

CONSERVATION CONNECTION

Spring 2019



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.

Mark Your Calendar

- **VSP –Education and Outreach Phase begins. Meeting May 13 5:00 pm. FC Commissioners Office**
- **Conservation District Board of Supervisors Meeting, Wednesday, May 22 5:30. Conservation District Office**

Introducing Our New District Manager Dave Hedrick

Dave Hedrick became the Ferry Conservation District Manager in April of 2019 after serving as an appointed Supervisor on our Board for two years. Dave will oversee the day-to-day activities of the district as well as serve as the lead person for outreach and communication with conservation partners. He comes to us after a long career in natural resources. His diverse experience ranges from co-managing the timber and land on his family ranch to owning and operating a large commercial fishing boat in Alaska for 38 years. He grew up north of Colville and has resided in Ferry County for the last twenty years.



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Proper Soil Nutrients Are Essential to Gardening Success Have Your Soil Analyzed by the Conservation District

The soil in a virgin forest or grassland, never tilled by humans, is full of nutrients: minerals released from native rocks, decomposed plant and animal matter, and nutrients from flood deposits. These nutrients have been used for millennia by the native flora and fauna, and then recycled back into the soil. Human agriculture, however, breaks this nutrient cycle, as crops (containing the nutrients) are removed and consumed. If the proper steps are not taken, the soil will become nutrient

poor and harvests will become smaller. Early settlers in this country learned this the hard way as they “used up” the soil on their farms and were forced to move to new unfarmed land.

Today’s farmers have learned how to replenish the nutrients in the soil: spreading manure from their animals back on the fields, applying fertilizer, and planting cover crops, including nitrogen-fixing legumes, which can be plowed back into the ground.



Backyard gardeners can benefit from a vast amount of knowledge now available about soil and soil health. A soil analysis will provide the gardener a nutrient profile of the soil and will help immensely with decisions about fertilizer application. *(Soil Health, cont. on pg. 3)*

Transition at the Conservation Office

Patrice Beckwith Retires after 30 Years of Service with NRCS



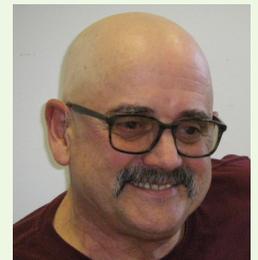
Patrice started her federal career with the Forest Service in Priest Lake, Idaho in 1986, where she served as a volunteer for the Student Conservation Association working in Fisheries and Wildlife. Returning to her home state of Rhode Island she was an Earth Team Volunteer while taking soils classes to meet the requirements for a position with the Soil Conservation Service. In 1988, Connecticut SCS hired Patrice as a Soil Conservationist. In March of 1991, Patrice accepted a promotion as a District Conservationist in Washington State and moved with her husband Jim to the remote mountain town of Republic. Here they have built a home and raised their two daughters, Christina and Lily.

After nearly 32 years of federal service and 28 years in Republic, it is time for a new chapter in Patrice’s life. Patrice is actively involved on community boards and has found an awesome network of friends in Ferry County to keep her engaged.

“I have learned a lot from so many different people. I am grateful for the connections I have made over the years. I have no regrets and countless great memories. I wish everyone the good fortune I have had.” Patrice Beckwith

Patrice recalls all the wonderful people she has encountered while working for SCS and NRCS, both her colleagues and clients. “I have learned a lot from so many different people. I am grateful for the connections I have made over the years. I have no regrets and countless great memories. I wish everyone the good fortune I have had.”

Lloyd Odell Takes on New Role as VSP Coordinator



After 11 years as Manager of the Ferry Conservation District, Lloyd Odell is giving up the helm. He has moved to part-time status, and will stay with the District, serving as the Ferry County Voluntary Stewardship (VSP) Program Coordinator.

Lloyd started with the District in 2000. He worked as a resource technician, providing technical assistance to landowners implementing conservation practices on their property and helping these landowners obtain cost-share funding from the District for their projects. He also developed the District’s native plant nursery and provided outreach for the District, writing educational materials, and teaching conservation topics to students aged 5 to adult in the schools and at local events.

As Manager, Lloyd added supervisory duties to his job description, working with staff and coordinating the District’s programs over all. He continued to help landowners with their conservation projects. He secured outside funding to pay for local water quality improvement projects. He also represented the District at regional and statewide meetings. In 2009, and again in 2018, he received the Northeast Washington District Manager of the Year award from the Washington State Conservation Commission.

Since VSP’s inception, Lloyd has guided the efforts to bring Ferry County’s VSP Work Plan to completion. The Work Plan has been approved, and effort has shifted to outreach and implementation. He will continue to guide the program to help agricultural land users balance environmental protection with their economic viability.

Lloyd has thoroughly enjoyed his time with the Ferry Conservation District. He says, “The opportunities to help my neighbors improve their properties has been a dream job. Through the years, people in Ferry County have been good stewards of the land. If I have helped some along the way, I’m happy to have done it.”

Soil Health (cont. from pg. 1)

NPK fertilizer applies to any soil amendment that supplies Nitrogen, Phosphorous, and Potassium (K). These fertilizers can be purchased with varying ratios of these three major plant nutrients. For example, a 6-10-4 fertilizer will contain 6 % nitrogen, 10 % phosphorus, and 10 % potash (potassium). The soil analysis will help determine the ratios of these three nutrients to apply.

Both chemical and organic mixes also exist for improving the levels of these nutrients. The most effective NPK organic fertilizers available for purchase are worm castings and alfalfa meal.

Deficiency in any one of the major nutrients can be treated with a "straight" fertilizer. Chemical fertilizers can be purchased and applied for each of the nutrients.

Organic solutions are available, as well. Planting nitrogen-fixing legumes (e.g., beans, peas and lentils) will "fix" atmospheric nitrogen, converting it into a form of nitrogen used by the plant and left in the soil for other plants. Applications of well-seasoned manure or compost with manure, tea, coffee grounds, feathers and kitchen scraps in it will increase levels of nitrogen. Nitrogen-rich fish emulsion, blood meal, cottonseed meal or bat guano can be purchased commercially and applied, as well.



Is your garden deficient in phosphorous? Chicken manure is high in this nutrient. Commercially available organic products rich in phosphorous include bat guano, soft rock phosphate, steamed bone meal, and fish bone meal.

Applications of well-composted sheep manure and wood ash (not recommended for pH higher than 6.5) will improve the potassium levels in your garden. Commercial organic products containing potassium include green sand (a marine sediment), kelp meal and alfalfa meal.

Although nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus are the three most important nutrients, plants also need the macronutrients calcium, magnesium, sulfur, as well as numerous micronutrients and trace nutrients for proper development. Supplements are available for all of these in both chemical and organic form.

Another important factor for garden success is having the proper pH level. pH, a measurement of acidity level, determines the availability of mineral nutrients for each crop. A number of common garden plants, among them potatoes, raspberry, carrots and cauliflower prefer a slightly acidic soil (pH 5.0-6.0). Other plants such as corn onion, peas, and cabbage will thrive in slightly acid or neutral soil (pH 6.0-8.0). One of the best ways to lower pH (make soil more acidic) is to add elemental sulfur. If the soil is too acidic, a treatment of dolomite lime (because it contains magnesium, it is not recommended when magnesium levels are adequate or high), or crushed oyster shells will raise the pH.

If you would like to have your garden soil analyzed to determine what you can add to improve the soil, please contact the Ferry Conservation District at 775-3473 (ext. 5). We will explain how best to sample your soil and we will test your soil for pH, nitrogen and potassium for free.

Visit this website (designed for kids but applicable for all ages) for some excellent information about soil nutrients and pH:

<http://www.ncagr.gov/cyber/kidswrld/plant/nutrient.htm>

"...pH, a measurement of acidity level, determines the availability of mineral nutrients for each crop. ..."

Ferry Conservation District

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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.

Next deadline for EQIP funding to be announced.

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 Karla Ware
509-685-0858 x115 or
Karla.Ware@wa.usda.gov**

The Ferry County Voluntary Stewardship (VSP) Work Plan has been approved by the Washington State Conservation Commission Technical Committee.

The plan is available online for review (For more info and a link to the plan [click here.](#))



We're on the Web. Visit us at:

<http://www.ferrycd.org>

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Eric Bracken, *Chair*
Dave Konz, *Vice Chair*
Charlotte Coombes, *Auditor*
Scott Palmer, *Supervisor*



Apple Blossoms in Spring

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