

# CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP) STATUS



Washington State  
Conservation  
Commission

Prepared for the Washington Conservation  
Commission Meeting

Brian Cochran, January 21, 2021

# OVERVIEW



- What is CREP?
- What have we accomplished?
- Challenges
- Opportunities
- Walla Walla perspective
- Whatcom perspective

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# WHAT IS CREP?



## bureaucracy noun

 Save Word

bu·reau·cra·cy | \ byū-ˈrā-krə-sē ⓘ, byə-, byər-ˈä- \   
 plural **bureaucracies**

### Definition of *bureaucracy*

- 1 **a** : a body of nonelected government officials  
**b** : an administrative policy-making group
- 2 : government characterized by specialization of functions, adherence to fixed rules, and a hierarchy of authority
- 3 : a system of administration marked by officialism, red tape, and proliferation
- 4 : see CREP

4 : see CREP



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# WHAT IS CREP?



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**FSA**  
HANDBOOK

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Agricultural Resource Conservation Program

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To access the transmittal page click on the short reference.

For State and County Offices

SHORT REFERENCE

2-CRP  
(Revision 5)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Farm Service Agency  
Washington, DC 20250

WA Exhibit 21

CREP – Agreement between USDA and the State of Washington, Including Amendments 1-5

## AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION

AND

THE STATE OF WASHINGTON  
CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A  
CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

## I. PURPOSE

This Agreement is between the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Washington (State) to implement a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to assist in the recovery of salmon species that have been listed as threatened or endangered species under the federal Endangered Species Act.

## II. GENERAL PROVISIONS

# WHAT IS CREP?

## THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION

### FSA HANDBOOK

#### Agricultural Resource Conservation Program

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Washington State



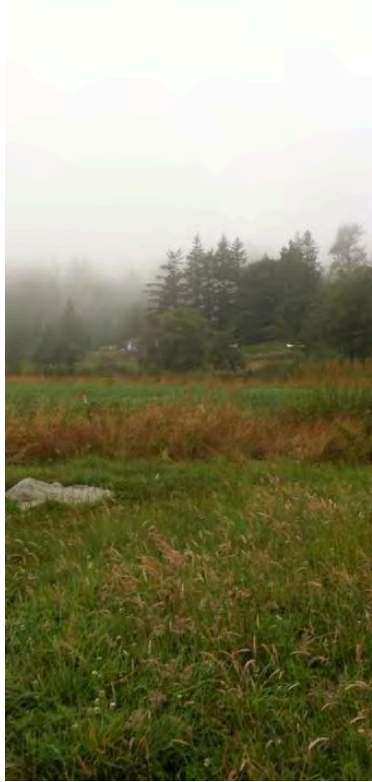
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# WHAT IS CREP?

- CREP is a federal program;
- A daughter program of CRP funded by the Farm Bill;
- A voluntary incentive program created in 1998.
- Different states have different CREP purposes.
- In Washington, CREP is intended to alleviate some of the ag-related habitat loss for ESA listed salmon and steelhead and impacts to water quality via specific objectives.



# WHAT IS CREP?



- In exchange for removing environmentally sensitive land from production agricultural producers are paid an annual rental rate to grow a “riparian crop”.
- FSA funds 80% of costs. State pays 20%.
- Landowner receives:
  - 100% of practice cost,
  - Signing bonus,
  - Rental payment for 10-15 years,
  - 100% maintenance costs for up to 5 years.

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# WHAT LAND IS ELIGIBLE?



- Land must be able to support one of the following NRCS conservation practices:
  - Riparian Forest Buffer
  - Wetland Enhancement
  - Hedgerow
  - Grass Filter Strip
- Land must not already have a functioning buffer;
- Land may not be under an existing easement.



# WHAT LAND IS ELIGIBLE?



- Land must be along specific SASSI identified streams.

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# WHAT LAND IS ELIGIBLE?



- Eligible cropland must have the required "cropping history,"
  - planted to an agricultural commodity crop during 4 of the 6 crop years, 2008 to 2013, and
  - is still physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner.

OR

- Marginal pasture: land that is not cropland or forestland and is not currently functioning as a riparian buffer.

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# WHO CAN/CAN'T PARTICIPATE?



- Producers must own or operate land for at least one year before they can enroll it in CREP, unless:
  - The new owner acquired the land due to the previous owner's death;
  - The ownership change occurred due to a foreclosure; or
  - FSA is otherwise satisfied that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.
- US Citizens

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# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS?



- Fences and off-stream water paid only if grazing exists pre-project;
- All practices subject to FSA local cost caps and WSCC maintenance cost caps;
- No commodity benefits within the buffer (i.e. grazing, timber harvest).

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# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS?

- Subject to confidentiality:

“(5) CONFIDENTIALITY.—Except as provided in section 2107(a)(9), or as otherwise directed by the Secretary or the Attorney General for enforcement purposes, no officer, employee, or agent of the United States shall make available to the public any information, statistic, or document obtained from, or made available by, any person under this title, other than in a manner that ensures that confidentiality is preserved regarding—

“(A) the identity of all relevant persons (including parties to a contract); and

“(B) proprietary business information.

- Unless individual producers opt out with a specific request to FSA.



# WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?

Since 1999, enhanced salmon habitat  
along over 925 miles of  
stream



←-925-→



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# WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?

Since 1999, planted  
nearly six million trees



Population ~ 5,695,000



Population ~ 6,036,000

# WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?

Since 1999, constructed over 280 miles of fence to keep livestock away from salmon streams



Bellingham



←-280->



Pullman

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# WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?

Since 1999, enrolled over 207,000 acres in the program



236,400 acres

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# WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?



Lincoln Creek, Lewis County

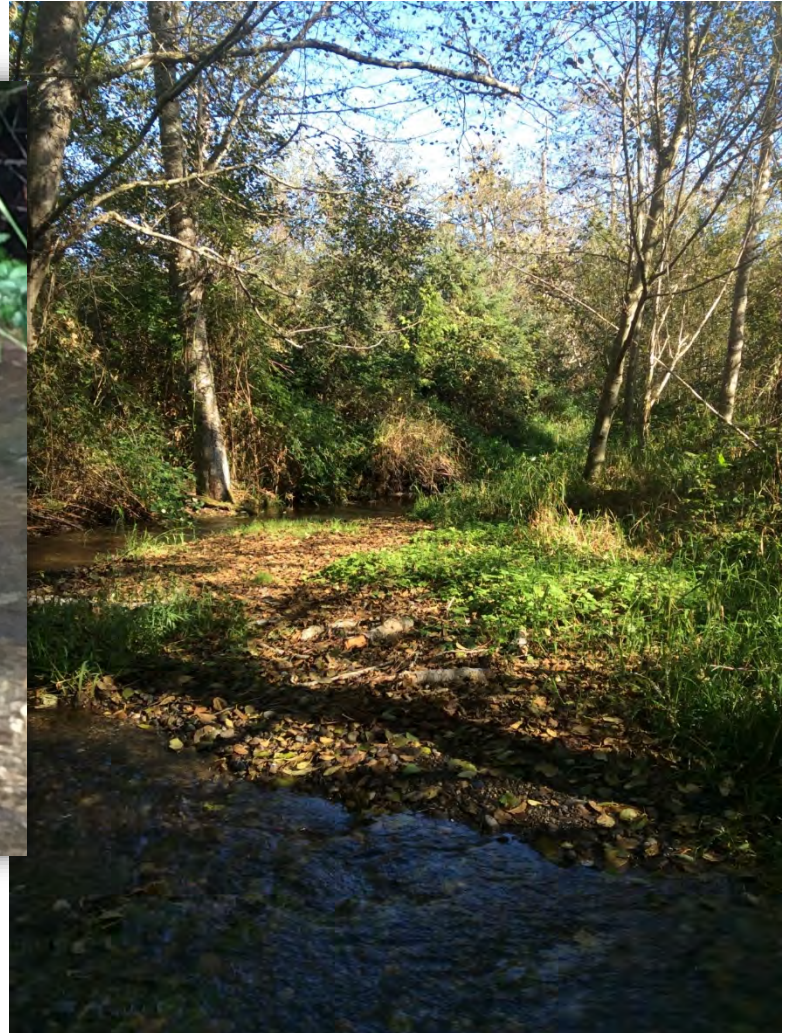
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# WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?



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Jefferson CD, fall 2020



# WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?



Okanogan County

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# WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?





# WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?



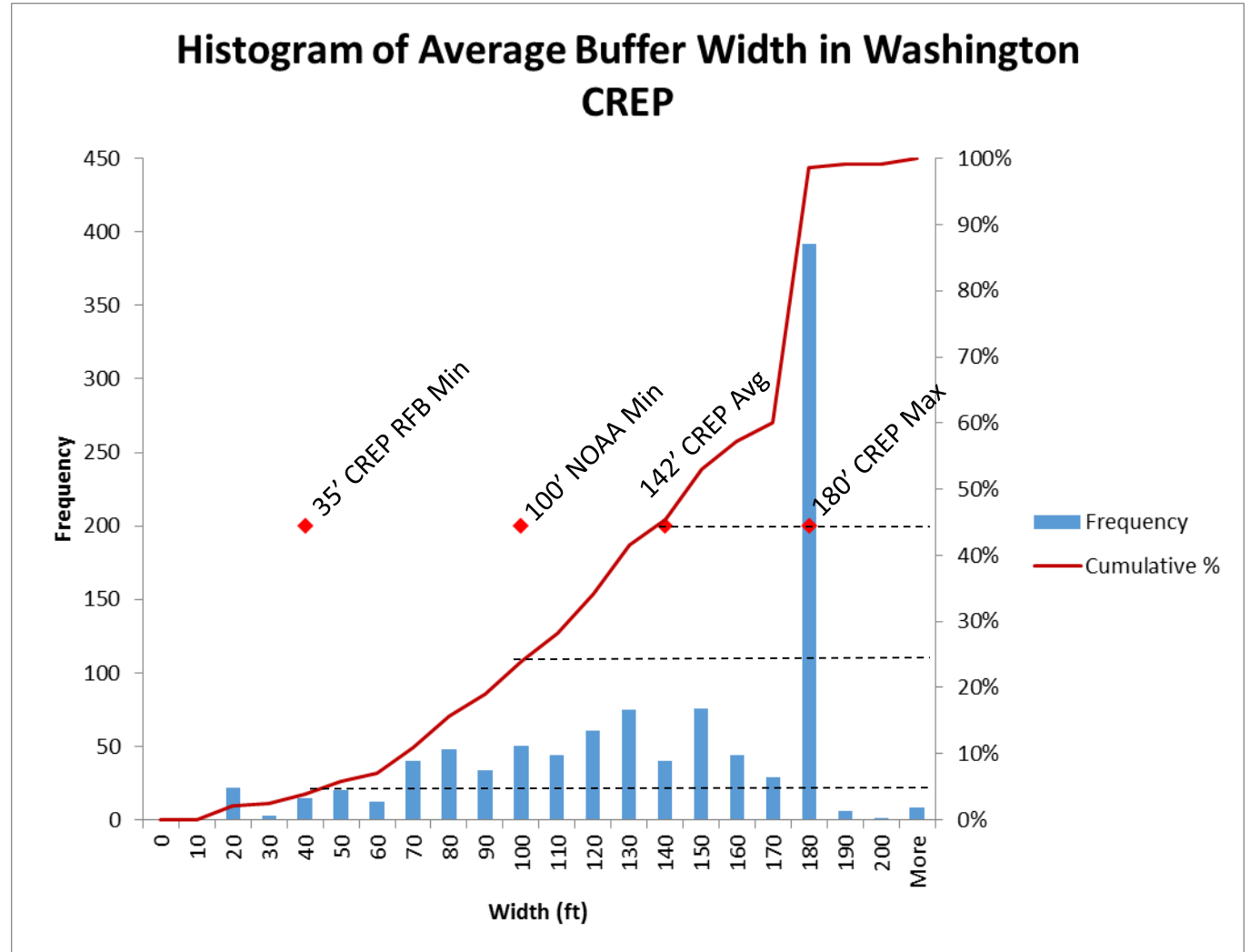
Mark Clark, somewhere in eastern WA, March 2007

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# WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?



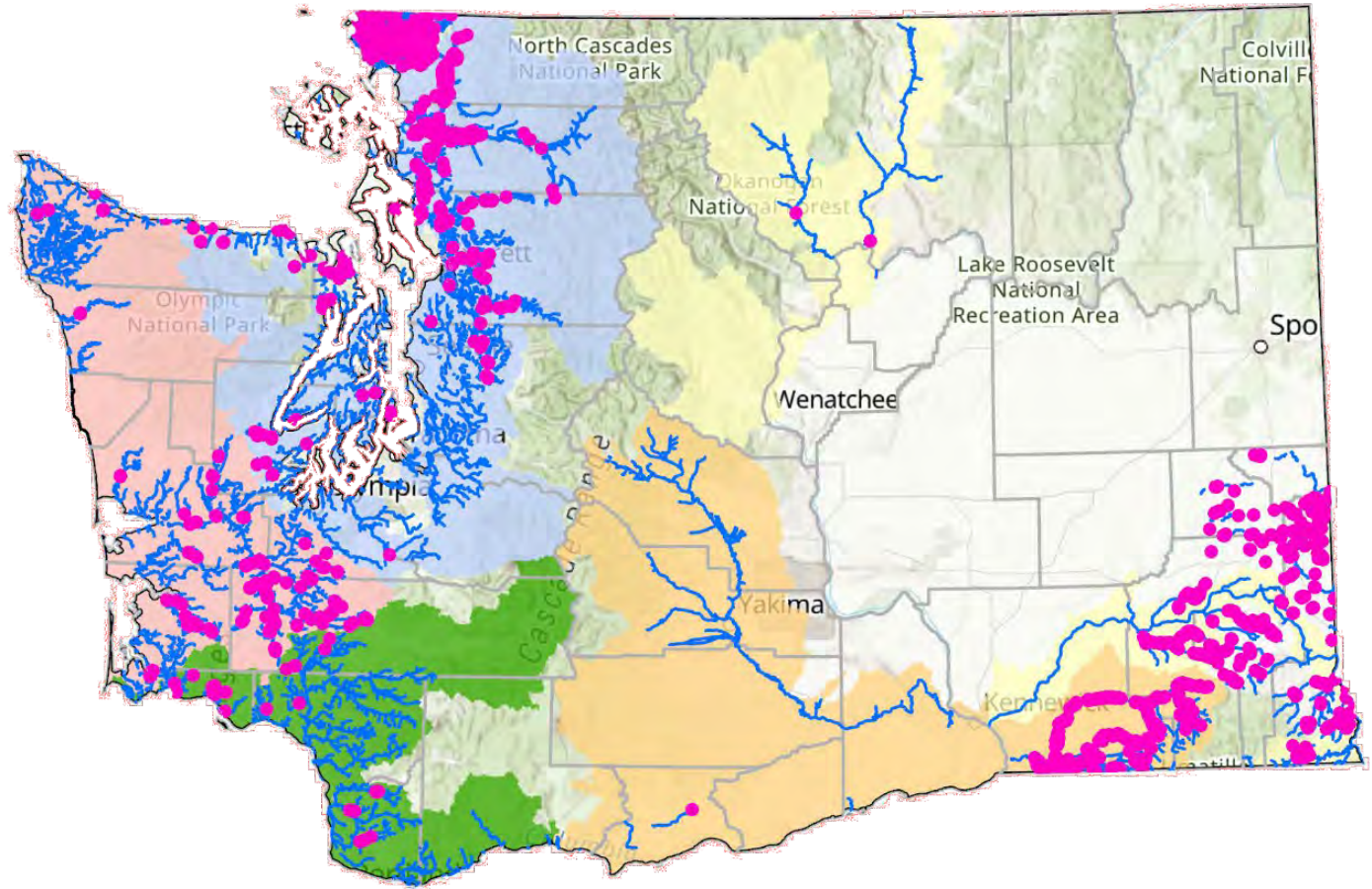
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# WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?



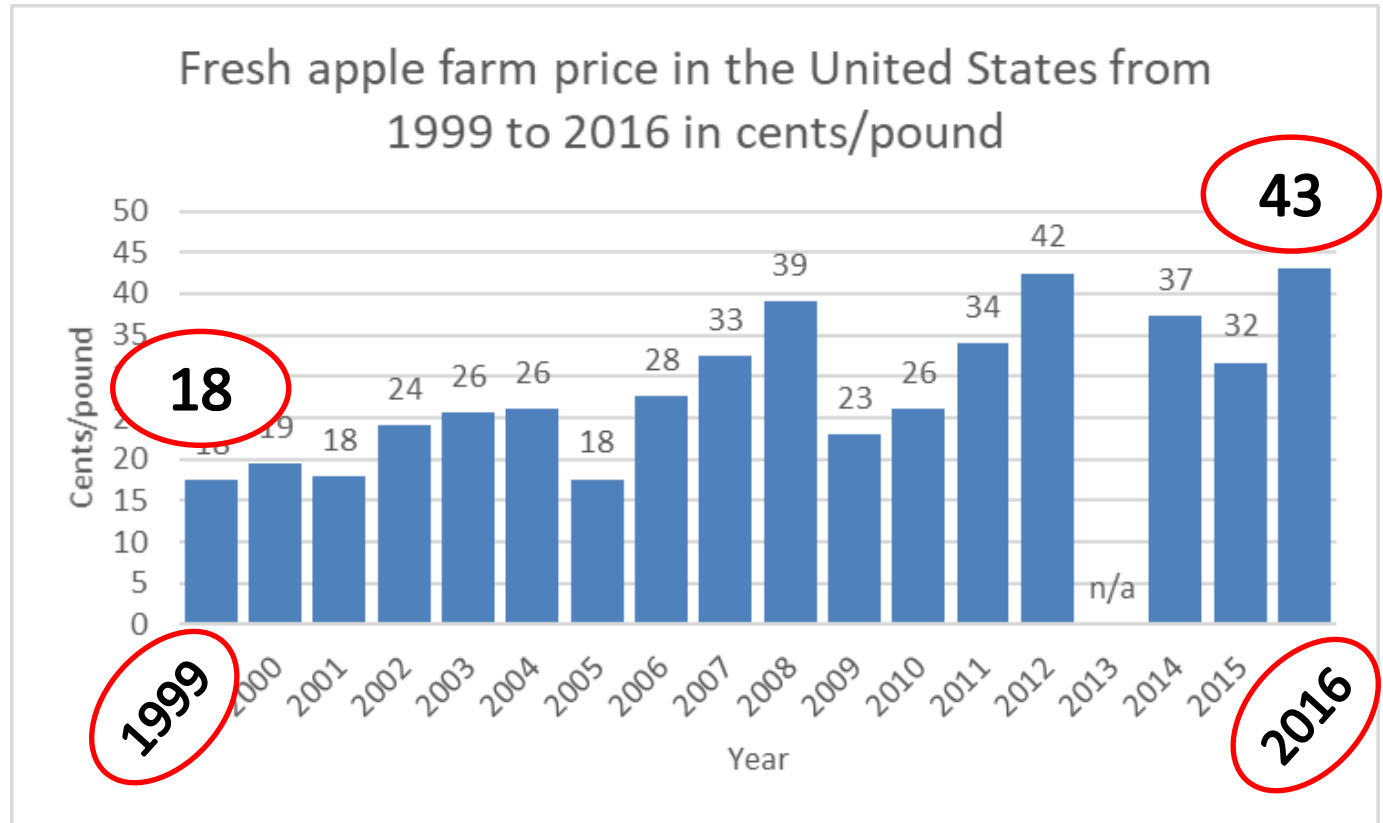
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# CHALLENGES



<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/price-spreads-from-farm-to-consumer/>

Apples yield 16-20K pounds fruit/acre ...

$\$0.26 \times 18k = \$4,680/\text{acre}$

2021 SRR for Yakima, Kittitas, Okanogan = \$53/acre

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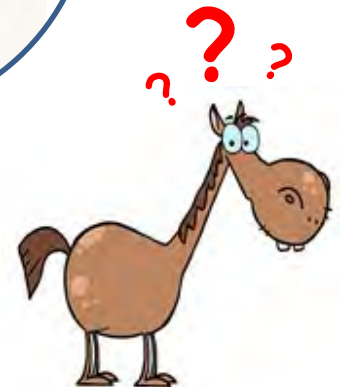
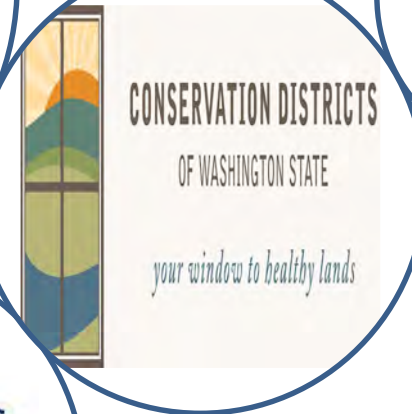
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# CHALLENGES

**FSA County  
Committee**



**District  
Board**  
(landowner  
agreement)



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# CHALLENGES

0 2 4 15 Years 100

Succession

Succession in eastern WA

→ Farm Bill

▶ State biennium

← Relationship building

→ Contract length

What  
defines  
success?



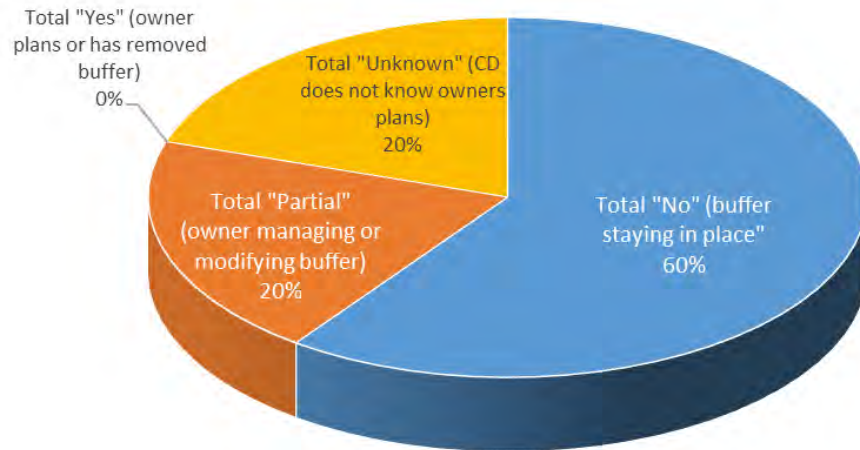
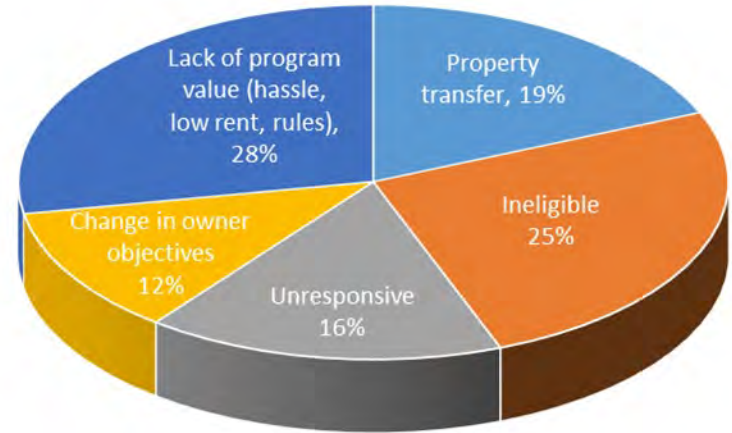
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# CHALLENGES



**Contract length and buffer fate?**

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# CHALLENGES



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**The Way Things Work:**  
How effective watershed projects are organized and what we can do to  
improve public and private sector watershed programs

**Report to the Natural Resources Conservation Service,  
USDA**

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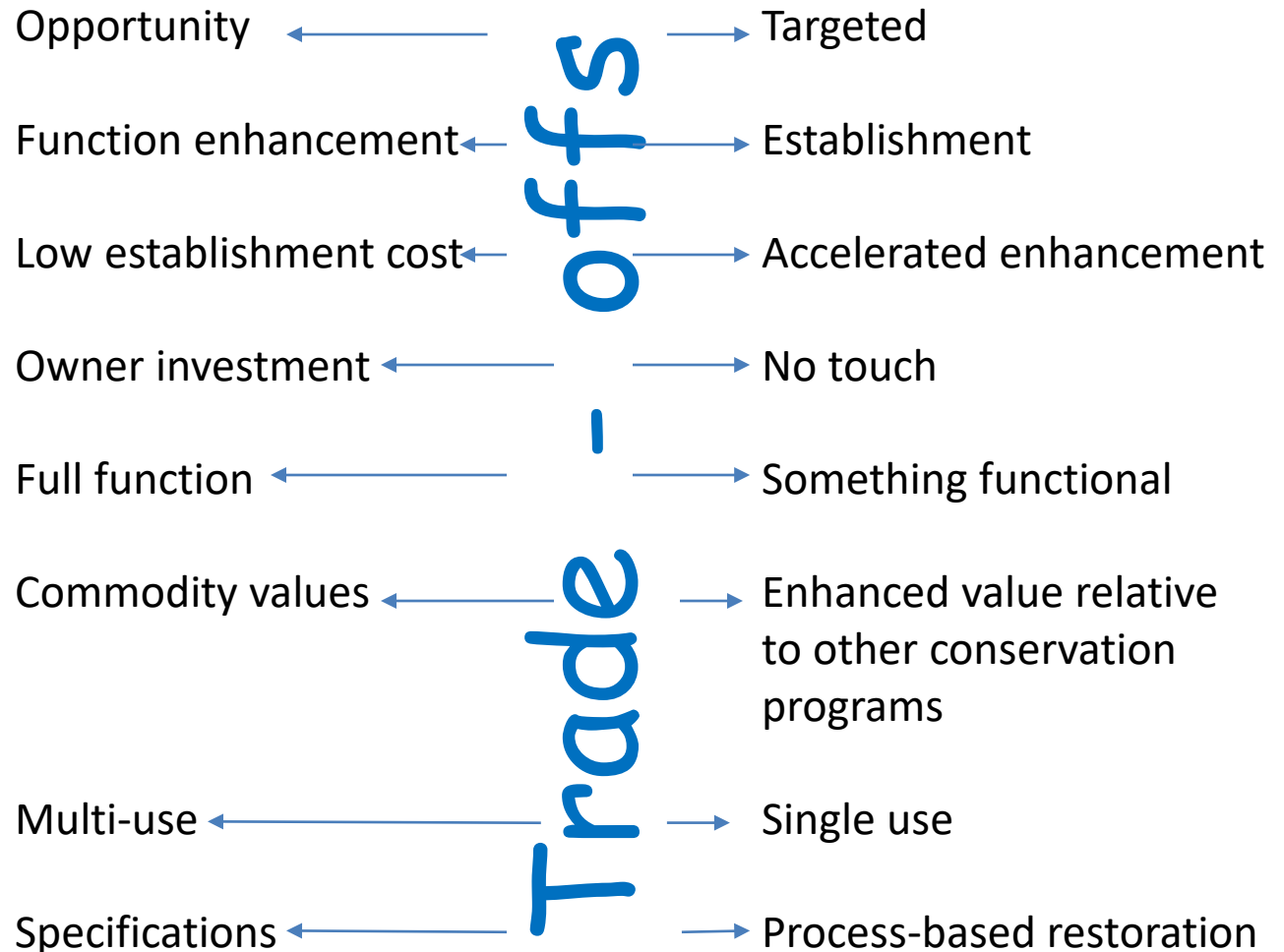
“While the more innovative farmers may be interested or motivated by articles, presentations or outside speakers, researchers such as Everett Rogers (2003) have noted that the majority of adopters of new practices get their information from and are motivated by a trusted, competent individual.”

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# CHALLENGES



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# CHALLENGES: BUFFER WIDTH



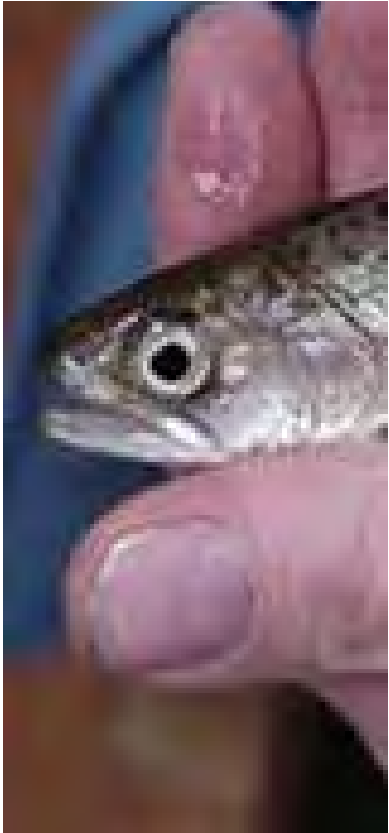
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# OPPORTUNITIES

- Incentives for
  - Wider buffer
  - Higher function buffer
  - Specific WQ issue
  - Percent lineal buffer
  - Re-enrollment
- Separate, complimentary, buffer programs:
  - Small landowner – No monetary reward, but no responsibility
  - Commodity based – grading the “crop”

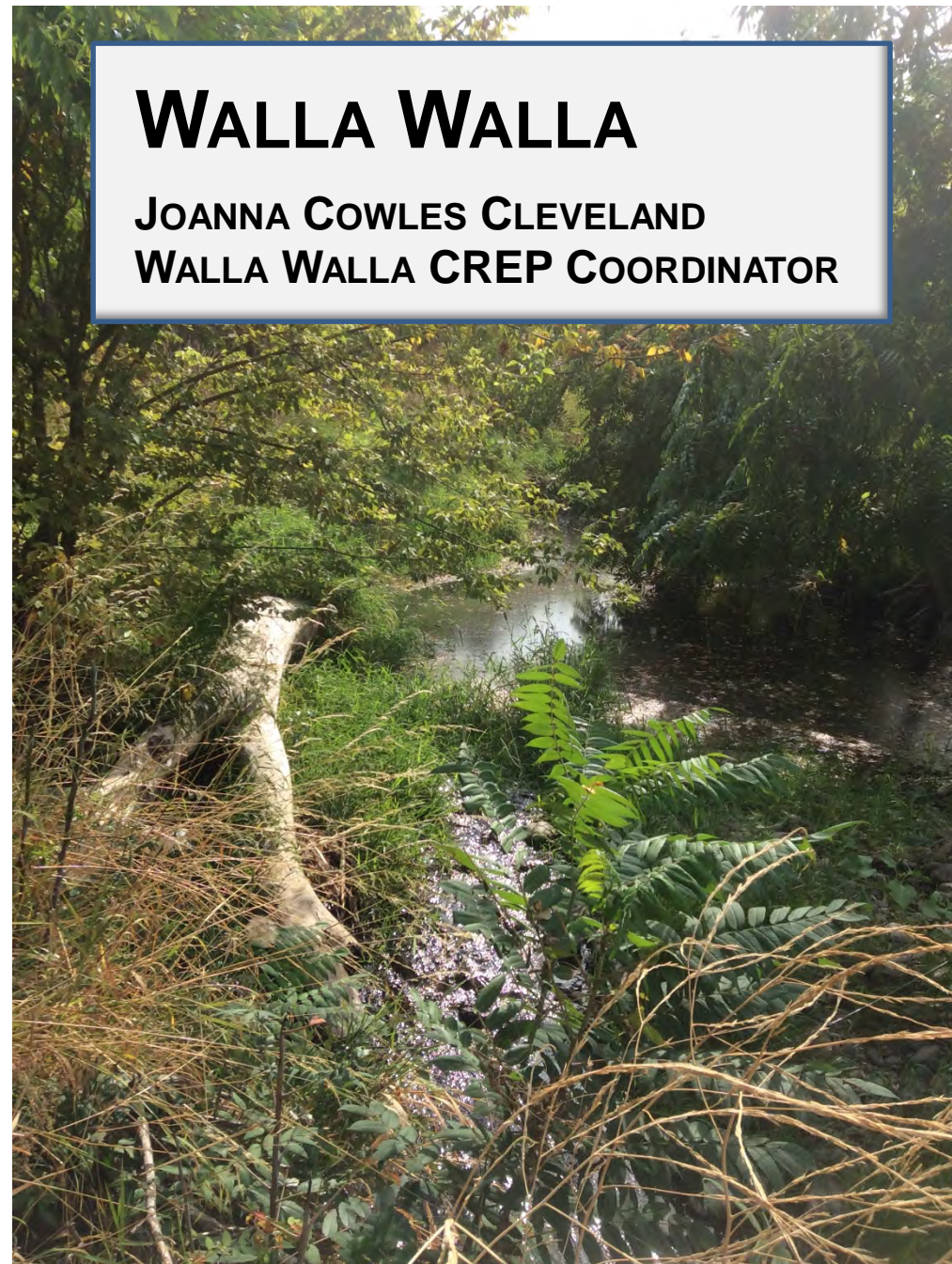
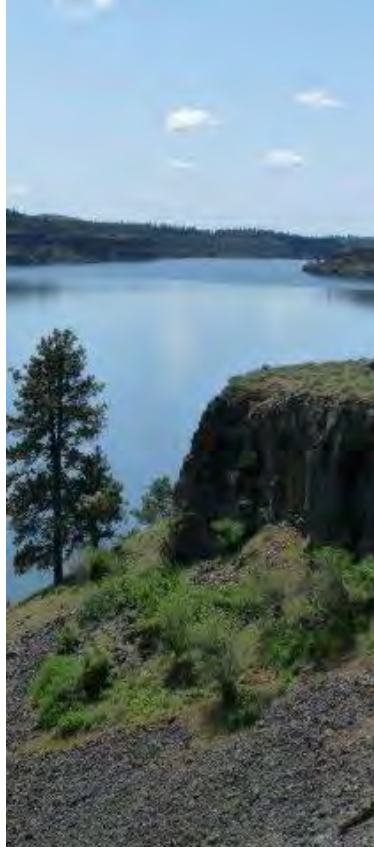


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# **WALLA WALLA**

**JOANNA COWLES CLEVELAND**

**WALLA WALLA CREP COORDINATOR**

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# CREP IN WALLA WALLA COUNTY



**WALLA WALLA COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
ESTABLISHED 1941

**Walla Walla CREP Coordinator:  
Joanna Cowles Cleveland**



**CONSERVATION DISTRICTS  
OF WASHINGTON STATE**

*your window to healthy lands*

# WALLA WALLA

- 126 contracts
- 2,671 acres
- Size: 0.75-168 acres
- Average: 21.20 acres



WALLA WALLA COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
ESTABLISHED 1941



# WALLA WALLA

- Approximately 390 miles of streambank & 1.4 million stems planted



WALLA WALLA COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
ESTABLISHED 1941

# WALLA WALLA

- Precipitation
  - Range of 8-52"
  - Landscape fabric
  - Supplemental watering



WALLA WALLA COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
ESTABLISHED 1941



# WALLA WALLA

- Planting density
- Initial site prep
- Maintenance

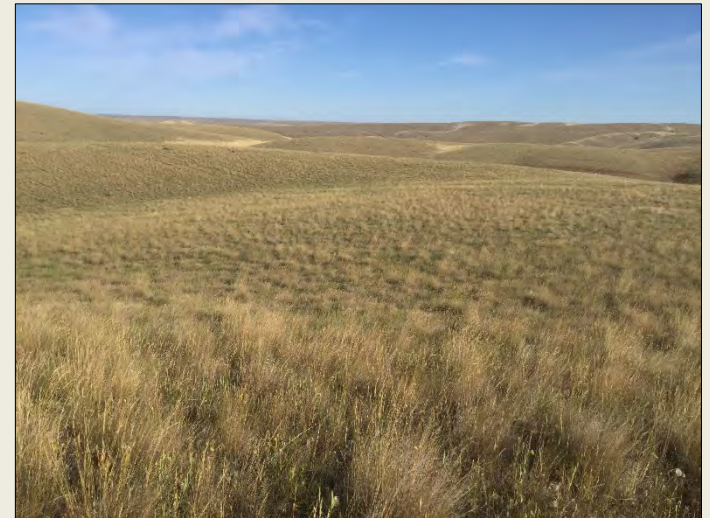


WALLA WALLA COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
ESTABLISHED 1941



# WALLA WALLA

- Cost-share & hold down rates
- Rental rates



WALLA WALLA COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
ESTABLISHED 1941



# WALLA WALLA

- Buffer width requirements
- Positive working relationships with landowners



WALLA WALLA COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
ESTABLISHED 1941



# WALLA WALLA

Before



After



WALLA WALLA COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
ESTABLISHED 1941



# WALLA WALLA

Before



After



WALLA WALLA COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
ESTABLISHED 1941

# WALLA WALLA

Before



After



WALLA WALLA COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
ESTABLISHED 1941



# WALLA WALLA

Before



After



WALLA WALLA COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
ESTABLISHED 1941

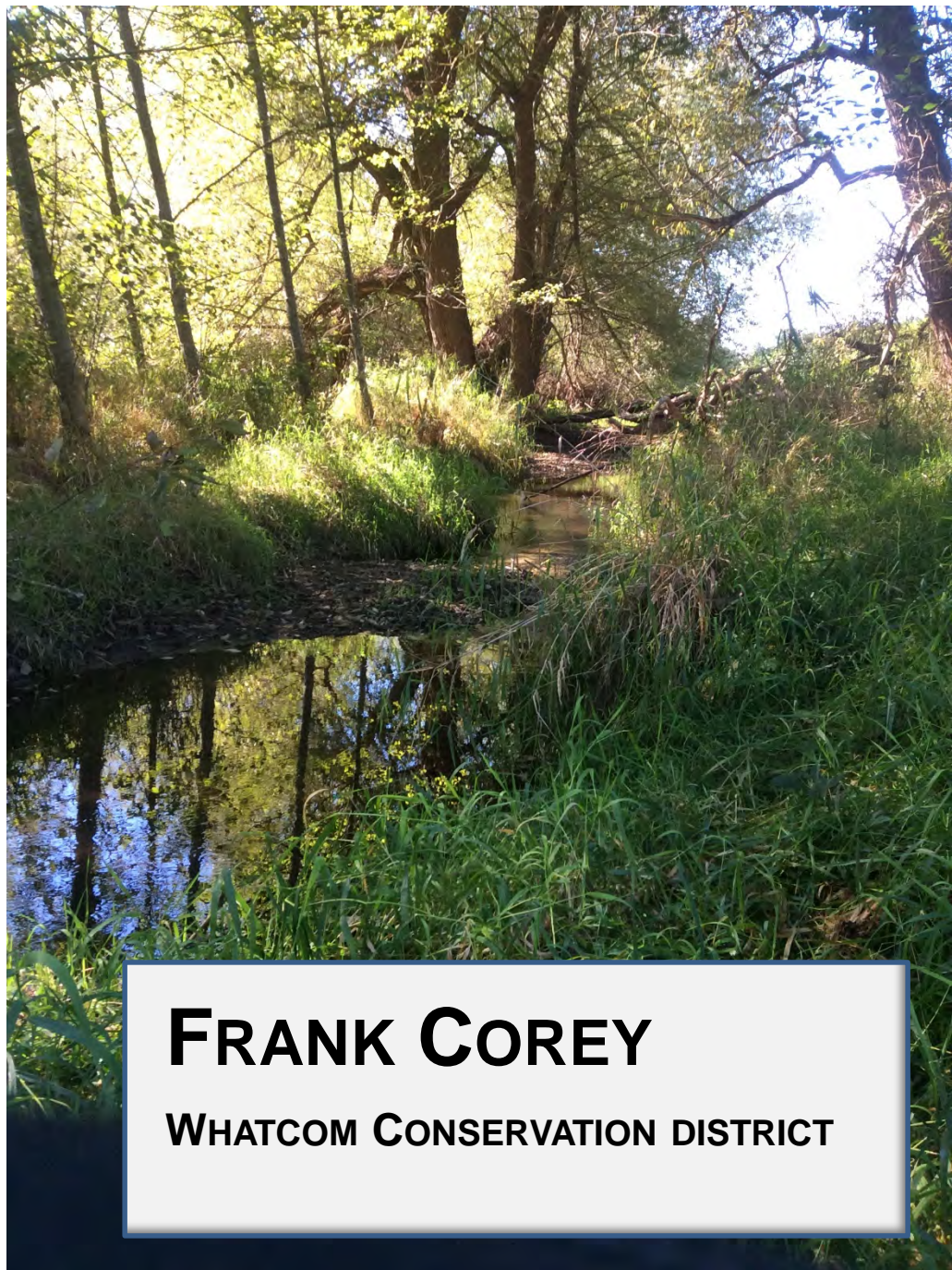




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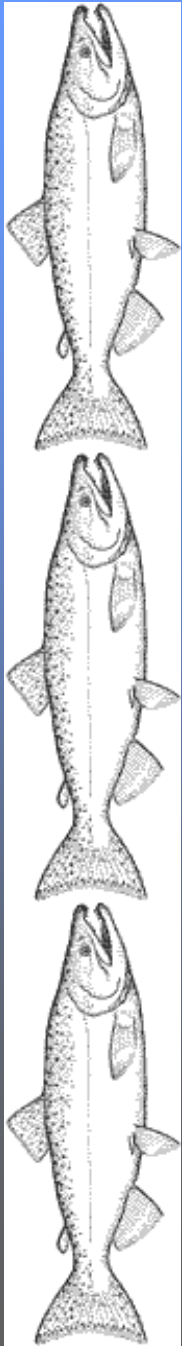
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**FRANK COREY**

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

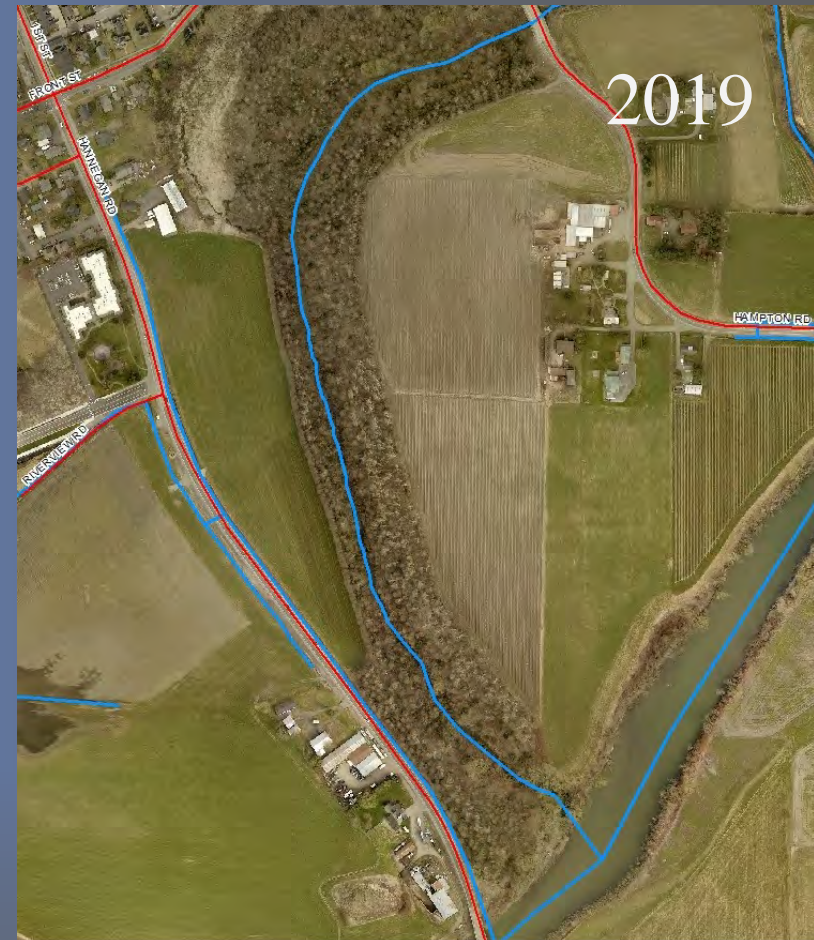
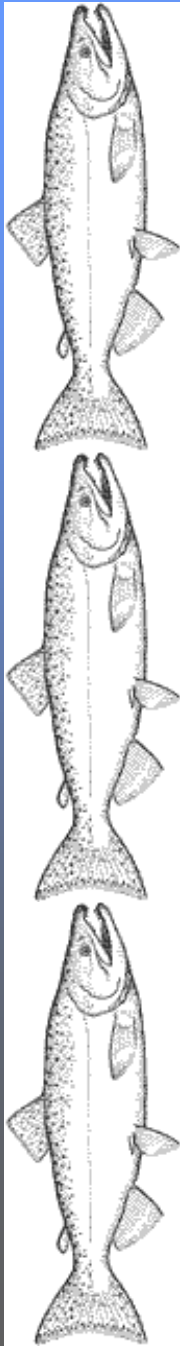




- 475 Contracts
- 2,800 Acres
- 1,425,000 plants
- 8 acre average

*Frank Corey*  
*Whatcom Conservation District*





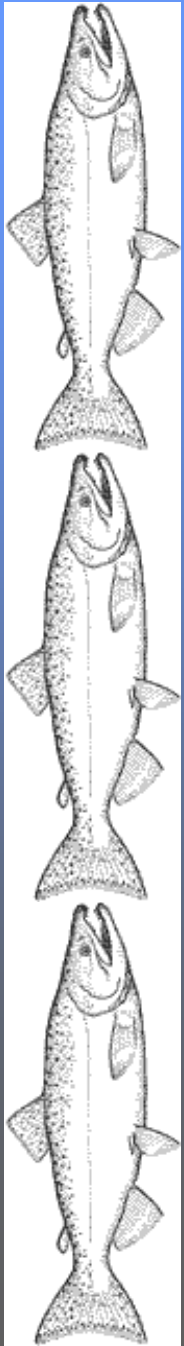
### Successes:

- Nooksack floodplain tributary important to Chinook
- Flexible buffer sizes

### Challenges:

- Current low rental rates
- Low cost share rates





### Successes:

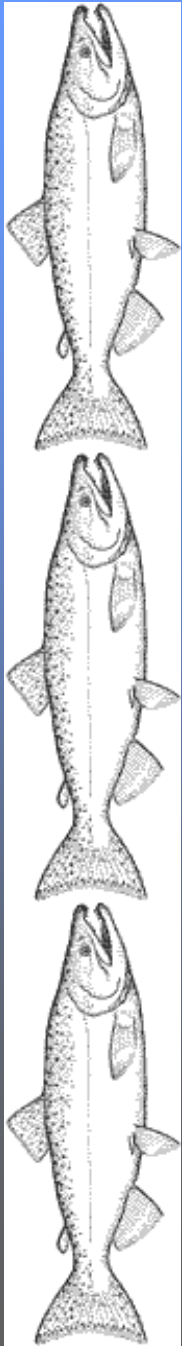
- Nooksack floodplain tributary important to Chinook
- CREP rent important



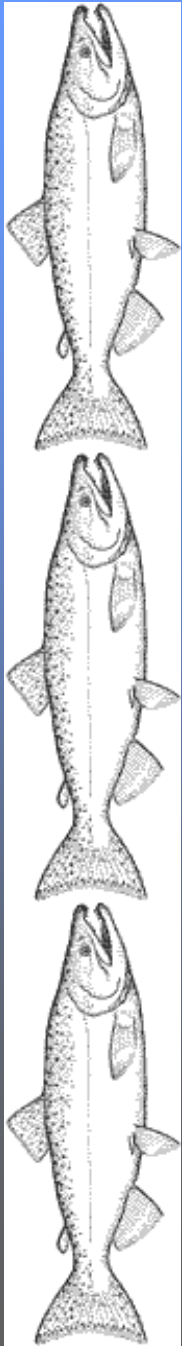
### Challenges:

- Low rental rates
- Need flexible buffer size
- Long term maintenance



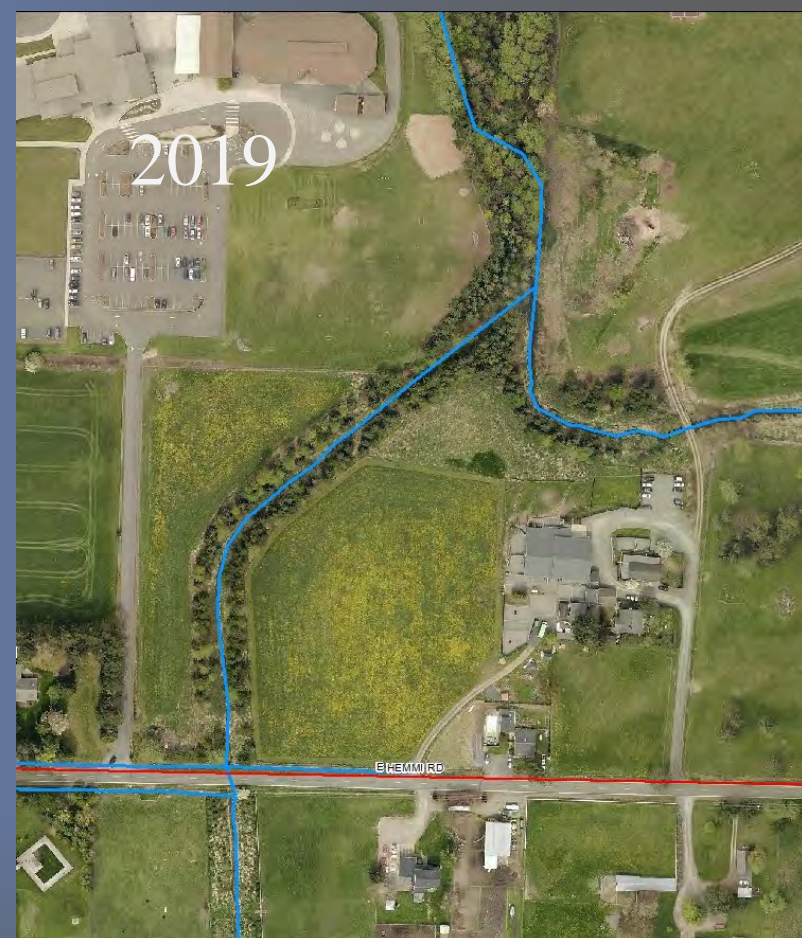






### Successes:

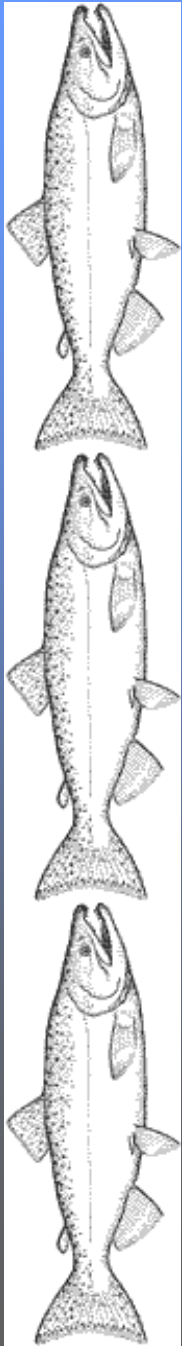
- 35' buffer
- Stewardship vs rent
- Maintains farmland



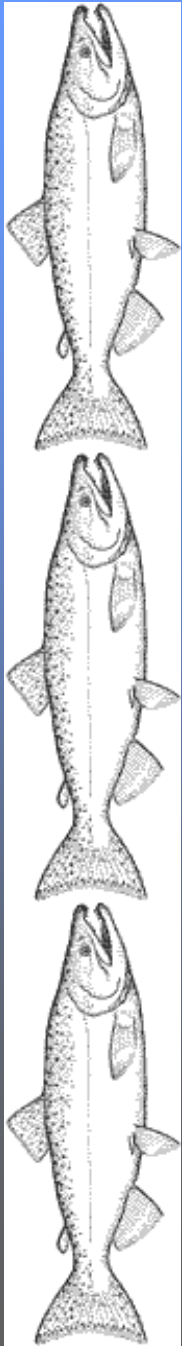
### Challenges:

- Plant density
- Poor soils - takes time
- Contracting difficult
- Re-enroll









### Successes:

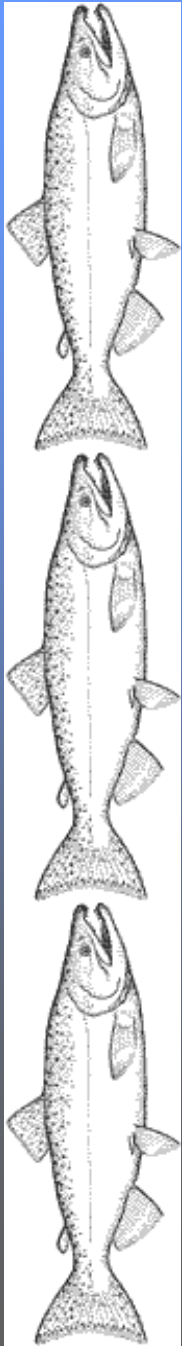
- 15' Hedgerow buffer
- Stewardship vs rent
- Maintains farmland
- Impressive shade



### Challenges:

- Buffer standards
- Rental rates







# Questions?



Brian Cochrane

Habitat and  
Monitoring  
Coordinator

Washington State  
Conservation  
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(360) 701-5749

Best day at work, ever!

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