District projects.

Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District Assistant Conservation Technician Laura Smith presented information on the Noxious Weed Survey, Tide Gate Inventory and gave information on the different kinds of tide gates found throughout the District as well as describing how different kinds of tide gates work.

NRCS District Conservationist David Chain presented three Certificates of Appreciation to District residents for work completed on their property through contracts with the Environmental Quality Incentive Program with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The first Certificate of Appreciation was presented to John Compton for completion of practices on his land which included replanting pastures, installation of livestock water systems, access roads, creating heavy use protection areas, cross fences to improve livestock grazing management, creating protected riparian areas with the use of exclusion fences and planting native trees to provide habitat in riparian areas.

The second Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Darryl Ray for the completion of practices on his land which included replanting pastures, installation of livestock water systems and spring developments, and creating access roads and heavy use protection areas for feeding livestock in the winter which aid in managing livestock grazing.

The third Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Vincent Fox for completion of practices on his land which included the installation of an efficient irrigation system that improves pasture growth rate. The updated irrigation system includes a buried mainline, fish screen on the pump inlet and a K-Line irrigation system allowing better application and management of irrigation water.

John Compton, Darryl Ray and Vincent Fox have all done an outstanding job of improving and managing the resources on their properties.

The Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District would like to send a big thank you out to everyone who attended the Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District 57th annual meeting!

A Great Idea to Help with the Muddy Winter!

By Conservation Technician/District Manager Rhonda Black

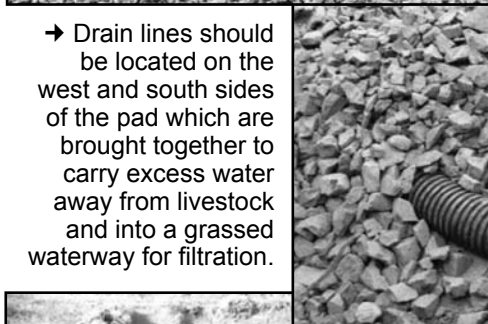
Mud is no fun and it is a big problem in the winter since we live in an area where rain is constantly bombarding us all winter long. This regular downpour is especially troublesome for livestock owners who battle mud where livestock is kept. Now, thanks to Columbia Soil and Water Conservation District the Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District has visual directions on how to construct a hardened turn-out area for horses which can also work as a sacrifice area for cattle and other livestock to help limit mud during the rainy season.

Give us a call or email us today so we can help you win the battle of the mud! Grants are available to help finance these great projects.



↑ First, excavate the entire pad down so the finished surface will be at ground level then lay out geotextile fabric with a base layer of 2-6" drain rock placed over the top.

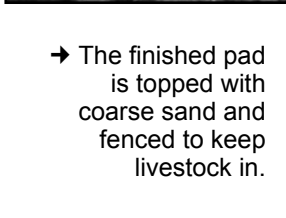
← Next, place a layer of ¾ minus rock to aid with drainage.



→ Drain lines should be located on the west and south sides of the pad which are brought together to carry excess water away from livestock and into a grassed waterway for filtration.



← Notice how the surface of the pad is at ground level.



→ The finished pad is topped with coarse sand and fenced to keep livestock in.



Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District

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Email: rhonda@umpquasoilandwater.com

Website: www.umpquasoilandwater.com

How to Find Us:

If going north on Highway 101 take the first right onto Longwood Drive just as you enter Reedsport. For reference, the Reedsport High School will be across the street. Then turn right into the Reedsport Coffee House and Bistro parking lot. Come on inside and visit us at the Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District office.

If going south on Highway 101 drive through the last stoplight in Reedsport. Turn into the last turning lane and turn left onto Longwood Drive. Then turn right into the Reedsport Coffee House and Bistro parking lot. Visit us upstairs at the Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District office.

MEETINGS IN THE AREA

Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District

Meets every 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM during daylight savings time and 6:00 PM during standard time. Generally held at the Reedsport Coffee House and Bistro, 2285 Longwood Drive in Reedsport and occasionally held at the Elkton Community Education Center, 15850 Highway 38 West in Elkton. Contact Rhonda Black for information at (541) 662-1341 or email rhonda@umpquasoilandwater.com.

Smith River Watershed Council

Meets the 4th Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM. Held at the Smith River Grange Hall, milepost #9 on Smith River Road. Contact Brian Swift for information at (541) 271-2223 or email swift@smithriverwatershed.org.

Gardiner/Reedsport/Winchester Bay Salmon Trout Enhancement Program

Meets every Wednesday at 8:00 AM. Held at the Gardiner hatchery at 76919 US Highway 101 North. Contact Dave Harris at (541) 271-4210.

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

"To be a respected, valued community organization committed to managing the natural resources base for future generations. To ensure sustainable agricultural and forest production, supporting functioning human, wildlife, fish and forest habitat."

