



CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
OF WASHINGTON STATE
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Benton Conservation District



Annual Work Plan for 2025

Table of Contents

Mission	3
Natural Resource Priorities	3
Program Areas:.....	6
Natural Resource Priority Program Area	6
District Programs	12
Budget	14

Mission

The Mission of the Benton Conservation District is to facilitate responsible stewardship of the land and resources for the residents of Benton County through the application and administration of various volunteer and cooperative partnership programs using all available funding sources.

Natural Resource Priorities

Water Quality / Quantity Issues / Monitoring & Urban Water Conservation Issues

- Natural resource priority description: Water is a valuable resource in Washington. Using our resources wisely will help us fill the needs of people, industries, businesses and farms, while also keeping fish and other aquatic life alive and well. Across the state these water users have diverse needs and goals we must find a way to share limited, fluctuating supplies. Water conservation—using water efficiently and avoiding waste—is fundamental to ensuring water availability in the future. In order to protect our water supply everyone can practice conservation. In our businesses, schools, and homes, using water more efficiently will lessen the effects of limited water supply. ~ ECY

Much of the water in the Rock Glade Watershed and the Alkli-Squilchuck Watershed has already been spoken for. Increased demands from population growth, declining groundwater levels, and impacts from climate change are adding to the challenge of finding new water supplies in WRIA 31 and 40, especially during the summer months. The Yakima River basin consists of three Water Resource Inventory areas, the Lower Yakima (WRIA 37), Upper Yakima (WRIA 39) and Naches (WRIA 38). Surface waters in the Yakima Basin are currently under adjudication and thus unavailable for new appropriations. Adjudications in an area are an indication that most if not all of the available water has already been allocated to existing uses. ~ ECY

Over 2,000 people in the Lower Yakima Valley GWMA area are exposed to nitrate over the maximum contaminant level (MCL) through their drinking water. While not all groundwater supplies have been impacted, many residents rely on private wells that are in the most vulnerable portions of the aquifer. Approximately 12% of domestic well users are exposed to nitrate levels in their drinking water that exceed the health-based standard of 10 mg/L. Water quality issues related to groundwater in the Lower Yakima River can impact surface water. The Lower Yakima River is listed on the Department of Ecology's 303(d) list for violations of numerous Water Quality Standards (WQS). Listings of pH and Dissolved Oxygen are related directly to surface water nutrient levels and the growth and decay of aquatic organisms in surface waters. Ecology is required to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) or action plans to obtain future compliance with WQS related to surface water. Connection between surface water and groundwater exists, and there is a potential for nutrients to move from ground to surface waters. ~ ECY

- Is this a state and or regional natural resource priority? YES (See Priority Description Above and Source Data below)
- Source of data: BCD's Five-Year Plan, Tri-Cities Urban Area Landscape Irrigation Plan, 2006, ECY Publication 11-11-035, ECY Publication 11-11-041, ECY Publication 11-11-044, WRIA 31 Plan, WRIA 37 Plan, ECY Publication 10-10-009 and ECY Publication 96-17, Benton County Voluntary Stewardship Plan, Benton County Groundwater Community Action Plan.
- Other entities: Columbia Snake River Irrigators Association, Benton County, NRCS, Benton Franklin Health District

Small Acreage Conservation Issues

- Natural resource priority description: Small acreage landowners face the same water quality and water conservation issues that their large-scale agricultural counterparts do without the benefit of robust government funding programs to address natural resource issues that arise from keeping livestock and growing crops.
- Is this a state and or regional natural resource priority? YES (See Priority Description Above and Source Data below)
- Source of data: WRIA 31 Plan, WRIA 37 Plan, Benton CD's 5 Year Plan, Site Specific Inventories
- Other entities: Benton County, Cooperative Extension, Benton Franklin Health District

Air Quality & Wind Erosion Issues

- Natural resource priority description: Natural resource priority description: During the late 1980s and early 1990s a large number of exceedances of the 24-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) from particulate matter ten microns or less (PM10) were recorded in Spokane, Kennewick, and Wallula, Washington. An examination showed a close correlation to high wind events. The Kennewick monitor has had 7 exceedances in the last five years. The exceedances are primarily attributable to activity on agricultural fields, although other sources may contribute. If any area exceeds pollution concentrations defined by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards or NAAQS more frequently than is permitted by the rule, the area is put into "non- attainment". The non-attainment status has significant planning and possibly economic impacts to that area. Since the policy does require that dust originating from man-made sources be controlled according to a best practice, documenting that essentially "nothing more could have been done" to prevent the exceedances avoids a determination of non-attainment. ~ BCAA
- Is this a state and or regional natural resource priority? YES (See Priority Description Above and Source Data below)
- Source of data: WRIA 31 Plan, WRIA 37 Plan, Benton CD's 5 Year Plan and Annual Plan of Work, Site Specific Inventories, ECY Air Quality Monitoring Stations, Columbia Plateau PM10 Project Research, WSU, USDA-ARS, FSA, Benton County Voluntary Stewardship Plan
- Other entities: Benton Clean Air Authority, ECY, NRCS

Noxious Weed Issues

- Natural resource priority description: 'Noxious weed' is the traditional, legal term for invasive, non-native plants that are so aggressive they harm our local ecosystems or disrupt agricultural production. These plants crowd out the native species that fish and wildlife depend on. They also cost farmers, orchardists, and ranchers millions of dollars in control efforts and lost production – and that can make the food we buy more expensive. While ordinary weeds may be annoying, noxious weeds are a genuine threat to the natural resources, ecology, and economy of our state. ~ Washington State NWCB
- Is this a state and or regional natural resource priority? YES (See Priority Description Above and Source Data below)
- Source of data: Benton County Weed Board, Washington State Weed Board, local inventories, BCD Five Year Plan, Benton County Voluntary Stewardship Plan
- Other entities: Benton County Noxious Weed Control Board

Wildlife Habitat & Public Access Issues

- Natural resource priority description: Shoreline vegetation conservation is a critical component when considering public access to Benton County's Shorelines. The County has recently completed its Shoreline Master Plan. The Shoreline Master Plan will protect environmental resources of Benton County shorelines; promote public access and enjoyment opportunities and plan for water-dependent uses. ~ BC

Shrub steppe communities form the iconic, western landscape of open sagebrush plains, rim rock, and tumbleweeds. Described as vegetation communities consisting of one or more layers of perennial grass with a discontinuous over story layer of shrubs, shrub steppe historically dominated the landscape in eastern Washington. Some of the many species of wildlife that inhabit shrub steppe can only be found in these semi-arid communities. Today, less than 50% of Washington's historic shrub steppe remains and much of it is degraded, fragmented, and/or isolated from other similar habitats. Conversion to cropland has resulted in the greatest loss of shrub steppe in Washington, leading to a fragmented landscape and a differentially high loss of deep-soil communities. Across the Intermountain West, shrub steppe communities have been lost or degraded by conversion to cropland, extensive energy extraction, and alteration of the vegetation through over-grazing, invasion by exotic plants and changes in fire frequency. ~ WDFW

Pollinators are essential to our environment. The ecological service they provide is necessary for the reproduction of nearly 70 percent of the world's flowering plants, including more than two-thirds of the world's crop species. The United States alone grows more than one hundred crops that either need or benefit from pollinators, and the economic value of these native pollinators is estimated at \$3 billion per year in the U.S. Beyond agriculture, pollinators are keystone species in most terrestrial ecosystems. Fruits and seeds derived from insect pollination are a major part of the diet of approximately 25 percent of all birds, and of mammals ranging from red-backed voles to grizzly bears. In many places, the essential service of pollination is at risk from habitat loss, pesticide use, and introduced diseases. ~ Xerces

- Is this a state and or regional natural resource priority? YES (See Priority Description Above and Source Data below)
- Source of data: WRIA 31 Plan, WRIA 37 Plan, Benton CD's 5 Year Plan, Site Specific Inventories, Inadequate Habitat for Wildlife in areas adjacent to cropland that have been degraded per BCD's Five Year Plan and as described in WDFW's Management Recommendations for Washington's Priority Species – Volume IV, 2004 and MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WASHINGTON'S PRIORITY HABITATS: Managing Shrub-steppe in Developing Landscapes, 2011, Benton County Shorelines Management Plan, Benton County Voluntary Stewardship Plan.
- Other entities: Benton County Parks Board, Xerces, NRCS

Program Areas:

Natural Resource Priority Program Area

Natural Resource Priority Program Area: Water Quality / Quantity Issues / Monitoring & Urban Water Conservation

Goal(s): Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring Results, Resulting in Reduction in Pollution, and Increased Water Use Efficiency. Number of programs and participants. Increase in number of people using technology and practices to conserve water and related reduction in water use.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Funding Source(s): See Notes Section

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Implement the Benton County Voluntary Stewardship Program.	7/24-6/25	Mark, Kara, Kelsi, Tom	277	\$94,000	WSCC
Continue working with Columbia Snake River Irrigators Association on water quantity issues.	7/24-6/25	Mark	2	\$1,000	Rates & Charges
Work to secure funding to monitor and improve the water quality in the streams and rivers that are of concern.	7/24-6/25	All Staff	3	\$1,000	Seeking funding

Implement Commercial Livestock Nutrient Management Program.	7/24-6/25	TBD	3	\$1,000	WSCC
Cost-share on Irrigation Conversions, Fish Screens, Water Meters, Pond Linings, Fencing and Wildlife Habitat. (Grant 00050)	7/24-6/25	Staff	45	\$70,000	WSCC / ECY / Rates & Charges
Implement Heritage Garden Program.	7/24-6/25	Kelsi, Kelsey	140	\$39,000	WSCC / Rates & Charges
Implement Yakima County Heritage Garden Program. (Grant 00049)	7/24-6/25	Kelsi, Kelsey	150	\$48,000	ECY / YBIP
Research new water efficiency technologies.	7/24-6/25	Tom, Mark	2.5	\$1,000	Rates & Charges
Participate in WSU Groundwater Monitoring Program.	7/24-6/25	Tom, Mark	15	\$4,000	WSU / USBR
Temperature and Water Quality Monitoring of Amon/Spring/Snipes Tributaries and Lower Yakima River. (Grants 00214 and 00090)	7/24-6/25	Tom, Marcie, Kristy, Riley	33	\$13,000	ECY
Continued Water Quality Monitoring of Lower Yakima. (Grants 00011, 00030)	7/24-6/25	Tom, Marcie, Kristy, Riley	50	\$20,000	ECY

Natural Resource Priority Program Area: Small Acreage Conservation Issues

Goal(s): Measurable increase in plans, programs, and included acreage and the number of people attending events/participating in programs.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Funding Source(s): See Notes Section

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Implement the District's Small Acreage Livestock Program.	7/24-6/25	Tom	94	\$28,000	WSCC
Work with Ecology, Benton Franklin Health Department and WSDA to explore the options for livestock mortality management on small acreage parcels.	7/24-6/25	Tom, Mark	3	\$1,000	WSCC
Seek funding to purchase pasture aerator, small no-till drill and small manure spreader.	7/24-6/25	Staff	3	\$1,000	Seeking funding
Work with landowners in Spring/Snipe/Amon basins on conservation plans and septic evaluations. (Grant 00090)	7/24-6/25	Marcie, Tom, Kelsi, Riley	30	\$10,000	ECY

Natural Resource Priority Program Area: Air Quality & Wind Erosion Issues

Goal(s): Reduction in PM-10 emissions and exceedances and increase in CO2 sequestration.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Funding Source(s): See Notes Section

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Work with Benton Clean Air and ECY to install monitoring stations.	7/24-6/25	Mark, Kara	2.5	\$1,000	Rates & Charges
Participate on High Wind Fugitive Dust Workgroup.	7/24-6/25	Bridget	0	0	n/a
Look for funding to support the use of No-till Equipment in the Horse Heaven Hills.	7/24-6/25	Staff	2.5	\$1,000	Seeking Funding
Seek funding/collaboration to provide Firewise Assessments.	7/24-6/25	Tom	2.5	\$1,000	Rates & Charges

Natural Resource Priority Program Area: Noxious Weed Issues

Goal(s): Number of acres treated. Active implementation of programs.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Funding Source(s): See Notes Section

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Implement Aquatic Veg. Removal to support Water Stargrass removal. (Grant 0006)	7/24-6/25	Marcie, Tom, Riley, Kristy, Intern	105	\$25,000	ECY / USGS / YN
Evaluate aquatic noxious weed biomass and relationship to water quality. (Grant 00214)	7/24 – 12/24	Marcie, Kristy, Intern	12	\$4,500	ECY

Natural Resource Priority Program Area: Wildlife Habitat & Public Access Issues

Goal(s): Increase in amount and quality of wildlife habitat and related acreage with plans and implementation. Increase in the amount of access to the Yakima River and other sites throughout the district.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Funding Source(s): See Notes Section

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Providing planting plans and seeding recommendation for riparian and upland sites per landowner requests.	7/24-6/25	Tom, Kelsi, Mark	14	\$5,000	WSCC
Implement Lower Yakima River Thermal Refuge. (Grant 00011 & 00030)	7/24-2/25	Marcie, Mark	15	\$8,000	ECY / MCF/YN
Implement Lower Yakima Cold Water Refuge Development and improve Amon Creek Riparian and thermal habitat. (Grant 20-1401 & 23-1168)	7/24 – 2/25	Marcie, Mark, Tom, Riley	20	\$24,000	ECY / SYCD / MCF/ YN
Provide pollinator habitat, wildlife habitat and insectary planting plans upon request.	7/24 – 6/25	Tom, Kelsi	3	\$1,000	WSCC
Provide engineering and technical assistance for streambank stabilization and riparian restoration projects that improve fish habitat and water quality.	7/24 – 6/25	Tom, Marcie	15	\$5,000	WSCC / Grants
Seek funding for a pilot project for large scale removal of Water Stargrass through dredging or chemical applications.	7/24 – 6/25	Staff	3	\$1,000	Rates & Charges
Identify additional access sites for public access on the Yakima River. Seek funding for land purchase or easements.	7/24 – 6/25	Mark, Kara, Board	2.5	\$1,000	Rates & Charges

District Programs

District Program Area: Information – Education & District Operations Priorities

Goal(s): Demonstrated increase in district capacity and successful district operations. Increase in public awareness (survey & media). Increase in number of people reached and number requesting services.

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Funding Source(s): See Notes Section

Activities for FY2025	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Implement BCD Education & Outreach Program Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salmon in the Classroom • Salmon Power • STEM Academy • RiverFest • Web-Based Media / Social Marketing • Print Media (Press Releases / News Articles) • Signage & Brand Development • Conservationist of the Year Award Program, etc. • Virtual Tour(s) and Landowner Testimonials 	7/24 – 6/25	Kristy / Max / Kara / Brie / new educator	320	\$185,000	WSCC / Rates & Charges / Grants
Outreach to Amon/Springs/Snipes Basins for Salmon Safe Certification, WSDA pesticide education. (Grant 00090)	7/24 – 6/25	Marcie, Max, Kelsey, Kelsi	20	\$20,000	ECY
Outreach events for implementing fish screens & water meters. (Grant 00050)	7/24 – 6/25	Marcie, Max, WDFW staff	6	\$5,000	ECY
Implement successful programs utilized by other agencies. (Wheat Week / Drain Rangers Stormwater Education)	7/24 – 6/25	Kara, Brie	15	\$10,000	WWC / Quad Cities
Keep County Commissioners apprised of activities funded through Rates & Charges.	7/24 – 6/25	Mark, Kara, Board	10	\$4,000	Rates & Charges

Increase expertise in accounting procedures and software.	7/24 – 6/25	Mark, Kara, Bookkeeper	3	\$1,000	WSCC / Rates & Charges
Continue to update the District's capital asset list.	7/24 – 6/25	Staff	1	\$330	Rates & Charges
Attend WACD Annual Meeting, WADE Training, WACD Legislative Days, NACD Annual Meeting.	Numerous dates / events	Board, Staff	12	\$5,000	WSCC
Continue toward construction of new BCD office building.	7/24 – 6/25	Mark, Kara, Board	15	\$3,000	Rates & Charges

Budget

Annual Budget - Benton Conservation District

Income	Proposed
3330000 · Indirect Federal	24,000
3340333 · Non-Competitive Grants/WSCC	300,000
3340000 · All Other State Grants	400,000
3370710 · District Rates & Charges from County	260,000
3370900 · Intergovernmental Service Revenue	185,000
3370200 · Interlocal Grant-Local Govern.	53,000
3611110 · Checking Interest	500
3611150 · Interest-WA Investment Pool	40,000
3611160 · Money Market Interest	20
3621000 · Equipment Rental Income	0
3671100 · Private Grants, Gift Donations	5,000
3699010 · Miscellaneous Revenue	100
Total Income	1,267,620
Expense	
5531110 · Salaries & Wages	320,000
5531120 · Personnel Benefits	45,000
5531142 · Election Advertising	300
5531240 · Cost/Share Programs	140,000
5531831 · Office & Operating Supplies	35,000
5531832 · Fuel	2,500
5531835 · Tools & Equipment	50,000
5531841 · Professional Services	600,000
5531842 · Communication	5,000
5531843 · Travel	2,500
5531844 · Advertising	60
5531845 · Rentals & Leases	35,000
5531846 · Insurance	13,000
5531847 · Utilities	2,000
5531848 · Repairs & Maintenance	5,500
5531849 · Miscellaneous	10,500
5810010 · Other Non-expenditures	1,000
Total Expense	1,267,360