

Fred Colvin is a rancher whose family legacy runs deep in Tenino, Washington. The family-owned 550-acre Colvin Ranch was founded in 1854 and is one of the oldest ranches in Thurston County still owned by the original family. Five generations later, the Colvin Ranch family heritage continues through humane livestock handling, sustainable grazing practices, and land stewardship, ensuring that native and endangered plants and animals flourish alongside its animals.

Fred became a Thurston Conservation District supervisor in 1996 and served for 18 years! During his time with TCD, Fred served as a Washington State Conservation Commissioner for 8 years from 2005 – 2013. He is also a past President of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts and was involved on a national scale with the National Association of Conservation Districts.

Nearly two decades ago, Fred became one of the first producers in Thurston County to put a conservation easement on his land with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This unique relationship focused on conservation grazing practices that rotated cattle throughout the ranch on a precise schedule to keep them out of areas of sensitive prairie habitat while rare and endangered wildflowers were blooming. Fred helped to demystify the concept of conservation easements for our local producer community while ensuring that the Colvin Ranch land legacy would continue for many generations to come.

In 2023, Colvin Ranch won the Slow Food Snail of Approval award which recognizes food businesses that embody values that yield food that is good, clean, and fair for all by committing to responsible sourcing, environmental impact, cultural connections, community involvement, staff support, and business values.

Thurston Conservation District is grateful for Fred's continued leadership, both as a member of the organization and as a community leader. His stewardship ethic is one that has been commended on numerous occasions and should continue to be honored. Fred is an iconic conservation advocate and land steward who really walks the talk. He is an intelligent educator and a conduit for bringing real challenges for landowners and operators, along with practical conservation solutions to the table. His on-farm land management follows suit and is an excellent example of generations of dedication to caring for the land.

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