2015 Feature Accomplishment: Yakima River shoreline stabilization project, Prosser

RESOURCE CHALLENGE  Bank erosion is a common problem along the Yakima River and can contribute to poor water quality by allowing soil into the river. Landowners become alarmed as the river seems to eat away at their valuable property. One of these landowners was aware of Benton Conservation District’s agricultural programs and asked if the district could also help with residential property. A previous riparian planting at this site was partially washed out during a highly unusual flood event, so bank erosion continued.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS  Benton Conservation District worked with landowners to design 500 feet of shoreline stabilization that included planting over 1,200 native shrubs and trees while preserving river views from the houses. Other components included stabilizing an upland slope with native bunch grasses and converting lawn into native plantings that will require less irrigation water and will attract wildlife. This project has great demonstration value as it is visible from the bridge into the county seat. Landowner Mrs. Martinez looks forward to giving tours of the project. She said with enthusiasm, “I’ll tell everybody Benton Conservation District is great to work with!”

KEY PARTNERS:  Nancy Martinez; Brad Klingele; Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group

More Work to Do!

• The district is building a program designed to help operators of small farms plan and implement conservation practices. The program will also include a new lecture series.

• The drought has caused massive growth of water stargrass, an aquatic weed, in the Yakima River. Benton Conservation District will be submitting a funding request to the Department of Ecology to look at potential management actions.