



# 5-Year Plan (2017 to 2022) BENTON Conservation District

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## Organization of the Benton Conservation District

A political subdivision of the State of Washington – authorities, powers and structure contained in RCW 89.08.

- *Benton Conservation District was founded in 1942.*

## Function of the Benton Conservation District

*To make available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.*

## We Serve & Why

*To facilitate responsible stewardship of the land and its resources for and by the residents of our county/district*

## 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.*

## Values of the Benton Conservation District

- *Conservation of all natural resources*
- *Voluntary cooperation*
- *Responsible and efficient use of public funds*
- *Partnerships*
- *Economic viability*
- *Open communication*
- *Information sharing*
- *Integrity*
- *Wise land use*
- *Public awareness of our goals and objectives*
- *Provide active leadership*
- *Professionalism*
- *Proactive in problem solving*
- *Conservation/Stewardship education*
- *Customer service*

## Natural Resource Data & Information:

Land Use Classifications	No. of Parcels	No. of Acres
Rangeland	710	81,351
Dryland Agriculture	990	303,095
Irrigated Agriculture	2,477	273,370
Non-Ag Rural	13,483	50,769
Urban	51,410	49,854
Totals	69,070	758,439

**Criteria for Selecting Conservation Priorities:**

- Must meet a need
- Must address a Benton County resource concern
- Would have the greatest impact on conservation needs in the districts
- Would have technical assistance and financial support to address
- Would provide quantifiable benefit
- Would be achievable, maintainable, sustainable
- Should have public and/or private support
- Should have partner potential
- Something that is not being offered by other agencies or organizations
- Maximize conservation benefit for dollars spent

**Priority Natural Resource Conservation Needs & Geographic Areas, Measures of Success and Goals:**

- *Water Quality & Quantity Issues:* *Irrigated Lands – Urban & Ag – Yakima River Basin & Horse Heaven Hills*
- *Small Acreage Conservation Issues:* *Located Throughout the District*
- *Urban Water Conservation Issues:* *Urban Areas*
- *Air Quality & Wind Erosion Issues:* *Disturbed Lands and Dryland*
- *Public Outreach / Marketing/Education:* *Located Throughout the District*
- *Monitoring & Project Implementation:* *Located Throughout the District*
- *Noxious Weed Issues:* *Located Throughout the District*
- *Wildlife Habitat:* *Located Throughout the District*
- *Public Access Issues:* *Fringe of Irrigated Lands, Yakima River*
- *Farmland Preservation:* *Located Throughout the District*
- *District Operations:* *Located Throughout the District*

<b>Natural Resource Conservation Need</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>	<b>Goal (by 2022)</b>
Water Quality & Quantity Issues & Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Water Quality monitoring results</li> <li>▪ Reduction in pollution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ By 2022 have a comprehensive water quality monitoring program providing results to target conservation programs</li> <li>▪ Implementation of a aquatic vegetation management plan</li> <li>▪ Demonstrated increase in conservation planning and systems implemented for water resources</li> <li>▪ Program recognized by regulatory agencies</li> </ul>
Small Acreage Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measurable increase in plans, programs, and related acreage</li> <li>▪ Number of people attending events &amp; served</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase in conservation plans, programs, and related acreage to address small acreage usage.</li> </ul>
Urban Water Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of programs and participants</li> <li>▪ Increase in number of people using technology and practices to conserve water and related reduction in water use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create an urban water efficiencies program in cooperation with the cities and irrigation districts</li> <li>▪ Demonstrated increase in number of people using technology and practices to conserve water and</li> </ul>

		related reduction in water use
Air Quality & Wind Erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduction in PM-10 emissions and exceedances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrated reduction in PM-10 emissions and exceedances</li> <li>▪ Increase in acreage of air quality practices and systems.</li> </ul>
Noxious & Other Weed Issues (terrestrial & aquatic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of referrals to BCNWCB</li> <li>▪ Active implementation of programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrated increase in referrals, monitoring efforts, assist BCNWCB in securing funding to address noxious weed issues.</li> </ul>
Wildlife Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase in amount and quality of wildlife habitat and related acreage with plans and implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrated increase in amount and quality of wildlife habitat and related acreage with plans and implementation</li> </ul>
Public Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase in amount of investigations for developing public access to the Yakima River</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrated increase in amount of investigations for developing public access to the Yakima River</li> </ul>

**Information – Education & District Operations Priorities, Measures of Success, and Goals:**

District Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Successful district operations – example District Accountability and Performance Program</li> <li>▪ Increase in district capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrated increase in district capacity and successful district operations</li> <li>▪ Administer a successful Voluntary Stewardship Program (funding dependent)</li> </ul>
Public Outreach / Marketing/Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hits to website</li> <li>▪ Facebook Likes</li> <li>▪ Increase in number of volunteer hours</li> <li>▪ Increase in public awareness (survey &amp; media)</li> <li>▪ Increase in number of people reached and number requesting services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to participate in the WSCC Communications Partnerships and Outreach Committee</li> <li>▪ Demonstrated increase in people reached and requesting services</li> <li>▪ Demonstrated increase in public awareness (survey &amp; media)</li> </ul>

**Land Manager Needs**

- *Assistance without whole farm planning requirement*
- *Conservation issues needing addressed*
- *Sound professional, up-to-date technical assistance and guidance to sources of information*
- *Financial assistance*
- *Advocacy*
- *Rental equipment – new technology or limited availability*
- *Input from staff – on-site*
- *Permitting assistance*
- *Confidentiality*
- *Expediency*
- *Updated information and methods, policies, legislation, education for conservation*
- *Engineering assistance*
- *Workshops*
- *Knowledgeable people to deal with*

## Milestones, Timeline & Actions

**Priority:** Water Quality & Quantity & Monitoring

**Measurable Goal:** Water Quality Monitoring Results Reduction in Pollution.

Milestones	Timeline	Actions
Continue working with CSRIA on water quantity issues	On-going	Certify Conservation O & M Implementation for producers
Develop a comprehensive aquatic vegetation monitoring plan	2019	Develop a comprehensive aquatic vegetation monitoring plan
Conduct WQ monitoring in coordination with the implementation of projects	2022	Monitor WQ due to in conjunction with project implementation
Coordinate current WQ and Quantity Monitoring efforts	2022	Consult with partners on monitoring efforts. Seek opportunities to partner on funding monitoring efforts

**Priority:** Small Acreage Conservation

**Measurable Goal:** Measurable increase in plans, programs, and related acreage and the number of people attending events/participating in programs.

Milestones	Timeline	Actions
Increase/build programs	2018	Increase outreach to community groups (4H, FFA, etc.)
Increase in the number of small farms with farm plans	2019	Continue offering farm planning to landowners Offer educational programs/workshops in partnership with Cooperative Extension Look at web based planning tool like Idaho 1 Plan
Develop mortality management program	2020	Investigate current rules, regulations and programs regarding mortality management (dead critter disposal)
Incentivize farm plans	2021	Provide cost-share. Promote sustainable practices that also increase crop production

**Priority:** Urban Water Conservation

**Measurable Goal:** Number of programs and participants. Increase in number of people using technology and practices to conserve water and related reduction in water use.

Milestones	Timeline	Actions
Continue to educate Cities and Irrigation District in BCD programs	2018	Contact representatives from the Quad Cities and Benton County Irrigation Districts to educate them and assess their level of interest in urban water conservation programs (example: Heritage Gardens)

Develop/Implement Urban Water Efficiencies Program	2019	Implement Heritage Garden Program Develop incentives for landowners to use less water Develop an irrigation water management program
Research new water efficiency technologies and train staff	2019	Research new water efficiency technologies Train staff on selected technologies as appropriate
Secure cost-share funding from all available sources	2019	Seek grant funding
Develop Certified HG Provider Program	2020	Work with the Columbia Basin Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society to develop criteria

**Priority:** Air Quality & Wind Erosion

**Measurable Goal:** Reduction in PM-10 emissions and exceedances.

Milestones	Timeline	Actions
Inventory Air Quality Strategies already in place	2017	Create a map of the County of practices being implemented according to land use
Seek support for CRP and other programs that reduce PM10 emissions	2018	Work with ECY, USDA to secure funding for CRP and other programs that have successfully shown reductions in PM10 emissions
Significant Acres converted to/utilizing no-till, direct seed, stripper header, deep furrow conservation drill	2020	Promote by using examples of operations that are working successfully
Market Air Quality Program to Urban Residents	2022	Coordinate with Benton Clean Air Agency on programs and funding

**Priority:** Noxious & Other Weed Issues

**Measurable Goal:** Number of acres treated. Active implementation of programs.

Milestones	Timeline	Actions
Continue to partner/collaborate with the BC Noxious Weed Control Board	2017	Continue to refer landowners to the BCNWCB for technical assistance

Critical Area Plantings / Native Grass Seedings	On-going	Continue to work with private landowners in rural and urban interface areas to implement BMP's like Critical Area Plantings that support native vegetation and reduce weed species
Weed Control Incentive Program	2020	Assist BCNWCB in securing funding to provide a financial incentive to landowners to implement noxious weed control measures
Encourage weed control in riparian and wildlife corridors	2021	Look at possibly expanding partnership with BC Juvenile Detention Program for low cost weed control

**Priority:** Wildlife Habitat

**Measurable Goal:** Increase in amount and quality of wildlife habitat and related acreage with plans and implementation.

Milestones	Timeline	Actions
Develop Upland Wildlife Habitat brochure to market implementation assistance and/or cost-share to landowners	2018	Implement as part of the Voluntary Stewardship Program
Develop Pollinator Habitat brochure to market implementation assistance and/or cost-share to landowners	2018	Implement as part of the Voluntary Stewardship Program
Develop Riparian Habitat brochure to market implementation assistance and/or cost-share to landowners	2018	Implement as part of the Voluntary Stewardship Program
Develop Annual Certification Program	2022	Annually certify the continued implementation/maintenance of practices that benefit wildlife at the request of landowners. Implement as part of the Voluntary Stewardship Program and/or as a standalone program

**Priority:** Public Access Issues

**Measurable Goal:** Increase in the amount of access to the Yakima River.

Milestones	Timeline	Actions
Investigate Marshall site on the Yakima River	2017	Contact landowner to determine interest in selling / leasing property

Map potential public access sites (both river and non-river)	2018	Work with County Parks Boards and WDFW to identify sites
Determine BCD capacity to own land examples: maintenance/staffing	2020	Develop a budget
Obtain funding to purchase lands	On-going	Seek funding

**Priority:** District Operations

**Measurable Goal:** Successful district operations – example Good Governance. Increase in district capacity.

Milestones	Timeline	Actions
Submission of Annual Financial Report and Schedule 22	Annually	Submission of Annual Financial Report and Schedule 22
Develop a plan for current and future staffing needs	2017	Develop individual staff development/training plans Research professional training opportunities and certifications
Continue Implementation of the Staff Sharing plan with the FCD	On-going	Continue annual review of staff sharing plan with the Franklin CD
Seek out and acquire grants to enhance district programs	On-going	Look outside the traditional grant resources.
Audits	2019	Contact the State Auditor Office to schedule an audit of 2016, 2017 & 2018
Acquire Land/Building	2022	Research and budget for the acquisition of land to construct a building or to purchase an existing building

**Priority:** Public Outreach / Marketing / Education

**Measurable Goal:** Hits to website. Increase in public awareness (survey & media). Increase in number of people reached and number requesting services

Milestones	Timeline	Actions
Maintain website and social media	On-going	Develop a list of needed updates Seek funding to make website more interactive
Implement education programs for students	On-going	Water on Wheel, Wheat Week, Salmon in the Classroom Salmon Power
Recruit participants for existing and future conservation programs	On-going	Through the implementation of outreach programs
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programs		
Implement roadway signs educating drivers about BCD service area	2018	Purchase signs, work with private landowners on sign placement

## **Staffing Needs**

### Staffing (Current)

*Managers (shared)*

*Resource Conservationist*

*Outreach / Education Coordinator and Fisheries Biologist*

*Education Program Assistant (part-time)*

*Heritage Garden Program Assistant (part-time)*

*Water Resource Specialist (part-time)*

*Bookkeeper / Financial (shared)*

*Engineering (contractor)*

### Staffing (Proposed)

*Administrative Assistant to managers (shared with Franklin)*

*Public Outreach (example - contractor for outreach)*

*Intern position*

## **Annual Budget Needs**

*Current        \$500,000*

*Proposed      \$650,000*

## **Key Decision Makers**

*Department of Ecology / Regulators*

*Partnering Agencies*

*Educators*

*Natural Resource Conservation Service*

*Benton County Commissioners*

*County Landowners and Managers*

## **Washington Conservation Districts assisting land managers with their conservation choices**

