

Other Accomplishments

Salmon in the Classroom Goes Regional

With innovative MOUs, staff-sharing, agency partnerships, outreach to volunteers and in-kind valued at over \$100,000, Benton CD served “Salmon in the Classroom” schools throughout eastern WA, from Grand Coulee to Kennewick, from Yakima County to Walla Walla County. Over 4,000 students attended a two-day Salmon Summit to release their fish and learn about the importance of natural resources.



CD “On Fire” with New Program

BCD is proud to introduce the Firewise program to Benton County landowners to help them protect their property against wildfires. Staff has worked hard to perform free site evaluations and prepare property protection plans. BCD has formed partnerships with regional fire chiefs and the Home Builders Association. BCD’s Firewise program has been featured on local radio.

2009 Feature Accomplishment

Benton CD Helps Local Irrigators Protect Threatened Salmonids

Resource Challenge

The Yakima River provides valuable habitat to steelhead and spring and fall chinook, therefore all fish screens are required by law to comply with current regulations in order to protect juvenile salmonids. However, many of the existing fish screens do not meet current standards and need to be updated.



Project Summary and Results

BCD is utilizing funds from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) to help irrigators voluntarily replace noncompliant fish screens. The fish screens prevent juvenile salmonids from being sucked into irrigation systems on private water diversions within the Yakima River. BCD is helping 16 local irrigators replace 10 fish screens that are no longer in compliance with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) criteria. A total amount of \$42,000 from SRFB and \$12,000 in matching funds from BCD will be spent to replace and update the pump stations which range in size from 65 gpm to 1,000 gpm.

Irrigators benefit from an updated system that is easy to maintain and is designed to meet their specific needs. It also protects irrigators from being fined by WDFW for non-compliant screens, as all irrigators are required by law to have NMFS approved fish screens. This program is the only one of its kind in Benton County to help local irrigators update their noncompliant fish screens.

Key Project Partners

Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, Walla Walla CD, and WA State Conservation Commission.

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More Work To Do

BCD will continue to provide leadership in implementing the Columbia River Management Program’s *Voluntary Regional Agreement* and other programs. More riparian plantings and off-channel livestock watering along the lower Yakima River are needed to improve fish habitat and water quality. BCD will develop an urban Xeriscape incentive program for future implementation. Increased outreach to small acreage livestock owners is needed to encourage conservation planning.