WHITMAN CONSERVATION DISTRICT

LONG RANGE RESOURCE PROGRAM

Whitman County, Washington

October 2003

Certification of Adoption

We, the Board of Supervisors of the Whitman Conservation District, do hereby approve the following document known as the *Long Range Resource Program of the Whitman Conservation District*. We hereby accept and certify the adoption of this *Program* on the __ day of October, 2003.

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Acknowledgments

The original *Long Range Resource Program* was aided by the Whitman County Regional Planning Council, US Army Corps of Engineers, Palouse Conservation District, Washington State Department of Game, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Whitman County Parks and Recreation Department, and the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service.

The 2003 revision used the original *Program* as the base document. Consultations also took place with the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and the Whitman Conservation District Board of Supervisors.

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Introduction

This publication's purpose is to present the Whitman Conservation District's Stakeholders a Program for the orderly development and wise use of the natural resources within its boundaries. Its function is to serve as a practical guide for the planning and accomplishment of work by the District, its Stakeholders, and associated agencies.

A district's long range program encompasses the elements involved in conservation and development of land, water and related resources for both agriculture and non-agricultural uses.

The development of the Whitman Conservation District's Long Range Resource Program is designed to inventory the resources, assess the problems and plan their solution based on a priority approach.

History of Conservation Districts

Just after the Dust Bowl crisis of the 1930's, people began to realize that such disasters could occur repeatedly if some kind of conservation practices were not applied to the land. In many areas across the country, erosion was a problem.

Congress recognized the problem of wasted land resources and in 1933 the Soil Erosion Service was set up on a temporary basis. In 1935 Congress created the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) due to the increasing demand for assistance in installing conservation practices. The new agency had the responsibility of developing and carrying out a long range resource program to protect, improve, and safeguard the Nation's soil from erosion and flood damage.

After the SCS was formed, the Secretary of Agriculture approved a committee recommendation which proposed that work be carried out in cooperation with local agencies and the states as soon as these agencies were established. Washington State followed with the passage of the Soil Conservation District Law by the State Legislature in 1939 which provided for the organization of local farmers to form conservation districts to attempt to control erosion with the aid of the SCS.

In 1996, the name SCS was change to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Formation of Conservation Districts

Conservation districts are effective organizations through which people and their government – local, state and federal – can cooperate to accomplish conservation objectives. Districts can request help from any public source that is empowered to make such assistance available and from private individuals and organizations.

The purpose of the conservation district is to provide leadership in the promotion and application of sound conservation practices within the authorities assigned to the district by state law under the Revised Code of Washington 89.08.

Conservation districts are subdivisions of state government. Local district organizations came about through a referendum vote of the local people. The districts operate by legal procedures under the authority of state conservation district law RCW 89.08.

Once the district has been established, three supervisors are elected by local electors and two supervisors are appointed by the state conservation commission. This local Board of Supervisors holds organizational meetings and elects officers to handle the district business. The Board prepares an inventory of resources, problems, and needs with the assistance of the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). With the cooperation of local interested Stakeholders, a long range resource program is developed. At the close of each year, the district may hold an annual meeting to inform local people of progress, request their ideas, and to present a financial report.

Supervisors Duties and Responsibilities

The Whitman Conservation District Board of Supervisors is public officials and is responsible for the management of natural resources in the District.

Corporate powers:

1. To conduct surveys and research relating to conservation.
2. To provide conservation education materials and programs.
3. To carry out preventive and control measures on works of improvement.
4. To cooperate or enter into agreements.
5. To acquire, maintain, administer, improve, sell, lease, or receive income from real property.
6. To make materials and equipment available for the conservation of natural resources.
7. To prepare and keep current a comprehensive long range resource program.
8. To prepare an annual work plan of action.

Duties and responsibilities:

1. Provide service to district Stakeholders.
2. Be active in district work.
3. Provide leadership in conservation activities.
4. Provide for needed technical assistance.
5. Establish goals, objectives and priorities.
6. Cooperate with groups, organizations and agencies on resource development programs.
7. Inform the public of problems, needs and progress of the district.
8. Conduct an annual election.
9. Keep an accurate record of funds and proceedings.
10. Provide for an annual internal audit.

District Membership

Each conservation district belongs to both a state and national conservation district organization. Whitman Conservation District belongs to the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). Both organizations are dedicated to the same objectives as the conservation districts but at a higher level of organization. They coordinate and represent the districts at state and national levels.

District Cooperation with Natural Resources Conservation Service and Other Agencies

Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical assistance to the District and the District Board in operations and policies. NRCS will make available to the District the services of personnel qualified in carrying out resource planning, conservation and development, and will designate a conservationist as its primary staff member for assisting the District. NRCS assistance will be allocated in accordance with the District and based upon the District's Annual Work Plan.

Federal laws give the NRCS certain duties and responsibilities, and state laws give conservation districts certain duties and responsibilities. These laws are complementary. NRCS and the conservation district have entered into a working arrangement to carry out the common objectives.

Other Agencies

The District provides assistance to, and receives assistance from, many different agencies involved in natural resource conservation. Some of these agencies are listed below.

Water Quality Committee
Regional Planning Council
Whitman County Health Department
Whitman County Commissioners
Washington State Cooperative Extension Service
Washington State Soil Testing Laboratory
Washington State University
US Forest Service
Farm Service Agency
Department of Ecology
Department of Natural Resources
Palouse Conservation District
Palouse Rock Lake Conservation District
Pine Creek Conservation District
Department of Fish and Wildlife
University of Idaho
Upper Columbia Resource, Conservation and Development

Description of Whitman Conservation District

Organization of the District

In 1966, the Whitman Conservation District was formed through the consolidation of the Central Whitman Soil Conservation District (originally formed in 1945) and the West Whitman Soil Conservation District (originally formed in 1946).

Originally, both districts were organized under the provisions of the Washington State Soil Conservation District Law enacted by the Washington State Legislature and signed by the Governor on March 17, 1939. Landowners in the different areas organized these legal subdivisions of the State for the purpose of conserving the soil and soil resources, for the control and prevention of soil erosion, and thereby to preserve the natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, preserve wildlife, protect the tax base, protect public lands, and to protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of the state.

District Activities

Throughout the year the Whitman Conservation District sponsors and/or participates in many activities to promote resource conservation.

1. District Annual Meeting: The District may hold an annual meeting. The Board of Supervisors decides the date, place, and time. The Board may sponsor a program to which the public is invited.

2. Annual Soil Judging Contest: The District may hold a soil-judging contest each year. During this contest, students from vocational-agriculture and science programs in local high schools judge different soils according to the physical characteristics and capabilities. The students receive scores and banners are awarded to the schools with the highest scores. The District may invite schools from throughout the State to participate.

3. Annual Envirothon Contest: The District may hold an Envirothon contest each year. During this contest, students from vocational-agriculture and science programs in local high schools compete in five natural resource areas: soil, water, forestry, wildlife and environmental issues. The students receive scores and awards are provided to the schools with the highest scores. The District may invite schools from throughout the State to participate.

4. Fifth Grade Conservation Education Program. The District may hold the fifth grade conservation education program. During this program, fifth graders learn about conservation measures being used locally and the reasons behind using such practices. They participate in a hands-on conservation project that involves planting plants.

5. Sixth Grade Water Quality Awareness Program. The District may hold the sixth grade water quality awareness program. During this program, the students learn about some basic water quality, the interrelationship between basic components, and complete some basic water quality testing. They also evaluate the area adjacent to the water bodies for conservation practice needs.

6. Natural Resource Camp (Inland Empire Natural Resources Youth Camp): Each year Whitman Conservation District may assist in locating sponsors for interested persons between the ages of 13 and 16 to attend a natural resources camp at Camp N-Sid-Sen on Lake Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. At this camp,

the students learn about natural resources and conservation. It helps young leaders to understand interrelationships among the soil, forest, range, wildlife, water, and recreation.

7. Conservation Speech Contest: The District, in cooperation with the Colfax Future Farmers of America advisor and chapter, may sponsor a speech contest each year. The subject will be provided by the local District and the rules by the Washington Association of Conservation Districts as "Soil Stewardship Week".

8. Conservation Farmer of the Year Award: If the Board of Supervisors so choose, this annual award is presented to the farmer in the District that the Board feels contributed the most to conservation in that year.

9. Tours: As funding and interest allows, the District may organize tours. The audience, schedule, and subject are decided by the Board of Supervisors.

10. Equipment Rental: The District may rent to local Stakeholders a mulch seeder (straw-blower), a manual pull grader and a refrigerated trailer.

11. The Steward: The District may continue to co-produce with Pine Creek Conservation District the quarterly newsletter, *The Steward*. The newsletter is a means of disseminating important information to the local Stakeholders. The newsletter publishes information such as USDA programs, important dates, local research projects and District activities.

12. Agricultural Burn Permits: The District may continue as a Permitting Authority with the service including assisting applicants with the Department of Ecology's Agricultural Burn Permitting Program application, and issuing permits locally.

13. Plant Sale: The District may continue to offer the annual plant sale to the local Stakeholders. The plant sale offers a variety of conservation-grade plants, both native and domestic, through a pre-order system.

14. Contract Tree Plantings: The District may continue to offer the annual contract tree planting service. The District coordinates large tree plantings by ordering the proper plants for compliance and reserving the Department of Natural Resources planting crews. The District works closely with the Stakeholder and is on-site to verify proper planting methods.

Original Conditions of the Area

The Palouse region originally supported a dense climax cover of grasses and legumes. The cover was composed chiefly of bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, big bluegrass, Sandberg's bluebunch, and junegrass. Yarrow and balsamroot made up a minor part of the cover. Small areas of open stands of conifers, mainly ponderosa pine, which had an understory of grass and shrubs, were located along drainage ways and in the northeast part of the County. Coniferous forests, mainly Douglas fir, were on some of the buttes.

Bottomland and main drainage ways were covered with a great variety of vegetation. In addition to the grasses and other plants common on the upland, such perennials as iris, camas, sedges, and rushes grew profusely on the lowland flats. Adjacent to Union Flat Creek and other major drainageways along the thin soil areas were found a variety of shrubs including hawthorne, willows, chokecherry, serviceberry, red osier dogwood, snowberry, and rose. Some of the native cover still exists on steep slopes in portions of the area.

Size and Topography of Whitman Conservation District

The Whitman Conservation District includes 424,065 acres of land of which approximately 223,159 acres are cropland, and 60,141 acres are enrolled in the federally funded Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). There is approximately 112,800 acres of native rangeland most of which adjoins the Snake River on the south boundary and the Palouse River on the west boundary of the District. Remaining acres in the district are included in woodlands, rivers, roads, and towns. There are approximately 530 operating units and 361 district cooperators as of September 2003. The location and boundaries of Whitman Conservation District are shown on the map following.

Most of the District has a rolling to hilly topography and deep soils that formed in silty material deposited by wind. Basalt is the base rock, but there are a few promontories of quartzite, shale, and sandstone.

The channeled scablands in the western part of the District consist of a broad basalt plateau that was stripped of soil by glacial floodwaters. Many island-like remnants of pre-glacial soils were left after the glacial floods. Channels, running in a southwesterly direction, were cut in the basalt bedrock.

The north half of the District drains into the Palouse River and its tributaries. The Palouse River heads in the mountains of Idaho with its north and south forks converging near the County center at Colfax. The river flows west and south from Colfax to its junction with the Snake River at the extreme southwestern corner of the District. Principal tributaries of the Palouse River, within the District include Union Flat, Rebel Flat, and Willow Creeks.

The south half of the District consists of a narrow band of very steep land along the Snake River Canyon. Alkali Flat, Almota, and Penawawa Creeks drain directly into the Snake River.

Agriculturally, Whitman Conservation District is divided into two major areas – the eastern and the western. Each area has conservation problems peculiar to its region, and different methods of farming must be developed for each.

The eastern area has deep soils that are used for dryland crops on large farms. Controlling erosion is the major conservation problem. Controlling weeds and maintaining the level of soil quality are secondary problems. These cropping systems are in general use in the area: 1) wheat, peas, or lentils, 2) annual grains, and 3) grass for seed. Combinations and variations of these systems are practiced, including rotation with grasses and legumes and, in some cases, summerfallow. A variety of alternative crops are being grown: Canola, garbanzo beans, corn, mustard, safflower; along with barley and other annual grains. Hay is another crop currently being harvested within the district.

The western area consists of deep soils, and channeled scabland. These soils are used mainly for large grain-livestock farming and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Rainfall in much of this area is slightly less than is needed to make annual cropping consistently practical. The most practical cropping system is one in which winter grains alternate with stubble mulch fallow, but this system necessitates special attention to control erosion. Conservation benefits can be obtained by adding a rotation of alfalfa and grass to the system.

Climate

The characteristics of both maritime and continental climates are present. Summers are warm, dry, and sunny. The average maximum temperature during the warmest months range from 80 to 90 degrees over most of the agricultural areas of Whitman County. Average temperatures during the summer are a

few degrees warmer in the western part of the county than to the east. Heat extremes of 110 degrees have been recorded at Colfax, Lacrosse, and Pullman.

Winter average minimum temperatures during January are around 21 to 22 degrees. During a few cold winters, the thermometer has dropped to –32 degrees at Pullman. Variations in temperatures in the County are mainly related to differences in elevation.

Precipitation

Precipitation varies from an average of 12 inches annually in the western part of the District to an average of 21 inches in the eastern part of the District.

Generally, precipitation is light in summer, increasing in the fall, reaching a peak in winter, and then gradually decreasing in the spring with an increase in late spring and early summer, followed by a sharp decrease in mid-summer. Although the summers are dry, heavy rain and hail are occasionally associated with thunderstorm activity in the spring and summer.

Most winter precipitation falls as snow. Around Colfax, the northeast corner of the District, snow can be expected from the middle of November until the first week of March. Snow accumulates to a depth of 10 – 15 inches and a snow cover remains on the ground from the middle of December until the last of February. A "Chinook" wind with rain sometimes melts a snow cover rapidly and results in severe erosion in the cultivated hilly areas.

Population

The largest center of population is the city of Colfax, located in the northeastern corner of the District. It has a listed population of 2,800 people (Census 2000). It is also the County Seat of Whitman County.

In addition to Colfax, there are the towns of Dusty, Hay, and Lacrosse. Central Ferry and Almota have modern grain storage and barge shipping facilities.

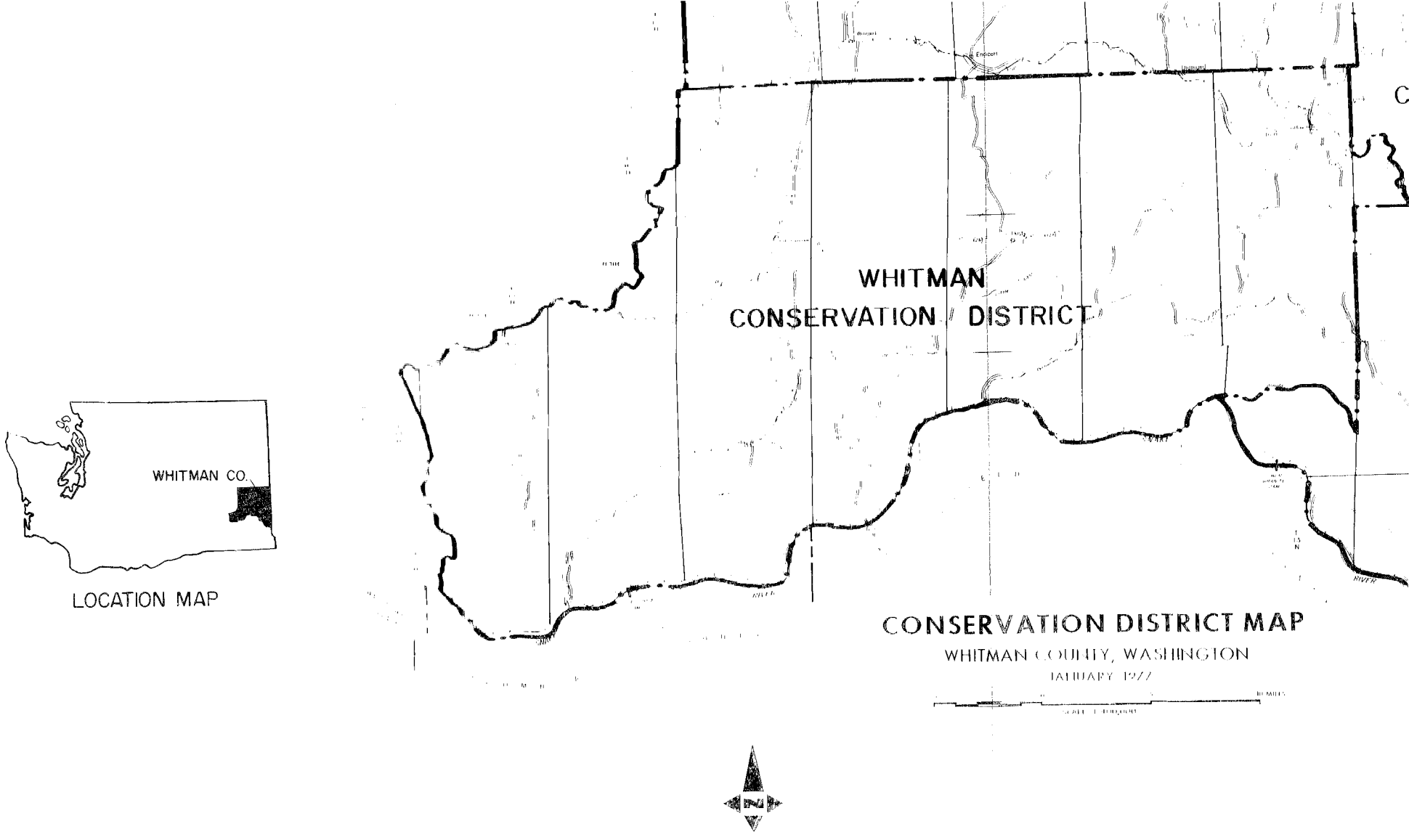
Woodland Use

Whitman County has about 10,000 acres, or less than 1 percent, of the County in native woodland. The areas are privately owned. The most important species is ponderosa pine with some Douglas fir and western larch present. The stands are generally uneven aged.

Woodlands in the County are used for grazing, recreation, wildlife habitat, and watershed protection.

Soils

Most of Whitman Conservation District consists of good farming land and soils have better than average fertility. It contains one of the largest areas of class II and III land in the State. The best soil in the District is largely found in the eastern part of the District. All these soils are rich in calcium and other soluble minerals. They were formed under semi-arid grassland conditions.



Source:
Base map prepared by [illegible] from [illegible] general highway map.
Thematic detail compiled by Washington state staff.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE USDA-SCS-PORTLAND, OR 1977

The Districts eastern soils have the important qualities of being deep, moisture absorbent, and free of gravel and stones. The topsoil zone is deep and fertile and has a high mineral content. The major problem in farming these grassland soils is wind and water erosion on the steeper slopes.

A soil association is a landscape that has a distinctive pattern of soils. It normally consists of one or more major soils and at least one minor soil, and it is named for the major soil. The soil in one association may occur in another, but in a different pattern. The descriptions of the soil associations are from the Soil Survey of Whitman County, Washington.

Very Deep Soils Formed in Loess: On Uplands

This group occupies upland hills and ridges. Elevation ranges from 1,200 to 3,000 feet. The average annual precipitation ranges from 11 to 23 inches.

Most of this group is used for dryland farming. Four of the seven associations in this group are found within Whitman Conservation District.

1. Walla Walla Association

Well-drained, moderately permeable silt loams are dominant in this association. The topography is fairly smooth and consists primarily of a series of roughly parallel hills oriented in a northeast-southwest direction, separated by U-shaped draws. The hills have broad, slightly rounded, gently sloping to moderately steep tops and steep to very steep side slopes. Total relief of individual hills varies from 50 to 120 feet. The area is slightly too moderately dissected and the drainage pattern is mainly sub-parallel. Annual precipitation is 11 to 15 inches. Elevation ranges from 1,200 to 2,200 feet.

This association is in the western part of the District and covers approximately 14 percent of the total acreage for the County. Parts of the association are isolated islands surrounded by the channeled scabland. Walla Walla soils are on most of the hills except Risbeck soils are on southerly upper side slopes. Onyx and Hermiston soils are on drainageways.

Practically all areas of the nearly level to steep soils are farmed. Wheat, barley, grass, and alfalfa are the principal crops. A summerfallow system of farming is used because the annual precipitation is too low to make annual cropping consistently profitable. Most of the steep slopes are small, isolated unfenced areas and are used for wildlife and range.

2. Athena Association

Well-drained, moderately permeable silt loams are dominant in this association. The topography is fairly smooth and consists primarily of a series of main hills or ridges and numerous small spur ridges extending outward from them. The hills and ridges are separated by U-shaped draws. The ridges have slightly rounded, gently sloping to moderately steep tops and moderately steep to very steep side slopes. The north and northeast facing slopes are generally shorter and steeper than the south and west facing slopes. Total relief of individual hills varies from 60 to 200 feet. The area is slightly too moderately dissected, and the drainage pattern is sub-parallel. Annual precipitation is 15 to 18 inches. Elevation ranges from 1,600 to 3,000 feet.

This association is dominantly in the western part of the District, but east of the Walla Walla association. Athena soils are on most of the hills except Lance and Calouse soils are on southerly upper side slopes and narrow ridgetops. Mondovi soils are dominant on drainageways.

Practically all areas of the nearly level to steep soils are farmed. Wheat, barley, peas, alfalfa, and grass are the principal crops. A farming system of annual cropping with intermittent fallow is used. Most of the very steep slopes are small, isolated, unfenced areas and are used for wildlife and range.

3. Athena-Calouse Association

Well-drained, moderately permeable silt loams are dominant in this association. The topography is fairly smooth and consists primarily of irregularly oriented hills or ridges. The hills are separated by U-shaped and V-shaped draws. The hilltops are slightly rounded and gently sloping to strongly sloping. In places are sharp-topped ridges having cirquelike amphitheater enclosures on the northern side. Side slopes of the hills are moderately steep to very steep. The north and northeast facing slopes are generally shorter and steeper than the south and west facing slopes. Total relief of individual hills varies from 100 to 220 feet. The area is intensely to very intensely dissected, and the drainage pattern is sub-parallel and dendritic. Annual precipitation is 16 to 18 inches. Elevation ranges from 1,950 to 2,900 feet.

This association is in the central to eastern part of the District, east of the Athena association. Athena soils are on most of the hills except Calouse and Lance soils are on southerly upper side slopes and narrow ridgetops. Mondovi soils are dominant on drainageways.

Practically all of the nearly level to steep soils are farmed. Wheat, barley, peas, alfalfa, and grass are the principal crops. A farming system of annual cropping with intermittent fallow is used. Most of the very steep slopes are small, isolated, unfenced areas and are used for wildlife and range.

4. Palouse Association

Well-drained, moderately permeable silt loams are dominant in this association. The topography consists of a series of irregularly oriented hills, or ridges, separated by U-shaped draws. The hilltops are mostly narrow and gently sloping to strongly sloping. Some have rather sharp tops. Cirquelike amphitheater enclosures are on northern sides of the hills in places. The side slopes are moderately steep to very steep. In some places they are fairly smooth and uniform; in others they are rough and irregular. North and northeast facing slopes are generally shorter and steeper than those facing south and west. Total relief of individual hills varies from 100 to 240 feet. The area is intensely to very intensely dissected, and the drainage pattern is sub-parallel and dendritic. Annual precipitation is 18 to 21 inches. Elevation ranges from 1,200 to 2,900 feet.

This association is in the eastern part of the District, east of the Athena-Calouse association. Palouse soils are on most of the hills except Thatuna soils are on many north and northeast slopes, Naff soils are on southerly lower slopes, Staley soils are on narrow ridgetops, and Garfield soils are on low-lying ridges. Snow soils are on foot slopes and Covello soils are on narrow drainageways.

Practically all areas of the nearly level to steep soils are farmed. Wheat, barley, peas, lentils, grass, and alfalfa are the principal crops. An annual cropping system of farming is used. Most of the very steep slopes are small, isolated, unfenced areas and are used for wildlife and range.

Very Deep Soils Formed in Loess: in Valleys

This group occupies the major drainageways including the side slopes. Elevation ranges from 1,400 to 2,700 feet. The average annual precipitation ranges from 14 to 23 inches. This group is used for dryland farming, range, woodland, and wildlife.

1. Palouse-Athena Association

Well-drained, moderately permeable silt loams are dominant in this association. The association includes all of the major drainageways within Whitman County, the adjacent bottomlands, and the gently sloping

to very steep side slopes leading down to them. Annual precipitation is 14 to 23 inches. Elevation ranges from 1,400 to 2,700 feet.

Palouse and Athena soils are on long southerly slopes, Gwin and Kuhl soils are on short southerly side slopes, Speigle and Linville soils are on northerly slopes, and Narcisse and Mondovi soils are on bottomland.

Most of the soils on very steep side slopes of this association, in the western and southern part of the District, are used for range and wildlife. Many soils on nearly level bottomland and gently sloping to steep side slopes are farmed. Wheat, barley, legumes, and grass are the principal crops.

Very Shallow to Moderately Deep soils Formed in Loess and Glacial Outwash: in Channeled Scablands

This group occupies the basaltic plateaus. Elevation ranges from 540 to 2,300 feet. The average annual precipitation ranges from 11 to 18 inches. Range and wildlife is the main use for this group.

1. Anders-Benge-Kuhl Association

Well-drained, moderately permeable silt loams and cobbly silt loams by basalt bedrock or gravel are dominant in this association. The landscape consists of a gently sloping to strongly sloping scarred basaltic plateau with minor percentages of moderately steep to very steep basalt cliffs, ledges, loess islands, and rock colluvial slopes on the sides of buttes, mesas, and canyons. There are also many undrained basins and gently sloping and strongly sloping outwash terraces having moderately steep and steep side slopes, Much of the area has patterned ground, the general term applied to mounds, stone nets, and stone strips. Annual precipitation is 11 to 15 inches. Elevation ranges from 540 to 2,050 feet.

Anders and Kuhl soils are on basaltic plateaus. Benge soils are on gravel and sand terraces and Walla Walla soils are on loess islands.

Shallow to Very Deep Soils Formed in Residuum from Basalt: in Canyons

This group occupies the Snake River breaks. Elevation ranges from 540 to 2,800 feet. The average annual precipitation ranges from 11 to 18 inches. Range and wildlife are the main uses for this group.

1. Kuhl-Alpowa Association

Well-drained, moderately permeable cobbly silt loams are dominant in this association. The landscape consists of steep and very steep canyon side slopes and gently sloping to moderately steep terraces.

Annual precipitation is 12 to 18 inches with elevation ranging from 640 to 2,800 feet.

This association is in the southern part of the District along the Snake River. Kuhl soils are on southerly side slopes, Alpowa soils are on footslopes and northerly side slopes, Athena soils are on upper ridgetops, and Farrell soils are on gravel and sand terraces.

Kuhl soils occur as a complex with Alpowa and Asotin soils, with inclusions of Bakeoven and Chard soils, and rock outcrop. Alpowa soils are on colluvial footslopes and steep and very steep northerly colluvial slopes. Large areas of Asotin soils are on long ridges with broad tops. Walla Walla soils are on long broad ridgetops and join Athena soils on upper edges and Asotin soils on lower edges. Linville soils are on steep and very steep northerly colluvial slopes at higher elevations than Alpowa.

Watersheds

The northern portion of the District is included in the main watershed of the Palouse River. The north portion drains into the Palouse River through a network of drainages that include Union Flat, Rebel Flat, and Willow Creeks, ultimately emptying into the Snake River. The general direction of drainage is northwest and then southwest with the various creeks emptying into the Palouse River along the west edge of the county. The Palouse empties into the Snake River at the extreme southwest corner of the District.

The southern portion of the District is included in the main watershed of the Snake River. The south portion drains into the Snake River through a network of drainages that include Alkali Flat, Almota and Penawawa Creeks. The general direction of drainage is southwest.

Recreation

Whitman County has numerous recreation sites for public use. Federal, state, county, and local agencies operate many parks and recreation sites.

District Resource Inventory

Resource Inventory Acreages[1]	Acreages
Whitman County	1,397,560
Whitman Conservation District	424,065
District Cooperators	361
Operating Units	530
Cropland in Tillage Rotation	
Irrigated	1,182
Non-irrigated	221,977
Conservation Reserve Program Enrollment	60,141
Pasture	12,703
Range	112,800
Woodland	1,600

Historical and Recreational Sites
- First White Settler
- Perkins House
- Submerged Marmes Rock Shelter
- Central Ferry State Park

Town sites
- Colfax
- Diamond
- Dusty
- Hay
- Lacrosse

Watersheds
- Alkali Flat Creek
- Almota Creek
- North Fork Palouse River
- Palouse River
- Penawawa Creek
- Rebel Flat Creek
- Snake River
- South Fork Palouse River
- Union Flat Creek
- Willow Creek

Streams/Rivers
- Alkali Flat Creek
- Almota Creek
- Goose Creek

(Streams/Rivers Continued)

Mud Flat Creek
Palouse River
Penawawa Creek
Rebel Flat Creek
Snake River
Union Flat Creek
Willow Creek

(1) 1978 District Long Range Resource Plan; Washington Soil and Water Conservation Needs Inventory, April 1970, USDA, Soil Conservation Service; USDA NRCS FOCS Program.

District Resource Needs and Priority Actions

June 6, 2003, the Whitman Conservation District Board, along with NRCS representation, participated in an Annual Planning Session. This session was used to outline existing District programs and activities, determine priority concerns and solutions, and create a plan of action for the District. Outside influences, funding and staffing levels were taken into account when prioritizing the activities within the plan of action.

As found below, *the Board prioritized the needs of the District*, and then determined the existing programs and what would be an additional activity to address concerns if staffing and funding were secured.

1a. Income and Revenues: It was determined that in order for the District to provide quality programs, funding sources and revenue generating programs, with staff to carry out the programs, would need to be secured outside of current grant sources.

Existing Programs:
- Burn Permit Program
- Planting Program (Contract and Plant Sale)
- State Revolving Funds Loan Program
- Awarded Grants

New Activity Priority:
- Secure Grants (Riparian Concerns, Alternative Crops, Research / Demonstrations)
- Contract Work (Fencing, Seed, Guzzlers, CRP Mgmt, Mowing)
- Technical Service Provider Contribution Agreement
- Assessment
- Sponsors

1b. Technical Assistance: It was determined that in order to assist the local Stakeholder with a variety of issues and/or concerns they are being faced with, the District needs to provide technical assistance.

Existing Programs:
- Continue to provide technical assistance as a service

New Activity Priority:
- Technical Service Provider Involvement
- Seek funding for additional personnel

2. Soil Health and Erosion: It was determined that with the District being located an agricultural area, the number one resource concern was soil health and erosion. It is a need to promote soil health and education about soil erosion within the District.

Existing Programs:
- Articles in *The Steward* (District newsletter)
- Demonstrate Soil Quality Test Kit
- Shop Talks / Seminars on Soil Health
- Cost-Share for Soil Health Benefits
- Demonstrations / Research on Farm

New Activity Priority:
- Articles in the Whitman County Gazette
- Visit Farms / Focus on Soil Health and Soil Life
- Provide Training / Pay Someone to Attend Soil Health Tour

*Board Action: Policy Change on Tiling Agricultural Fields

3. Water Quality: It was determined that water quality concerns remained high in the District. There is a strong need for water quality awareness / education, and watershed assessment, involvement, and protection.

Existing Programs:
- Articles in *The Steward* (District newsletter)
- Coordinate with Palouse Conservation District for Water Resource Inventory Area 34 (WRIA) (Palouse River drainage), and Asotin Public Utilities Department for WRIA 35 (Snake River drainage)
- Promote / Demonstrate impact of direct seeding on water quality

New Activity Priority:
- Coordinate riparian fencing for those interested Stakeholders
- Watershed Planning – Local Outreach and Education
- Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Educational Programs

4. Livestock Issues: It was determined that the need for District involvement in the local livestock concerns remained high. Outside influences are setting guidelines for which the local Stakeholders are directed to abide by without any technical and/or financial assistance. The District needs to be able to local and secure funding to assist these Stakeholders.

Existing Programs:
- Shop Talks / Tour of Sites (AFO/CAFO, Riparian Developments)
- Cost-Share Assistance

New Activity Priority:
- Educational Programs (Partner with Other Agencies for Program Delivery)
- Weed Management
- Rangeland Health and Grazing
- Grazing Budgets (Forage Balance Summary)

5. Market Development: It was determined that a need for locating alternative markets, and demonstrating, and promoting these market developments for alternative crops is a priority for the Board of Supervisors.

Existing Programs:
- Study Oilseed Crushing Plant (portable or fixed)
- Cost / Profitability Analysis

New Activity Priority:
- Promote / Evaluate Alternative Crops
- Examine Niche Market Crops
- Develop Carbon Market

6. Air Quality: It was determined that a need for further promotion of good air quality and understanding is needed for the local Stakeholders. Outside influences are evaluating, with the possibility of regulation in the agricultural community, Particulate Matter (PM) 10 and 2.5.

Existing Programs:
- Promote Direct Seed and Reduced Tillage Practices to Reduce Dust

New Activity Priority:
- Promote Biofuels
- Provide Information on PM 10 and 2.5 to Stakeholders

7. Land Development Concerns: It was determined that there is a need to be involved in the rural planning and policy development for the County.

Existing Programs:

New Activity Priority: Participate in Land Use Planning for Rural Housing
Develop Policy on Small Acreage Farms

8. Supervisor Training: The Board of Supervisors acknowledges the need for continual training, understanding the importance of staying abreast of the most recent of information relating to agriculture and business.

Existing Programs: Washington Association of Conservation Districts Annual Convention
Annual Direct Seed Conference (STEEP)

New Activity Priority: Regular Review of Laws / Regulations (10 Minutes @ Board Meetings)
Washington Association of District Employees Annual Conference

9. Wildlife: It was determined that Whitman County contains an abundance of a variety of wildlife. The needs that present themselves are to assist local Stakeholders create habitats and assist local Stakeholders with wildlife intrusion.

Existing Programs:

New Activity Priority: Food Plot and Seed for Food Plot Contracts
Guzzlers
Assist Stakeholder with Wildlife Problems

10. Agricultural Burning: It was determined that there is a need for the District to stay involved with the Department of Ecology's Burn Program. The service includes assisting local Stakeholders with the application process and issuing local permits.

Existing Programs: Conduct Permitting Process
Stay Involved with Ecology on the Permit Process
Inform Stakeholders of Burn Alternatives

New Activity Priority: Protect Agricultural Burning as a Tool

The following two activities, Communication and Youth Education were consider separate from the prioritization due to their nature. Both were considered high priority as funding and staffing allowed.

Communication / Education: It was determined that there is a need for outreach activities directed to the adult Stakeholders of the District.

Existing Programs: Coordinate with other Districts and Agencies on Activities and Information
Shop Talks / Seminars / Tours
Newsletter

New Activity Priority: Whitman County Gazette Articles
Radio Talks
Board Members Talk to Interested Groups

Youth Education: It was determined that there is a need for educational outreach activities directed to the youth in the District relating to the agricultural community they live in.

Existing Programs:	5th / 6th Grand Conservation Programs Envirothon Contest Soil Judging Contest
New Activity Priority:	Youth Camps

The Whitman Conservation District works willing with other conservation districts and agencies to fulfill the needs of the local Stakeholders. Due to the availability of limited funding, the District coordinates their efforts with other resource programs, depending on the nature and timing of the available program.

Land Use Policy of Whitman Conservation District

Conservation districts are dedicated to the wise use of land. The Whitman Conservation District has defined the following priorities as their attitude towards wise land use.

Priorities

1. The prevention and control of nonpoint source pollution: this includes the prevention of soil erosion and the control of pollution from sediment, pesticides and herbicides, fertilizers, storm water runoff, and animal wastes to comply with the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-500).

2. Resource management on a watershed basis: this includes the utilization of all techniques to preserve, conserve, and develop soil, water, forest, range and wildlife resources within watersheds in the District. The District will provide technical assistance on any District land with farmers, urban citizens, planning boards, city councils, and commissioner's board on a priority basis when such technical help is available.

3. The preservation, enhancement, and improvement of prime and unique agricultural, range, wildlife, recreational, and forest lands: the District will aid in the classification of these lands and their protection, through administrative, legislative, or other means.

The District will strive to get conservation education into the school curriculums.

Operating Policy

The Mission of the Whitman Conservation District is to promote the wise, ethical, and sustainable use of Natural Resources, by leadership in the education and assistance of all Stakeholders. The Whitman Conservation District will promote the implementation of the best available conservation measures and provide a forum for local input on Natural Resource issues.

It shall be the policy of the Whitman Conservation District Board of Supervisors to promote the Mission of the District within the district boundaries and within the authorities assigned to the District by Washington State law RCW 89.08.

Representation
Geographical representation shall be paramount in selection of Supervisors but no geographical or sub-district lines will be designated.

Board of Supervisor Authority
Board powers and duties are prescribed by Washington State law RCW 89.08.

Associate Supervisor Appointments
Associate supervisors shall be appointed by the Board of Supervisors, as needed, for an undetermined term and without compensation.

Election of Supervisors – Filling Vacancies
Supervisor elections and appointment procedures shall adhere to Washington State law. A vacancy may be declared if a Supervisor fails to function for three (3) consecutive months – this includes elected and appointed Board Supervisors and Associate Supervisors. Supervisors serve for a three (3) year term and without compensation.

Meetings
Regular meetings of the Whitman Conservation District shall be held on the second Thursday of each month, starting at the hour of 7:00 pm, except that if the regular meeting is a legal holiday, the meeting shall be rescheduled and advertised according to Washington State law. The month of August is a non-meeting month. The Board will meet at such other times and places as it may be determined from time-to-time with official public notice given.

Amendments
Any rule of practice or procedure of the District may be suspended, amended, or repealed at any time by majority vote or not less than three (3) Board Supervisors at any regular or special meeting, provided that no action shall be taken without three (3) days prior notice.

Election of Officers
The annual reorganization of the Board shall take place at the regular meeting in January, every other year.

Rules of Order
Except as modified by the By-laws or Rules of Procedure, all meetings of the District shall be conducted in accordance with the current edition of "Robert's Rules of Order".

Minutes
All official actions, resolutions, and decisions of the Board of Supervisors shall be recorded in official Board minutes. Minutes of each meeting will be sent to all Board_Supervisors and Associate Supervisors, and upon request, to all interested parties.

Annual Report and Plan of Work
Each fiscal year, the District will prepare an Annual Report and Plan of Work. This report is submitted to the Conservation Commission. This Report reviews the accomplishments of the past year and outlines the goals and objectives for the coming year.

Financial Plan

Sources of Income
1. Federal, state, and county grant funds – governmental grant funds should be utilized whenever possible for specific district projects.
2. Resale of merchandise – the district will sell merchandise for conservation benefits as allowable by Washington State law RCW 89.08.
3. Equipment rental – rental of District owned equipment.
4. Private funding – funding received from private entities through the use of a 501(c)3.

Expenditures
1. District Operations.
2. Equipment Purchase and Maintenance.
3. Surplus Funds Invested Appropriately.

Equipment Operation Plan

The Whitman Conservation District will make equipment available for rent for use on projects that are not detrimental to conservation. Equipment rental will be on a first-come, first-serve basis for District Stakeholders by contacting the District Coordinator.

Renters of equipment will be responsible for routine maintenance of the equipment, and will be billed for any damage due to negligent use. The Renter will be responsible for operating or furnishing an operator for the equipment. Renter will assume all liability for any damage to life or property that may occur with the transportation or use of the District equipment.

1. Movement – Renter will be responsible for moving equipment to and from the District's storage site. Equipment will be returned upon completion of the Renter project unless other arrangements are made with the District Coordinator.

2. Repair – the District will make repairs necessary to maintain the equipment in good operating condition with available funds.

3. Rental Rates and Equipment – The District equipment consists of a mulch seeder (straw-blower), a manual pull grader and a refrigeration trailer. Rental rates are available by contacting the District Coordinator.

4. Loan of Equipment Outside of District – District equipment is available for rent outside the District boundaries as long as it is not being used or been reserved by District Stakeholders.