



CREP Pays Landowners for Riparian Conservation

Chances are you live near a stream, river or wetland. Chances are you know there are ways to improve, restore or protect water quality and habitat wherever you live in the watershed. And you have heard that water quality regulation will be addressing the causes of runoff from agricultural land and non-vegetated stream banks or riparian areas.

Landowners Bruce Follansbee and Diane Tissot graze sheep and goats on their small farm along a quarter-mile stretch of Middle Creek, south of Fairview. The animals have had open access to the creek for watering, and even with a relatively tiny herd size, riparian vegetation was being grazed back before it could regenerate sufficiently for salmonid habitat. Riparian vegetation also functions to stabilize banks and filter runoff of sediment, excess nutrients and manure.

Bruce and Diane have now joined a growing number of landowners enrolled in the US Department of Agriculture's **CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) which makes annual rental payments to landowners** for excluding livestock or other agricultural activities from riparian areas and

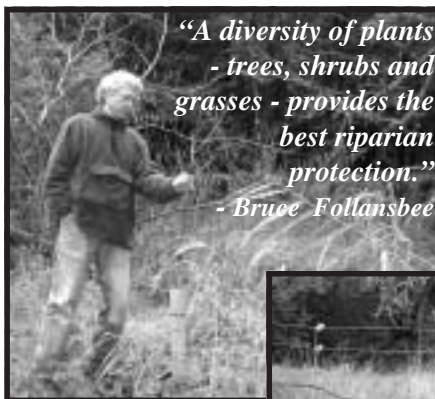
establishing a buffer of native trees and shrubs. CREP contracts are for 10 or 15 years, after which the landowner can decide whether or not to renew the contract. The exact width of the buffer area is determined by the site's soil type, size of stream, topography, and other factors, with a minimum average of 35 horizontal feet. For irrigated land, where the landowner chooses to lease that portion of water rights out for instream use, the annual CREP payment is \$140/acre/year, and non-irrigated land (no water rights) pays \$100/acre/year. Bruce and Diane,

in the first year of their 15 year contract, were paid the non-irrigated rate for their CREP buffer.

The CREP program also provides 75% cost-share for fencing and off-stream watering materials, purchase of native plants, labor, and a yearly payment for ongoing maintenance. Many farmers provide their 25% of the cost-share by providing labor to

the project. However, Bruce and Diane applied to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for a grant which provided the match funds. With these combined, Bruce and Diane were fully reimbursed for their "set up" expenses.

Bruce and Diane have completed the first phase of their riparian project which began in February, 2002. This included installation of a New Zealand six-strand wire fence designed for sheep and goats, and planting 1,000 trees along the north bank of Middle Creek as it runs east to west through their 23 acres. A stand of mature Myrtle trees towers high over the south bank. Young Chinook, Coho, Steelhead and Cutthroat using Middle Creek for rearing and migration habitat throughout the summer will benefit from the overhanging branches



*"A diversity of plants - trees, shrubs and grasses - provides the best riparian protection."
- Bruce Follansbee*



New fencing with tensioners (to the left) and off-stream watering facility.

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Cooperator of the Year

of the new trees. These will provide shade, necessary cover from predators and other habitat benefits. Currently, Reed canary grass, an invasive, exotic species, covers the north bank. (In certain conditions Reed canary grass can be managed for forage production.) The north bank is also interspersed with protective metal cylinders announcing the presence of newly planted trees. While a grass-covered riparian area is better for water quality than bare ground, a combination of tree, shrub and grass roots will penetrate the soil much deeper, thus providing superior bank stabilization and filtering capacity. (Leonard et al, 1997) The cylinders, which are old newspaper printing plates purchased from The World for 40 cents each, provide the young trees with protection from beaver and rodents. The ten different species of native trees and shrubs planted on the north bank will also provide forage and cover for terrestrial wildlife, and attract insect populations which will become food for young fish.

The second phase of the project, on a separate CREP contract, will be along a tributary that meanders through the property before flowing into Middle Creek. The tributary was damaged by sediment overload from a cedar salvaging operation upstream and is recovering. The tributary is important fish rearing habitat. It provides shelter from mainstem predators, and an escape from winter high flows. Fencing and planting along the tributary will allow more filtering of sediment and nutrient runoff, decrease down-cutting of the banks and provide habitat for other wildlife. Also, Bruce says, "The fencing will make it easier to divide pastures and improve forage production with managed grazing."

Bruce and Diane's project is just one small-scale example of how CREP can benefit the landowner, improve water quality and enhance habitat. Now take a moment to imagine a larger operation with, say, 40 riparian acres enrolled in CREP. With water rights leased to the Federal government (for the 40 acres only), and \$10/acre/year for maintenance, that equals \$6,000 per year paid to the landowner for letting a buffer of trees grow.

The CREP is one of several programs that provide financial incentives and technical assistance to farmers and other landowners for implementing sensible conservation practices. Call or stop by the office to see what we can do for you and your riparian area.

**For more information call (541) 396-2841,
or stop by the office at
382 N. Central Blv. in Coquille.**

Leonard, Kinch, Elsbernd, Borman, Swanson, 1997, Riparian Area Management, TR 1737-14, BLM, Denver, CO., p.7

Flood-Friendly Fencing Facts

From Bruce Follansbee

An important factor in the success of riparian planting projects is fencing appropriately for flood events.

- New Zealand smooth wire fencing catches less debris than barbed wire and will stretch some before snapping under pressure.
- Fencing parallel to the stream will withstand flooding and debris much better than perpendicular fencing.
- In areas where debris is likely to buildup or come through the fence, a weaker break away section is recommended that will snap more easily and save the rest of the fence.
- Bruce and Diane placed their CREP fence in the best topographic position so that it would better withstand flood events.
- Tensioners on each wire allow easy loosening in preparation for flood events.

Coos Coquille Agricultural Water Quality Management Plan

Requirements beginning in 2005:

Sediment: Soil erosion associated with agricultural cultivation shall not deliver sediment sufficient to violate water quality standards.

Nutrient: Application and storage of manure, commercial fertilizer, and other nutrient inputs will be done in a manner that minimizes the introduction of nutrients into waterways.

Pesticide: In cranberry production, water storage systems that intercept agricultural drainage containing pesticides and that reapply this water will be designed to minimize percolation of drainage waters to groundwater.

Riparian: Management activities in the riparian area will allow the establishment, growth and maintenance of riparian vegetation consistent with site capability.

Irrigation: Application and irrigation systems will be managed to minimize runoff and the introduction of nutrients and farm chemicals into waterways.

See Coos Coquille AgWQM Plan for full text of requirements and practices that help protect water quality.

**For more info. call (541) 396-2841 x34 or
www.coosswcd.oacd.org**

Farmed Waterways: Apply Now for Summer Project Permits

Most of Coos County's bottom land was once thick with willow, beaver and wetlands. The once tidally-influenced floodplain has been drained and cultivated for pasture operations, which comprise the base of Coos County's agricultural industry. These farmed wetland pastures often retain some characteristics - plants and soil types - of wetlands. Most of the waterways, or ditches, in them are streams that have been straightened and/or relocated for drainage, sediment catchment, irrigation and livestock watering. Many of these waterways provide habitat for waterfowl, fish and other wildlife; they also influence the other streams and rivers they drain into.

As part of pasture drainage management, landowners occasionally need to remove accumulated sediments and other material from waterways. This type of activity is regulated by the Removal-Fill Permit Program and administered by the Oregon DSL (Division of State Lands). Projects involving maintenance of farmed wetland waterways, and many others affecting waters of the state, may require a permit from one or more agencies. The permitting process is intended to ensure the protection, conservation and best use of the state's water resources.

Activities requiring a permit:

- Removal or fill of 50 cubic yards or more of material from waterways, streams or wetlands.
- Removal or fill of any material in essential salmon habitat. (Includes most waterways in Coos county.)
- Removal or fill of any material from the bed and banks of scenic waterways.

Contact the DSL, or see the website listed in the box, for a list of activities exempt from the permit requirement.

Get the process started for next summer

The permitting process may take six to eight months to complete, so now is the time to apply for summer work permits. The process varies depending on the extent of the project, where and how the dredged material will be transported and deposited. You may need a permit from both the DSL and the Army Corps, as well as approval from various other affected parties. The first step is to obtain a Removal-Fill joint application package located at one of the agencies listed in the box to the right. The package includes background information and instructions. You may request the assistance of the Coos SWCD in filing your permit. The County Planning Department will then review the application, provide any survey documents needed, and a cover letter with recommendations to the applicant before you send the application to the DSL. "It is important to remember," says Bob Lobdell of DSL, "that even if your waterway is not specifically designated as essential salmon habitat, (*contd. on p.5*)



Positive Management Practices for Maintenance of Farmed Wetland Waterways

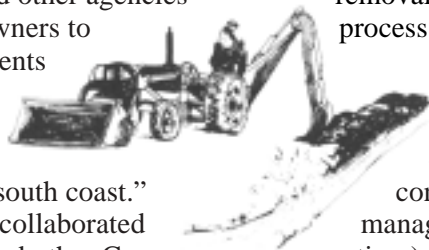
- Unless growing in the channel, woody vegetation and debris should not be removed.
- Only sand and silt sediments, not gravel, should be removed.
- Disturbed areas (i.e., channel banks and work areas) should be planted with grass and/or trees and shrubs.
- Ungrazed vegetation along the sides of the waterway will act as a filter to decrease the deposition of sediment, nutrients and bacteria in the waterway.
- Excavation operations should be conducted from one side of the channel. This is especially important when establishing riparian vegetation. On an east-west running channel, the south side should be vegetated to provide shading and maintenance done from the north side.
- Place dredged sediments so that they do not erode back into the channel.
- If upland dredged material disposal is not feasible, then the dredged material should be spread in a thin layer (three inches or less).
- Freshwater wetland, salt marsh, tidal flats or permanent or semipermanent open water areas should not be used for dredged material disposal.
- Removal of sediments shall be kept to the minimum amount necessary to remove recently deposited materials.

This list was adapted from a list of G.A. condition requirements found, 1-6-03, on DSL webpage <http://statelands.dsl.state.or.us/140-089-0060.htm>

Coos SWCD (541) 396-2841
County Planning Dept. (541) 396-3121x210
US Army Corps of Engineers (541) 267-6484
Oregon Division of State Lands (503) 378-3805
DSL Removal-Fill Program website
<http://statelands.dsl.state.or.us/r-fintro.htm>

Permits continued... if it drains into designated essential salmon habitat it falls under the same requirements."

All permits require design and operating conditions that help to ensure the conservation and best use of natural resources. The DSL and other agencies have worked closely with local landowners to establish adequate operating requirements that meet the objectives of all parties - landowners, natural resource protection and fisheries. "We have developed a win-win situation on the south coast," says Mike McCabe, of DSL, who has collaborated with several of the District directors and other Coos County landowners over the years.



The passage of SB 172 by the 2001 legislature will transfer certain authority (section 404) of the Army Corps over to the DSL under a new streamlined SPGP (State Programmatic General Permit). If approved by the legislature this session, implementation of SPGP, beginning in Fall 2003, will relieve many landowners from needing separate

Removal-Fill permits from both agencies. Currently, there is a streamlined permit process for certain smaller types of projects that fall under a GA (General Authorization). Projects that may qualify include erosion control, wetland restoration and enhancement, and the removal of sediment behind tidegates. The review process is quicker and simpler.

Today's farmers and ranchers are managing their farmed wetland pastures under biological and political conditions that did not exist when these waterways were first converted from their original state. Positive management (see list of positive management practices) of farmed wetland waterways provides an opportunity for landowners to improve water quality and habitat conditions while continuing use of the waterway for drainage purposes. Farm productivity, water quality and wildlife habitat can all be maximized by working together.

For technical assistance contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service, (541) 396-2841. See box on page 4 for other Removal-Fill contacts.

Outstanding Cooperator of 2002



The Coos Soil & Water Conservation District directors awarded Gary Shull of Shull Dairy as the Outstanding Cooperator of 2002 at the District's annual meeting in November.

The award is presented

annually to recognize cooperators who exemplify the principles of natural resource management promoted by the District. Gary and his wife, Ian, manage their second-generation, family-owned operation located three miles south of Coquille. The Shulls have installed an extensive waste management system for collecting, storing and broadcasting manure at agronomic rates. Livestock exclusion and a buffer area of grass filter strips and native trees and shrubs protect water quality in streams and drainage ditches next to pastures. A rotational grazing system helps ensure high quality and quantity of pasture forage.

District Staff

District Administrator-----Janice Anglin
 SB1010 Outreach Coordinator----Bessie Joyce
 Watershed Technical Specialist-----Larry Gill

Kudos to Essay Winner

Lane Gorst, of Myrtle Point High School, won first place in the Dorothy Guerin Memorial Essay Contest for his essay on wildfires, titled What Have We Gained. Lane received \$100, and the traveling plaque, at the Coos SWCD's annual meeting in November.

District Board Elections

The Coos SWCD would like to welcome newly elected directors Sharon Waterman and Daniel Varoujean. They will sign their Oath of Office at the District board meeting in January. "Thank you" Tom Johnson and Jim Nielson for four years of excellent service.

District Board of Directors

Chairman -----Jeff Cochran
 Vice Chairman-----Charlie Waterman
 Secretary-----Arlene Guerin
 Treasurer-----Tom Johnson
 Director----- Gordon Hayes
 Director-----Jim Nielsen
 Director-----Dan Brelage
 Associate Director-----Gordon Ross
 Associate Director-----Tom Guerin
 Associate Director-----Don Gray
 Director Emeritus-----Ken Messerle