



## 5-Year Plan (2015 to 2020) Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District

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### **Organization of the Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District**

*A political subdivision of the State of Washington – authorities, powers and structure contained in RCW 89.08.*

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### **Function of the Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District**

*To make available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.*

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### **We Serve & Why**

*The people of Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District cooperators, private land owners, land managers, students, and public city, county, state, and federal entities about issues impacting them regarding continued protection and enhancement of the natural resources in Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District.*

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### **Mission of the Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District**

*To assist the cooperators of Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District, to maximize sustainable productivity, to increase their income, while conserving and enhancing natural resources (soil, water, air, plants, animals, and humans) for now and future generations by making available federal, state, county, city, and private programs, resources, technical and scientific information, and educational opportunities.*

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### **Vision of the Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District**

- *Changing values and priorities has raised the public's interest in "conservation commodities". Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District will assist our cooperators in providing the public with clean air, clean water, wildlife diversity, recreational, educational, and renewable energy opportunities.*

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### **Values of the Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District**

*We Believe in:*

- *Protecting and improving natural resources of soil, water, air, plants, animals, and humans*
- *Maintaining and/or improving income for the cooperators of Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District*
- *Sustainable agriculture for both resources and economics.*
- *Improving the resources for future generations*
- *High moral integrity in the management of information, money, and technical assistance provided to our cooperators*
- *Utilize programs such as the NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Project to expand Conservation adoption*
- *Providing our services without bias or prejudice*
- *Education is fundamental*
- *Respecting the rights of our cooperators*
- *Expanding tested and proven new technology*

## **Natural Resource Priorities (in Priority Order) and Goals:**

- 1. Soil
- 2. Water
- 3. Air
- 4. Agricultural Lands Viability

### **First Priority: Soil**

#### **Soil Erosion –**

Goals: By the year 2020:

- Direct seeding will be increased from the current estimate of 40% to 70% of the cropland acres
- Increase acres of contour grass buffer strips from the current of 40% up to 50%
- Increase documentation of soil loss reduction that is being achieved
- Develop plantings for protection of soil and for wildlife habitat
- Demonstrated increase in acres of riparian buffers

#### **Soil quality –**

Goals: By the year 2020:

- Develop soil health initiatives using direct seed systems and cover crops
- Assist cooperators in becoming “Farmed Smart Certified”
- Increase the documentation of proper pest and nutrient management
- Document the number of producers that are adopting precision agriculture
- Develop an educational strategy to help change producer attitudes towards direct seeding, and other tested, proven technologies
- Test cover crop and other new ideas for conservation treatment
- Identify programs needed to address emerging conservation issues

### **Second Priority: Water**

#### **Water Quality and Quantity -**

Goals: By the year 2020

- Increase acres of riparian buffer strips from 20% to 50%, of the eligible riparian acres, to help move cattle in riparian feeding areas away from the streams and rivers
- Increase documentation of water quality and quantity improvements that are achieved
- Have 95% of all identified AFO/CAFO issues resolved by 2020
- 80% of the cattle will be located in feeding areas away from the streams and rivers
- Plans that treat water quality will be completed and 50% of the cooperators will be in compliance with water quality standards for nutrients and sedimentation
- Enhance off-site watering facilities for livestock and wildlife
- Educating livestock producers on programs available
- Implement with Whitman County and agencies a simplified, less regulatory management permit program for maintenance of riparian areas

### **Third Priority: Air**

Goals: By the year 2020:

- Work with DOE on the management of burning through continued permitting and information dissemination
- Continue to work with DOE on education about reduction of wind erosion
- Increase education and the use of wind, solar, or other energy conservation programs
- Increase education and the use of biofuels
- See above for wind erosion control goals under soil

#### ***Fourth Priority: Agricultural Lands Viability***

Goals: By the year 2020:

- Successful implementation with Whitman County of the Voluntary Stewardship Program in lieu of Critical Areas Ordinances
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#### ***Critical Geographic Areas:***

- West half of PRLCD – (16” and below rainfall area) Dryland area of district has more concerns with cultural resources
  - All watersheds have issues with soil erosion, AFO/CAFO, & vegetation enhancement & air quality
  - Rural Communities have environmental issues with groundwater contamination
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#### ***Information – Education Priorities and Goals:***

Goals: By the year 2020:

- Have maintained a continuous conservation education program in the local school systems
- Increase grower education activities to reach 70% of the growers in the District leading to an increase in conservation activity by 20%
- Increase communication with all landowners in the district
- Have maintained an active Web Site
- Have developed a list of cooperator’s contact information

Specific Educational Activities:

- Keep a website updated including topics of a technical nature gathered from existing research and information that is pertinent and valued by our cooperators
- Educational annual meetings, workshops, demonstration days, tours, and a day in the district for elected officials to provide information about conservation technology and programs
- Host community/citizen’s meetings including annual meeting
- Continue Envirothon effort
- Work with the ag advisors at schools on conservation education programs - provide guest speakers and presentations
- Coordinate with NRCS on presentations and tours.
- For Soil Erosion distribute information on managing contour grass buffer strips (eyebrows)
- Education events to inform producers of emerging legislation, policies, programs rules and regulations that will impact the agricultural industry

#### ***District Operations Priorities, Goals:***

Goals: By the year 2020:

- Increase staffing and services to provide the programs needed by cooperators by using contracted services, using agency personnel assistance, and partnerships with other conservation district positions
- Seek certification of district employees to increase implementation of all conservation programs
- Increase utilization of partnerships with NRCS, WDFW, Ecology, Tribes, and FSA
- Train staff in the latest applications of software and increase their computer skills in order to increase efficiency

### ***Trends Impacting Conservation in the Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District***

- Farm Economy – losing our neighbors on the farm and communities – low commodity prices and high costs of operation
- Money is getting tight in the farm economy – looking for alternatives for getting income off the land
- Ecology has become more and more regulatory in PRLCD on livestock issues and cropland issues, etc.
- EPA and Ecology mandates increasing – clean water and clean air
- Economic hardships continue to increase for farmers, ag businesses, etc.
- Uncertainty and changes in ag programs
- Direction of funding opportunities – tougher to get
- The utilization of the riparian programs will benefit producers as well as habitat
- Increasing interest in AFO and CAFO by Ecology
- Cost of production is increasing while the interest in ecological conditions are increasing at the same time – measurements are getting tighter and tighter – RUSLE II, STIR factor (determining direct seed/mulch till), and PM 2.5 or PM 10

### ***Strategies to Address Trends***

- Set up a clearing-house for all the grants, technical assistance, funding etc – farmers could come to the district for a direct lead for services and programs regarding conservation planning and practice application. Coordinating all the agencies in one place leads to efficiency
- Enhance technical assistance to cooperators – keep them abreast of continuing opportunities to stay in business and meeting requirements for rules and regulations – help our cooperators walk through the processes
- To assist cooperators applying conservation practices through technical assistance, information and funding
- Base funding on resource concerns rather than on the most available grant - be leaders in program funding - not followers
- Active leadership in Voluntary Stewardship Program with Whitman County
- Actively work with other neighboring districts to increase effectiveness and efficiency in conservation program delivery

### ***Natural Resource Data:***

#### Background

Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District (PRLCD) has been serving the needs of the local farmers and citizens since its beginning on September 11, 1942.

The Palouse-Rock Lake CD is unique in that it is one of four districts serving the citizens of Whitman County. There are 1,397,560 acres in Whitman County with a total of 378,701 acres located in Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District. Towns located in Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District include St. John (population 518), Ewan (population 36), Endicott (population 350), and Lamont (population 94). Rainfall in the area ranges from 14 to 18 inches per year. Rivers, Creeks and Streams and lakes located within the district boundaries are the Palouse River, Rock Creek, Rock Lake, Pleasant Valley Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Imbler Creek, Packer Creek, Lower Downing Creek, Negro Creek, Rebel Flat Creek, and Little Valley Creek.

### ***Staffing Needs***

- 1 FTE Office Manager (Secretary/Bookkeeper)
  - 1 FTE District Coordinator – full-time
  - 1 PTE Soils Lab Tech / Janitor (part time)
  - 1 FTE Field Technician
  - 1 PTE student or Americorp person to assist office manager
  - 1 plus – Specialized field work - spraying, engineering, other (Contract or part time employees)
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### ***Key Decision Makers***

- Conservation District Supervisors and Employees
  - Washington State Conservation Commission
  - Whitman County Commissioners
  - State Legislatures
  - Natural Resource Conservation Service (all levels)
  - Farm Service Agency (all levels)
  - Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
  - Washington State Department of Ecology
  - Washington Association of Conservation Districts
  - National Association of Conservation Districts
  - United States Department of Agriculture Secretary (Mutual Agreement)
  - Governor of Washington State (Mutual Agreement)
  - Environmental Protection Agency
  - Washington Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation
  - WA state parks and recreation.
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**Priority Actions – 12 Months**

**Measurable Goal:**

<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>12 Month Actions</b>
<b>Direct Seed</b>	<b>4/15- 10/15</b>	<b>Enroll 17 Kamiak Creek Watershed cooperators into the direct seed cost share program</b>
<b>Direct Seed Outreach</b>	<b>4/15-12/15</b>	<b>Through education and mentoring increase direct seeded acreage in the district by 5,000 acres</b>
<b>Riparian Buffer</b>	<b>4/15-12/15</b>	<b>Write conservation plans for 10 miles for the riparian buffer program and assist them to contract with FSA</b>
<b>Direct Seed Tours and Demonstrations</b>	<b>6 /15- 10/15</b>	<b>Conduct two direct seed tours to educate cooperators and others on the benefits of direct seed and soil health initiatives</b>
<b>Conservation Education</b>	<b>4/15-10/15</b>	<b>Partner with other conservation districts in Whitman County to enhance student education through the Envirothon and Soil Judging Contests</b>
<b>Tree Enhancement Program</b>	<b>4/15-12/15</b>	<b>Increase opportunities for the general public to purchase trees for upland areas</b>
<b>CREP</b>	<b>4/15-12/15</b>	<b>Disseminate information on potential CREP Options and work with producers on signups &amp; implementation</b>
<b>RCPP</b>	<b>4/15-12/15</b>	<b>Disseminate information on potential RCPP Options and work with producers on signups &amp; implementation</b>
<b>VSP</b>	<b>4/15-12/15</b>	<b>Work with Whitman County on planning and implementation of VSP</b>

- See Annual Work Plan for the Current Fiscal Year.

*Washington Conservation Districts assisting Land Managers with their conservation choices*





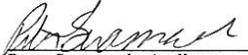
*Palouse-Rock Conservation District*  
*Certificate of Adoption*

*We the Board of Supervisors of the Palouse Rock Lake Conservation District*  
*Do hereby approve this document known as the*  
**Five Year Plan of Work 2015-2020**  
*Of the Palouse Rock Lake Conservation District*

*We hereby certify the adoption and approval of this Plan*

  
Clinton O'Keefe, Chairman

  
Tom Kucklick, Vice-Chairman

  
Peter Swannack, Auditor

  
Erin Bailey, Secretary

  
Josh Garrett, Member

Adopted 5/27/15

Appendix- Maps of Highest Priority Resource Concern

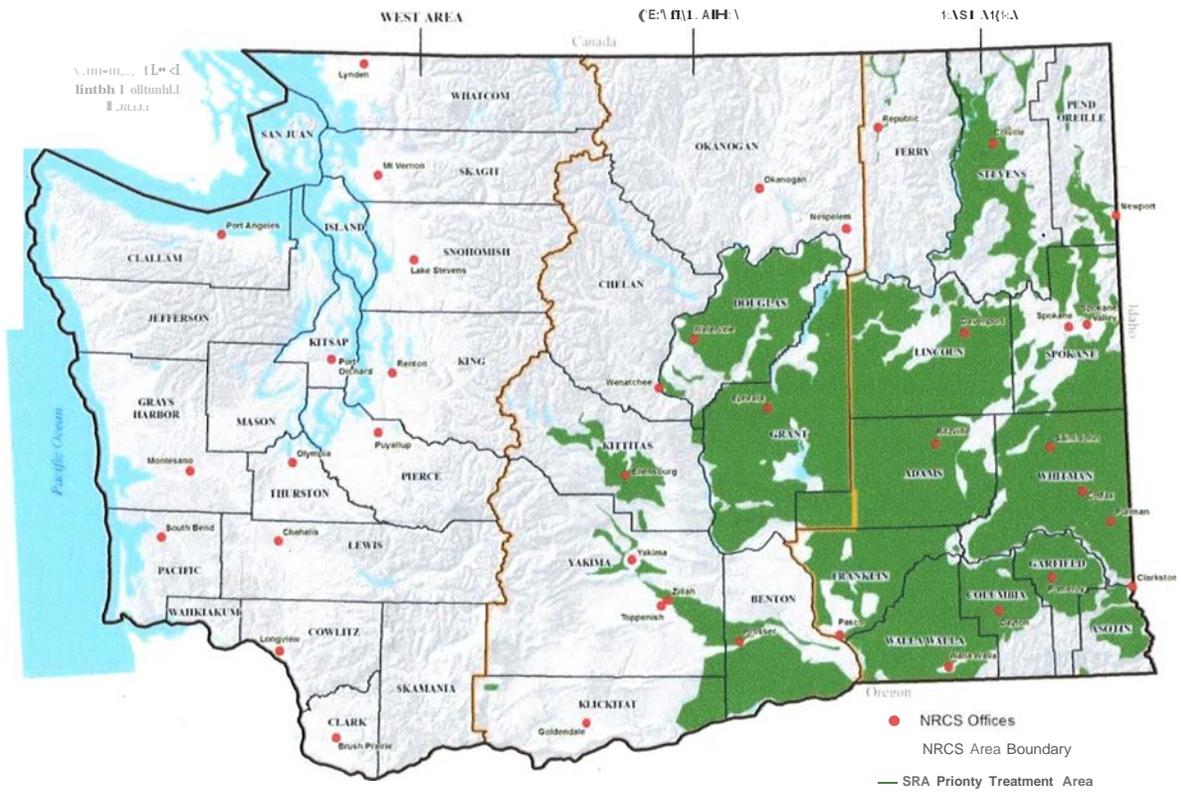


Fig. 2- Crop-Sheet, Rill, and Wind Erosion Resource Concern Priority Treatment Area Map

## SOIL EROSION - Sheet, rill, and wind erosion

Sheet, rill and wind erosion is caused by the detachment and transportation of soil particles caused by rainfall runoff or splash, irrigation runoff, or by wind.

Sheet and rill erosion is caused primarily from rainfall from late fall through spring, and especially from rain on snow events when the soils are frozen. Additional information related to Sheet and Rill erosion can be found in Appendix II.

Wind erosion occurs when the soils are not protected by adequate crop cover, crop residues or other conservation practices, and the wind picks up enough velocity to detach the finer soil particles on the land. Additional information related to Wind erosion can be found in Appendix II.

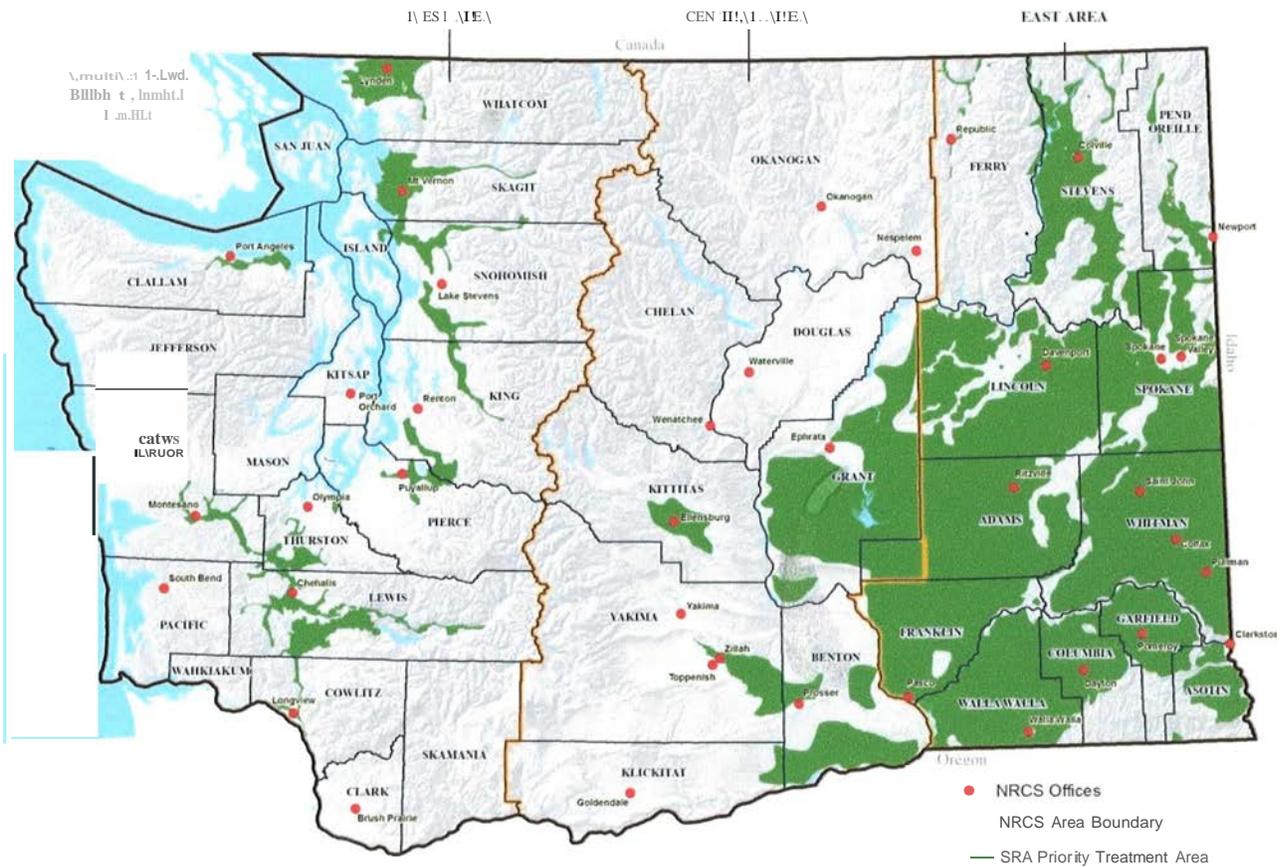
Washington State Priority Resource Concern	CROP		
	Potential At-Risk Acres	Acres Needing Treatment	Priority Treatment Acres
SOIL EROSION -Sheet, rill, and wind erosion	7,123,000	4,440,000	426,600

Fig. 1 – SRA Acreage Table for Crop- Sheet, rill, and wind erosion

Crop- Sheet, Rill, and Wind Erosion- Resource Concern Indicator(s):

- Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Croplands Subsets- Cropland type subsets.
- NRCS Statewide Soil Survey derivatives: Sheet and Rill Erosion Risk and Wind Erodibility Index.
- NRCS Climatic C Factor isobars -Index of climatic erosivity, specifically wind speed and soil moisture.
- NRCS Water and Climate Center PRISM -Average Annual Precipitation.

# Crop- Excessive Sediment in Surface Waters Resource Concern Priority Treatment Area Map



**WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION- Excessive sediment in surface waters**

This resource concern is related to the off-site transport of sediment from sheet, rill, gully, and wind erosion into surface water that threatens to degrade surface water quality and limit use for intended purposes. When sediment enters the water column it increases turbidity and carries pollutants such as nutrients and pesticides.

Washington State Priority Resource Concern	CROP		
	Potential At-Risk Acres	Acres Needing Treatment	Priority Treatment Acres
WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION - Excessive sediment in surface waters	7,584,000	3,055,000	325,500

Fig. 9 – SRA Acreage Table for Crop- Excessive sediment in surface waters

**Crop-Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health -Resource Concern Indicator(s):**

- **Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Croplands Subsets-** Row crops subset.
- **East Area criteria:** All cropland.
- **Central Area criteria:** Row crops in association with surface waters.
- Where no geospatial indicator datasets existed for a particular resource concern/landuse combination, the local knowledge and expertise of the NRCS Area specialists was used to identify the Priority Area.

