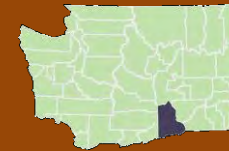


Benton Conservation District



State Legislative District #8, 16
Congressional District #4

Other Accomplishments

Benton CD Supervisor
Receives National Recognition

The Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Dave White presented the NACD/NRCS Olin Sims Conservation Leadership Award to Nicole Berg-Tobin. Berg-Tobin, a wheat farmer from Washington State, was recognized for her superior service to the conservation community in promoting and leading conservation on private lands.



Benton CD Farm
Receives State Award

Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) recognized Mercer Canyons as the 2010 recipient of the State Wildlife Farmer of the Year award. Mercer Canyons irrigates approximately 6,800 acres of prime agricultural land in southern Benton County. They have approximately 2,500 acres that has been set aside and is protected for wildlife habitat.



2010 Feature Accomplishment

Yakima River Restoration Efforts

Resource Challenge

Water stargrass is putting a strangle-hold on the Yakima River. Once considered a rare native plant, water stargrass (*Heteranthera dubia*) has become increasingly abundant since 2001. Water stargrass now forms a dense canopy, stretching from bank to bank along the lower 43 miles of the Yakima River (roughly Prosser to Richland). Water stargrass threaten irrigation systems, recreation and safety, fish and aquatic life, water quality and the river itself.

Volunteers Removing Water Stargrass from the Yakima River



Project Summary and Results

During the summer of 2010 the Benton Conservation District with grant funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation implemented the Community Harvest of Water Stargrass Project. The project was designed to educate shoreline property owners and the general public about problems caused by water stargrass in the lower Yakima River.

Project staff recruited and trained volunteers to restore salmon habitat by removing invasive water stargrass. Property owners, volunteers and staff cleared water stargrass from 1.5 acres of historic salmon spawning habitat. Over 30 volunteers donated over 500 hours of time in the community work parties to harvest water stargrass.

Staff and volunteers monitored the project site to document fish use by adult salmon spawners in October and November. BCD staff and volunteers observed three redds within the project site and identified adult Chinook on the redds on three different occasions in October 2010.

Key Project Partners – National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Tapteal Greenway, Friends of Badger Mountain, Friends of Mid-Columbia National Wildlife Refuges, Griggs Hardware, Tri-City Herald, KNDU-TV and KEPR-TV.

Contact Information

Mark Nielson, District Manager
mark-nielson@conservewa.net
415 Wine Country Road
Prosser, WA 99350
(509) 786-1923 ext. 3
www.bentoncd.org

Board of Supervisors:

Jack Clark, Chair
Dan Downs, Vice-Chair
Mike Sackschewsky, Auditor
Larry Cadwell, Member
Nicole Berg-Tobin, Member

More Work To Do

Benton Conservation District in cooperation with the South Central RC&D and Washington Conservation Commission is helping to develop a new ecosystems marketing program for central Washington. Ecosystem markets can provide payments to agricultural producers to provide environmental benefits to off-set environmental degradation from other business sectors.

New air quality rules promulgated by EPA relating to wind-blown dust are being watched closely by the district. Regulators will be invited on a tour in the spring of 2012 to view proactive measures being implemented in Benton County