



Other Accomplishments

Administrative Support to Partner Organizations

The Benton Conservation District recently signed an MOU to provide administrative support to the Benton County Noxious Weed Control Board. The Weed Board had no active members or management staff and was in peril of being deactivated by the County. The BCD Board recognizing the importance of having a functioning weed board offered to assist by having their management team and financial staff provide administrative support to the organization.

BCD Assists NRCS with CRP

The Benton Conservation District staff conducted field inspections and conservation plans on 120 CRP contracts. The inspections and subsequent plans were to ensure that the plant species and densities met certification criteria for re-enrollment into CRP.



2013 Feature Accomplishment

On-farm Water and Energy Conservation Projects Provide Multiple Resource Benefits

Resource Challenge

Water availability for new out-of-stream uses is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain. Court rulings regarding Columbia River and Snake River dam operations have reduced water availability for power production. Providing efficient irrigation saves both water and energy. However, Washington water law has not been conducive to water conservation.

Project Summary and Results

During the 2012 irrigation season the Benton Conservation District with funding from the Washington State Conservation Commission provided cost-share funding to implement a water and energy conservation program. 14,625 acres of Irrigation Water Management was implemented which provided a water savings of approximately 1,985,636,250 gallons or 6,094 acre-feet. Benton Conservation District has been working with the Department of Ecology and the Columbia Snake River Irrigators Association to implement a program that allows agricultural producers to utilize half of the saved water on additional lands while leaving half of the saved water to remain in-stream for fish and wildlife benefits.

The Benton Conservation District also provided cost share funds to install a 1,000 horse-power variable frequency drive (VFD) motor on a Columbia River pump station. VFD motors allow for more precise irrigation saving water and reducing energy consumption and thus the need to build more power plants. The new VFD will annually save 646,000 kWh.

Key Project Partners – Washington State Conservation Commission, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Benton REA, SC RC&D.

Variable Frequency Drive Project
Benton County, WA



Contact Information

Mark Nielson, District Manager
mark-nielson@conservewa.net
415 Wine Country Road
Prosser, WA 99350
(509) 786-1923 ext. 3
www.bentoncd.org

Board of Supervisors:

Jack Clark, Chair
Dan Downs, Vice-Chair
Mike Sackschewsky, Auditor
Michael Crowder, Member
Nicole Berg, Member

More Work To Do

A portion of Benton County was included within the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area (GWMA). The Benton County Commissioners ultimately decided that this particular process was not in the best interest of Benton County. However, they recognized the importance of implementing a groundwater program within the county. Benton Conservation District will be working with the County and the local Health District to develop a groundwater program with the emphasis on nitrate. Many of the District's current programs (efficient irrigation, nutrient management, small acreage farms, etc.) already result in the reduction of nitrate into the groundwater.