

### Ellensburg Water Company at Coleman Creek

The KCCD, in partnership with the Ellensburg Water Company (EWC) has just completed a project on Coleman Creek on North Ferguson Road. Prior to the project, Coleman Creek flowed under the EWC Canal during the irrigation season and under and through the canal during the non-irrigation season. EWC also had a diversion from Coleman Creek near the Kittitas Highway that did not have a compliant screen to protect fish from entrainment in the canal, and had a dam that prevented upstream fish passage. Over more than five years, the KCCD worked to secure funding to design a project that would install a siphon for the canal so that it would pass under Coleman Creek and design a new irrigation diversion that had a fish screen and a fish ladder to allow for passage. Funding was secured through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the Department of Ecology, the Bonneville Power Administration (through the Yakima Tributary Access & Habitat Program or YTAHP), Kittitas County Public Works and the EWC and construction began in fall of 2015. A 96-inch diameter pipe along with inlet and outlet structures were constructed at North Ferguson Road. Coleman Creek is now daylighted and the canal is fully separated from the creek flow. The irrigation diversion downstream of the Kittitas Highway was removed and replaced with a structure that includes a dam, but also a four step fish way providing for fish passage. The new diversion also has a fish screen with an automated cleaning system and flow meters for both headgates at the site.



KCCD's Ryan Roberts (2nd from left) talks with the project contractor, project engineer and Ellensburg Water Company staff at a project walk-through in late March.



Crews work to install the 96-inch diameter pipe for the canal to pass under Coleman Creek.

Completion of the project is part a larger effort to screen irrigation diversions and provide fish passage in the lower reaches of all the tributaries of the Yakima River in the Kittitas Valley. This effort is working toward the goal of reducing liabilities for water right holders and landowners with unscreened irrigation diversions and providing access to additional habitat in an area determined to be critical habitat for Mid-Columbia Summer Steelhead (listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act).

# Kittitas County Conservation District

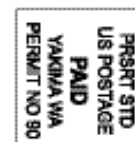
Serving Landowners in Kittitas County Since 1942



June 2016

Kittitas County Conservation District  
2211 W Dolarway, Suite #4  
Ellensburg, WA 98926

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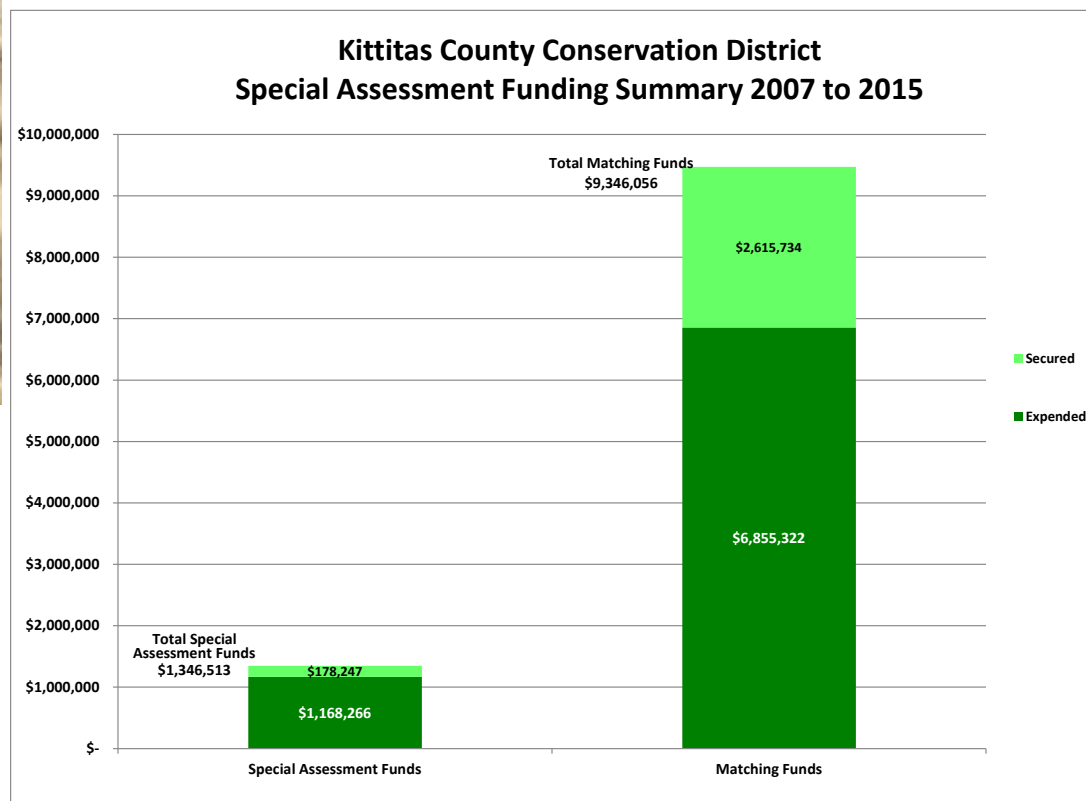
### KCCD Looks to Continue Local Funding

Since 2007, the District has collected a Special Assessment as allowed by Chapter 89.08.400 RCW. Special Assessments are authorized to be imposed for conservation districts to fund activities and programs declared to be of special benefit to lands to conserve natural resources, including soil and water, and may be used as the basis upon which special assessments are imposed. The RCW authorizes the county legislative authority, of the county in which the conservation district is located, to accept the proposed assessment for a period not to exceed ten years in duration. The Kittitas Board of County Commissioners did so in 2006 for a period of 10 years beginning in 2007. This year is the final year of that Special Assessment.

Due to pending litigation in Washington State regarding property assessments, several conservation districts, including the Pierce, King, Snohomish, Mason, and Spokane Conservation Districts collaborated in the 2012 Legislative Session to add an alternative method of collecting local revenue called a rate or a charge. This method is described in RCW 89.08.405. A conservation district cannot impose both an assessment (89.08.400) and a rate or charge (89.08.405).

An assessment is generally related to a service or improvement that adds value to a parcel of property. Alternately, a rate is a charge intended to recover the cost of public improvements, services or programs, received by or available to properties in the District, or to pay for costs to mitigate negative impacts on natural resources from those properties i.e. protection of soil and water quality, forest health, or habitat restoration.

Under rates and charges, each eligible parcel is subject to a charge; there is still a cap of \$5 per parcel on eligible parcels to be charged and \$0.10 per acre; and, rates cannot be increased without authorization from the State Legislature, the District Board of Supervisors, and the Board of County Commissioners.



KCCD local funds are used to secure State and Federal grants. To date, KCCD has leveraged approximately \$7 for every \$1 of Special Assessment funds collected.

The KCCD is seeking to renew the local funding currently collected through an assessment. In that renewal process, the KCCD proposes to switch to rates and charges. In doing so, a rates analysis is necessary and is available on our website. The property owners within the KCCD may see a slight difference in their annual bill due to the results of this rate analysis. However, the funds will still be collected through the property tax statements sent by the County, and there is a maximum of \$5 per parcel and \$0.10 per acre.

### Value of Local Funding

The addition of local funding to the KCCD budget in 2007 provided a significant level of stability as it supports the continuity of basic operations and allows KCCD to address local priorities for which grant funding is lacking. In the last several years, there have been budget crises, including shortages of state funding, threatened state government shutdowns and actual federal government shutdowns, as well as the loss locally of office space and utilities provided for the KCCD for decades. Any one of these could have temporarily shut down operations and the loss of office space could have severely reduced program delivery to landowners had funds not been (continued page 2)



(continued from page 1) available to bridge the gap and help us transition to a more secure situation.

Even with the local funds, the KCCD is primarily grant funded with an annual budget averaging \$3 million over the last five years. During that time the special assessment averaged \$156,000 per year or about one half percent of the total budget. This particular fact may make it seem as though the local funds are unimportant, but the opposite is true. These local funds allowed the KCCD to work on resource concerns and apply for grants that may have otherwise been unavailable to local landowners. A prime example is the Firewise and Fuels Reduction programs, an area where KCCD staff supported by these local funds worked to secure more than \$1.2 million grant funds for fuels reduction work and Firewise USA Community development. In 2012, the KCCD's involvement in forestry and fuels reduction, and the relationships developed with landowners, the community and partner agencies allowed the KCCD to respond quickly to a request by the Board of County Commissioners to assist with the recovery of the burned area of the Taylor Bridge Fire. KCCD staff worked primarily with the Washington State Conservation Commission and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to secure more than \$800,000 for technical and financial assistance for landowners in the burned area.

KCCD also used local funds to develop a list of landowners interested in converting from rill to sprinkler irrigation. Staff then went to work to find funding to complete these projects. More than \$1.3 million in cost share funding through the Department of Ecology (Yakima Basin Integrated Plan) and the Washington State Conservation Commission has been secured to fund projects on that list. Local funds will continue to be used to find funding for the nearly 4,000 acres that remain on this list of irrigation conversion projects.

#### How can I support the KCCD proposal?

There are several opportunities to voice support for the KCCD proposal for a system of rates and charges to maintain this very important local funding. First there are two public hearings scheduled for June 15 and June 23 (see details above). Landowners are encourage to attend these meetings and provide public comment regarding the proposal. Landowners may also provide direct comment to the KCCD or to the Board of County Commissioners.

#### KCCD Public Hearings:

**June 22, 2016** 7:00 PM at Upper Kittitas County District Court, 700 E 1st Street, Cle Elum WA 98922.

**June 23, 2016** 7:00 PM in the Armory meeting room at the Kittitas County Event Center, 901 E 7th Avenue, Ellensburg WA 98926.

#### KCCD Board Meeting

July 14, 2016 7:00AM The Board of Supervisors will consider Rates and Charges Resolutions at their regular monthly meeting.

## Kittitas County Conservation District Board of Supervisors

**Mark Moore - Chair (Elected - term expires in 2018)**

**Lynn Brown - Vice Chair (Appointed - term expires in 2017)**

**Jeff Brunson - Auditor (Elected - term expires in 2018)**

**Bill Boyum - Member (Appointed - term expires in 2018)**

**Ron Gibb - Member (Elected - term expires in 2017)**

### District Staff

**Anna Lael - District Manager**

**Miranda Nash- Financial Manager**

**Suzanne Wade - GIS Specialist**

**Mark Crowley - Resource Technician II**

**Ryan Roberts - District Engineer**

**Sherry Swanson - Project Manager**

**Lance Downing - Resource Technician**

**Board meetings are generally held on the second Thursday of each month. The schedule for the year:**

<b>July</b>	<b>7:00 AM</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>7:00 AM</b>
<b>September</b>	<b>7:00 AM</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>7:00 AM</b>
<b>November</b>	<b>1:00 PM</b>
<b>December</b>	<b>1:00 PM</b>

**Meeting notices are also posted on the KCCD web page and at the KCCD office. Additional special meetings are occasionally held throughout the year. For more information or to receive e-mail notifications of meetings, contact Anna or Miranda at 925-3352 or m-nash@conserveva.net.**

## VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Washington State's Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) was created in 2011 to provide an alternative approach for counties to address Growth Management requirements for agricultural activities.

### How it Works

The Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) administers funding for counties to implement the program. Counties then designate a work group to develop a watershed-scale plan that will:

- Identify critical resource concerns.
- Identify agricultural activities in the critical areas.
- Create a plan for targeted outreach to assist landowners in developing farm plans that address agricultural impacts to critical areas on their property.
- Identify and maintain economically viable agriculture while protecting and restoring critical areas

In October 2015, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) worked with the Kittitas County Conservation District to enlist our assistance with facilitation of the Watershed Group. We entered into an interlocal agreement with the County in November. The BOCC passed Resolution 2016-001 in January 2016 designating the KCCD as the lead entity for the Voluntary Stewardship Program. The Watershed Group was formed and began meeting in March

### What are Critical Areas?

There are five critical areas identified in Washington's GMA:

- Wetlands
- Frequently flooded areas
- Critical aquifer recharge areas
- Geologically hazardous areas
- Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas

In Kittitas County, information about critical areas can be found on the County's website by visiting the County website.

### Background

1990 – Washington Legislature passes Growth Management Act (GMA), which requires state and local governments to manage growth by identifying and protecting critical areas, designating urban growth areas, and preparing and implementing plans and regulations. While well-intentioned, implementation of GMA requirements meets with years of conflict and lawsuits.

2007 – In response to GMA conflicts, Washington Legislature charges the Ruckelshaus Center—a collaborative, problem-solving center—to examine the conflict between protecting agricultural land and protecting critical areas under GMA.

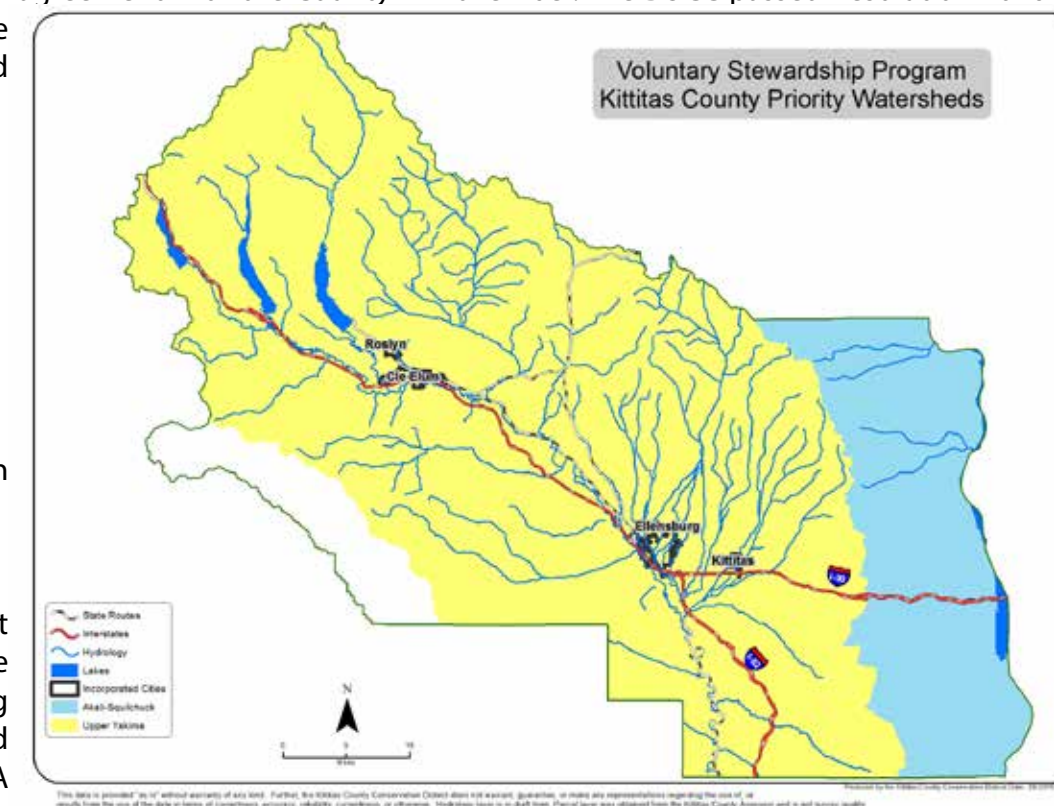
2010-11 – Based on recommendations of the Ruckelshaus Center, the legislature creates VSP at the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC). VSP represents a voluntary, incentive-based approach that offers counties an alternative for meeting GMA requirements related to protecting critical areas and agricultural lands. No new state funding was provided for VSP, and counties are not obligated to implement VSP until funding is provided.

2011-2012 – Kittitas County and 27 other counties across the state exercise the option to opt-in to VSP instead of continuing to try to meet GMA requirements as written under existing law. The Kittitas Board of County Commissioners passed Ordinance 2011-012 on November 30, 2011

2013 – Washington State Legislature made State funds available for two pilot counties— Thurston and Chelan.

**Next Meeting of the Watershed Group:** July 20st, 2016 10:00AM to 2:30 PM at the Kittitas Valley Event Center's Heritage Room (under the grandstands), 901 E 7th Avenue, Ellensburg WA 98926.

**Be sure to keep up to date on the Voluntary Stewardship Program by visiting our website at [KCCD.net/VoluntaryStewardship.htm](http://KCCD.net/VoluntaryStewardship.htm)**





### Mid-Columbia Fisheries' Adopt-A-Stream Program



The Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group is committed to protecting and enhancing Ellensburg's 12 miles of urban streams.

Working under a grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology, Mid-Columbia Fisheries is recruiting volunteer stewards to adopt, clean-up, and monitor stretches of Ellensburg's streams. Community outreach will encourage pet waste pick-up and the installation of riparian buffers and discourage the dumping of trash and contaminants into streams. The goal of this program is to improve water quality in our local tributaries and increase public awareness. To adopt a stretch of stream stewards are asked to host 4 clean-up events over a 2 year period. Mid-Columbia Fisheries will supply tools, personal protective equipment, and properly dispose of garbage collected. Volunteer groups will be recognized by a sign installed near their adopted stream. Join Mid-Columbia Fisheries in their efforts to clean Ellensburg's urban streams by contacting their office at 509-925-3474.



### Welcome Our New Staff Members

We have a few new faces around the office. Stop by and welcome Miranda Nash as our new Financial Manager and Lance Downing who joined our staff as a Resource Technician, late last year.



Miranda grew up in Ellensburg, a fifth generation on the family farm. With an interest in Agriculture she attended YVCC where she received an AAS in Agribusiness Management. Miranda manages the finances and administrative activities for KCCD.

Lance was hired by the KCCD in the fall of 2015. He grew up in Vermont and moved West to attend college at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana (B. S. Earth Sciences 2007). He has held numerous seasonal technician jobs working with native fish and natural resources throughout the Rocky Mountains and Pacific Northwest. Lance assists the KCCD with field data collection and day to day operations.



### Long Range Plan and Annual Plans of work

The Board of Supervisors approves Annual Plans of Work each year and updates the Long Range Plan every five years. These documents provide a detailed summary of the priorities, work underway and work planned for the District. The plans are based on the state fiscal year (July to June) and the formats are prescribed by the Washington State Conservation Commission.

In 2016, the Board updated the Long Range Plan. A survey of partners and communities was completed in February and the Board reviewed multiple drafts between February and April. Comments were solicited from our partners and the community. On April 14, 2016 the Board approved the final version which is available on our website at [kccd.net/boarddocuments.htm](http://kccd.net/boarddocuments.htm).



### Newsletter to be Electronically Delivered

Our Conservation District will be transitioning to an electronic version of the newsletter in the near future.

Email [suzanne-wade@conservewa.net](mailto:suzanne-wade@conservewa.net) to be put on the list. As always, copies of the newsletter are also on our website.

### A Snapshot of Special Assessment Activities in 2015



USDA Service Center Office Space



PAM Cost Share



Small Project Cost Share Program



RCPP Proposal



Sprinkler Conversion Projects with "Non Shellfish" funds



Wildfire Preparedness Day



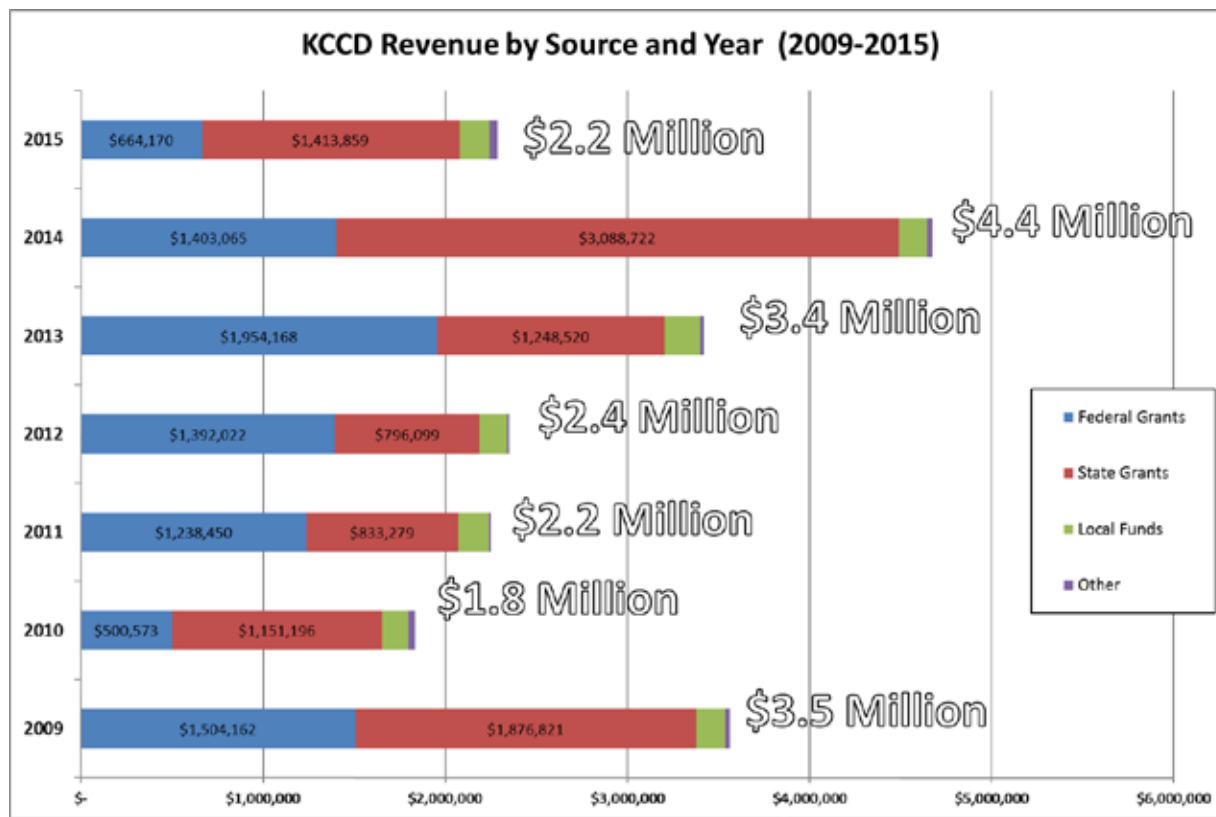
Roving Chipper Program



For the full report, visit our website, [kccd.net](http://kccd.net).



### Financial Report



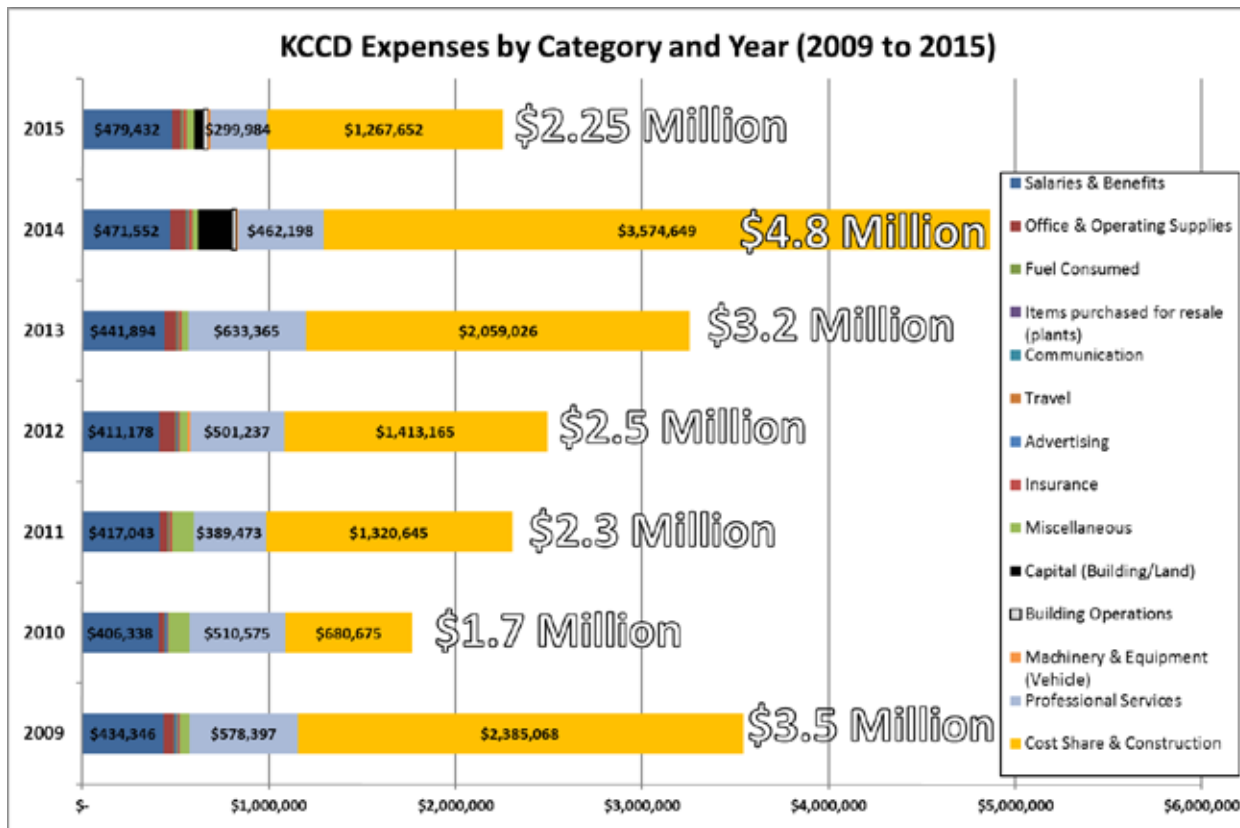
The KCCD is primarily grant funded and averages approximately 20 open grants at any time. The grants are secured predominantly from state and federal sources such as the Washington State Conservation Commission, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Ecology, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Bonneville Power Administration, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Over the last seven years, the state and federal grants have accounted for 94% of the revenue received. The remaining revenue is from local and private sources, including the Special Assessment, Kittitas County Public Works and private organizations (e.g. Puget Sound Energy). The Special Assessment funding is used to secure many of the state and federal grants, so although the local funds are a small part of the overall revenue, they are critical to obtaining those grants.

KCCD's expenses vary widely from year to year, although basic operating expenses (wages, office supplies, etc.) are relatively constant, usually varying by less than 5% per year. Note that in 2014, there was a significant increase in operating expenses when the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service stopped providing

office space and utilities to the KCCD. That resulted in an approximately 17% increase in KCCD's operating expenses.

The professional services (primarily engineering & design) and cost share and construction expenses are where the large variations occur in the expenses. This is not unexpected, as cost share and construction projects are developed over the course of months or sometimes years. Implementation occurs when the funding, the design and permits are all in place. For example, in 2014 more than \$1 million in cost share payments were made to 54 landowners and \$2.5 million was paid to construction contractors on four separate projects. In 2015, \$1.05 million was provided in cost share payments to 49 landowners, and \$260,000 was paid to construction contractors on three projects. That is simply a result of project readiness and funding availability.

Annual expenditures of federal funds in excess of \$500,000 require a single federal audit to be conducted by the Washington State Auditor's office. KCCD has completed these audits for the last seven years and is planning for the next one this summer. Audit reports may be found on the State Auditors website – [www.sao.wa.gov](http://www.sao.wa.gov).



Each year, the KCCD holds an Annual Meeting and dinner to review activities and accomplishments and to recognize those individuals who have contributed significantly to improve natural resource conditions in our District. For 2015, the following landowners and partners were honored for their work with us.

#### Volunteer Awards:

- Darlene Carlton
- Dottie Zufelt
- Mel Shenyer
- Randy Rhodes

#### On Farm Conservation Awards:

- Matt Eslinger
- Mark Hansen
- Douglas Gibb
- Ron Gibb
- Ryan Knudson
- Jim Seaton
- John Nylander

#### Forestry Conservation Awards:

- Jeff Myers
- Craig Mabie
- Donna Pirog
- Carolyn Berglund
- Jim Gylling

#### KCCD Service Awards:

- Brent Dixon
- Sara Leist

### KCCD Annual Dinner



Pictured from left to right: Craig Mabie, Doug Gibb, Donna Pirog, Ron Gibb, Carolyn Berglund, Jeff Myers, Sara Leist, Darlene Carlton, Dottie Zufelt, Matt Eslinger, and Mark Hansen.



Suzanne Wade presents the award to Carolyn Berglund for all her hard work with Firewise and Fire Adapted Communities



An attentive audience of landowners, staff and partnering agencies.