



FY2021 (7/1/20 – 6/30/21) Annual Work Plan Benton Conservation District

For More Information Contact: Mark Nielson, (509) 736-6000, mark-nielson@conservewa.net



Mission of the Benton Conservation District

- *The Mission of the Benton Conservation District is to facilitate responsible stewardship of the land and resources for the residents of Benton County through the application and administration of various volunteer and cooperative partnership programs using all available funding sources.*

Natural Resource Priorities

- Water Quality / Quantity Issues / Monitoring & Urban Water Conservation Issues
 - **Natural resource priority description:** *Water is a valuable resource in Washington. Using our resources wisely will help us fill the needs of people, industries, businesses and farms, while also keeping fish and other aquatic life alive and well. Across the state these water users have diverse needs and goals we must find a way to share limited, fluctuating supplies. Water conservation—using water efficiently and avoiding waste—is fundamental to ensuring water availability in the future. In order to protect our water supply everyone can practice conservation. In our businesses, schools, and homes, using water more efficiently will lessen the effects of limited water supply. ~ [ECY](#)*

Much of the water in the Rock Glade Watershed and the Alkli-Squilchuck Watershed has already been spoken for. Increased demands from population growth, declining groundwater levels, and impacts from climate change are adding to the challenge of finding new water supplies in WRIA 31 and 40, especially during the summer months. The Yakima River basin consists of three Water Resource Inventory areas, the Lower Yakima (WRIA 37), Upper Yakima (WRIA 39) and Naches (WRIA 38). Surface waters in the Yakima Basin are currently under adjudication and thus unavailable for new appropriations. Adjudications in an area are an indication that most if not all of the available water has already been allocated to existing uses. ~ [ECY](#)

Over 2,000 people in the Lower Yakima Valley GWMA area are exposed to nitrate over the maximum contaminant level (MCL) through their drinking water. While not all groundwater supplies have been impacted, many residents rely on private wells that are in the most vulnerable portions of the aquifer. Approximately 12% of domestic well users are exposed to nitrate levels in their drinking water that exceed the health-based standard of 10 mg/L. Water quality issues related to groundwater in the Lower Yakima River can impact surface water. The Lower Yakima River is listed on the Department of Ecology's 303(d) list for violations of numerous Water Quality Standards (WQS). Listings of pH and Dissolved Oxygen are related directly to surface water nutrient levels and the growth and decay of aquatic organisms in surface waters. Ecology is required to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) or action plans to obtain future compliance with WQS related to surface water. Connection between surface water and groundwater exists, and there is a potential for nutrients to move from ground to surface waters. ~ [ECY](#)

- **Is this a state and or regional natural resource priority?** YES (See Priority Description Above and Source Data below)
- **Source of data:** BCD's Five Year Plan, Tri-Cities Urban Area Landscape Irrigation Plan, 2006, ECY Publication 11-11-035, ECY Publication 11-11-041, ECY Publication 11-11-044, WRIA 31 Plan, WRIA 37 Plan, ECY Publication 10-10-009 and ECY Publication 96-17, Benton County Voluntary Stewardship Plan, Benton County Groundwater Community Action Plan.
- **Other entities:** Columbia Snake River Irrigators Association, Benton County, NRCS, Benton Franklin Health District

- Small Acreage Conservation Issues
 - **Natural resource priority description:** *Small acreage landowners face the same water quality and water conservation issues that their large-scale agricultural counterparts do without the benefit of robust government funding programs to address natural resource issues that arise from keeping livestock and growing crops.*
 - **Is this a state and or regional natural resource priority?** YES (See Priority Description Above and Source Data below)
 - **Source of data:** WRIA 31 Plan, WRIA 37 Plan, Benton CD's 5 Year Plan, Site Specific Inventories
 - **Other entities:** Benton County, Cooperative Extension, Benton Franklin Health District

- Air Quality & Wind Erosion Issues
 - **Natural resource priority description:** *Natural resource priority description: During the late 1980s and early 1990s a large number of exceedances of the 24-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) from particulate matter ten microns or less (PM10) were recorded in Spokane, Kennewick, and Wallula, Washington. An examination showed a close correlation to high wind events. The Kennewick monitor has had 7 exceedances in the last five years. The exceedances are primarily attributable to activity on agricultural fields, although other sources may contribute. If any area exceeds pollution concentrations defined by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards or NAAQS more frequently than is permitted by the rule, the area is put into "non-attainment". The non-attainment status has **significant planning** and **possibly economic impacts** to that area. Since the policy does require that dust originating from man-made sources be controlled according to a best practice, documenting that essentially "nothing more could have been done" to prevent the exceedances avoids a determination of non-attainment. ~ [BCAA](#)*
 - **Is this a state and or regional natural resource priority?** YES (See Priority Description Above and Source Data below)
 - **Source of data:** WRIA 31 Plan, WRIA 37 Plan, Benton CD's 5 Year Plan and Annual Plan of Work, Site Specific Inventories, ECY Air Quality Monitoring Stations, Columbia Plateau PM10 Project Research, WSU, USDA-ARS, FSA, Benton County Voluntary Stewardship Plan
 - **Other entities:** Benton Clean Air Authority, ECY, NRCS

- Noxious Weed Issues
 - **Natural resource priority description:** *'Noxious weed' is the traditional, legal term for invasive, non-native plants that are so aggressive they harm our local ecosystems or disrupt agricultural production. These plants crowd out the native species that fish and wildlife depend on. They also cost farmers, orchardists and ranchers millions of dollars in control efforts and lost production – and that can make the food we buy more expensive. So while ordinary weeds may be annoying, noxious weeds are a genuine threat to the natural resources, ecology and economy of our state.~ [Washington State NWCB](#)*
 - **Is this a state and or regional natural resource priority?** YES (See Priority Description Above and Source Data below)
 - **Source of data:** Benton County Weed Board, Washington State Weed Board, local inventories, BCD Five Year Plan, Benton County Voluntary Stewardship Plan
 - **Other entities:** Benton County Noxious Weed Control Board

- Wildlife Habitat & Public Access Issues
 - **Natural resource priority description:** *Shoreline vegetation conservation is a critical component when considering public access to Benton County's Shorelines. The County has recently completed its Shoreline Master Plan. The Shoreline Master Plan will*

protect environmental resources of Benton County shorelines; promote public access and enjoyment opportunities and plan for water-dependent uses. ~ [ECY](#)

Shrubsteppe communities form the iconic, western landscape of open sagebrush plains, rim rock, and tumbleweeds. Described as vegetation communities consisting of one or more layers of perennial grass with a discontinuous over story layer of shrubs, shrubsteppe historically dominated the landscape in eastern Washington. Some of the many species of wildlife that inhabit shrubsteppe can only be found in these semi-arid communities. Today, less than 50% of Washington's historic shrubsteppe remains and much of it is degraded, fragmented, and/or isolated from other similar habitats. Conversion to cropland has resulted in the greatest loss of shrubsteppe in Washington, leading to a fragmented landscape and a differentially high loss of deep-soil communities. Across the Intermountain West, shrubsteppe communities have been lost or degraded by conversion to cropland, extensive energy extraction, and alteration of the vegetation through over-grazing, invasion by exotic plants and changes in fire frequency. ~ [WDFW](#)

Pollinators are essential to our environment. The ecological service they provide is necessary for the reproduction of nearly 70 percent of the world's flowering plants, including more than two-thirds of the world's crop species. The United States alone grows more than one hundred crops that either need or benefit from pollinators, and the economic value of these native pollinators is estimated at \$3 billion per year in the U.S. Beyond agriculture, pollinators are keystone species in most terrestrial ecosystems. Fruits and seeds derived from insect pollination are a major part of the diet of approximately 25 percent of all birds, and of mammals ranging from red-backed voles to grizzly bears. In many places, the essential service of pollination is at risk from habitat loss, pesticide use, and introduced diseases. ~ [Xerces](#)

- **Is this a state and or regional natural resource priority?** YES (See Priority Description Above and Source Data below)
- **Source of data:** WRIA 31 Plan, WRIA 37 Plan, Benton CD's 5 Year Plan, Site Specific Inventories, Inadequate Habitat for Wildlife in areas adjacent to cropland that have been degraded per BCD's Five Year Plan and as described in WDFW's Management Recommendations for Washington's Priority Species – Volume IV, 2004 and MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WASHINGTON'S PRIORITY HABITATS: Managing Shrub-steppe in Developing Landscapes, 2011, Benton County Shorelines Management Plan, Benton County Voluntary Stewardship Plan.
- **Other entities:** Benton County Parks Board, Xerces, NRCS

Washington Conservation Districts assisting land managers with their conservation choices



FY2021 (7/1/20 – 6/30/21) Annual Work Plan BENTON Conservation District



Natural Resource Priority Program Area: Water Quality / Quantity Issues / Monitoring & Urban Water Conservation

Goal(s): By 2022 have a comprehensive water quality monitoring program providing results to target conservation programs. Implementation of a water stargrass management plan. Demonstrated increase in conservation planning and systems implemented for water resources. Program recognized by regulatory agencies. Create an urban water efficiencies program in cooperation with the cities and irrigation districts. Demonstrated increase in number of people using technology and practices to conserve water and related reduction in water use.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Funding Source(s): See Notes Section

Activities for FY2021	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Implement Clean Water Centennial Grant for Benton County Groundwater Nitrates: Badger Coulee - WQC-2020-Bent-CD-00080	7/20 – 6/21	Heather / Rachel / Marcie / Melissa	125	\$40,000	Rates & Charges / ECY / Benton Co./ BFHD
Implement the Benton County Voluntary Stewardship Program – K2003	7/20 – 6/21	Mark / Melissa / Heather / Matt	150	\$47,500	Rates & Charges / WSCC
Continue working with Columbia Snake River Irrigators Association on water quantity issues	7/20 – 6/21	Mark	2.5	\$1,000	Rates & Charges
Submit implementation documentation to Ecology as part of producers participating in the Voluntary Regional Agreement	7/20 – 6/21	Mark	2.5	\$1,000	Rates & Charges
Conduct temperature monitoring for MCF on Yakima Delta – RCO Grant 18-2109	7/20 – 10/20	Marcie / Mark / Diver	12	\$15,000	MCF
Implement Clean Water Centennial Grant for Lower Yakima River Water Quality, Nutrient and Aquatic Vegetation Dynamics – WQC-2018-BentCD-00065	7/20 – 2/21	Marcie / Rachel	40	\$28,500	ECY / USGS

Implement Yakima Basin Integrated Plan Grant for Lower Yakima River Thermal Refuge and Water Recharge Study – WRYBIP-VER1-BentCD-00004	7/20 – 12/20	Marcie / Mark / Matt	65	\$30,000	ECY / USGS / YN
Implement Lower Yakima River Thermal Refuge – WRYBIP-1921-BentCD-00011	7/20 – 6/21	Marcie / Mark / Matt	35	\$27,000	ECY / MCF / YN
Work to secure funding to monitor and improve the water quality in the streams and rivers that are of concern	7/20 – 6/21	All Staff	3	\$1,000	Seeking Funding
Implement Commercial Livestock Nutrient Management Program	7/20 – 6/21	Melissa	10	\$2,500	WSCC
Cost-share on Irrigation Conversions, Fish Screens, Pond Linings, Fencing and Wildlife Habitat	7/20 – 6/21	Staff	45	\$115,000	WSCC / Rates & Charges
Seek funding to Implement variable speed drive cost-share program in the irrigated acres of Benton County	7/20 – 6/21	Staff / Mark	3	\$1,000	Rates & Charges
Seek additional funding for the installation of fish screens, livestock fencing, riparian buffers and shoreline stabilization projects	7/20 – 6/21	Marcie / Rachel / Melissa	4	\$1,000	Seeking Funding
Implement Heritage Garden Program	7/20 – 6/21	Heather / Donna	100	\$33,500	WSCC / Rates & Charges
Implement YC Heritage Garden Program – WRYBIP-00012 HG	7/20 – 6/21	Heather / Ann	110	\$44,000	ECY / YBIP
Seek funding for urban irrigation water management program	7/20 – 6/21	Mark / Heather / Staff	3	\$1,000	Seeking Funding
Research new water efficiency technologies.	7/20 – 6/21	Mark / Heather / Melissa	3	\$1,000	Rates & Charges

Natural Resource Priority Program Area: Small Acreage Conservation Issues

Goal(s): Increase in conservation plans, programs, and related acreage to address small acreage usage.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Funding Source(s): See Notes Section

Activities for FY2021	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Implement the District's Small Acreage Livestock Program	7/20 – 6/21	Melissa	100	\$28,000	WSCC
Work with Ecology, Benton Franklin Health Department and WSDA to explore the options for livestock mortality management on small acreage parcels.	7/20 – 6/21	Heather / Melissa	3	\$1,000	WSCC
Seek funding to purchase pasture aerator, small no-till drill and small manure spreader	7/20 – 6/21	Heather / Staff	3	\$1,000	Seeking Funding

Natural Resource Priority Program Area: Air Quality & Wind Erosion Issues

Goal(s): Demonstrated reduction in PM-10 emissions and exceedances. Increase in acreage of air quality practices and systems.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Funding Source(s): See Notes Section

Activities for FY2021	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Implement Ecology's Air Quality Grant for expiring CRP and Irrigated Agriculture – OTGP-2020-BentCD-00028	7/20 – 6/21	Heather / Matt / Melissa	57	\$16,000	ECY PNA Funds
Work with Benton Clean Air and ECY to install monitoring stations	7/20 – 6/21	Mark / Heather	3	\$1,000	Rates & Charges
Participate on High Wind Fugitive Dust Workgroup	7/20 – 6/21	Heather	3	\$1,000	Rates & Charges
Work with Devin and Garrett Moon on the Dryland Water Retention Study	7/20 – 6/21	Melissa / Mark	3	\$1,000	Rates & Charges

Look for funding to support the use of No-till Equipment in the Horse Heaven Hills	7/20 – 6/21	Staff	3	\$1,000	Seeking Funding
Seek funding/collaboration to provide Firewise Assessments	7/20 – 6/21	Melissa	3.5	\$1,000	Rates & Charges

Natural Resource Priority Program Area: Noxious Weed Issues

Goal(s): Demonstrated increase in numbers of acres treated for noxious weed control.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Funding Source(s): See Notes Section

Activities for FY2021	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Participate in the Tumbleweed Mitigation/Control Task Force	7/20 – 6/21	Heather / Melissa	3	\$1,000	Rates & Charges
Seek Funding in partnership with the BCNWCB to map existing weed infestations and prioritize treatment areas and programs (include biological, mechanical, cultural and chemical controls)	7/20 – 6/21	Mark / Heather	3	\$1,000	Rates & Charges

Natural Resource Priority Program Area: Wildlife Habitat & Public Access Issues

Goal(s): Demonstrated increase in amount and quality of wildlife habitat and related acreage with plans and implementation & increase in amount of access.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Funding Source(s): See Notes Section

Activities for FY2021	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Providing planting plans and seeding recommendation for riparian and upland sites per landowner requests	7/20 – 6/21	Heather / Mark / Melissa / Matt	10	\$5,000	WSCC

Provide pollinator habitat, wildlife habitat and insectary planting plans upon request	7/20 – 6/21	Heather / Mark / Melissa / Matt	3	\$1,000	WSCC
Provide engineering and technical assistance for streambank stabilization and riparian restoration projects that improve fish habitat and water quality	7/20 – 6/21	Rachel	6	\$5,000	WSCC / Grants
Seek funding for a pilot project for large scale removal of Water Stargrass through dredging or chemical applications	7/20 – 6/21	Staff	3	\$1,000	Rates & Charges
Identify additional access sites for public access on the Yakima River. Seek funding for land purchase or easements in partnership with BC, WDFW and City Parks Boards	7/20 – 6/21	Mark / Board	3	\$1,000	Rates & Charges

District Program Area: Information – Education & District Operations Priorities

Goal(s): Demonstrated increase in district capacity and successful district operations. Administer a successful Voluntary Stewardship Program (funding dependent). Lead the state in the development and implementation of a statewide marketing and public outreach plan. Demonstrated increase in people number of people reached and number asking for services. Demonstrated increase in public awareness (survey & media).

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: To Be Determined Based on Actual Grant Funding Levels

Funding Source(s): See Notes Section

Activities for FY2021	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding	Notes
Implement BCD Education & Outreach Program Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salmon in the Classroom Program • Salmon Power • River Fest Coordination • Farm Fair, Kids Fishing Day, etc. • Junior Board Member Program • Web Based Media / Social Marketing • Print Media (Press Releases / News Articles) • Signage & Brand Development • Conservationist of the Year Award Program, etc. • Virtual Tour(s) and Landowner Testimonials 	7/20 – 6/21	Rachel / Medora / Matt	320	\$95,000	WSCC / Rates & Charges / Grants
Implement successful programs utilized by other agencies (Wheat Week / Stormwater Education)	7/20 – 6/21	Kara	80	\$30,000	WWC / Quad Cities / Rates & Charges
Promote Farmland Preservation & Seek Funding for Conservation Easements	7/20 – 6/21	Mark / Melissa	3	\$1,000	Rates & Charges
Keep County Commissioners apprised of activities funded through Rates & Charges.	7/20 – 6/21	Mark / Heather / Board	10	\$4,000	Rates & Charges
Increase expertise in accounting procedures and software	7/20 – 6/21	Mark / Heather / Bookkeeper	3	\$1,000	WSCC / Rates & Charges

Administer funds, prepare required reports, maintain financial records, manage district activities and personnel	7/20 – 6/21	Mark / Heather / Bookkeeper	260	\$97,135	Grants / Rates & Charges
Continue to update the District's capital asset list	7/20 – 6/21	Staff	1	\$330	Rates & Charges
Attend WACD Annual Meeting, WADE Training, WACD Legislative Days, NACD Annual Meeting	Numerous	Board / Staff	12	\$5,000	WSCC
Look for land to purchase and build BCD Office	7/20 – 6/21	Mark / Heather / Board	3	\$1,000	Rates & Charges

FY2021 Annual Budget

BENTON Conservation District

	Proposed
Income	
3340333 · Non-Competitive Grants/WSCC	110,000
3370710 · District Rates & Charges from County	267,000
3370900 · Intergovernmental Service Revenue	20,000
3370200 · Interlocal Grant-Local Govern.	130,000
3611110 · Checking Interest	20
3611150 · Interest-WA Investment Pool	5,000
3611160 · Money Market Interest	150
3621000 · Equipment Rental Income	150
3671100 · Private Grants, Gift Donations	20,000
3699010 · Miscellaneous Revenue	1,000
Ecology Grants	250,000
Total Income	803,320
Expense	
5531110 · Salaries & Wages	180,000
5531120 · Personnel Benefits	28,000
5531142 · Election Advertising	250
5531240 · Cost/Share Programs	90,000
5531831 · Office & Operating Supplies	25,000
5531832 · Fuel	2,500
5531835 · Tools & Equipment	7,500
5531841 · Professional Services	200,000
5531842 · Communication	5,000
5531843 · Travel	10,000
5531844 · Advertising	600
5531845 · Rentals & Leases	25,000
5531846 · Insurance	6,000
5531847 · Utilities	1,200
5531848 · Repairs & Maintenance	1,500
5531849 · Miscellaneous	10,000
5531851 · Intergovernmental Prof Services	130,000
5810010 · Other Non-expenditures	50
Total Expense	722,600