



# THURSTON CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Legislative District: 2, 20, 22, 35 Congressional District: 3, 10

## Other accomplishments:



McLane Creek project site that included culvert replacement, livestock fencing, and riparian buffer planting. Photo by Dakota Dominguez



Climate Change Affecting Agriculture in Puget Sound forum where producers and the community discussed needs for the future. Photo by Dakota Dominguez



Watershed Adventure Camp provided place-based learning from Mount Rainier to Puget Sound during a week of summer exploration. Photo by Dakota Dominguez

## 2017 FEATURE ACCOMPLISHMENT

### RIVERBEND RANCH RESTORES SALMON STREAM



Flooded pasture on Riverbend Ranch. Photo by Riverbend Ranch

#### Resource challenge

Historic clearing of native plants to the river's edge for grazing cattle was causing increased erosion and flooding in pastures. Allowing cattle to access the river for drinking water was impacting water quality in the river system. Undersized culverts and unused culverts on a tributary to the Skookumchuck River were increasing seasonal flooding and causing water back-up, making it difficult for steelhead, coho, and chinook salmon to move upstream to spawn.

#### Project summary and results

Thurston Conservation District worked with Riverbend Ranch to identify three blocked culverts that caused flooding on the landowner's property. We are designing the remaining three crossings to suit landowner needs, decrease flooding, and provide safe passage for salmon. We customized the placement and width of a 6.8 acre buffer of native plants along 1.4 miles of the river, including 7,370 feet of fence, and a well and solar-powered water pump for the cattle.



3,400 plants installed along Skookumchuck River. Photo by Riverbend Ranch

Keeping the cattle out of the buffer will provide good habitat for wildlife, filter run-off water, and allow vegetation to grow and shade the river, which will keep the the water cool and healthy in the Chehalis Basin.

**Key partners:** Riverbend Ranch; Lewis County Conservation District

## MORE WORK TO DO

- ▶ Facilitate working lands easements to keep working lands in production and maintain wise stewardship of critical habitat.
- ▶ Assist producers in critical habitat areas through the Voluntary Stewardship Program.
- ▶ Restore riparian habitat and reduce the impacts of flooding in the Chehalis Basin.