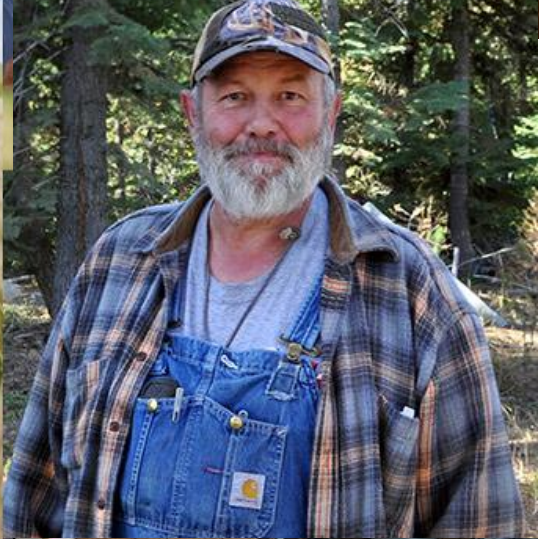
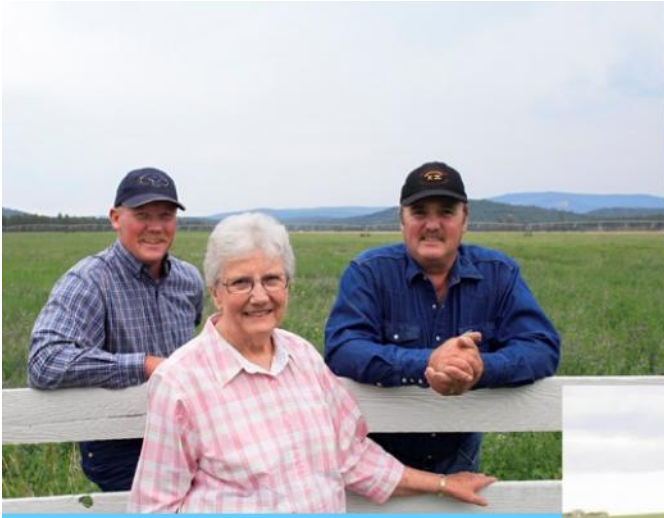




# **“Working with Landowners”**

## **Nonpoint Implementation**

Walt Edelen, Water Resources Program Manager













Before



After



Before



After







Before



After





# What Does Nonpoint Source Implementation Really Mean?

- For the SCD, it boils down to the following;
  - Working with landowners individually
  - Gaining trust and forming relationships
  - Finding/providing financial assistance
  - Working on a voluntary basis
  - Slowly making changes in a watershed over time



# Working with the Landowner

- The SCD provides natural resource technical assistance to all landowners within our district.
  - Provide assistance to improve property or operation
  - Keep agriculture/forestry viable industries in Spokane
  - Improve or maintain water quality, habitats, soil health, etc.



# Landowner Project A to Z

- Completing a project with a landowner is complex. It's a social dynamic gauntlet!
  - Site visits, phone calls, agree upon the plan approach
  - Regulatory Agency (authority) buy-in
  - Engineering? Bids, RFQ
  - Permits? How many?
  - Cultural Resource Review? Survey?
  - Cost-share? Contracts? Funding Requirements



# Landowner Project A to Z

- Typically six months to one year from initial visit to final completion

## Provided:

- No major engineering changes
- Issuance of permits, etc on time
- Landowner doesn't change mind



# Landowner Project A to Z

- How many projects can we get done in one year?
- Depends on many factors and it varies every year
  - Willingness of landowners (regulatory air)
  - Type of project
  - Cost-share/other funding available
  - Capable and experienced staff
  - New Programs



# 2015 Examples

- On-Site Septic Program (repairs, replacement, connections to sewer)
- Completed 76 projects (majority are connections to sewer in Spokane Valley)
  - Disbursed \$42.5K in grants to hardship cases
  - Disbursed \$185K in loans (no defaults to date)



# 2015 Livestock Projects





# Livestock BMP Projects (5)



- 34 technical assistance visits
- Riparian Fence (2) – 3,900’
- Dairy Lagoon (1)
- Heavy Use Area (1)
- Waste Storage Facilities
  - Aerated (1)



# Ravenwood Ranch



# Three-Bin, Top Loading, Aerated



# Spokane Family Farms

- 150 cows
- approximately 3,750 gallons of waste per day
- 716,500 gallon storage capacity required
- Double liner required





# Hangman Creek

## Horlacher Farms



# 40 Head Cattle Operation

- Moved over 500' off creek



- Riparian Fencing
- HUA installed
- Water

# Fish Habitat & Water Quality Restoration Projects



- Willow Warriors
- Family, Forest, Fish Passage Program (FFFPP)
- Bear Creek Re-Alignment

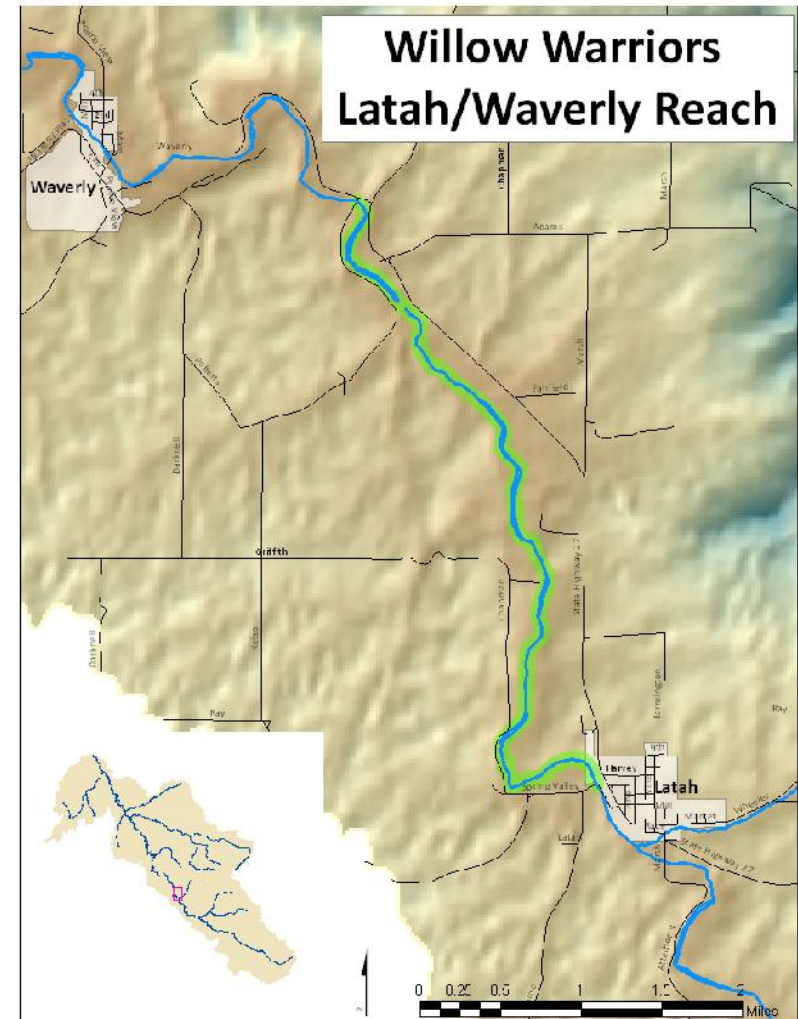




# Willow Warrior Weekend



- 5000 willows in 2015
- Hangman Creek, April 17-18



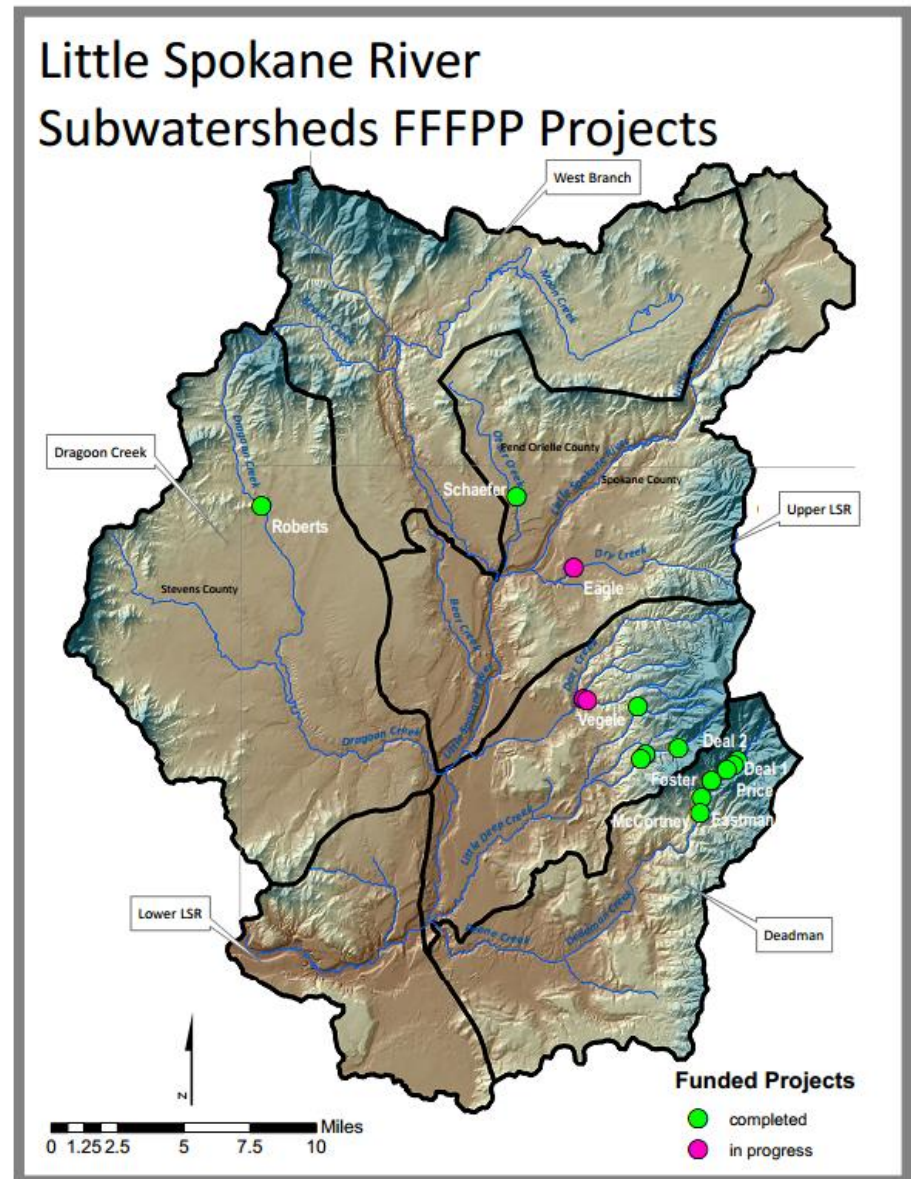
- Initiated in 2009
- Approximately 41,000 willow whips to date
- Popular event for SCD and volunteers



# FFFPP Program



- Initiated in 2005
- 17<sup>th</sup> landowner contracts
- 20 barrier corrections
- **102.86** miles of Type F (fish use) stream habitat have been made accessible.
- FFFPP funds utilized in Spokane County by SCD: **\$1,699,475**
- 3 **NEW** projects for 2016!



# 2015 Little Deer Creek

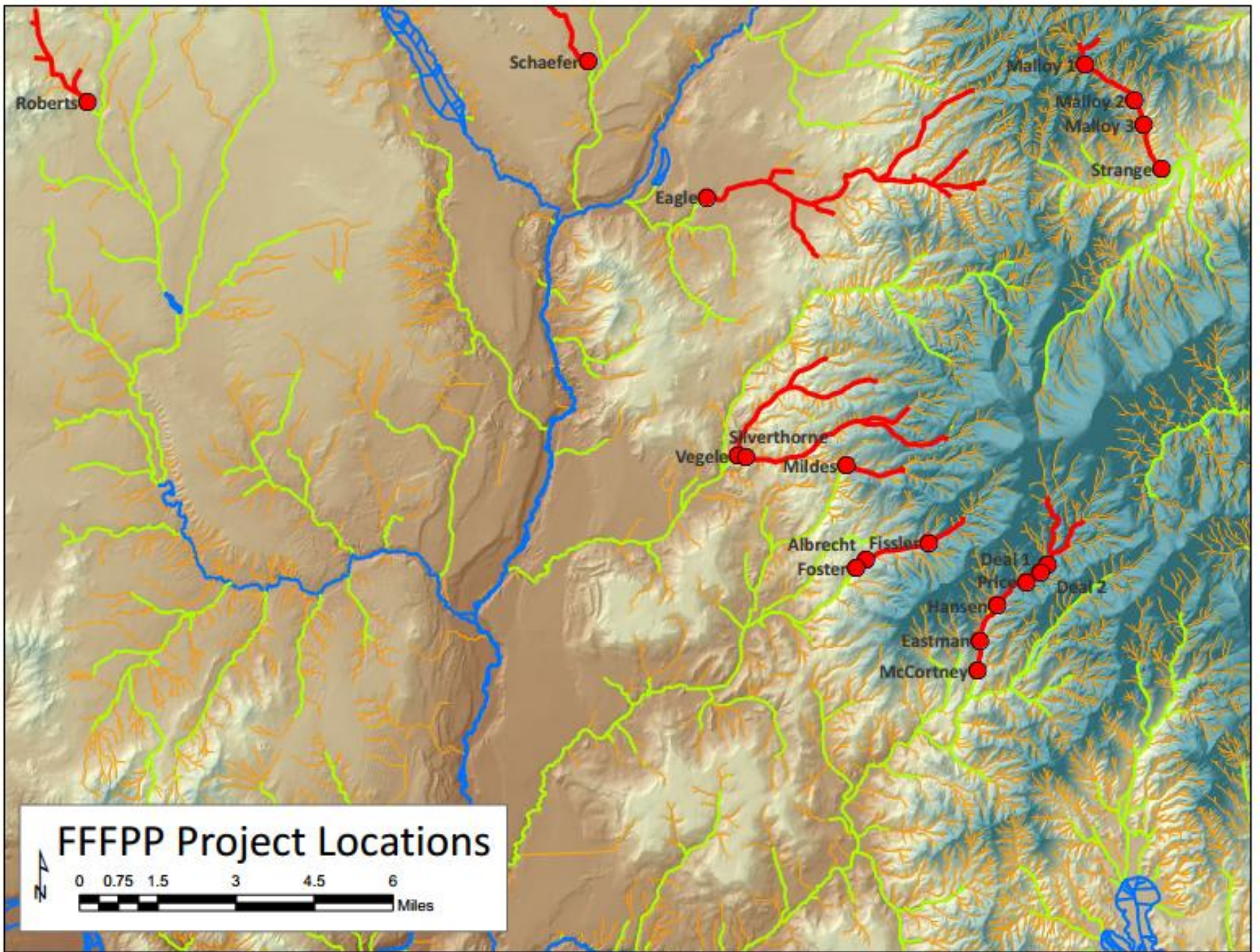
- Silverthorne & Vegele Property
- New 5.94 miles accessible

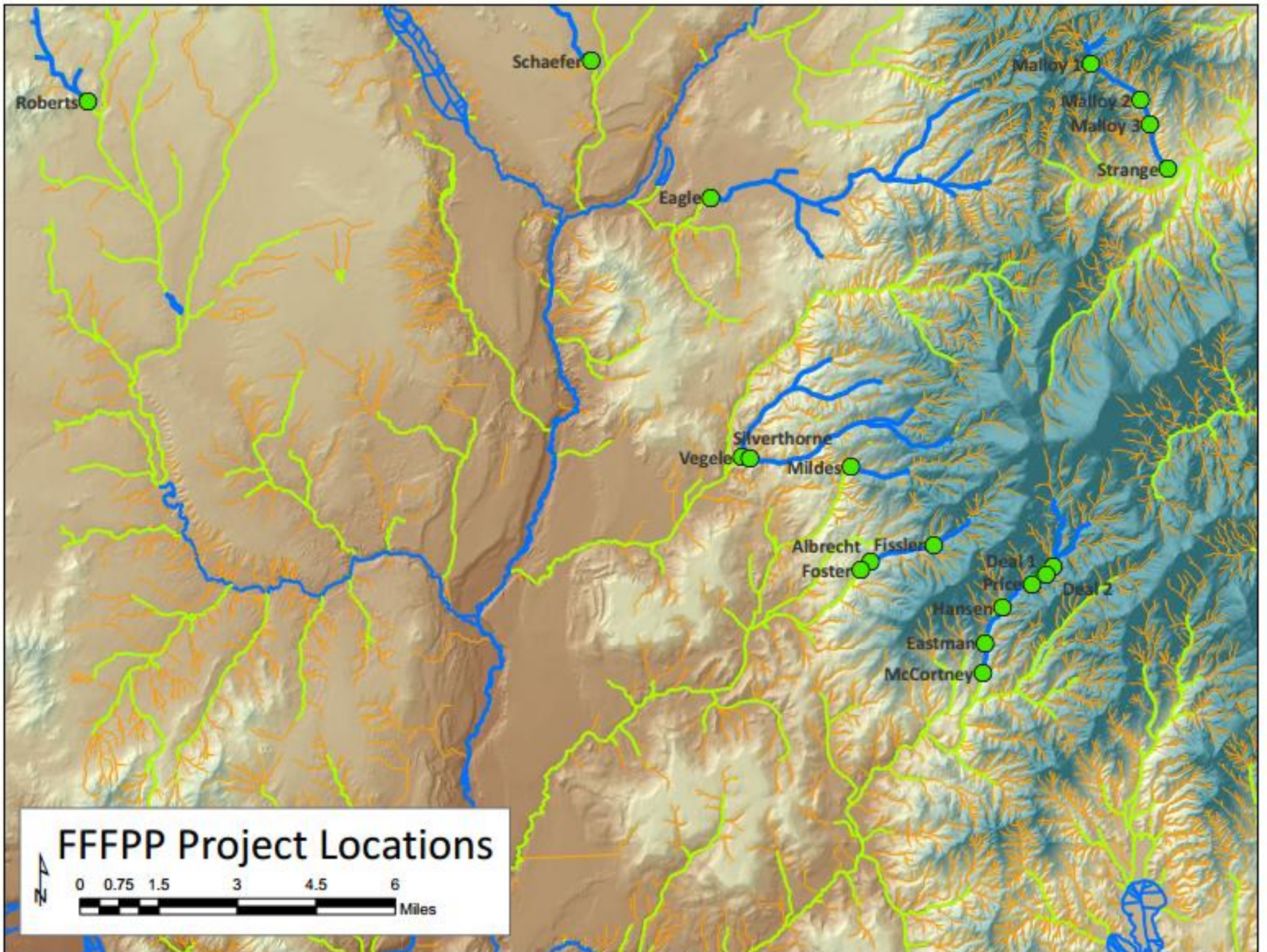


# 2015 Dry Creek

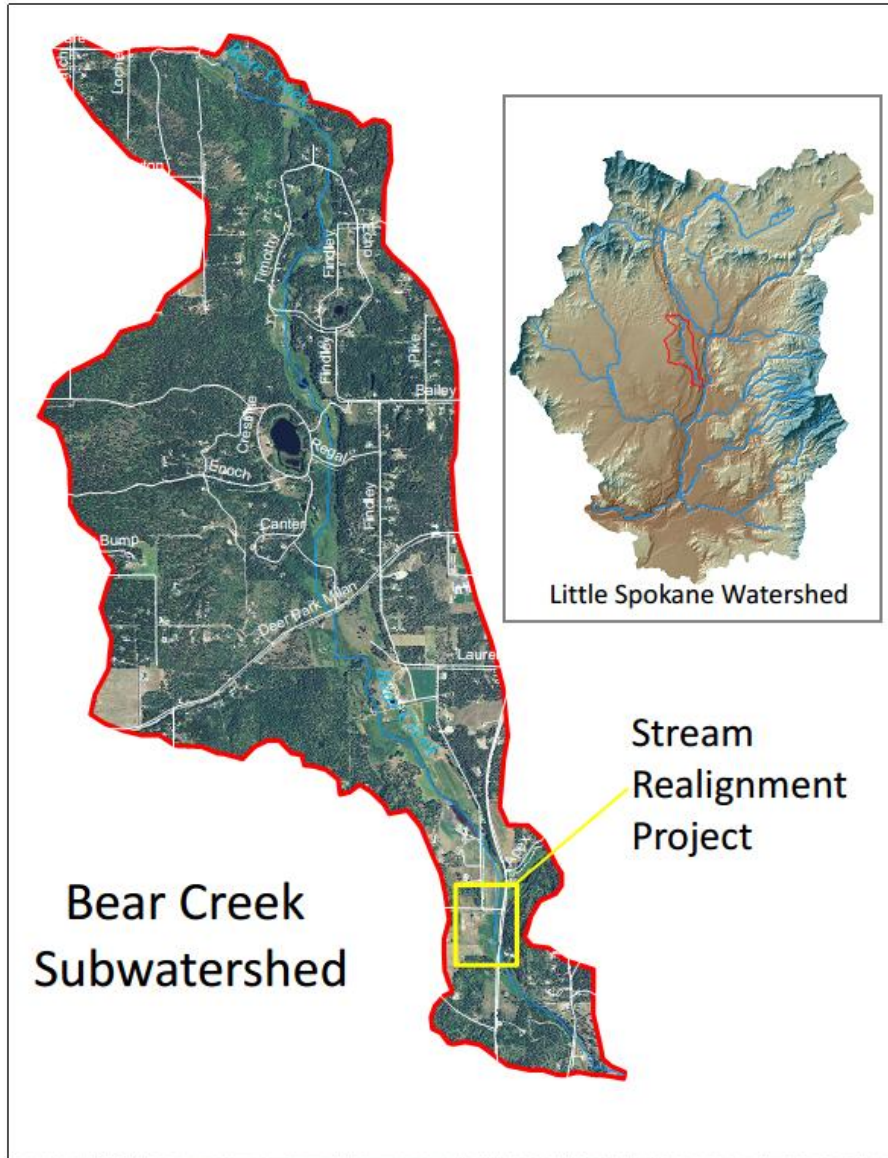
- Eagle property
- New 10.7 miles accessible







# Bear Creek Watershed





# Re-Alignment Project

- 1,100' along Route 2
- Increase to 1,800' meandering creek
- Thousands of trees and shrubs (new habitats)
- 1,500' of livestock fencing
- Demonstration/Education Area









**STREAM  
RESTORATION  
PROJECT**



# 2015 Project Tally

- 76 OSS Projects
- 5 Livestock Improvement Projects
- 1 Willow Warrior Project
- 3 FFFPP Projects
- 1 Creek Re-alignment Project
- 2 irrigation conservation retro-fit projects
- 2 Spokane River Mitigation Projects (in progress)

**Total of 90 projects of various types and sizes**



# 2016 Project Agenda

- 3 FFFPP Projects
- 2 livestock BMP projects in progress
- 3 shoreline stabilization projects (2800 ft)
- **NEW** Riparian Program – soliciting projects
- **NEW** CDBG Grant for OSS
- **NEW** Voluntary Stewardship Program
- **NEW** Regional Conservation Partnership Program

# Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Background



- All counties must adopt a critical areas ordinance protecting critical areas
- Several counties exempted agriculture from CAO
- Trend of board decisions in early 2000's agriculture not exempt from CAO requirements
- Concerns in agriculture community about regulation impacting agriculture value
- Environmental concerns of agriculture impact to critical areas – both ongoing and future agriculture
- Counties concerned re costs of appeals

# Purposes of VSP



- **Protect and enhance critical areas within the area where agricultural activities** are conducted, while maintaining and improving the long-term **viability of agriculture** in the state of Washington and reducing the conversion of farmland to other uses;
- Focus and **maximize voluntary incentive programs** to encourage good riparian and ecosystem stewardship as an alternative to historic approaches used to protect critical areas;
- Rely upon RCW [36.70A.060](#) for the protection of critical areas for those counties that do not choose to participate in this program;
- **Leverage existing resources** by relying upon existing work and plans in counties and local watersheds, as well as **existing state and federal programs** to the maximum extent practicable to achieve program goals;
- Encourage and foster a spirit of **cooperation and partnership** among county, tribal, environmental, and agricultural interests to better assure the program success;
- **Improve compliance** with other laws designed to protect water quality and fish habitat; and
- Rely upon **voluntary stewardship practices as the primary method** of protecting critical areas and not require the cessation of agricultural activities.

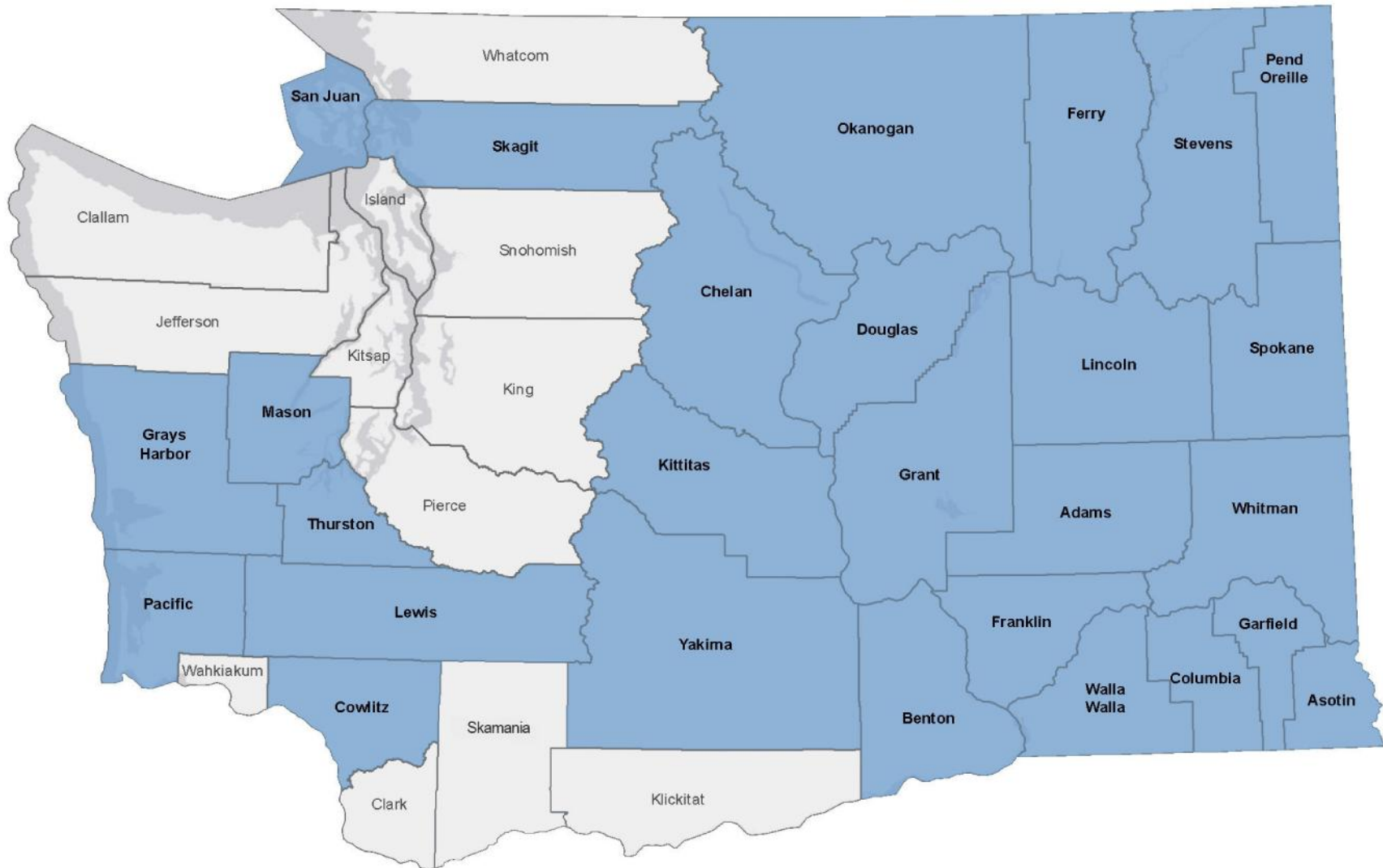


# What are the Five Critical Areas VSP seeks to Protect?



1. Wetlands
2. Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water
3. Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
4. Frequently flooded areas
5. Geologically hazardous areas

## COUNTIES OPTING-IN TO THE VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM



As of January 2016

# Designation of Watershed Group



- Must be designated when funds are made available.
- The designated watershed group must develop a work plan to protect critical areas while maintaining the viability of agriculture in the watershed.
- County must:
  - “...confer with tribes and interested stakeholders before designating or establishing a watershed group.”
  - “The watershed group must include broad representation of key watershed stakeholders and, at a minimum, representatives of agricultural and environmental groups and tribes that agree to participate. The county should encourage existing lead entities, watershed planning units, or other integrating organizations to serve as the watershed group.”
- State and federal agencies can be very useful work group participants

# Developing The Work Plan



- Watershed work groups have 2 years 9 months of receipt of funds to prepare and submit a work plan.
- If no work plan is submitted by deadline:
  - SCC to engage stakeholder group in discussion with watershed group.
  - Must have work plan in 3 years or “fail out” of VSP
  - Statute defines what happens if a county “fails out”

# What topics must the work group address?



- The work plan must:
  - Identify critical areas and ag activities
  - Identify economic viability of agriculture in county
  - Identify outreach plan to contact landowners
  - Identify entity to provide landowner assistance
  - Identify measurable programmatic and implementation goals and benchmarks

# Work Plan Approval



- Once a county has completed a work plan, it is submitted to Commission Director for approval.
- Director submits the plan to a technical panel who has 45 days to review and make recommendation to the director.
- If no, director to work with the local work group and Statewide Advisory Panel for revisions.
- Once final approval, must implement.
- Every 5 years, local work group must report on progress to the Conservation Commission
- If not making progress, must correct or be kick back into “traditional GMA approach”.

# Work Plan Implementation



- “Traditional GMA” uses a regulatory approach – required buffers on each parcel with critical areas.
- VSP uses a voluntary approach – landowners use stewardship plans and voluntary programs.
- Voluntary programs have provisions for standards and practices for best management practices.
- Agricultural operators implementing an individual stewardship plan consistent with a work plan are presumed to be working toward the protection and enhancement of critical areas.  
36.70A.750(1).

# Work Plan Implementation



Various incentive programs are available to be identified in the landowner stewardship plan:

- CREP – Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentive Program
- CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program
- ACEP – Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
- Conservation District Programs – Funded through SCC funding and other fund sources such as ECY water quality grants and local assessment funds.
- **RCPP to the rescue!**





# Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

**The single largest nonpoint project in the Spokane River Basin to date!**

- Federal program (NRCS) that promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation to producers and landowners
- Provides assistance through partnership agreements, program contracts, or easement agreements
- Combines four former conservation programs into one (EQIP, CSP, ACEP, HFRP)



# Why RCPP?

- Excellent opportunity to bring conservation dollars to our area.
- Address non-point source pollution issues in Spokane River Basin.
- Nationwide competition for funds (284 apps)
- We requested \$10 million and were awarded \$7.7 million.



# Partners

- Many partners from old watershed groups and several new ones.
- Spokane and CDA Tribes
- Idaho Dept of Lands
- Conservation CDs
- Lands Council
- PNDSA, and many others
- No **New** Partners are allowed (match purposes)

# Project Area



6,640 sq. miles

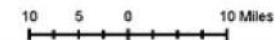
- 2,295 – WA
- 4,345 – ID

4,249,600 acres

The Greater Spokane River  
Watershed Implementation  
Project Area

### Legend

- Watershed Boundary
- Tribal Land
- Major Roads
- Surface Water
- Lakes, Stream and Canals
- County/State Boundaries



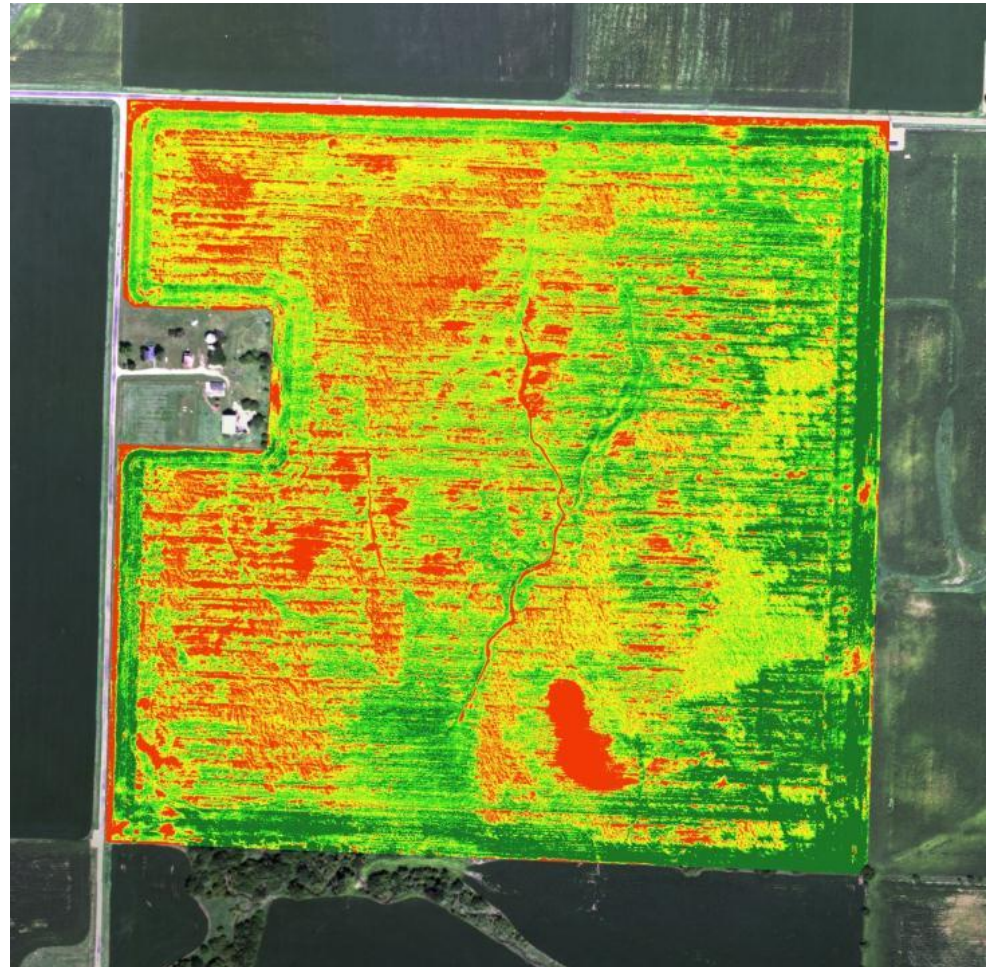


# Objectives

- Approximately 150,000 acres of conservation
  - 120,100 acres of conservation tillage
  - 20,000 acres of precision ag.
  - 750 acres of riparian buffer/filter strips (commodity)
  - 400 acres of conservation easements (ag and forest)
  - 8,750 acres of forest stand improvements
- Reduction of 600,000 tons of soil erosion by 2021.
- Improve water and air quality, soil health, and habitat.
- **Timeline**– 2016 through 2021

# Precision Agriculture

- Helps with decision making due to variability in crops
  - Technology (Drones, GPS, thermal, satellite imaging)
- Crop health
- Areas of red and yellow indicate less vegetation
- Management decisions for application of inputs like fertilizer or fungicides



# Conservation Tillage vs Conventional



# Financial Assistance by State



## Washington

- \$720K/year – EQIP
- \$320K – ACEP (2017)
- \$295K – HFRP (2017-2018)
- \$72K/year CSP (1/2 contracts)

## Idaho

- \$520K/year – EQIP
- No ACEP (unless needed)
- \$320K/year – HFRP (2017 – 2018)
- \$43K/year CSP (1 contract)



# Programs



- **Conservation Stewardship Program**

**CSP** provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on tribal and private working lands. Contracts (five years in length with the option of extension) are based on meeting or exceeding a "stewardship threshold."

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**

**EQIP** provides financial and technical assistance to producers and land owners to plan and install structural, vegetative, and land management practices on eligible lands to alleviate natural resource problems.

# Programs



- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program**
  - **ACEP** provides financial and technical assistance through two types of easements: agricultural land easements that limit non-agricultural uses on productive farm or grass lands, and wetland reserve easements that protect and restore wetlands.
  - *Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)*
  - *Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE)*
- **Healthy Forests Reserve Program**
  - **HFRP** assists landowners in restoring and enhancing forest ecosystems using 10-year agreements, 30-year contracts, 30-year easements, and permanent easements.

**\* These are two new programs for both WA and ID**



# Commodity Buffer

- Compensate producer for value of buffer area out of production.
- Value assessed through RMA Crop Insurance Projected Prices. We will likely use this fixed price and make it slightly higher for incentive.
- Buffer size requirements vary depending on type of tillage operation. Use their Buffer Matrix.
- Fits with Farmed SMART Certification program.
- No impact on bottom line.



# Buffer Program Requirements

	Farmed Smart	Enhanced Mulch Till	Mulch Till	High Disturbance
Stream Type <span style="float: right;">STIR</span>	30 or Less + Farmed SMART Certified	40 or Less	31-80	81+
<b>Ephemeral/ Short Term Intermittent (0-6 Months) Stream Order 1, 2</b>	No Setback	No Setback	20 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip Standard)	35 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip Standard)
<b>Intermittent (7-10 months) Stream Order 2, 3</b>	15 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip Standard)	20 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip Standard)	35 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip Standard)	50 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip Standard)
<b>Perennial (11+ Months) Stream Order 3, 4, 5</b>	35 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip allowing bank vegetation)	35 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip allowing bank vegetation)	50 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip allowing bank vegetation)	75 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip allowing bank vegetation)
<b>Perennial Major Fish-bearing Stream Order 6+</b>	50 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip allowing bank vegetation)	50 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip allowing bank vegetation)	60 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip allowing bank vegetation)	75 Ft. Setback (Filter Strip allowing bank vegetation)

# Farmed SMART Certification

- **Offers** farmers a promotable consumer brand
- adherence to defined conservation standards,
- certifies that they are utilizing sustainable practices,
- and develops markets for certified sustainable product
- <http://www.directseed.org/certification/>

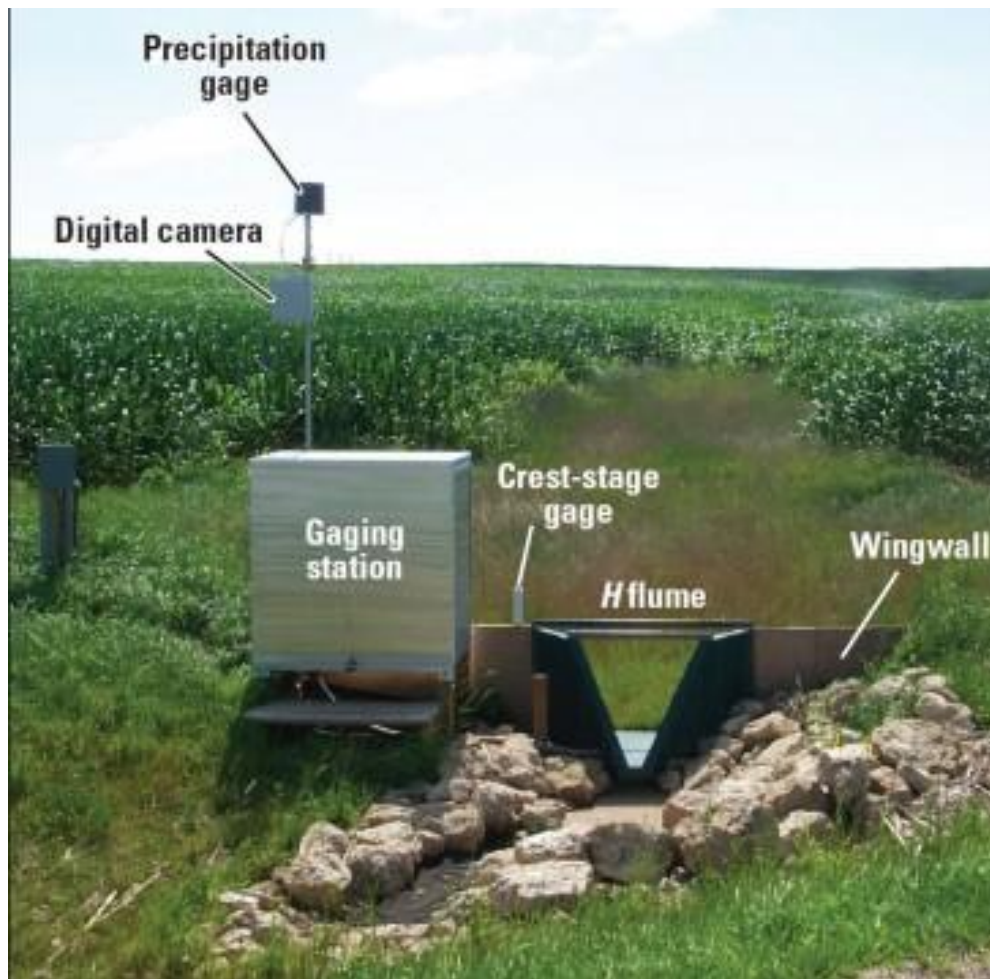


# Edge of Field Monitoring

- Evaluate crop nutrients leaving the field in water runoff. This program will help producers understand
  - when and how nutrients escape from the field.
  - How to tailor management practices that capture nutrients in the root zone for crop use.



# Edge of Field Monitoring



- Research on farms provides an important link between plot and watershed scale research.
- Also a way to actively engage farmers in discussions on local water quality issues.
- Some of the critical issues are effective monitoring and identifying the best approaches to monitoring from individual farms.

# Next Steps



- NRCS Contract Completion – by June/July
- Meeting for working on local priorities, practice list, ranking criteria, hold downs, etc.
- Finish Commodity Buffer Program Criteria
  - Secure funding from WSCC
- Monitoring Plan Development
- Outreach Plan development
  - WA/ID efforts by partners to spread word and get people in for contract work.
- First sign up is projected for this fall.



# RCCP Website



<http://sccd.org/the-greater-spokane-river-watershed-project>

**Department Contact:**

Walt Edelen

Water Resource Manager

509-535-7274, ext. 224

[walt-edelen@sccd.org](mailto:walt-edelen@sccd.org)

Charlie Peterson

RCCP Coordinator

509-535-7274, ext. 220

[charlie-peterson@sccd.org](mailto:charlie-peterson@sccd.org)

# QUESTIONS?

Walt Edelen

Water Resources Manager

Spokane Conservation District

(509) 535-7274

