

# CONSERVATION CONNECTION

Spring/Summer 2018



## Mark Your Calendar

- Conservation District Board of Supervisors Meeting on Wednesday, June 27. (Regular meetings held every 4th Wed.)
- VSP –Informational Meetings for Public Review of Final Draft Work Plan. Friday, June 1 Barstow, Monday June 18 Curlew, Tuesday June 19, Republic (see box page 3)
- VSP Final Draft Work Plan—Public Comment period ends Friday, June 29
- Voluntary Stewardship Planning meeting Monday, July 16. Ferry County Commissioners’ office, Republic (see box pg. 4)

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## Ferry Conservation District

Our mission is to safeguard the rural lifestyle and sustainable use of natural resources of Ferry County for present and future landowners, residents, and visitors by offering technical and financial assistance, outreach, and education through partnerships.

## Renewable Energy Incentive

### Washington State offers Program to Encourage Renewables



*Install your own system or hire a contractor.*

Have you ever considered generating your own electricity with solar panels, wind mills or anaerobic digesters? Now may be a good time for taking this step.

The State of Washington is offering a new incentive program for renewable energy systems. While there has been a renewable energy incentive program in effect in the state for several years, its term is coming to an end and being replaced by this new program. Signed into law by Governor Jay Inslee in July 2017, the program provides

incentive payments for homeowners, as well as commercial and community energy consumers.

Homeowners who wish to install renewable energy systems under this new program may be eligible for payments of \$0.16 per kilowatt hour (KWH) of energy produced (slightly more if the equipment purchased is manufactured in Washington). The system must be grid-tied and not connected to batteries to be eligible for the incentive payment. These payments will be received for eight years or until 50% of the total system price is reached –

whichever comes first.

As an additional bonus, the federal government is offering a 30% tax credit on qualifying alternative systems. So, for example, if a homeowner spends \$15,000 on a system in 2018, he or she will be able to claim a \$4500 rebate on this year’s income tax. If the maximum incentive amount (50%) is reached, the net cost this system will be just \$3000.

The true sweetener in the mix is that any power produced by the system offsets the homeowner’s power bill. Even a small amount of monthly savings from such power production will further reduce the remaining \$2000 in the above example. And, if and when the system is paid for, any additional production is simply money saved by the homeowner.

Though qualifying systems may be installed through *(Renewable Incentive, cont. on pg. 3)*



## Another Successful Plant Sale

At our 2018 Spring Plant Sale more than 100 customers purchased native and ornamental trees and shrubs, fruit and nut trees, reforestation trees, strawberries and asparagus. This was our biggest sale in many years! The Conservation Fair was also a success. A large crowd showed up at the Fairgrounds on the beautiful sunny Saturday to learn about Ferry County’s natural resources. We look forward to seeing you all next year!

## Historic Kettle River Flooding Spring 2018



*Highway 21 bridge in Curlew during high water*

Extremely high snowpack during the winter of 2017-18 in northeastern Washington and south-central British Columbia set the stage for an immense spring run-off. Our best hope was that with the right conditions – slowly rising temperatures, little rainfall - the runoff would be big, but perhaps not that impactful.

However, that was not to be. In early spring the temps stayed low, keeping the snowpack relatively intact. During the last week of April and the first week of May, the temperature rose, first into the 70s and then reaching the low 80s. The Kettle River rose along with the temperature. On May 10, a day punctuated by intense cloudbursts throughout the region, the Kettle River rose swiftly, and, just before midnight, crested at 22.54 ft., a full 1.47 feet higher than the previous high-water mark of 21.07 feet measured on May 29, 1948.

*“Our community will pull through as it always has and help those who suffer property damage or loss.”*



*Kettle River overlook, July 2016*



*Same spot, May 11, 2018*

Basements flooded and some residents had to leave their homes - some even by kayak. Some roads were closed, including Highway 21 between Curlew and Danville. Volunteers were organized to help with sandbagging and to be on-call should evacuations become necessary. Our community will pull through as it always has and help those who have suffered property damage or loss.

As you can see from the photos, our wide floodplains have served us well, filling with water to mitigate the destructive power of the river. Nonetheless, miles of streambank will feel the stress and may experience damage, especially where the riparian zone had been previously compromised. As the waters recede we will begin to survey the effects of this historic event.



*Flood plain doing its job!*

### Agricultural Producers

Have you have experienced damage or losses from the recent flooding? Contact the Farm Services Agency at 509-422-2750 as soon as possible to see if you are eligible for recovery assistance.

## 2018 Renewable Incentive (cont. from pg. 1)

June 2021, the per-KWH rate will start decreasing after June 30, 1018. The federal tax rebate will also start declining after the end of 2018. In addition, there are upper limits on the budget for the State program and on the budget each local utility has available for incentive payments. When the limit is reached in a utility area, the payments will be reduced. For all of these reasons, it is important to get started planning your system as soon as possible.

Visit the Solar Washington website ([https://www.solarwa.org/solar for homeowners](https://www.solarwa.org/solar-for-homeowners)) for

information on evaluating your home for solar sizing, pricing, financing and installing your system as well as hiring a solar contractor. Visit <http://www.energy.wsu.edu/> (click on Renewable Energy Incentive program) for more information and for an on-line application.



*Photovoltaic panels can be roof-mounted or pole-mounted.*

Several Ferry County residents have recently taken advantage of these incentives and installed photovoltaic (solar) panels on their property. They would be willing to show off their systems and share their experiences with other interested homeowners. Please contact Bill Chamberlin at the Ferry Conservation District (509-775-3473, ext. 109) to arrange to see one of these systems.

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The Ferry County Voluntary Stewardship (VSP) Work Group has completed the VSP Final Draft Work Plan! The plan is available online for review (For more info and a link to the plan [click here](#).) The public is invited to comment on it by Friday, June 29. A series of three meetings are scheduled for information and Q&A:

- Friday, June 1, 7:00 to 8:30 pm—Kettle River Grange, Barstow
- Monday, June 18, 5:00 to 7:00 pm— Old Curlew Fire Hall
- Tuesday, June 19, 5:00 to 7:00 pm—Ferry County Commissioners’ Office

The next regular meeting of the Work Group is scheduled for Monday, July 16, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at the Ferry County Commissioners’ Office.

## Ferry Conservation District

84 East Delaware Ave.  
PO Box 1045  
Republic, WA 99166  
(509)775-3473 Ext. 5

Conserving Natural Resources Since 1947

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

**EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation or improved or create wildlife habitat.**

**The deadline for the next round of EQIP funding will be in September, 2018.**

**Each applicant must establish themselves as a USDA customer and complete all Farm Service Agency (FSA) eligibility requirements *prior* to the application cut-off date.**

**For additional information contact Patrice Beckwith at 509-775-3473 x102.**

## Agriculture, Water, & Local Control

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS ENCOURAGED AND NEEDED!

The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is the final step for Ferry County to opt out of the Growth Management Act (GMA). It is about making rules locally to fit local needs.

Next Work Group Meeting

Monday, July 16, 5:00 pm

County Commissioners'

Office - Republic

For more information  
Call (509) 775-3473 ext. 5



Volunteering to participate means :

- We maintain local control, instead of following State mandated regulations.
- Our priority is to maintain the economic viability of Ferry County agriculture.
- Participation in the program is *voluntary*.
- The program recognizes the good stewardship of Ferry County's farmers, ranchers and land owners.
- There will be incentives provided to participants upon completion of the program report.



FERRY CONSERVATION DISTRICT



We're on the Web. Visit us at:

<http://www.ferrycd.org>

#### Board of Supervisors

Eric Bracken, *Chair*  
Dave Konz, *Vice Chair*  
Charlotte Coombes, *Auditor*  
Dave Hedrick, *Member*  
Scott Palmer, *Member*  
Bowe Brown, *Associate*  
John Hamilton, *Associate*

#### Staff

Lloyd Odell, *Manager*  
Liz Carr, *Water Quality Specialist*  
Candy Lammon, *Financial Administrator*  
Bill Chamberlin, *Resource Assistant*  
Patrice Beckwith, *NRCS Resource Conservationist*



*Curlew's Ol' Swimmin' Hole underwater.*

*Ferry Conservation District is a non-regulatory agency. Our services are available to all without discrimination.*