



Benton Conservation District

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Legislative District: 8, 16 Congressional District: 4

Other Accomplishments



Alayne Blicke of Horses for Clean Water led this year's Small Farms Workshop about Firewise™ and pasture and manure management. Photo by Melissa Pierce



Benton County Voluntary Stewardship Program funding was used to install water control structures at Mast Farms to increase floodplain functionality. Photo by Bob Montgomery, Anchor QEA



Expanded Heritage Garden program into Yakima County thanks to funding provided by Ecology and the Municipal Subgroup of the YBIP. Photo by Ann Autrey

2019 FEATURE ACCOMPLISHMENT

A Champion for Working Lands and Working Waters

Resource Challenge

The public does not understand the connection between local dams, agriculture, salmon, and local quality of life. The system of dams provides irrigation water, renewable power, efficient barge transportation, fish passage, and flood control. Benton County's \$1.5 billion agriculture and food processing industry, families, and other businesses rely on these dams to generate 80 percent of the electricity used in the County. Without adequate information residents cannot best manage local natural resources.

Project Summary and Results

Benton Conservation District (BCD) rallied over 50 organizations to educate the public at an event called RiverFest: Our Rivers, Our Way of Life. BCD facilitated the event, bringing leadership, technical expertise, and partnerships to the lengthy process of planning, coordination, and communication. Power utilities, agricultural commodity groups, and ports participated. BCD recruited other agencies, non-profit and conservation groups, businesses, recreationists, and volunteers. Over 3,000 people attended, learning how wisely managed rivers can become working waters, providing multiple benefits.



A young RiverFest attendee shows off his built transmission tower in front of a renewable energy exhibit. Photo by Bonneville Power Administration

Key Partners

Pasco Chamber of Commerce; Washington Grain Commission, Idaho Wheat; Oregon Wheat; Washington Potato Commission; Benton and Franklin PUD; Ports (Whitman, Pasco, Benton, Walla Walla); Columbia-Snake River Irrigators; Lamb Weston; Shaver Tugboat



A wheat barge approaches a dam's boat lock from downstream. Photo by Tidewater Barge Lines

Priorities for 2020...

- ▶ Implement the Badger Coulee Groundwater Nitrate Centennial Grant.
- ▶ Continue working with the Department of Ecology's Air Quality Division to address PM10.
- ▶ Continue working with landowners to develop conservation plans and best management practices for the Voluntary Stewardship Program.