



## Walla Walla County Community Development Department

[www.co.walla-walla.wa.us](http://www.co.walla-walla.wa.us)

### From the Director's Desk by Tom Glover, AICP

The process for updating the County's Comprehensive Plan and development regulations is finally nearing completion. We had hoped to have had it completed by December 31st, but the County received a formal appeal of our SEPA decision relating directly to the Martin Airfield UGA amendment application submitted by the City of College Place. That application has since been withdrawn, and the appeal dropped. Our next task is to review our land capacity analysis regarding the other UGA amendment application submitted by the City of College Place, in lieu of the Martin Airfield proposal having been withdrawn. Analysis paralysis? The time spent developing a full-proof analysis can be frustrating, but we're making progress. We hope to bring a final analysis and recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners before the end of January.

Meanwhile ...

I have begun the arduous task of reviewing the department's fee structure for land use applications and comparing it to the direct and indirect costs of providing services. The last time the County raised the land use application fees was in 2007 so this review is long overdue. While the cost of applying for various land use applications has not increased in the past decade, the cost of providing services has. Presently there are 35 different land use application types, most require the payment of a fee, but a few do not. It is our perspective that costs should be recovered as efficiently as possible, but without penalizing the customer. Not all applications result in the issuance of a permit; some are formalized decisions, issued either administratively by the Director, or through a public hearing with the County's Hearing Examiner. Policy decisions are decided by the Board of County Commissioners, with a recommendation from the Planning Commission.

We welcome your comments and feedback regarding our newsletters, as well as any of the activities we manage. Please contact us any time during regular business hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Wednesdays we close at 3:30 for staff meetings). Our main phone line is: (509) 524-2610. We can also receive inquiries by e-mail at: [commdev@co-walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:commdev@co-walla-walla.wa.us)

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## Ron's Road Report

Waking up in a state of fogginess (freezing), that is, I needed to get away. After spending all week with my lights on, on Saturday I made the drive up to Lewis Peak Road. Getting above the inversion layer is a must if you have never done it. As you travel up Mud Creek Road your day gradually becomes brighter, and the dreary winter starts to fade away. As you approach the ridge, the first thing you notice is that you are blinded by the bright sunlight. After the sunglasses go on, you can see that even the deer hop around with a light, carefree attitude. Its warmer by about 8 degrees, and the Peakeans are strolling down the gravel road in sunglasses, like it is California. Looking down at Walla Walla I see the top of the clouds, it looks like your standing on a beach looking out at the ocean. I know that for most of the winter the Peakeans have a hard life, with blowing, drifting snow, and impassible driveways. But some days I can see why people live up there. We spend our winter days making a living under the constant pressure of the inversion layer, because we live in our beautiful valley. Give yourself a break and head up hill to see another great reason to live in Walla Walla County.

## SURVEY MONUMENTS written by James Wengler, PLS, CFedS

Citizens of Washington State have invested in property boundaries and survey monuments since before Statehood. Survey monuments are not only important to delineate public and private ownership; they are critical. However, property corners and survey monuments are often endangered, and in many cases destroyed, by road and utility construction and maintenance. RCW 58.24.040 (8) and WAC 332-120 provide the process to protect these monuments.

Anyone performing construction or maintenance activities should consider the following:

- No survey monument shall be removed or destroyed (the physical disturbance or covering of a monument such that the survey point is no longer visible or readily accessible) before a permit is obtained from the Department of Natural Resources.
- When one or more monuments must be removed during an activity which might disturb or destroy it, a licensed Professional Engineer or Land Surveyor must complete, sign, seal and then file a permit with the Department of Natural Resources.



## What is the Voluntary Stewardship Program and How Far Have We Come? *By Renee M. Hadley, District Manager, Walla Walla County Conservation District*

The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) promotes the idea that complex environmental problems can be solved through voluntary cooperation rather than Growth Management Act regulation (William D. Ruckelshaus Center, 2010). After the County opted into the new VSP and the legislature funded the program in 2015, the County contracted with the Walla Walla County Conservation District to administer the program.

The VSP is intended to give local land users a strong say in protecting critical areas that overlap agricultural activities. With that in mind the Conservation District invited key community members to join the Walla Walla VSP Work Group, the entity responsible for developing the Work Plan. Like many new programs there was a steep learning curve. The state developed and provided some guidance along the way but as Bill Eller with the State Conservation Commission has said “VSP has been like trying to fly a plane while we are still building it.”

Despite the challenges and lack of clear direction the work group came together and identified their priorities and goals for the county. After a year and a half of monthly meetings and several times where they scratched their head unsure of how to proceed, a VSP work plan was completed and approved by the state. On time and under budget!

Now we are in a new phase of VSP... implementing the plan. This phase still requires joint collaboration with the county, the local VSP work group and the conservation district, but meetings are somewhat less frequent. In 2018 Conservation District staff completed VSP site assessments totaling just over 10 percent of the acres in the county. Several potential projects were identified that would protect critical areas and we are now partnering with landowners and agencies to install those projects using the funds leftover from work plan development.

One of the great things about VSP is that it allows the county to report critical area statistics on a county wide basis, not by farm. Individual landowners can contribute to VSP efforts by allowing an assessment to be done on their property, but they are not obligated to participate, and no identifying information is included on final reports. The VSP assessment takes a look at what's already happening on your farm and what you have done to protect critical areas.

Here is how it works:

1. Complete a field visit with Conservation District staff (1-2 hours)
2. Conservation District staff will complete some paperwork and review the information you provided. They will identify any areas that could be improved and will provide you with information and resources to help you address the resource concerns and/or transition to new practices.

Check out [The Walla Walla County Conservation District website](#) for more information.

In Walla Walla County, five types of critical areas are subject to VSP:

1. Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas
2. Wetlands
3. Frequently Flooded Areas
4. Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas
5. Geologically Hazardous Areas
  - a. Water Susceptibility of Erosion
  - b. Wind Susceptibility of Erosion
  - c. Landslides/Steep Slopes
  - d. Seismic/Liquefaction

Only those critical areas that intersect with agricultural activities are addressed under VSP.

310 W Poplar St Suite 200  
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Main Line 509-524-2610  
[commdev@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:commdev@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Inspection Request Line 509-524-2611

Residential Burn Decision Line  
509-524-2612

Permit/Document Submittals  
[permits@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:permits@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Thomas E. Glover, AICP, Director  
509-524-2621  
[tglover@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:tglover@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Lauri Withers, Permit Coordinator  
509-524-2614  
[lwithers@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:lwithers@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Felicia Gorze, Administrative Assistant  
509-524-2619  
[fgorze@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:fgorze@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Lauren Prentice, Principal Planner  
509-524-2620  
[lprentice@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:lprentice@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Don Sims, Associate Planner  
509-524-2618  
[dsims@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:dsims@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Todd Blevins, Building Official, Fire Marshal  
509-524-2617  
[tblevins@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:tblevins@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Ron Bull, Building Inspector I  
509-524-2615  
[rbull@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:rbull@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Nina Baston, Code Compliance/  
Burn Control Officer II  
509-524-2616  
[nbaston@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:nbaston@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

Inspection Hours 7 AM – 4 PM (M – F)  
Office Hours: 8 AM – 4 PM (M, T, Th & F)  
& 8 AM – 3:30 PM (W)

NOW OPEN DURING THE LUNCH HOUR



*"Sounds like the first two pigs should have gotten special inspections"*

## 2018 – WWCCDD - A Year in Review

In 2018 there were 1215 Building permits issued with a valuation of work of \$48,139,908.41. This up 101 permits from the 2017 total of 1114. Below are just a few highlights:

- New Single-Family Residences - 47
- Additions / Remodels – 48
- Burn Permits – 675
- New Commercial Buildings – 19
- Garage / Shops / Pole Buildings – 56
- Reroof – 61
- Plumbing / Mechanical – 148
- Inspections Conducted - 2852

In addition, there were 173 new Land Use Projects. This ranges from Accessory Dwelling Units, to SEPA determinations, to Zoning Code Text Amendments. This is up 5 projects from the 2017 total of 168.

Finally, there were 100 new Code Enforcement cases. This is down 4 cases from the 2017 total of 104. 608 CE inspections, 675 Burn Permits, and \$54,573.10 in Solid Waste Enforcement (SWE) Grant Funding administered.