

### 2020's Conservation Success Stories

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One of my favorite things about working for the Conservation District is interacting with people and adapting to the diverse needs and interests of our community. 2020 prompted technological adaptations everywhere, including the Okanogan CD office. We can more reliably offer web options for meetings, allowing community members from across the county to participate more easily in work groups and planning efforts. Our website got a makeover and we can now receive online requests for assistance. Soon our website will be available in Spanish! Our team worked hard through 2020 to adapt to new work flows, meet grant deadlines, and explore new projects. This newsletter highlights some of our 2020 accomplishments. We look forward to sharing more with you in person!



#### Executive Director's Note

We are revising our 5-year and Annual Plan of Work this spring. Long-range planning can invoke groans of despair because the value of the process is not well understood, or because visioning for the future may be less than 20/20. However, our 5-year plan will be the foundation from which we identify, prioritize, develop, and implement projects through June 2026. It will be our guide to determine where we focus our energy and our funding to meet the conservation goals you have for the resources you manage.



We appreciate input from local residents, project partners, and others. If you are interested in learning more, I encourage you to contact me and watch our homepage and social media accounts for updates on the process. You can reach me at [craig@okanogancd.org](mailto:craig@okanogancd.org) or 509-422-0855 x. 110. I look forward to hearing your input to help us plan for a vibrant future.

# Habitat Improvements



## 3 riparian enhancement projects:

- 1,150' along Omak Creek
- 490' along No Name Creek

4 more projects planned



## Plants installed:

- 460 potted native plants
- 700 willow stakes



6 volunteers and 4 landowners helped install plants



## Networks we're part of:

Similkameen Okanogan Watershed Action Team, Methow Restoration Council, Arid Lands Initiative, Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board Implementation Team

Plants installed at No Name Creek (above) and Omak Creek (below).



For more information about our habitat improvement program, contact one of our conservation planners.

Aquatic habitats: Hannah Coe, 509-429-5237 or [hannah@okanogancd.org](mailto:hannah@okanogancd.org).

Upland habitats: Ben Carroll, 509-422-0855, ext. 111 or [ben@okanogancd.org](mailto:ben@okanogancd.org)



## A Little Help for our Feathered Friends

Mr. Dailey's woodworking students at Okanogan High School built kestrel and barn owl nesting boxes for installation at riparian planting project sites. Supporting native predators around open areas, like fields, will help control the population of burrowing creatures that chew through the shrubs we installed in the fall. We appreciate the burrowers for their role in maintaining healthy soil, but we hope to restore some balance to their numbers! Thanks to the students for dedicating time to this project and Department of Ecology for providing materials for the project.

# Agricultural Production



**3,000 acres of range inventory completed for the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation & NRCS**



**3 Okanogan County PUD customers received rebates for updating their irrigation systems via SWSE (see below)**



**101 irrigated acres will have improved irrigation efficiency from the above projects**



**Networks we're part of:**

Okanogan County Cattlemen's Association, Okanogan Horticultural Association, Voluntary Stewardship Program

Above: Mixed forest above Twin Lakes during the CTCR range inventory.  
Below: Evaluating irrigation efficiency of overhead sprinklers in a local orchard.



For more information about our agricultural production program, contact one of our staff members.

Irrigation & pollinators: Ricardo Angel, 509-422-0855 ext. 101 or [ricardo@okanogancd.org](mailto:ricardo@okanogancd.org)

Rangeland: Ben Carroll, 509-422-0855, ext. 111 or [ben@okanogancd.org](mailto:ben@okanogancd.org)



Okanogan County PUD customers can take advantage of the rebate programs for irrigation system upgrades. In 2020, customers received rebates on the installation of a new pump and variable frequency drive, and on updates to existing irrigation systems that increase water use efficiency. Okanogan CD staff work with customers to evaluate and recommend changes that qualify.

Contact Ricardo Angel for more information or visit [www.okanogancd.org/cost-share](http://www.okanogancd.org/cost-share).

# Wildfire Resilience and Air Quality



Before (above) and after (below) of a 2020 thinning project on private land in the Methow Valley to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health.



30 home risk assessments completed  
3 community assessments completed



36 post-fire site visits for Cold Springs and Palmer Mountain fire survivors. 40 more received over-the-phone assistance



4 chipping events, keeping 623.1 pounds of particulate pollution (PM 2.5) out of local airsheds



3 forest health/defensible space thinning projects on a total of 25 acres



Networks we're part of:  
Okanogan River Airshed Partnership, Washington Fire Adapted Communities

For more information about our wildfire resilience and air quality program, contact Mindy Untalan, 509-422-0855 x. 109 or [mindy@okanogancd.org](mailto:mindy@okanogancd.org).



## There's Strength in Neighbors

Wildfire Ready Neighbors is a collaboration between Washington State Department of Natural Resources and local wildfire experts like Okanogan CD. This spring, we'll be conducting a six-week challenge across Okanogan, Chelan, and Spokane counties to sign up as many residents as possible and help everyone get ready for wildfire season and reduce wildfire risk in their community. **Will Okanogan County win the challenge?** That's up to you! Starting April 19, you can sign up for your personalized wildfire ready plan at [WildfireReady.com](http://WildfireReady.com). **BONUS:** when you sign up, you'll be entered to win a \$300 gift card from Ace Hardware. Let's get ready!

# Conservation Education



Above: a family visits a school garden pumpkin patch for free pumpkins.  
Below: A student helps to weed the beds.  
Photo credit: East Omak Elementary.



1,535 youth & 931 adults learned about natural resource conservation



24 online lessons developed to support students and teachers during the pandemic



8 school gardens planned, developed, or enhanced across Okanogan County



2 creek's water quality monitored by students



Networks we're part of:  
Conservation District Educators,  
Washington State Envirothon,  
Okanogan County School Garden Network, Washington State Conservation Commission  
Communication, Partnerships, and Outreach Group

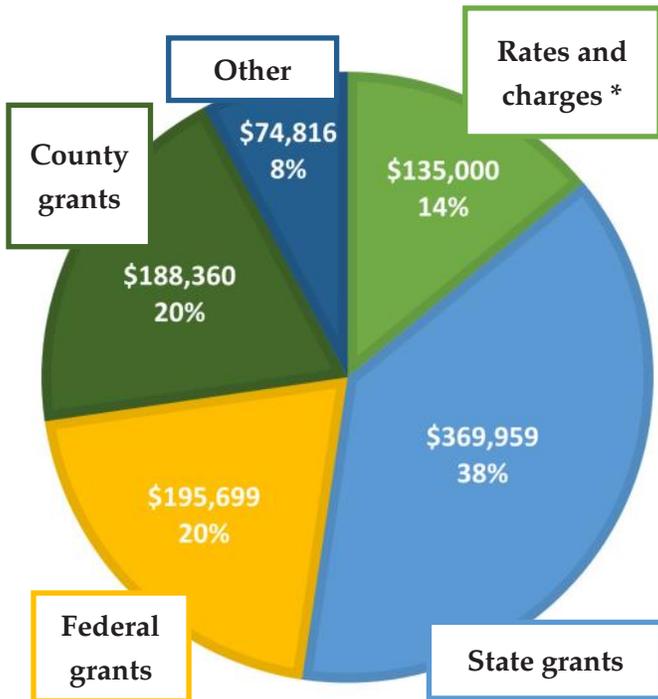


## #OKNatureCamp

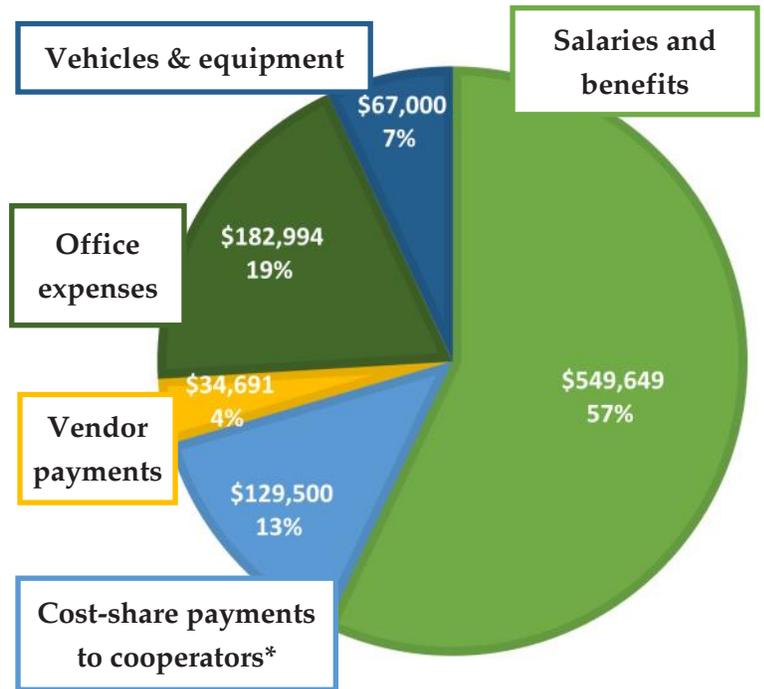
Education Specialist Kim Kogler compiled some of our favorite lessons to encourage students and families to go outside, have fun, explore, and learn about their local ecology. Then, she turned them into videos! We expect to continue posting more videos as the year continues. Follow us on YouTube to stay updated. To find our YouTube channel, go to our home page and click the YouTube icon on the top right. For written lesson plans, please visit [www.okanogancd.org/education](http://www.okanogancd.org/education). For lesson plans in Spanish, contact Kim at [kimberly@okanogancd.org](mailto:kimberly@okanogancd.org).

# Okanogon CD 2020 Budget

## INCOME



## EXPENSES



\* Rates and charges is a local funding source based on a per parcel rate and per acre charge. These funds are then leveraged to create an average of 7 additional dollars of funding for local conservation in our area.

\*Cost-share varies year-to-year, depending on landowner interest, timing of permits and other project implementation factors. Over the last 3 years, Okanogon CD has provided an average of \$153,000 in cost-share funds annually to support local conservation actions.

## New Grants Received in 2020



To develop guidelines for a natural resources career pathway program for Okanogon County students.



To design a riparian restoration project along Loup Loup Creek near Malott.



To provide technical assistance and cost-share for pollinator plantings, air pollution prevention, and to promote the Salmon-Safe program.



To support the network of school gardens in Okanogon County in partnership with Classroom in Bloom.

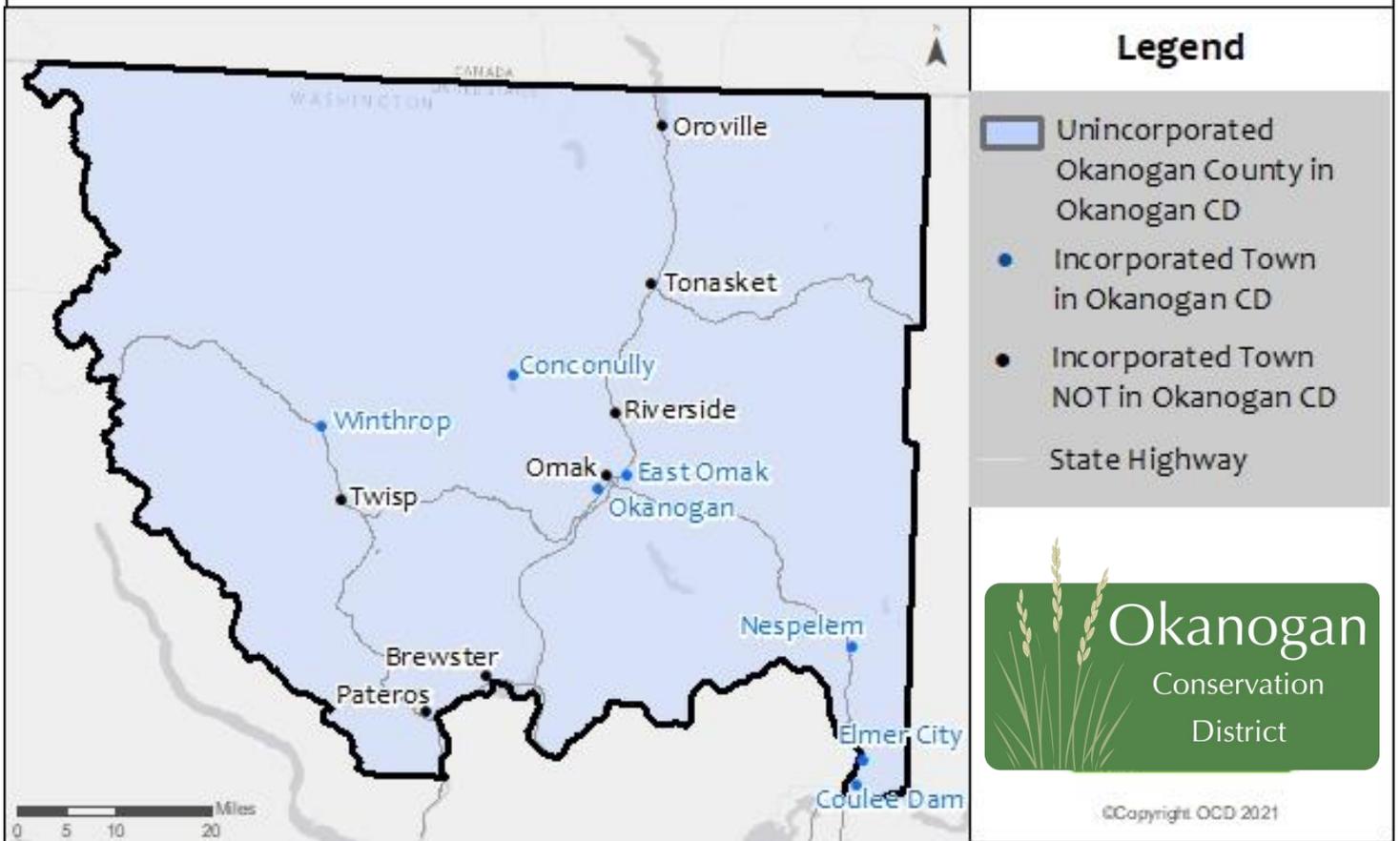


To support the development and implementation of Wildfire Ready Neighbors in Okanogon County.



To survey local residents about fire resiliency and to facilitate the development of community-led fire preparedness plans.

# Okanogan CD Service Area



Okanogan CD provides conservation programs and services free of charge to landowners and managers within our district boundaries. Currently, 7 cities have not opted into the district (Oroville, Tonasket, Riverside, Omak, Twisp, Pateros, and Brewster). If you are in one of these cities and would like to receive our services, please contact your elected officials and ask them to consider joining. For more information, call Craig at 509-422-0855 x. 110 or email [craig@okanogancd.org](mailto:craig@okanogancd.org).

## Okanogan CD Programs

We're here to help you find solutions that work best for you and your conservation goals. We are non-regulatory and working with us is completely voluntary. Below is a brief description of our main programs; visit our website at [www.okanogancd.org](http://www.okanogancd.org) for more details, or give us a call at 509-422-0855.



### Habitat Improvements

Help with wildlife, plants, water bodies, and wetlands.



### Wildfire Resilience

Help with readiness, recovery, and air quality concerns.



### Agricultural Production

Help with livestock, orchards, irrigation, and dryland crops.



### Conservation Education

Classes, workshops, and events for youth and adults.



1251 S. 2nd Avenue, Rm 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

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US POSTAGE

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WENATCHEE WA

## Congratulations to Lightning River Ranch for Salmon-Safe Certification!



Last fall, Okanogan CD worked with Salmon-Safe to certify Lightning River Ranch in Twisp. Owner Mike Devany promotes healthy ecosystems with practices including fish habitat restoration, water conservation, and pollinator plantings. As Mike says, “the Salmon-Safe certification is a way to advertise that focus of my ranch operation, and it is useful in telling the story as I market my beef.” For more information about this ecolabeling program, visit [www.salmonsafe.org](http://www.salmonsafe.org). If you are interested in certification for your agricultural operation, please call or email our office.

Okanogan Conservation District

[www.okanogancd.org](http://www.okanogancd.org)

509-422-0855