



Natural Resources Education

Conservation districts use education and outreach to foster natural resource stewardship. Each year, district educators provide place-based lessons to tens of thousands of students, using Washington’s unique landscapes and resources as a classroom.

Background

Washington students at all grade levels must receive lessons about conservation, natural resources, and the environment with “an emphasis on solving the problems of human adaptation to the environment” (WAC 392-410-115). Today’s students—our future leaders—need these lessons to build a strong, sustainable Washington. Thanks to Washington’s conservation districts, there’s a foundation of education programs and providers already in place to meet this need.



Students at Benton Conservation District’s Salmon Summit—part of Salmon in the Classroom—watch a biologist prepare salmon for tagging and release.

Solution

Across the state, conservation districts offer education programs that connect students and teachers to the natural world. Franklin Conservation District, in southeast Washington, designed and administers two programs that reach beyond district borders, helping teachers meet Washington State Science Learning Standards:

- **Wheat Week:** Series of lessons educating 4th and 5th graders about water, soil, watersheds, energy, systems, and wheat. With 16 educators across the state, Wheat Week is available to any school in Washington.
- **Water on Wheels:** Hands-on lessons for K-6 (public and private) throughout eastern Washington that explore water conservation, habitats, soil, water cycle, stormwater, watersheds, and more.

Conservation districts also provide cooperative educational programs that address science standards, including:

- **Salmon in the Classroom:** Classrooms receive salmon eggs, watch them hatch, raise salmon fry, then

Quick Facts:

- In the 2014-15 school year alone, *Water on Wheels* reached 19,989 students, and *Wheat Week* reached 19,859.
- Programs align with Washington State Science Learning Standards.
- Both *Wheat Week* and *Water on Wheels* can be used to help jurisdictions meet stormwater needs.

release them into a local river or stream. The program also includes lessons on salmon anatomy, lifecycles, and their historic and cultural significance to Washington State. Established by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, several conservation districts sponsor this program, including Franklin, Benton, South Yakima, and Grant County.

Program highlights...

Wheat Week:

- Employs 16 educators across the state, making Wheat Week available to any school in Washington.
- Reached over 19,800 students during the 2014-15 school year, and have a goal to reach even more in 2015-16.
- With funding from the Tri-Cities and Asotin County, educators send students home with stormwater flyers and magnets for their parents, helping those jurisdictions meet their stormwater outreach requirements.
- Sponsored by the Washington Grain Commission, Washington State Conservation Commission, Tri-State Seed, and several local jurisdictions and conservation districts.



"After seeing this instruction for several years, I think it has just become better and more focused each year. Vocabulary, visuals, hands-on experiences, discussion, and collaboration make this so exciting and engaging."

- Beth Austin, 4th grade teacher, Livingston Elementary



"With additional funding we could reach thousands and thousands more students. Teachers love the program."

- Kara Kaelber, Education Director, Franklin Conservation District

Water on Wheels:

- All lessons are grade-level appropriate and compliment Full Option Science System (FOSS) and Science & Technology Concepts (STC) resources.
- Reached over 19,900 students during the 2014-15 school year, and hope to exceed that number in 2015-16.
- Received a Department of Ecology grant in 2014 to increase the program across eastern Washington and include a stormwater component to each lesson.
- Funded by the Washington State Conservation Commission, Washington Grain Commission, Washington Potato Commission, Washington State Department of Ecology, and several local jurisdictions and conservation districts.

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