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SPOKANE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bi-state partnership investing in Spokane River

More than \$15 million earmarked for agriculture and forestry improvements

SPOKANE - A consortium of 20 organizations from both Washington and Idaho aims to implement 150,000 acres of conservation practices on the ground to protect clean water and benefit working lands.

The Spokane Conservation District, along with partnering state and local organizations, secured \$7.7 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The program directs funds towards conservation projects to help improve water quality, enhance soil health and support wildlife habitat. This is the second RCPP award in eastern Washington and northern Idaho since its inception in 2014.

The Spokane Conservation District has long been active in promoting the sustainable use of natural resources throughout eastern Washington and parts of northern Idaho. The RCPP award will greatly expand that role through the partnership of more than 20 other organizations including the Spokane and Coeur d' Alene Tribes, multiple conservation districts from northern Idaho and Washington, along with State, County and local governmental agencies. Several non-profits and service organizations representing the entire Greater Spokane River Watershed in both states will also be part of the coalition.

Each partner organization will play a specific and crucial role in the implementation of the project which will include conservation of soil and water resources on over 150,000 acres of agricultural lands. The partners will be contributing matching funds with the cumulative match equaling \$15.4 million available for this project.

The program is expected to be available for private landowners to enroll in innovative conservation programs in the fall of 2016. It is anticipated that more than 300 farm operators will become involved over a 5 year period.

For more program information and upcoming media events, contact Walt Edelen Walt-Edelen@sccd.org or Charlie Peterson Charlie-Peterson@sccd.org at 509-535-7274. You can also visit our website at www.SCCD.org.

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