

Conservation at Kenagy Family Farms



Peter Kenagy is a leader in conservation ecology. He has won USDA's Patrick Madden's Sustainability Award and Norpac's Farmer of the Year Award in the Sustainability category for his combination of conservation tillage, minimum pesticide use and habitat restoration and enhancement innovations. His well thought out farm design is clearly where efficient crop production and biodiversity meet. **Wide riparian borders are maintained (between 40 -70 yards in width) and boast a complex structure of mature native and non-native harvestable habitat.**



Instead of cropping the bottom lands, Peter restored them **with plantings of trees and native grasses that maintain the critical functions of the Willamette flood plains and filter sediment and pollutants, such as fertilizers, pesticides, and harmful bacteria, that would otherwise enter the river. Conservation tillage practices during crop production further reduce soil loss and protect water quality.**



Peter finds unique opportunities to enhance non-cropped areas on his farm by planting habitat in what he calls "no man's land" around his telephone poles and other farm margins. **Having diverse habitat on the farm edges increases food and shelter for beneficial insects that help keep crop pest outbreaks below economic damage levels. It also provides food and undisturbed nesting areas for native pollinators, which can aid in crop pollination.**



Simply by adding extensions to utility poles Peter **provides habitat for some of the primary predators of Oregon's rivers, the Osprey and the bald eagle. Both are yearly residents of the farm and indicators of environmental health. These and other birds of prey help keep farm rodent populations in check.**



Throughout the fields, islands of habitat and mature riparian borders are connected by hedgerows of native spirea, ceonothus and willow. **These habitat corridors provide important food for native pollinators, and insect predators and parasitoids. They also provide excellent paths, nest sites, shelter, food, and perches for predatory birds, bats and other mammals that help keep on-farm insect and rodent pest populations in balance.**

According to Peter Kenagy, biodiversity supports the viability of his family farm by:

- reducing tractor usage, which saves time, energy, and resources;
- maintaining the many critical ecological functions of the floodplain;
- providing a sustainable market for restoration seeds which he grows; and
- increasing the enjoyment his family gains from observing the abundant wildlife, particularly bird life, his land is able to support.