

ASOTIN COUNTY

Couse Creek Feed Area Relocation and Riparian Habitat Project

Resource Challenge

Prior to 2001, livestock in lower Couse Creek had uncontrolled access to the stream and were fed at several locations along the stream, which had a negative effect on the instream and riparian habitat. The landowner recognized the impacts and enrolled 58.2 acres in CREP, protecting 3.2 miles of stream bank. Since the areas previously used for winter feeding were part of the CREP buffer, new feed areas were needed as well as water sources for livestock.

Project Summary

The project is located on Couse Creek, an ESA listed stream and tributary of the Snake river. Objectives were to improve fish habitat, riparian vegetation, and ground and surface water quality. Improvements consisted of restricting livestock from the riparian corridor, planting trees and shrubs in the CREP buffer, creating new feed areas and water sources for livestock, and installing a waste management system including a comprehensive nutrient management plan. Shelterbelts, including fabric mulch and drip irrigation, were also installed along the feed areas to protect livestock from the elements.

Project Results

The project resulted in 58.2 acres along Couse Creek being enrolled in CREP including 3.2 miles of stream bank protected and 20,770 trees and shrubs planted in the riparian buffer. Three feeding areas were created, and a waste storage facility was built, including a lined storage pond, a dry stack slab, and a transfer slab for manure. The facility was fenced, and a shelterbelt was planted. This project was completed utilizing cost-share from EQIP and District grants, however, the landowner contribution was more than 50% of the total cost. This project will provide instream and riparian protection and restoration. It will also improve ground and surface water quality and reduce soil erosion.

Contact

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State Legislative District # 9
Congressional District # 5

FEATURE ACCOMPLISHMENT



Waste Management System



Feed Area above the CREP Buffer

More Information

Key Partners Involved

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
USDA Farm Service Agency
Asotin County Conservation District
WA Department of Fish & Wildlife
Private Landowner

Funding Partners

Bonneville Power Administration
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
USDA Farm Service Agency
WA Department of Ecology
WA State Conservation Commission
Private Landowner

Asotin County CD

Board of Supervisors

Keith Ausman, Chair
Dan Sangster, Vice-Chair
Jerry Hendrickson, Auditor
Ron Scheibe, Secretary
Rich Witters, Member

OTHER DISTRICT INFORMATION

Background

The Asotin County Conservation District (ACCD) has been serving local citizens since 1940. The District includes all of Asotin County (excluding incorporated cities and towns) and the Grouse Flat area of Garfield County. The District includes the Asotin Creek, Couse Creek, and Tenmile Creek Watersheds, the lower portion of the Grande Ronde River, and a portion of the Umatilla National Forest. Dryland farming and livestock operations are the primary land uses in the District. Asotin County is known for recreation and tourism due to fishing, hunting, and access to Hell's Canyon.

Mission Statement

To advocate, educate, and assist people in responsible land management and agricultural practices that conserve and improve air, soil, and water quality and fish and wildlife habitat for present and future generations.

Natural Resource Priorities and Goals

- **Water Quality:** By June 2011 sediment basins will be installed on 50% of the erosion-causing terrace outlets; runoff systems will be installed on 35% of livestock feeding operations; and 100% of failing septic systems will be updated.
- **Soil Erosion & Quality:** By June 2011 soil erosion and soil quality will be improved on 50% of farmed private cropland; 80% of soil erosion rates will be within the soil loss tolerance levels (T); and 75% of private cropland will be in direct seeding systems.
- **Range & Pasture Health:** By June 2011 prescribed grazing systems will be implemented on 50,000 acres of private grazing lands; 1/3 of private grazing lands will have integrated pest management plans; and 50% of small acreage landowners will have been reached through an education program.
- **Riparian Health:** By June 2011 75% of the eligible stream miles on private land will be enrolled in CREP, 25 miles enrolled in CCRP, and 25 miles fenced with managed grazing plans.
- **Forest Health:** By June 2011 the Firewise program will have 75% private forest landowner participation, with assessed disease and thinning needs on 50% of private forestland.
- **Air Quality:** By June 2011 non-burning, direct seed will occur on 75% of cropland acres; work to continue with the county, state and federal agencies on promoting burning alternatives.

Information - Education Priorities and Goals

- Displays will be at schools, fairs, and other events.
- All counties in Southeastern Washington will be involved in Envirothon.
- All students in Asotin County will have access to the Salmon in the Classroom program.
- A curriculum and workshops will be available for land managers on natural resource topics.
- Asotin County citizens will be reached through website, newsletters, and workshops.

Critical Geographic Areas

Asotin, George, Couse, and Tenmile Creeks

Natural Resources Status: More Work to Do

Strong riparian and upland cost-share programs have been established in Asotin county and will be continued. These programs address a variety of resource concerns, including water quality, riparian health, and soil erosion and quality.

ACCD is in the process of expanding their services to address additional resource concerns.

- Utilizing the livestock funding available, ACCD has been able to start addressing complex livestock issues. The majority of livestock owners in Asotin County utilizes pastureland for fall, winter, and spring grazing, and confine animals during the winter feeding season. ACCD currently has a backlog of landowners that would like technical and financial assistance to address livestock issues.
- ACCD is in the process of building a forestry program that will include Firewise, the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan and forest health awareness.
- A small acreage program is also being developed to assist landowners with conservation efforts on small "farms." Small ownerships (landowners with between 1 and 20 acres) are rapidly increasing throughout Asotin County, and assisting these landowners is going to be a large workload for the District.
- The district is working with the residents of Anatone to install a municipal sewer system to replace individual septic systems. WSU engineering students conducted a feasibility study to identify systems that will work within the limitations of the area.

