

**SPRING  
2016**



# The Columbia SWCD presents: “The Dirt”

## **BATWATER STATION:**

**Winner of the Department of State Lands’ Annual  
Wetland Restoration/Mitigation Project Award**

This year the Columbia Soil and Water Conservation District has the honor of accepting an award from the Department of State Lands for their part in the wetland restoration at Batwater Station. This award will be presented to the CSWCD staff on April 12, 2016 by the Governor, State Treasurer, and Secretary of State.

Batwater Station is a 64-acre property in the Clatskanie floodplains. This project had two primary environmental goals: restoring the area’s natural hydrology and creating critical wildlife habitat. The plan consisted of breaching the eastern levee, removing the tidegate, and reconnecting the 26 acre eastern basin of the property with the Columbia River. Restoring natural hydrology to a wetland area has many environmental benefits. Natural tidal movements allow for exchange of nutrients, water, and sediment between the river and its floodplain. Connection with a natural floodplain diminishes bottom and bank scour and erosion by allowing some of the pressure from high tides to be absorbed by drainage into the floodplain. Additionally, healthy floodplains reduce the risk of flooding for homes and other surrounding properties.

The second goal (habitat creation and improvement) was accomplished by constructing tidal channels, installing large woody debris to increase habitat complexity, and planting native shrubs and trees to replace the understory previously overrun by Reed canarygrass. Completion of this project has resulted in the creation of vital rearing habitat for migrating salmon, something that has been seriously degraded over recent years due to things like dyking, filling, and installation of flood control structures. This project also provides improved wetland habitat for other native species including birds, amphibians, and reptiles.

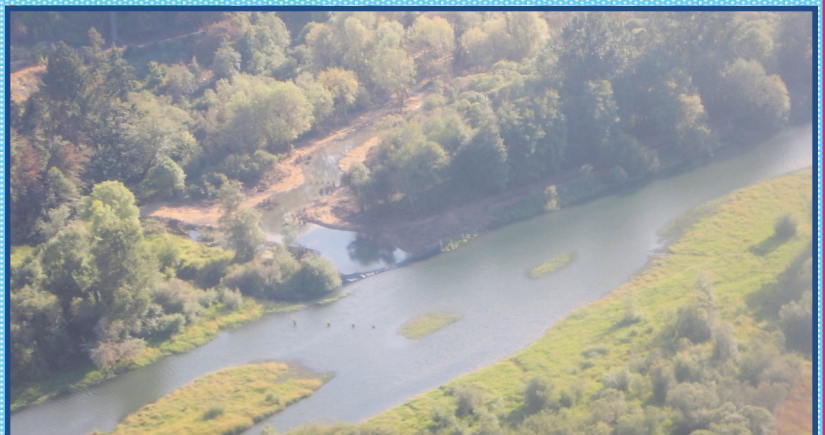


Photo taken during construction of tidal channels’ connection with the Columbia River.

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# Get Involved

## Local Board Meetings:

Columbia Soil and Water Conservation District: 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at their office in Saint Helens

Scappoose Bay Watershed Council: 1st Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at their office in Scappoose

Lower Columbia River Watershed Council: 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Columbia SWCD office

Upper Nehalem Watershed Council: 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Vernonia High School

### CSWCD STAFF

#### District Manager

Kari Olsen-Hollander

#### Assistant District Manager

Malysa Legg

#### Resource Conservationist

Tyler Joki

#### Resource Conservationist

Nathan Herr

#### Outreach Coordinator/ Field Technician

Crystalyn Bush

#### Office Assistant

Jennifer Steinke

### NRCS STAFF

#### District Conservationist

Don Mehlhoff

#### Program Support Tech

Dee Robinson

#### Soil Conservationist

Angela Reseland

## UP-COMING EVENTS

### **4/27/16 5:00—7:00 p.m.: Open House at Vancouver Lake; Vancouver Water Resources Education Center**

Join the Estuary Partnership for an open house for Vancouver Lake and find out how you can get involved. For more information call the LCREP at 503-226-1565.

### **4/30/16 1:00—5:00 p.m.: Homebrew Battle for the Columbia River; Columbia River Brewing Company**

Fifteen homebrewers will compete for the People's Choice of best beer and prizes donated by sponsors. A \$15 entry fee gets you into this event, samples of all the homebrews, and a few other commemorative items. Columbia brewing will also have food and drinks for sale. All proceeds from entry fees go to support the work of the Estuary Partnership. Contact Vanessa Bird at LCREP for more information at 503-226-1565 x 234.

### **4/30/16 Beginning Forestry Workshop in Portland, OR**

This is a workshop for new forest owners who want to know about Pacific ecology and managing a woodlands. Check out <http://beginning-forestry-or.eventbrite.com> for more information.

### CSWCD BOARD

#### Chair:

Bill Eagle

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Lona Pierce

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Dave Freytag

#### Director:

Randy Bergman

#### Interim Director:

Craig Ellis



## MEET THE NEW STAFF!

Both the Columbia SWCD and our partner agency, NRCS, have recently added new staff members. We are very excited to have such wonderful additions to our team and to be able to grow our ability to serve the residents of Columbia County.



Crystalyn Bush has been hired as an Outreach Coordinator/Field Technician. Crystalyn has been volunteering with the District for several years and is excited to officially become part of the team. She has a B.S. in environmental science from Oregon State University as well as a B.A. in English Literature from Middlebury College. In her spare time she enjoys spending time with her family outside, gardening, reading, and fun trips with the kids. She is looking forward to helping the residents of Columbia County and educating people about things we can all do to protect our natural resources.



Jennifer Steinke is the District's new Office Assistant. Jennifer has grown up and lived in Columbia County her whole life. She loves living here and is excited to be in a position where she can serve the residents of Columbia County. In her spare time she enjoys hiking, baking, knitting, exploring costume/SFX makeup and being adventurous.



Angela Reseland is the new Soil Conservationist for NRCS. She began working for the NRCS as a student intern in 2010. She has a B.A. in Anthropology, a M.S. in Resource Management from Central Washington University, and a M.S. in Environmental Studies from Evergreen State College. Angie relocated to the St. Helens field office in February 2016 from the Olympia, Washington field office where she started working in 2011. In her free time Angie enjoys cooking, gardening, watching football (especially the Seattle Seahawks), and adventuring with her husband, John, and their dog, Lizzie.

# INTELLIGENT IRRIGATION: A Smarter Way to an Awesome Garden

By: Crystalyn Bush, Columbia SWCD Outreach Coordinator/Field Technician

Last year I included a small note in our spring newsletter about a new irrigation system we were going to be testing out in our family garden. The system is called Aquajet and it's made by a company called Intelligent Irrigation llc. Since then we have gone through an entire gardening season: planting, growing, harvesting, and putting the garden to bed. So now is a great time to provide a review of the product to anyone who is interested. Here is the review: It's fabulous!

The most complicated thing about this product is definitely the installation. You have to customize it to your situation. We have two long growing boxes that are 4 feet wide. So we laid two strips of pipe in each that ran the full length of the box (except for about 6" at the far end). On the outside of the first box we installed a spigot for the hose to connect and a three way splitter. One lever turns on water to the first box, the second lever to the second box, and the third lever to a garden hose for hand-watering as we have some plants growing outside of the boxes. This is not super complicated, but it definitely helped that my husband is handy with piecing things together.

When you plant you have to be a little mindful of where you are placing your seeds or starts in relation to the pipes. If you place them directly above a pipe they will not receive any water. The pipes distribute water parallel to the surface of the soil in the root zone. If you place plants too close the pressure could probably be a little damaging to the roots. We planted at about a 6 inch spacing from the pipes. Initially, especially if you are direct seeding, you will need to hand-water until the plants establish, as the pipes are several inches below the surface and water will not reach them until their roots have gone down about this far.



This system definitely makes it easier to manage your garden as it greatly reduces the amount of time dedicated to watering. The benefit to time and efficiency is clearly there, but we were wondering whether or not this would lead to a more productive garden. The following are pictures from our garden last summer. Things grew so fast and dense that I spent the entire summer just trying to keep up

with the growth and keep our walking paths clear. To be fair, we also planted in 100% pure compost and had a really long and hot growing season. Consequently, our jurassic garden was the result of a combination of factors. However, I feel I can safely say that our plants were definitely receiving the water they needed to reach their full potential and that our irrigation system contributed to a super productive garden last year. It might be too late to install one of these systems in your garden this year (since it obviously has to be done prior to planting). However, it's never too early to start thinking about next year! Happy gardening!









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## ID Your Weeds

With summer just around the bend, it's time to take a careful look around and see if you have any unwanted guests growing on your property. We conduct spray treatments on Knotweed during the summer and can provide advice or assistance for dealing with other invasive species as well. Here are three of the worst culprits to be on the look out for:



Barbara Tokarska-Guzik, Univ. of Silesia

Japanese Knotweed



Linda Wilson, Univ. of Idaho

Purple Loosestrife



Nancy Loewenstein, Auburn Univ.

Yellowflag Iris