

Just about all you need
to know about Washington State
trust lands in agriculture.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



THE dirt

FARMING
FOR THE
SCHOOL TRUST

[HOME](#)

Posted on [October 4, 2012](#)

[← Previous](#)

2012 Wildfires affect DNR Grazing Leases



— Many grazing leases on state trust lands have been affected by 2012 wildfires that chewed through open grasslands and forests. Photo: DNR

The wildfires of 2012 have affected activities on several thousand acres of [State Trust lands](#) in the eastern and southern foothills of

the [Cascade Mountains](#) and northeast Washington State.

Dozens of grazing leases were among the ‘casualties’— some parcels were severely burned while others were harmed to a lesser degree.

DNR’s Trust Land Managers are assessing the fire’s effects on the land and resources to determine how best to work with lessees on affected parcels.

Best management practices include the option to rest the rangeland, which may be recommended for the next growing season or two.

If it is decided that grazing is to be deferred, and as long as no grazing occurs, basic rent will be waived during the period. Lessees still will be required to pay annual assessment fees.

If a lessee receives any government subsidies, grants or insurance payments for damage to rangeland, normal rent will be due.

DNR, US Forest Service and partners have worked hard to prevent the spread of the wildfires in these areas, but public and private grazing lands have suffered. Permit ranges across State Trust lands, [National Forests](#) and other landowners’ parcels also were affected by fire, and DNR is assessing the effects at the time of this publication.

Pat Ryan, DNR Agriculture Program Manager

Share this:  Twitter  Facebook  Email  Print

Like this: Like Be the first to like this.

This entry was posted in [Dryland](#), [Grazing](#), [Leasing state trust lands](#) by [The Dirt Newsletter from Washington DNR](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

Just about all you need
to know about Washington State
trust lands in agriculture.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



THE dirt

FARMING
FOR THE
SCHOOL TRUST

HOME

Posted on [October 4, 2012](#)

[← Previous](#) [Next →](#)

Landlocked No More



— This parcel of trust lands southeast of Ephrata is once again productive. Photo: Brent Billingsley, DNR

After three growing seasons without water, a parcel of irrigated state trust land south of Ephrata is once again leased and producing income, thanks to the persistent efforts to gain legal access by DNR's Southeast Region agriculture staff. A 75-acre irrigation circle on the parcel was first developed from

sagebrush in 1994, and was leased to the adjacent landowner. At the time, there was an urgency to use the water service contract offered to DNR by the [Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District](#), or DNR would lose it.

It all started in 1956, when the state land surrounding this parcel had to be sold when the [Columbia Basin Project](#) brought water to the block. Unfortunately, these farm units were sold without preserving legal access to the remaining state trust land. In 2008, lease negotiations were unsuccessful with the existing lessee who had access, and efforts to purchase legal access over the shortest route failed. Consequently, the parcel was left unleased.

Over the next two years, DNR worked to find other routes to the parcel for both access and power. An agreement was finally reached with one neighbor to dedicate a county road and a second neighbor to sell DNR an easement to complete an access route. DNR's equipment operator built the needed 2,000 feet of new road across rocky terrain and along a steep hillside.



— DNR built new access road to 750 acre parcel. Photo: Brent Billingsley, DNR



Corn stalks grow on new lease near Ephrata. Photo: Brent Billingsley, DNR

A new lease was offered at public auction in November, 2011 — awarded to a young farmer from the area. This development lease stipulated that the lessee pay for construction of a half-mile of new power line and the irrigation equipment. He completed the irrigation development just in time to plant a crop of corn in April, 2012.

We are pleased to have resolved the access problem and returned this parcel to production, generating revenue for the [Common School Construction Fund](#) (K-12th grade schools).

Brent Billingsley, Columbia Basin District Manager

Share this:  Twitter  Facebook  Email  Print

Like this: Like Be the first to like this.

This entry was posted in [Irrigated](#), [Leasing state trust lands](#) by [The Dirt Newsletter from Washington DNR](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

Just about all you need
to know about Washington State
trust lands in agriculture.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



THE dirt

FARMING
FOR THE
SCHOOL TRUST

HOME

Posted on [October 4, 2012](#)

[← Previous](#) [Next →](#)

What's Up Down in the Corner?



— Irrigated orchard on state trust lands in the southeast 'corner' of Washington State. Photo: Ryan Cloud, DNR

In the southeast corner of Washington State lies the Dayton Unit of DNR's Snake River District. The Dayton Unit includes 52,000 acres of [state trust land](#) in Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Walla Walla Counties managed to benefit the various trust beneficiaries. These lands have a wide variety of uses,

including: Dryland, Irrigated, Grazing, Windpower, Vineyard, Orchard production, and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation of Wildlife Habitat. In 2011 leases for these lands generated a record income of over \$1 million for the trusts.

With the favorable growing conditions for dryland wheat in 2011, about 350,000 bushels of wheat were produced. Multiple record yields included 3 leases that averaged more than 100 bushels per acre, and several others in the 90 bushel range. Almost 75 percent of the dryland leases in this unit are either direct seeded or minimum tillage (2-pass). There are 9,000 acres in Dryland Agriculture and another 2,500 acres of land enrolled into the Conservation Reserve Program.

It is looking like 2012 will be another great year.

In 2004, DNR's first Wind Power lease went into production in Walla Walla County with twelve 0.66 Megawatt Generators. Today in the Dayton Unit there are 28 turbines producing electricity with a rated capacity of 37.92 Megawatts. Last year a little more than 95,000 megawatts of wind energy were produced on trust land.



— Leases for wind turbines and dryland grain both earn money for the trusts. Photo: Ryan Cloud, DNR

The irrigated agriculture leases are serviced by river pump stations in the Columbia and Snake Rivers, and ground water wells. The majority of these irrigated 2,400 acres in the Dayton Unit are under pivot irrigation with the remainder under either hand lines or drip irrigation.



— Mists float across lush rangeland on trust lands in the southeastern corner of Washington. Photo: Ryan Cloud, DNR

Other DNR programs 'in the corner'

As is true across the state, in addition to managing state trust lands, DNR also provides [Wildland](#)

[Fire Protection](#) and [Forest Practice Regulations](#) such as for the forested state and private land surrounding the Umatilla National Forest in the four counties. The bedlands and shorelands of the Grande Ronde, Snake, and Columbia Rivers—and all the structures in the water, and in the air space above—are managed by the [Aquatics Program](#). DNR's [Small Forest Landowner](#) Program assists private landowners to plan how to achieve goals for their forests; and DNR also regulates the [surface mining practices and site restoration](#) for the state.

For more information regarding these programs contact our [Ellensburg office](#).

Ryan Cloud, Dayton Unit Land Manager

Share this: [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Email](#) [Print](#)

Like this: Like Be the first to like this.

This entry was posted in [Conservation](#), [Dryland](#), [Grazing](#), [Irrigated](#), [Leasing](#)

Just about all you need
to know about Washington State
trust lands in agriculture.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



THE dirt

FARMING
FOR THE
SCHOOL TRUST

HOME

Posted on [October 4, 2012](#)

[← Previous](#) [Next →](#)

DNR and the Conservation Reserve Program, and Farm Program



— This swath of Conservation Reserve Program-supported land protects habitat and prevents erosion on a farm on trust lands in Grant County. Brent Billingsley, DNR

Two federal programs help DNR achieve sustainable farming on trust lands, and help protect the lessee farmers from some financial risk while encouraging protections for vulnerable landscape features such as draws, riparian areas and wetlands, and those lands prone to erosion.

The [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers safeguard environmentally sensitive land. The program participant's—our lessees—plant long-term, resource-conserving ground covers to control soil erosion, improve the water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, the US Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance for protecting those public resources. The Farm Services Agency administers the Conservation Reserve Program, while other USDA agencies and partners provide technical support.

The Farm Program started with the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 and the Agricultural Marketing Agreement of 1937. It has changed over the years but has helped stabilize commodities production, offer assistance with farm and home management planning and technical supervision, and helped farmers get loans. The current Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP) provides payment to eligible producers on farms enrolled for the 2008 through 2012 crop years. There are two types of payments—direct payments, and counter cyclical payments—both calculated using base acres and payment yields established for the farm. A farm's base acreage and program yield are historical averages of crop production, and are used to calculate the farm program payments. Each participating farm has a unique base acreage and payment yield recorded with the [Farm Service Agency](#) for each of the commodities covered in the program.

The formula for both direct and counter-cyclical payments uses 'payment acres' equal to 85 percent of the base acres. The direct payment equals the payment acres multiplied by the payment yield and a fixed payment rate established in the farm

bill for each crop. The counter-cyclical payment is similar, but uses a payment rate tied to season-average market prices. If market prices are low, the counter-cyclical payment makes up for the difference between the farm bill's "target price" and the lower season-average market price. If market prices are above the target price, then no counter-cyclical payment is made.

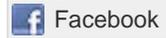


In order to be eligible for the farm program and receive payments, owners, operators, landlords, tenants, or sharecroppers must share in the risk of producing a crop on base acres on a farm enrolled in DCP and be entitled to a share in the crop produced on the base acres. The farmer annually needs to report the use of the farm's cropland acreage, comply with conservation and wetland protection requirements on all of their land, and use the base acres for agricultural or related activities. They also must comply with planting flexibility requirements, protect all base acres from erosion, provide sufficient cover as determined necessary by the county Farm Service Agency committee and control the weeds on the property.

Throughout the years DNR has participated in the farm program to varying degrees. This helps us implement the Department's vision to leave a legacy of healthy and thriving ecosystems, and a vibrant natural resource-based economy while maintaining a valuable financial return to the trusts. It also gives us opportunities to use sound science, data and the most up-to-date information through the technical expertise of our partnership with the Farm Service Agency in the decisions affecting our management of state trust lands.

Tammy Yeakey, Farm Program Manager, Southeast Region

Share this:



Like this:



Be the first to like this.

This entry was posted in [Conservation](#), [Dryland](#), [Leasing state trust lands](#) by [The Dirt Newsletter from Washington DNR](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

Theme: [Customized Twenty Eleven](#)  [Blog at WordPress.com](#).

Just about all you need
to know about Washington State
trust lands in agriculture.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



THE dirt

FARMING
FOR THE
SCHOOL TRUST

HOME

Posted on [October 4, 2012](#)

[← Previous](#) [Next →](#)

Facts & Trends

Number & Size of Farms in Washington State over Three Decades

Number of Farms, by size	2007	1997	1987	1978
1 to 9 acres	9,211	9,208	6,040	4,161
10 to 49 acres	14,790	14,791	11,362	9,896
50 to 179 acres	7,307	7,646	7,216	7,433
180 to 499 acres	3,479	3,536	3,796	4,136
500 to 999 acres	1,731	1,770	1,855	2,000
1,000 to 1,999 acres	1,218	1,502	1,626	1,673
2,000 acres or more	1,548	1,660	1,664	1,688

USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service

- The small family farm — from 1 to 49 acres — makes up a significant number of the roughly 39,000 farms in Washington State.

Share this: [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Email](#) [Print](#)

Like this: Like Be the first to like this.

This entry was posted in [Dryland](#), [Grazing](#), [Irrigated](#), [Leasing state trust lands](#) by [The Dirt Newsletter from Washington DNR](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).