

Celebrating 25 Years *of the* **Conservation Reserve Program**

CRP — On the Ground

CREP Project

Saves Streams
Walla Walla Co.



Grass Filter Strip

Protects Peone
Creek,
Spokane Co.



CRP Creates
Wildlife Park
Spokane Co.



CRP Provides

Farm Balance
Whitman Co.



CREP Preserves

Family Lifestyle in
Whatcom Co.



Business Grows

with CRP in
Whitman Co.



CRP Tree Planting in Spokane County —Photo by Patrick Lewis

CRP Turns Land into Wildlife Park

When Jack Bowman chose to upgrade his Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) bid in 1992, he didn't realize he was also upgrading his retirement. At the time, Bowman offered to plant trees on the 121 acres he was bidding into the program for a second time in hopes that the trees would help seal a bid acceptance. The original bid in 1991 was not accepted.

The upgraded bid put Bowman's land six miles north of Tekoa, Washington into the program. Bowman, a teacher at Tekoa High School, was planning for retirement. Raising wheat and lentils on the 121 acres was a secondary job. In 1969, after seeing the property when obtaining fertilizer for his garden, he purchased the farm land. A move to the country and farming followed.

Bowman explained that the land is better off in trees. "All of the land around there was originally in trees," he explained, "It probably never should have been broken out. There's a lot more clay in the topsoil than the soil in Tekoa." Bowman said with the land in CRP, water that runs off the land

flows clear instead of muddied.

When the first ten year contract expired in 2002, it was again bid into the program and accepted.

Now retired, Bowman is pleased with the results of converting the crop land to CRP. A three-variety mixture of grasses and 31,000 trees cover the land. About 75 percent of the trees are native Ponderosa Pine and the rest are Douglas Fir. "It kind of looks like a park now," said Bowman.

Since planting the grass and trees, Bowman has built two ponds in areas that were too wet for trees to survive. He's added fish and now enjoys fishing in his retirement.

"The biggest benefit (of CRP) has been the wildlife habitat improvement," said Bowman.

He has seen a wolf, deer, elk and moose on the property. Currently, he is working with the Wildlife Council in Spokane to introduce pheasant. The Council's Upland Bird Committee supplied day-old birds and Bowman will raise them to five-weeks old and release them on the CRP acreage.

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