



STATE OF WASHINGTON

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

PO Box 47721 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7721 • (360) 407-6200 • FAX (360) 407-6215

### News Release

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Contact: Mark Clark, Executive Director, Washington State Conservation Commission  
[mclark@scc.wa.gov](mailto:mclark@scc.wa.gov) (360) 407-6200

Contact: Dave Fenn, Supervisor, Lewis County Conservation District  
[fennfarms@centurytel.net](mailto:fennfarms@centurytel.net) (360) 245-3786

Contact: Bob Amrine, Manager – Lewis County Conservation District  
[bob.amrine@wa.usda.gov](mailto:bob.amrine@wa.usda.gov) (360) 748-0083

### **Lewis County Conservation District Protects Livestock from Flooding**

CHEHALIS – When the Chehalis River decides to flood, over 1,400 livestock will be high and dry. The Lewis County Conservation District is completing the first state-funded projects designed to protect livestock from flooding.

The 2007 flood event led to a loss of more than 700 livestock in the Bunker Creek and Ceres Hill area. To mitigate future losses, the construction of three “critter pads” on Bunker Creek Road will provide protection from flooding for 605 livestock. The search is on for material to construct two more critter pads on Ceres Hill Road. These are designed to protect an additional 800 livestock.

Critter pads are man-made, raised-earth plateaus, which protect livestock from the effects of flooding. The pads will contain enough room and necessary feed for the livestock to remain safe during the flood event. Most of the livestock protected by the pads will be dairy cows and beef cattle. One of the pads on Bunker Creek Road will protect 105 sheep.

These critter pads are part of an overall program to reduce flood damage in the Chehalis Basin that has been developed by the Chehalis Flood Authority. The legislature provided \$5 million in 2012 to support the critter pad development, plus other projects. The Flood Authority asked the Governor’s office to route critter pad funding through the Washington State Conservation Commission. The Washington State Conservation Commission provides programmatic assistance with funding to conservation districts statewide, like the one in Lewis County.

Total cost of the first three critter pads will be less than \$200,000. The two remaining pads are much larger and expected to cost nearly \$100,000 apiece, although increases in material costs are now becoming an issue.

Mark Clark, Executive Director of the Washington State Conservation Commission and Dave Fenn, Supervisor, Lewis County Conservation District, were quick to give credit to numerous other agencies and partners who helped put these projects on a fast track to completion before another flooding season is in full swing.

“We couldn’t have done this without our partners,” said Fenn. “Partners included the Washington State Conservation Commission, Lewis County planning and permitting department who helped with the permitting process and allowed us to use material stockpiled from the 2007 flood event, to the landowners

themselves, this was a team effort. These critter pads are excellent insurance policies for saving the livestock during our next major flood event.”

“The Governor’s office was very helpful in getting this funding moving quickly and in the right direction,” said Clark. “The Flood Authority’s confidence in our system of working through conservation districts to put projects on-the-ground in a timely and efficient manner was extremely gratifying.”

For more information about the Lewis County Conservation District, and conservation districts in general, please visit us online <http://www.scc.wa.gov/>.

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*The mission of the Washington State Conservation Commission is to lead the citizens of the state in the wise stewardship, conservation, and protection of soil, water, and related natural resources on private lands.*

*The Conservation Commission does this by providing structure and leadership for good governance by conservation districts who provide education, technical assistance, and implementation of land management practices.*