



5-Year Plan (2012 to 2017) BENTON Conservation District

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Organization of the Benton Conservation District

A political subdivision of the State of Washington – authorities, powers and structure contained in RCW 89.08.

- *Benton Conservation District was founded in 1942.*

Function of the Benton Conservation District

To make available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.

We Serve & Why

To facilitate responsible stewardship of the land and its resources for and by the residents of our county/district

Mission of the Benton Conservation District

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.

Values of the Benton Conservation District

- *Conservation of all natural resources*
- *Voluntary Cooperation*
- *Responsible and efficient use of public funds*
- *Partnerships*
- *Economic Viability*
- *Open Communication*
- *Information Sharing*
- *Integrity*
- *Wise Land Use*
- *Public Awareness of Our Goals and Objectives*
- *Professionalism*
- *Proactive in Problem Solving*
- *Conservation/Stewardship Education*
- *Customer Service*

Natural Resource Data & Information:

| Land Use Classifications | No. of Parcels | No. of Acres |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Rangeland | 734 | 85,884 |
| Dryland Agriculture | 982 | 306,939 |
| Irrigated Agriculture | 2,530 | 270,523 |
| Non-Ag Rural | 13,550 | 45,670 |
| Urban | 48,469 | 46,969 |
| Totals | 66,265 | 755,985 |

Criteria for Selecting Conservation Priorities:

- Must meet a need
- Must address a Benton County resource concern
- Would have the greatest impact on conservation needs in the districts
- Would have technical resources and fundability to address
- Would be something quantifiable
- Would be achievable, maintainable, sustainable
- Should have public and private support
- Should have partner potential
- Something that is not being offered by other agencies or organizations
- Conservation benefit compared to dollars spent

Priority Natural Resource Conservation Needs & Geographic Areas, Measures of Success and Goals:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Water Quality & Quantity Issues:</i> | <p><i>Irrigated Lands – Urban & Ag – Yakima River Basin & Horse Heaven Hills</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Small Acreage Conservation Issues</i> | <p><i>Located Throughout the District</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Urban Conservation Water Issues</i> | <p><i>Urban Areas</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Air Quality & Wind Erosion Issues</i> | <p><i>Disturbed Lands and Dryland</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Public Outreach / Marketing/Education</i> | <p><i>Located Throughout the District</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Monitoring & Project Implementation</i> | <p><i>Located Throughout the District</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Noxious Weed Issues</i> | <p><i>Located Throughout the District</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Wildlife Habitat & Public Access Issues</i> | <p><i>Fringe of Irrigated Lands, Yakima River</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>District Operations</i> | <p><i>Located Throughout the District</i></p> |

| Natural Resource Conservation Need | Measures of Success | Goal (by 2017) |
|--|---|---|
| Water Quality & Quantity Issues & Monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Water Quality monitoring results (matrix) ▪ Reduction in pollution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By 2015 have a comprehensive water quality monitoring program providing results to target conservation programs ▪ Implementation of a waterstar grass management plan ▪ Demonstrated increase in conservation planning and systems implemented for water resources ▪ Program recognized by regulatory agencies |
| Small Acreage Conservation Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Measurable increase in plans, programs, and related acreage ▪ Number of people attending events & served | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in conservation plans, programs, and related acreage to address small acreage usage. |
| Urban Conservation Water Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of programs and participants ▪ Increase in number of people using technology and practices to conserve water and related reduction in water use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create an urban water efficiencies program in cooperation with the cities and irrigation districts ▪ Demonstrated increase in number of people using technology and practices to conserve water and related reduction in water use |
| Air Quality & Wind Erosion Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduction in PM-10 emissions and exceedances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated reduction in PM-10 emissions and exceedances ▪ Increase in acreage of air quality |

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| | | practices and systems. |
| Noxious Weed Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of acres treated ▪ Active implementation of programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated increase in numbers of acres treated for noxious weed control |
| Wildlife Habitat & Public Access Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in amount and quality of wildlife habitat and related acreage with plans and implementation ▪ Increase in amount of access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated increase in amount and quality of wildlife habitat and related acreage with plans and implementation & increase in amount of access |

Information – Education & District Operations Priorities, Measures of Success, and Goals:

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|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| District Operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successful district operations – example Good Governance ▪ Increase in district capacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated increase in district capacity and successful district operations ▪ Administer a successful Voluntary Stewardship Program (funding dependent) |
| Public Outreach / Marketing/Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hits to website ▪ Increase in public awareness (survey & media) ▪ Increase in number of people reached and number requesting services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lead the state in the development and implementation of a statewide marketing and public outreach plan ▪ Demonstrated increase in people number of people reached and number asking for services ▪ Demonstrated increase in public awareness (survey & media) |

Land Manager Needs

- *Assistance without whole farm planning requirement*
- *Conservation issues needing addressed*
- *Sound professional, up-to-date technical assistance and guidance to sources of information*
- *Financial assistance*
- *Advocacy*
- *Rental equipment – new technology or limited availability*
- *Input from staff – on-site*
- *Permitting assistance*
- *Confidentiality*
- *Expediency*
- *Updated information and methods, policies, legislation, education for conservation*
- *Engineering assistance*
- *Workshops*
- *Knowledgeable people to deal with*

Milestones, Timeline & Actions

Priority: Water Quality & Quantity Issues & Monitoring

Measurable Goal: Water Quality Monitoring Results (matrix). Reduction in Pollution.

| Milestones | Timeline | Actions |
|--|-----------------|---|
| Continue working with CSRIA on water quantity issues | On-going | Submit Conservation O & M Implementation document to Ecology. |

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| Conduct WQ monitoring in coordination with the implementation of projects | 2014 | Document changes in WQ due to implementation of BMP's. |
| Investigate current WQ and Quantity Monitoring efforts | 2014 | Consult with partnering organization to develop a database of monitoring efforts. Seek opportunities to partner on funding monitoring efforts. |
| Develop a comprehensive waterstar grass monitoring plan | 2014 2015 2015 | Convene a workgroup to develop a monitoring plan. Have a working draft of the plan out for review. Seek Funding |
| Develop a comprehensive water quality monitoring plan | 2015 2016 2016 | Convene a workgroup to develop a monitoring plan. Have a working draft of the plan out for review. Seek Funding |

Priority: Small Acreage Conservation Issues

Measurable Goal: Measurable increase in plans, programs, and related acreage and the number of people attending events/participating in programs.

| Milestones | Timeline | Actions |
|---|----------|---|
| Increase/build programs | 2014 | Increase outreach to community groups (4H, FFA, etc.) |
| Increase in the number of small farms with farm plans | 2016 | Continue offering farm planning to landowners. Offer educational programs/workshops in partnership with Cooperative Extension. Look at web based planning tool like Idaho 1 Plan. |
| Develop mortality management program | 2016 | Investigate current rules, regulations and programs regarding mortality management (dead critter disposal). |
| Incentivize farm plans | 2017 | Provide cost-share. Promote sustainable practices that also increase crop production. |

Priority: Urban Conservation Water Issues

Measurable Goal: Number of programs and participants. Increase in number of people using technology and practices to conserve water and related reduction in water use.

| Milestones | Timeline | Actions |
|---|----------|---|
| Determine the level of interest in Cities and Irrigation District in BCD programs | 2013 | Contact representatives from the Quad Cities and Benton County Irrigation Districts to educate them and assess their level of interest in urban water conservation programs (example: Heritage Gardens) |
| Develop Urban Water Efficiencies Program | 2014 | Implement HG Program. Develop incentives for landowners to use less water. Develop an irrigation water management program. |

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| Research new water efficiency technologies and train staff | 2014 | Assign staff to research new water efficiency technologies. Train staff on selected technologies as appropriate. |
| Secure cost-share funding from all available sources | 2015 | Seek grant funding. |
| Develop Certified HG Provider Program | 2015 | Work with NPS to develop criteria. |
| Look at being a native plant re-seller for the Heritage Garden Program | 2016 | Look at partnering with the NPS and Master Gardeners. |
| Develop Heritage Garden Demo Site(s) | 2017 | Seek grant funding. |

Priority: Air Quality & Wind Erosion Issues

Measurable Goal: Reduction in PM-10 emissions and exceedances.

| Milestones | Timeline | Actions |
|--|----------|---|
| Inventory Air Quality Strategies already in place | 2013 | Create a map of the County of practices being implemented according to land use |
| Information gathered presented to stakeholders, local , state and federal agencies | 2014 | Public Outreach for meeting Tour to show practices implemented Create next steps to address air quality |
| Significant Acres converted to no-till or direct seed | 2017 | Promote by using examples of operations that are working successfully |
| Market Air Quality Program to Urban Residents | 2017 | Coordinate with Benton Clean Air Agency on programs and funding |

Priority: Noxious Weed Issues

Measurable Goal: Number of acres treated. Active implementation of programs.

| Milestones | Timeline | Actions |
|--|----------|--|
| Investigate the roles and responsibilities of the Noxious Weed Control Board | 2013 | Staff to compile existing laws and county regulations. |
| Develop a plan to | 2014 | Meet with County Commissioners and Benton County |

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| partner/collaborate with the BC Noxious Weed Control Board | | Noxious Weed Control Board. |
| Develop a comprehensive plan for the control of existing and future weed infestations in Benton County | 2016 | Seek funding for plan development and implementation. Look at mapping existing conditions, prioritizing treatment areas and programs (include biological/mechanical/cultural/chemical controls). Hire a consulting firm to accomplish this goal. Evaluate consultant's progress quarterly. |
| Weed Control Incentive Program | 2017 | Secure funding to provide a financial incentive to landowners to implement noxious weed control measures. |

Priority: Wildlife Habitat & Public Access Issues

Measurable Goal: Increase in amount and quality of wildlife habitat and related acreage with plans and implementation. Increase in amount of access.

| Milestones | Timeline | Actions |
|---|----------|--|
| Investigate Seitz site on the Yakima River | 2012 | Contact landowner to determine interest in selling / leasing property. |
| Map potential public access site (both river and non-river) | 2013 | Work with County Parks Boards and WDFW to identify sites. |
| Determine BCD capacity to own land examples: maintenance/staffing | 2014 | Develop a budget. |
| Develop brochure to market cost-share to landowners | 2014 | Assign staff. |
| Obtain funding to purchase lands | On-going | Seek funding. |

Priority: District Operations

Measurable Goal: Successful district operations – example Good Governance. Increase in district capacity.

| Milestones | Timeline | Actions |
|---|----------|---|
| Submission of Annual Financial Report and Schedule 22 | Annually | Submission of Annual Financial Report and Schedule 22 |
| Develop a plan for current and future staffing needs | 2013 | Develop individual staff development/training plans. Research professional training opportunities and certifications. |
| Continue | On-going | Continue annual review of staff sharing plan with the |

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| Implementation of the Staff Sharing plan with the FCD | | Franklin CD. |
| Seek out and acquire grants to enhance district programs | On-going | Look outside the traditional grant resources. Monitor VSP Funding |
| Audits | 2013 | Contact the State Auditor Office to schedule an audit of 2009, 2010 & 2011 |

Priority: Public Outreach / Marketing/Education

Measurable Goal: Hits to website. Increase in public awareness (survey & media). Increase in number of people reached and number requesting services

| Milestones | Timeline | Actions |
|--|-----------------|--|
| Upgrade website and improve interactive services | On-going | Develop a list of needed updates. Seek funding to make website more interactive. |
| Implement education programs for students | On-going | Water on Wheel, Wheat Week, Salmon in the Classroom Look at hosting Land Judging |
| Consult with professionals to develop a marketing plan | 2013 | Identify funding sources for plan development. Develop a list of plan elements/deliverables to be in the plan. Solicit bids from qualified vendors. Select a vendor. |
| Develop a list of target audiences and messages | 2013 | Increase exposure to specialized audiences. |
| Implement Marketing Plan | 2014 | BCD staff, managers, supervisors and consultants |
| Evaluate the feasibility of statewide marketing position | 2014 | Work with WSCC & WACD |
| Recruit participants for existing and future conservation programs | 2015 | Through the implementation of the marketing plan. |
| Evaluate the Successfulness of the Marketing Plan | 2015 | Increase in public awareness (survey & media). Increase in number of people reached and number requesting services |
| Research roadway signs educating drivers about crops/cropland | 2016 | Look into the price of signage and the logistics of coordinating with the county and agricultural community. |

Staffing Needs

Staffing (Current)

Agricultural resource technician

Education / outreach

Water quality technician
Bookkeeper / Financial (shared)
Manager (shared)
Engineering (contractor)

Staffing (Proposed)

Resource Conservationist that would work on water conservation, noxious weed or where program growth is...base on workload analysis

Administrative Assistant to managers (shared with Franklin)

Public Outreach (example - contractor for outreach)

Intern position

Annual Budget Needs

Current \$500,000

Proposed \$650,000

Key Decision Makers

DOE regulators

Partnering agencies

Educators

NRCS

County Commissioners

County Landowners

Washington Conservation Districts assisting land managers with their conservation choices

