



Horizons

SERVING BENTON COUNTY SINCE 1956

Fall 2012
Volume 21 Issue 2

2011-2012 Annual Report

Chair's Perspective *Cliff Hall*



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Everybody Wins!

A Tribute to Tom Bedell



With a genuine smile and earnest care, Tom gave the BSWCD staff the freedom to be innovative and the confidence to move forward.

In July, the Benton SWCD lost a longtime supporter, leader and friend, Tom Bedell, who died of complications after a battle with cancer. Tom was elected as a Director on our Board in 1997 and was our Chair for the last 13 years.

Tom was first and foremost an educator who worked many years as an OSU Extension Rangeland Resources Specialist. He was also a gentleman, a grassland specialist, a mentor to our staff, and an outstanding resource for anyone interested in agricultural and environmental issues. He will be sorely missed.

As I assume the role of Chair, I recognize how hard it will be to fill Tom's shoes. Fortunately, the District has an outstanding staff whose services include technical advice, on-the-ground project management, and educational programs. Jenny Ayotte, our District Manager, demonstrates strong leadership as we partner with the many schools, landowners, and agencies that benefit from and support our programs. We are also lucky to have a committed group of elected volunteers who

serve on our Board of Directors and bring a wealth of experience to our deliberations. We are pleased to present this publication, our 2011-2012 Annual Report, in which we proudly share our achievements due, in no small way, to staff, community partners and volunteers. As always, we offer a resounding THANKS to the citizens of Benton County for their financial support that enables us to provide timely and effective assistance to people who manage and protect soil and water resources.

We are committed to helping you achieve your conservation goals and are here to meet with you to discuss your needs. We invite you to volunteer for our outreach programs, such as K-12 education events and the Native Plant Sale.

Tom Bedell will be missed, yet his leadership and values inspire our efforts as we continue to help manage and conserve Benton County's precious natural resources.



See also page 2.

Please join us for

Perspectives & Partnerships



56th Annual Meeting

Thornton Lake photo - A. Higinbotham

Tuesday, October 23, 2012

Come discover past and present care of local watersheds from Kalapuyan times to the 21st century.

Feast on modern dishes featuring the traditional foods of the Kalapuya, including steelhead, elk and huckleberries, prepared by nationally renowned chef, Matt Bennett, of Sybaris in Albany. See www.sybarisbistro.com

Time: 5-6 pm Kalapuyan Cuisine
6-8 pm Presentations

Location: N. Albany Community Church
1273 NW Thornton Lake Dr.

RSVP: Please RSVP by October 16th
office@bentonswcd.org
(541) 753-7208

Additional Info: \$10 Suggested Donation
cash or checks accepted at the door

Battle Invasive Species

The Willamette Mainstem Cooperative (WMC) Project

Crystal Durbecq

The WMC is a fast-moving collaborative project funded through a Meyer Memorial Trust Willamette River Initiative grant. A short-term objective of this project is to survey and map riparian vegetation and invasive plants along the mainstem Willamette River from Corvallis to Albany. This information will provide a preliminary assessment of current habitat functions and potential threats. Vital components of this project include outreach to landowners and key partnerships noted below. A main goal is to promote long-term stewardship and awareness of current ecological issues that affect Willamette River riparian lands.



Welcome Crystal Durbecq who joined Benton SWCD in April 2012 as Stewardship Coordinator/Invasive Species Specialist. She taps her OSU Natural Resources undergrad degree and US Forest Service experience to work with key partners and utilize the leadership of local farmers, Peter Kenagy and Marvin Gilmour, to expedite habitat and invasive plant surveys along the Willamette River.

🔗 **Project Budget:** \$188,612.

🔗 **Key Partners:** Meyer Memorial Trust, Local landowners, Oregon Parks and Recreation, Greenbelt Land Trust, Bonneville Environmental Foundation, OSU Extension, Calapooia Watershed Council, and Carex Working Group.

🔗 **Accomplishments:**

- 2,000 acres of Land Access Permissions.
- 1,600+ acres contracted for 2012 surveys.
- Over 25 landowner participants.



WMC team members Maya Goklany, *left*, and Andy Neill, *middle*, enjoy boat ride on the Willamette River with Scott Youngblood, *back*, Oregon Parks and Recreation.

Cooperative Weed Management Area

Heath Keirstead

In 2010, Benton SWCD recognized the need to develop a countywide, cross-jurisdictional plan on invasive species management to protect quality conservation areas in the County, provide for native fish and wildlife species, and inform the public of the threat invasive species pose to our economy and environment.

In 2011, the SWCD initiated the planning process with a group of land and invasive species managers working in Benton County.

In total, 79 individuals from 27 organizations were involved in the process, with about 25 participants attending each of the

three initial planning meetings. The objectives of these meetings were to collaboratively address invasive species issues and, most importantly, develop a county-wide plan aimed at early detection and rapid response (EDRR) as well as outreach and education.

The group achieved consensus to move forward as a Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) with four active sub-committees. CWMA's are local organizations that function under the authority of a Memorandum of Understanding to coordinate weed management activities.

Contact Heath, hkeirstead@bentonswcd.org to read the CWMA strategic action plan created by our stellar planning process facilitator, Lisa DeBruyckere.

Tom's Legacy

For 13 years, Tom led our crusade for the responsible use of natural resources. He was an inspiration and role model for future generations.



Far left, Tom holding Ketti Pitot, and, *near left*, with fellow director, Frank Nusbaum. *Below*, Jenny Ayotte, Dana Higgins and Tom greet 2009 Oak Creek Tour attendees.



Tom loved to engage the public in conservation!

Left, he is shown during the 2010 Ties to the Land Workshop and, *below*, as a 2011 Native Plant Sale greeter.





Above, Troy Brandt, River Design Group, spoke to Thornton Lake area residents about this unique aquatic system at the April neighborhood meeting.

Below, Heath and her daughter Ketti at the Native Plant Sale.



Neighborhood Meetings

Heath Keirstead

The City of Albany recently underwent a Goal 5 resources conservation planning process, and Thornton Lake was designated as significant (for more on Goal 5, visit www.oregon.gov and search for

“Goal 5 resources”). To help local residents, BSWCD and Calapooia Watershed Council, along with partners from the City of Albany and Friends of Thornton Lake, hosted a neighborhood meeting focused on riparian invasive species management. Neighbors wanted to learn more about alternative methods for managing aquatic vegetation so a second neighborhood meeting was held in April. Experts talked about the ecology and

natural history of the system, the lake’s native turtle populations, and how neighbors can participate in restoration activities, like weed control and log placement for turtle habitat. Thornton Lake continues to draw our attention: a volunteer ivy pull at the East Thornton Lake Natural Area is scheduled for Saturday October 27. Contact Heath to sign up.

Want to hear more about Thornton Lake? Attend our annual meeting on October 23rd at the North Albany Community Church. See page 8 for details.

If your neighborhood would benefit from a weed meeting, email Heath hkeirstead@bentonswcd.org for more information.



Year after year, Native Plant Sale volunteers, such as, *left*, Rachel Snyder and Candace Russo, and *right*, Corinne Butzin, invest their time and energy in the success of this community-spirited event!

Thanks to all our great volunteers!!!



2011-2012 Financial Report

audit not complete at printing

	General Fund	Project Fund
Beginning Balance 07/01/11	\$ 206,526	\$ 593
Income		
Benton County Property Taxes	\$ 334,745	\$ -
Benton County Public Works	\$ 5,000	\$ -
Grants (including ODA LMA Funds)	\$ 70,930	\$ 174,400
Admin Transfer from Project Fund	\$ 8,367	\$ -
Interest	\$ 1,607	\$ -
Other	\$ 2,015	\$ -
Native Plant Sale	\$ 26,915	\$ -
Total Income	\$ 449,579	\$ 174,400
Expenses		
Community Conservation Programs	\$ 41,435	\$ -
Operations	\$ 111,277	\$ -
Personnel	\$ 283,252	\$ 19,764
Project Expenditures	\$ -	\$ 33,879
Native Plant Sale	\$ 20,007	\$ -
Capital Outlay	\$ -	\$ -
Expenses	\$ 455,971	\$ -
Transfers Between Funds		
Transfer to Program Reserve	\$ 12,500	\$ -
Transfer to Building Reserve	\$ 12,500	\$ -
Transfer Admin to General Fund	\$ -	\$ 8,367
Total Expenses	\$ 480,971	\$ 62,010

2012 Native Plant Sale *Alice Fairfield*

In January, Henry Storch, At-large Director, plant enthusiast and bee extractor, kicked off the 2012 Native Plant Sale with a lively and informative presale presentation that encouraged native plantings for an extended array of blooms to support pollinator species.

Based on local nurseries’ stock, we vary our pre-sale order inventory to cater to our new and returning customers and promote diverse Benton County vegetation. New plants offered this year were Choke Cherry, Oregon Viburnum, Kinnikinnik, Pacific Rhododendron, Western Azalea, Wood Sorrell, Piggyback Plant, and Broad Leaved Shooting Star. In total, over 13,100 plants were sold in 2012, for a net of \$8,102.

A record number of 381 pre-orders were placed. Our customer base grew but there were fewer larger special orders related to restoration projects. In addition, customers spent about \$2,000 on plants not on the pre-sale order form and during Sunday’s excess inventory sale.

The 64 dedicated and hard-working volunteers were the driving force of the 2012 Native Plant Sale. Intern, Lisa Lindner, did an outstanding job soliciting and maintaining the food donations that fueled volunteers.

Next Native Plant Sale pick up day—Feb. 16, 2013.



Conservation Chute

100 Start again at #1 and continue conservation	99 Advance your education and job skills	Weeds are out of control!	97 Unaware of natural resource activities in Benton County	95
81 Apply for a scholarship	82	98	Become a board member	85
80	83 Call BSWCD for IPM advice	77	84	86
61	79 School grounds not inviting to wildlife	63	76	75
62	62	64	65	66
60 Attend the Annual Urban Creek Tour	59	58	57	56 BSWCD performs a Weed Inventory
41	42	43	44	45
40	39	38	37	36
21	22	23	24	25
20	19	18	17	16
1	2	3	4	5

1 Attend Neighborhood Weed Workshop

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3 Apply for Conservation Education Grant

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5 Apply for an OWEB small grant

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15 Livestock are in the creek

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18 Get a Conservation Ed. Grant to build birdhouses

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21 Receive a Conservation Site Visit

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24 Buy more plants at next Native Plant Sale

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26 Community Service with BSWCD

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36 Order

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Chutes & Ladders

14 Native plants dry out before you plant them 88 Receive advice and cost share 67 Attend Volunteer Appreciation Event 54	Horse Pasture turns to winter Mud 93 88 73 Cost share for sacrifice area 72 68 69	92 89 90 71 Take family to Kids Day for Conservation 70 70 51 Volunteer for a Weed Pull 50	Enjoy fun, hands-on learning 91 91 90 71 Take family to Kids Day for Conservation 70 70 51 Volunteer for a Weed Pull 50
47 48 Uh-oh! Minor law infraction 41 33	48 Uh-oh! Minor law infraction 41 33	49 Butterfly Bush in your yard 41 33	50 50 31 Plant a cover crop 31
27 Plant a school Butterfly Garden 14 7	27 29 12 13 8 Submit a soil sample for assessment 9	28 Attend a board meeting 29 12 13 8 Submit a soil sample for assessment 9	30 30 11 Find alternative in GardenSmart Oregon 10 10

Conservation Chutes & Ladders

is a game for all ages.

Follow the game board from 1 to 100 and discover opportunities for everyone in Benton County to adopt new conservation practices - and get to know the programs of the District at the same time!

Whether your journey includes more chutes or ladders is not important because

Everyone Wins with Conservation!

Game Markers



What You Need to Play:

- 1 Die
- 2-4 Game Markers
- Game Board

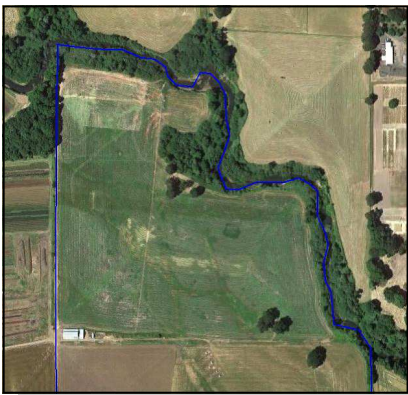
Rules of Play:

1. Roll Die.
2. Move # of spaces.
3. Climb ladders and slide chutes on spaces where you land.
4. Continuous Play: go back from 100 to 1
5. To win: **EVERYONE** wins with Conservation!

Resource Assessment



3,500 feet of fencing were installed along the Marys River just south of Corvallis, *above*, and 3,400 feet of fencing were installed along the Marys River one mile south of Philomath, *below*. The fencing was installed to keep livestock out of the River. The landowner is also planting trees and shrubs to enhance wildlife habitat and improve water quality.



Conservation Assistance

Donna Schmitz

Our staff members helped over 200 Benton County residents evaluate conservation needs and provided recommendations in response to phone calls, office visits and 56 scheduled site visits.

On some projects, we helped with grant and permit applications, or facilitated enrollment in federal/state conservation programs through USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency. Four grant applications were approved to improve water quality and several projects were implemented including: a one-acre wetland restoration, 6,900 feet of riparian fencing, and a bridge. Two landowners improved drainage around barns to provide winter heavy use areas for livestock. About 250 riparian plants were purchased through our native plant sale discount program.

The National Fish and Wildlife grant area expanded to include Oak Creek and some of northeast Benton County. With partners we recruited landowners for riparian restoration projects along local streams and plan to assess Greenbelt Land Trust's Bald Hill Farms for wetland and riparian plants and grazing management.

An "Oak Creek Action Plan" was completed for the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). Using GIS maps to compare differences in elevations in vegetation heights, we defined vegetative cover within a fifty foot buffer on either side of Oak Creek and two tributaries. This analysis will identify areas in need of additional trees and shrubs.

A cadre of partners including Cascade Pacific RC&D, the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Benton and Linn Soil and Water Conservation Districts, South and North Santiam, Calapooia, and Long Tom Watershed Councils, secured an OWEB grant to fund 3 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program regional planners. As a result, 106 acres of riparian forest buffer were planned with four landowners this year.

For over a decade, research in the Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area has focused on the cause of high levels of nitrate in the groundwater. With partners, we were awarded an ODA Fertilizer Grant to understand how fertilizer practice changes impact groundwater. Beginning in 2013, watch for soil quality building and fertilizer management workshops supported by ODA Fertilizer Grant funds.



Above, Amy Garrett, OSU Small Farms, and Teresa Matteson, BSWCD, collaborate to build the Soil Quality Network, a regional project funded by Western SARE.

Soil Quality Goes Regional

Teresa Matteson

Since the Dust Bowl, it has been well documented that degradation of soil is widespread, compounds the need for expensive and inefficient inputs and leads to negative environmental impacts. Yet, throughout our Soil Quality (SQ) Project, farmers and agricultural professionals indicated a need for soil quality assessment

tools and programs to support their work. We continue to address these needs through partnerships, assessment services and network building.

Partners: OSU Extension Small Farms, Amy Garrett; Oregon State University College of Agriculture, Oregon Society of Soil Scientists, Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Society, Clackamas County SWCD and Wasco County SWCD, numerous farmers and agricultural professionals.



*Join the SQ movement!
Ask me how!!!
541-753-7208
tmatteson@bentonswcd.org*

Key accomplishments:

- Benton SWCD performed SQ assessments in 36 fields on 19 farms.
- We analyzed two-years of SQ data and submitted a colossal report to Oregon NRCS to fulfill the 2010 Conservation Innovation Grant.
- We received a Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Professional Development Program grant for the Soil Quality Network (SQN), a three-year project to create a database, develop a website, and train ag professionals in SQ assessment, education program development and strategies to support farmers.
- In February 2012, we hosted the first of two SQN workshops that drew 104 attendees, including 26 students, for two days of field demonstrations, presentations and network building.



Soil Quality provides internships and real-world work experience for students and volunteers. *Above*, OSU student, Leslie Michel, collected soil samples in addition to lab and office work. Now she is gainfully employed with Okanogan Conservation District in WA.

Our adult and K-12 education program morphs each year based on community need and staff availability. New efforts, such as Teen Weed Spotters, highlighted below, augment our customary list of annual events summarized here:

Education & Outreach

- Every day of the year our [webpage](#), [listserv opportunities](#) and [facebook page](#) offer instant access to conservation news and events.

SUMMER

- Gerhard Behrens, 3rd grade teacher at Adams Elementary received our scholarship for Session 1 of the 20112 Summer Ag Institute.
- [Making Ripples Newsletter](#) released with focus on soil lessons.
- Robert Livesay and Javier Fernandez Salvador each received a \$1,000 Natural Resources Scholarship for studies in Geosciences and Horticulture, respectively.

FALL

- 8 Conservation Education Grants totaled \$6,003. **Ask these educators about their awards:** Jefferson PAT, Corvallis and Crescent Valley High Schools, Marys Peak Group of the Sierra Club, Avery House Nature Center, OSU STEPs Program, Institute for Applied Ecology, Corvallis Environmental Center Starker Arts

Garden for Education.

- Kids Day for Conservation–Western Pond Turtle Migration Obstacle Course. Over 200 youth donned pond turtle shells for a perilous migration between upland and aquatic habitats.
- Staff helped students at the Forest Expo tree ID station.

WINTER

- *Invasion: Plants on the Move* a Saturday Educator Workshop held at Adams Elementary. 8 attended.
- Master Gardeners Gearing up for Gardening Lecture–Invasive Weed Talk
- Corvallis Garden Club–Invasive Weed Talk

SPRING

- Connect 2012, about 30 SWCD staff from around the state attended our Soil Quality presentation and regional strategy session.
- Talked about soil assessment during West Multnomah SWCD’s Soil School.
- 170 6th graders learned about soil texture, compaction and infiltration

during Forest Camp. Thanks to Leslie Michel, Carl Evans and Priscilla Woolverton for the hands-on instruction!

- 150 students took our Oregon Envirothon soils test during this statewide high school natural resources competition.
- We shared our conservation message with Spring Garden Festival-goers.
- Evergreen Day - Leslie Michel, Priscilla Woolverton and Sarah Marshall helped 120 Philomath 8th graders explore upland and wetland soil features and wonders of soil wildlife.
- 4-H Wildlife Stewards Summit elementary students were engaged in our native and invasive plant scavenger hunt led by Teen Weed Spotters.
- Jackson Frazier Creek Tour, highlighted urban creek projects and raised creek-care awareness. 65 attended.
- Monroe School Field Day.
- 15 in-class/in-field days with Monroe and Alsea High School Teen Weed Spotters

Read more below!



Above, Liz now works for Polk SWCD in Dallas, Oregon.

Liz Graham Finds RARE Opportunities *Heath Keirstead*

This year, BSWCD participated as a host for Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE), an AmeriCorps program through the University of Oregon.

RARE participant, Liz Graham, a returned Peace Corps volunteer, came to us from a naturalist job in Indianapolis, Indiana. She worked on the Weed Spotters program and was the principal contact with Teen Weed Spotters. She thrived in her role as classroom educator and field trip leader for the teens in Jennifer Allen’s Earth Science class. The students

had fun learning how to identify, map and remove target weed species.

Liz also conducted a rural Benton County needs assessment to determine how we could best be of service to those communities in the area of K-12 conservation education. We plan to use her assessment results to modify rural educational offerings.

Teen Weed Spotters *Heath Keirstead*



Above, Monroe Teen Weed Spotter teaches youth about invasive species at the 4-H Wildlife Stewards Summit.

High school students from Alsea and Monroe, Oregon participated in Teen Weed Spotters, a cooperative program of Benton SWCD and OSU Extension Service, Benton County 4-H. The objectives of the project were: 1) education of Monroe and Alsea area residents and visitors about invasive species, 2) mapping and control of target invasive species, and 3) creation of educational materials and presentations to further raise awareness.

Monroe High School students studying Earth Science received in-class instruction on invasive plant identification, mapping and use of GPS units. They spent some time mapping and removing weeds at Finley Wildlife Refuge and several other Benton County locations. They shared their newfound knowledge with youth at the 4-H Wildlife Stewards Summit and a special Monroe Field Day, and made educational presentations to the BSWCD Board and Monroe School Board.

Teen Weed Spotters is funded in part with an Oregon Department of Agriculture Administered State & Private Forest Noxious Weed Small Grant and Title III Forestry Safety Net funds from Benton County. Teen Weed Spotters continued their weed removal efforts over the summer and more projects are planned for the fall.

Teen Weed Spotters target plant species include:

- meadow knapweed
- false brome
- Scotch broom
- Spanish broom
- Italian thistle



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or better yet, pass it to a friend!



Looking Ahead *Jennifer Ayotte*

At Benton SWCD, we are filled with sadness over the recent

death of our beloved Chair, Tom Bedell. Tom's leadership and generous spirit have become an integral part of our organization.

This report reflects the combined work of our staff, our Directors, and our many partners. We are fortunate to have Directors who faithfully attend our evening meetings, make thoughtful decisions, and enthusiastically support our organization in the midst of their own full and demanding lives. I thank all of you for your productive work and for your confidence in our organization! While this report gives us a chance to savor our accomplishments, I am also looking forward to the upcoming work for the year ahead.

Please join us as we:

- Structure the new Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA), a partnership that will formulate plans and take cohesive actions to address invasive plants on a county-wide scale.
- Expand partnerships along the Albany-Corvallis reach of the Willamette River, with an emphasis on the inventory and management of invasive plants.
- Sponsor the 2nd Soil Quality Network Conference with this year's focus on the role of soil in water quality and quantity.
- Collaborate with the Marys River and Calapooia Watershed Councils to increase landowner outreach.
- Host the annual Native Plant Sale on February 16, 2013.
- Work with the residents of Benton County to put conservation practices on the ground.

The Benton SWCD mission:

is to provide leadership to Benton County residents through education and technical assistance for conservation and responsible use and management of soil, water and related resources.

A Time of Change on the BSWCD Board

FY 2012 Directors (Zone)

Cliff Hall, Vice Chair (1)
Anne Rigor, Treasurer (2)
Tom Bedell, Chair (3)
Robert Bewley (4)
Frank Nusbaum (5)
Jeni Richardson (At Large)
Henry Storch (At Large)

FY 2013 Directors (Zone)

Pat Malone (1)
Vacant (2)*
Cliff Hall, Chair (3)
Robert Bewley, Treasurer (4)
Frank Nusbaum (5)
Vacant (At Large)*
Henry Storch, Vice Chair (At Large)

*Vote for candidates on the General Election Ballot 11/6/2012.

Associate Directors:

Tim Dehne, Rana Foster, Mark Taratoot

Staff

Jenny Ayotte, District Manager
Crystal Durbecq, Invasive Species Specialist
Alice Fairfield, Native Plant Sale Coordinator
Jennifer Floro, Office Manager
Heath Keirstead, Education & Outreach
Teresa Matteson, Education & Outreach
Donna Schmitz, Resource Conservationist
Tom Snyder, NRCS District Conservationist

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