



**Pend Oreille  
Conservation  
District**

# Winter Newsletter



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## Are Real or Fake Trees Better?

Settle the debate once and for all!



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## Regulatory Pressures May Threaten Voluntary Conservation

What you need to know and what you can do



**Winter 2021 Newsletter**



# O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree!

Real or Fake? Store bought or adventure with a saw? We wanted to know the details check out what we found out!

### Real or Fake: Which Christmas tree is better for the environment?

Short answer—real! Real trees help fight climate change, and even though your Christmas tree is cut down, you’re actually supporting forests.

### Are fake Christmas trees bad for the environment?

In the U.S., around 10 million artificial trees are purchased each season. Nearly 90 percent of them are shipped across the world from China, resulting in an increase of carbon emissions and resources. Most artificial trees are not recyclable and end up in local landfills.

### Why are real trees better than artificial ones?

Out of the 350-500 million growing on tree farms across the U.S., only 30 million trees are harvested for Christmas each year. Buying real trees will help keep tree farms in business – and in turn keep their lands covered in the healthy forest habitat that wildlife depends on to survive.



**50% of our audience in the Pend Oreille County has a fake tree this year.**

Wait, are you telling me that I should cut down more trees? Yes! Science shows that one of the best ways to protect forests is to use them—carefully. When our forests are sustainably managed, they can produce renewable resources like Christmas trees and other wood-made products. This is important because well-main-

tained forests often store as much carbon as unmanaged forests, making innovative forest management methods a key solution to fighting climate change. More than half of U.S. forests are privately owned. Buying sustainable forest products supports local communities and gives landowners the profits they need to keep their land forested.



**Cement your place on the nice list by choosing to use a real tree every year!**



# Awaken Your Imagination

A collaboration between scientists and those of us who are just curious or concerned and motivated to make a difference.

by Elly Styskel - Selkirk Alliance for Science

I am sitting here next to a warm fireplace watching Mother Nature lay a soft, white blanket of snow on our corner of the world. Winter is here and the days are colder, shorter, and darker. We sometimes end up wondering what to do, so here is an option to alleviate boredom.

Scientists are always looking for ways to improve their knowledge base. Using citizen volunteers is one way to share information, give accurate feedback and contribute to a multitude of projects needing attention. Gaining new knowledge by traveling the world around us from the comforts of home or in our immediate area can expand our horizons. Citizen Science is: “a collaboration between scientists and those of us who are just curious or concerned and motivated to make a difference.” There are no deadlines or age limit, you can give as much time as you can to a project and explore as many projects as you want. You can be indoors or outdoors, on a computer or smart phone. You might even find a hobby. Let your adventure begin!

The Great Backyard Bird Count on February 18-21, 2022 is a survey of birds that visit your favorite places. In 1998, Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society started the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) as the first online, real time citizen-science project (community science) to collect data on wild birds. In 2013 it became a global project. Each February, for four days, people all around the world come together for their love of birds. Observations help scientists understand global populations before annual migrations begin. Information gathered is entered into eBird, which is one of the world’s largest nature databases, storing 100 million birds sightings per year and used by professionals, for conservation as well as ordinary people. See the website for details.

How much snow is falling in your backyard? How much water does it contain? Are you interested in learning more about your local precipitation patterns? Would you like to contribute your data for others to use? Thousands of volunteers collect precipitation data and enter their measurements on the CoCoRaHS website. The Community Collaborative Rain Hail and Snow Network originated in 1998 following a devastating flood in Fort Collins Colorado. Nolan Doeskin collected rain measurements wherever he could find them, including from rain gages, buckets, and trash cans, in order to understand the tremendous

variation in the rainfall across his city.

Now CoCoRaHS volunteers of all ages are found in every state. Their data is used by the National Weather Service, other meteorologists, hydrologists, emergency managers, insurance adjusters, the USDA, engineers, mosquito control boards, ranchers, farmers, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, teachers, students, neighbors, and others.

Becoming a volunteer is easy. Enthusiasm for weather watching is required. For wintertime observations you will need some basic equipment: the official four-inch rain gage available from a variety of vendors, a snow (fly) swatter, a small piece of plywood painted white, and a yard stick, preferably one measured in tenths of inches. Check out the CoCoRaHS organization website for the volunteer application, & educational videos which ensure that everyone uses the same measurement procedures, and weather newsletters. (CoCoRaHS contributed by Jan Wood, Newport, WA)

## Citizen Science Project Finders

SciStarter lists about 1,500 citizen science projects and is unique in its ability to search for projects by a age group, word or phrase, location, activity or skill level. You can participate in a variety of projects, indoors or outdoors. <https://scistarter.org/citizen-science>

If you have your own computer, Zooniverse has about 100 options in a variety of subjects to study objects provided by researchers and compare characteristics. Researchers create citizen science projects and complete their objective by using volunteers to collect and analyze data then report their findings. The premise is that many individuals looking at the same thing may find more variations in the object than just one person.(i.e. “crowd sourcing”) <https://www.zooniverse.org/projects>

Selkirk Alliance for Science is a Washington nonprofit whose amateur and professional scientist volunteers advocate an increased understating of the nature, value and integrity of science to benefit our communities. <https://www.selkirkscience.org>



## Regulatory Pressures May Threaten Voluntary Conservation

By Alex Case- Cohen - POCD District Manager

### Are cows the culprit? New regulations put a significant burden on Washington farmers and ranchers.

Protecting natural resources for future generations is only part of the Pend Oreille Conservation District's mission. Our complete mission is to do so together; without voluntary participation from local landowners, our efforts to protect and enhance Soil, Water, Air, Plants, Wildlife and Livestock may prove futile. Humans are an integral component of the natural landscape, and without local farmers, foresters, river residents, and other community members, we could not accomplish much of what we do.

This year, regulatory changes may be underway to mitigate some of the efforts conservation districts and land stewards have worked toward to protect and enhance critical areas. These changes are two-fold: 1) that water diverted from a local waterbody for livestock would require a water right, and 2) that mandatory buffers may be imposed.

#### Livestock Water and Mandatory Water Rights

In 1994, the Department of Ecology enacted a Water Resources Program Policy to allow for the conveyance of surface water for livestock once exclusionary fencing had been installed. This was a huge incentive for landowners to implement agricultural best management practices to protect water quality, since most utilized creeks and streams to water their livestock. The proposed changes recommend that without a water right, livestock landowners may not consume water from a given waterbody, either directly or through a diversion. What must be noted is that no water right is required to drill a well and withdraw groundwater for livestock; however, this can be an extremely expensive undertaking for many landowners when compared to diverting water from a creek or stream.

Mandatory Setbacks (Buffers) as part of \$187 million Salmon Recovery Plan. Through the VSP, farmers work with farm planners to determine the best location to install fence along a waterway

This month, Washington Governor Jay Inslee proposed his \$187 million Salmon Recovery Plan. Priorities include protecting and restoring vital salmon habitat; investing in clean water infrastructure for salmon and people, correcting fish passage barriers, and restoring salmon access to historic habitat as outlined in a December 2021 policy brief. While the brief vaguely addresses the need to "...accelerate riparian buffer implementation to improve water quality and salmon habitat in priority-impaired watershed", some sources believe these setbacks would be imposed statewide, preventing efforts set forth by the Voluntary Stewardship Program to "protect and enhance critical areas while maintaining agricultural viability".



It must be noted that neither proposal has been passed: the proposals to livestock water access are currently under review, and the Salmon Recovery Plan must make an arduous journey through next year's legislative session. What Washington farmers and land stewards must do is show that voluntary conservation DOES work. Imposing mandatory setbacks and eliminating access completely has severe negative implications for landowners. If mandatory setbacks are put in place, farmers may no longer be willing to work with conservation districts or other agencies to voluntarily implement stewardship practices. This means that trust developed over decades may be squandered between local landowners and conservation districts, and our ability to protect natural resources will become increasingly more difficult.

In summary, I encourage you all to reach out to your legislators; share your stewardship, explain to them what's at stake. If you're interested in implementing a Voluntary Stewardship project on your farm to show that mandatory regulations are not necessary, contact the Conservation District.

# Annual Conference Offers Wealth of Information On Weeds

By Mary Malone – Education and Outreach, Pend Oreille County Weed Board, Pend Oreille Conservation District

While grazing may not be an option for everyone when it comes to invasive weed control and reducing risk of fire, it was one of many fascinating topics at this year's Washington State Weed Conference, particularly with the recent onslaught of drought and fire.

Hosted by the Washington Vegetation Management Association, the conference featured three days of presentations in Wenatchee. One of these sessions was titled "Grazing before and after Wildfire." Tipton Hudson from the Ellensburg WSU Extension emphasized the importance of controlling invasive annual grasses after wildfire. These plants outcompete native species, lower moisture levels and increase fuel loads, which can lead to increased fire occurrence. It is equally important to encourage perennial grasses, which are "key to long-term site stability," Hudson said.

For those who are interested in grazing, this type of control primarily affects the rate of fire spread, flame height, and the extent of the fire. Hudson warned, however, that extensive grazing pressure can create flammable plant communities, but if done correctly, can reduce the risk of fire. Case studies on this topic can be found online at [csanr.wsu.edu/case-studies](http://csanr.wsu.edu/case-studies).

There are many weed management techniques which include, of course, herbicides. Following Hudson's presentation, Trent Brusseau with Corteva Agriscience spoke about Milestone, and how fall is an ideal time to control noxious weeds while also treating invasive annual grasses.

Milestone, he said, is a highly effective herbicide with very low toxicity ("practically non-toxic" to birds, fish, mammals, bees, etc.). These products have pre-emergent and post-emergent activity for season-long control of target broadleaf and winter annual grasses. There are no grazing restrictions, and it is safe for most established perennial grasses. Other herbicides for controlling winter annual grasses discussed at the conference include Panoramic, Laramie 25DF, Journey, Glyphosate, SFM 75 and Rejuvra.

When using herbicides, it is important to always remember that the label is the law. If used incorrectly, these products could adversely affect the environment. One such effect is injury to non-target plants. This is

the area of expertise for Noelle Orloff from Montana State University Extension, who was one of the final speakers as the conference came to a close on November 5.

While there are testing labs available, Orloff relies solely on visual diagnosis. The first thing she does is assess the symptoms of the plant and the area around the plant – are there other plants affected? It is also important to rule out (or confirm) disease, insects, etc. She then determines a detailed site history, including whether any herbicides have been used in the last 2-3 years, soil pH, soil type, location, construction and more.

If it has been determined that herbicide has been used in the area, she will carefully examine the label and determine if the Mode of Action (MOA) matches the injury symptoms.

"It is important what part of the plant you see symptoms on – herbicides have specific parts of the plant that they affect," Orloff said. Three of the MOA groups are amino acid inhibitors, synthetic auxins and photosynthesis inhibitors. Different injury symptoms appear on plants for each of these groups. With amino acid inhibitors, for example, chlorosis (yellowing) generally starts on the new growth and the plant dies very slowly. With synthetic auxins, some of the symptoms include distortion such as tissue thickening, leaf cupping, stem twisting and curling. Photosynthesis inhibitors also may cause chlorosis, as well as necrosis (browning), and can be "tricky" to diagnose, she said, which is why site history is key.

While it can be difficult to diagnose herbicide symptoms and consulting an expert is recommended, there are free resources available online. Orloff co-authored "A Guide to Diagnosing Non-Target Herbicide Injury on Plants," which can be downloaded for free from the MSU Store at [store.msueextension.org](http://store.msueextension.org). Another website to help diagnose symptoms is [herbicidesvmtoms.idm.ucanr.edu](http://herbicidesvmtoms.idm.ucanr.edu).




**PEND OREILLE  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

121 N Washington      509-447-1155  
Newport WA,      ADMIN@POCD.ORG

Protect and enhance all natural  
resources. Together.

WWW.POCD.ORG



**PEND OREILLE  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
2022 ELECTION  
INFORMATION**

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**Interested in running for a  
volunteer position as a POCD  
Board Supervisor?**

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<p><b>CANDIDATE INFORMATION</b></p> <p>We currently have one elected position expiring on the POCD Board. Qualified candidates must submit the required (and optional) information by the filing deadline of February 14, 2022, at the POCD office. For more information such as where and how to file, forms, etc., please visit our elections page at: <a href="http://www.pocd.org/elections">www.pocd.org/elections</a> Or contact <a href="mailto:admin@pocd.org">admin@pocd.org</a> / 509-447-1155</p>	<p><b>Important Dates</b></p> <p>Feb. 14: Candidate Filing Deadline Feb. 24: Last day to request ballot March 17: Election Day</p> <p><b>VOTER INFORMATION</b></p> <p>Because this election will be held by mail-in/drop-off voting, ballots are available by request only. The deadline to request a ballot is Feb. 24, 2022, at 5:00 PM. Completed ballots must be mailed-in or dropped off by Election Day, March 17. Please see elections page for more information.</p> <p>← ← ←</p>
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