



State Legislative District #8, 16
Congressional District #4

Benton Conservation District

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Board Chair: Jack Clark

Other Accomplishments



Served 6,645 students, teaching how dams generate electricity while providing fish passage, with funding from Bonneville Power Administration.

Photo: BCD volunteer Bob Kolowitz



Engaged the community to discuss a controversial fisheries project proposal in a local habitat area prized for recreation and related businesses.

Photo: BCD staff Medora Robertson



Over 2,000 students released fish and learned about natural resource conservation at BCD's Salmon Summit. Volunteers contributed 2,894 service hours.

Photo: BCD volunteer Bob Kolowitz

2014 Feature Accomplishment: Improving water quality – one small farm at a time

RESOURCE CHALLENGE Small acreage farms seem to be an increasing trend, no matter where you are in Washington State. Five, ten, and fifteen acre tracts of land are being utilized for row crop production or to raise livestock. These small acreage farms face numerous challenges, including how to make their operations economically viable while protecting water quality. To address this issue, the Benton Conservation District developed and is implementing a Small Acreage Assistance Program.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS The Small Acreage Assistance Program provides conservation plans, technical assistance, and cost-share incentives to landowners to implement best management practices. This past year the Benton Conservation District (BCD) provided cost-share assistance to three landowners to convert inefficient irrigation systems to more efficient center pivot or solid set irrigation systems. The District has two additional projects currently under construction: one irrigation conversion and one fencing and watering facility project. In addition, the District provided technical assistance and/or conservation plans to 12 small acreage landowners.

KEY PARTNERS: WA State Conservation Commission; Benton County landowners; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service



Left: Inefficient irrigation systems can cause excess nutrients to be lost to surface and groundwater. Right: Efficient center pivot irrigation system saves water, energy, and protects water quality. Photos: BCD staff Erin Hightower

More Work to Do!

- Host two Heritage Garden workshops for landowners this fall. The workshops will provide information on how to implement low water-use landscaping.
- Benton Conservation District received a \$250,000 grant from the Dept. of Ecology's Clean Water Centennial Fund to characterize nitrate concentrations in groundwater, educate the public, and develop a preliminary plan on how to address nitrate loading.