

Summer 2005

Horizons

awarded Oregon Association of Conservation Districts'
2004 Newsletter of the Year



BENTON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT—SERVING BENTON COUNTY SINCE 1956

Join the Battle Against Noxious Weeds

by *Vern Holm, Partnership Coordinator*

Northwest Oregon Invasive Weed Management Partnership

What's new? On June 6, the Board of the Benton SWCD voted to join an entity called the Northwest Oregon Invasive Weed Management Partnership, and I have been asked to write a few lines to explain what the Weed Partnership is and why the citizens of Benton County can benefit from the Benton SWCD's action.

Each of us knows something about weeds – whether we garden, farm, or just enjoy the rich landscape of Northwest Oregon, weeds are part of our lives. Most weeds are little more than a nuisance; however, there is another class of weeds that are labeled as noxious or invasive. These weeds differ from the others in that if they are not controlled they will take over a landscape.

Enhanced by our mobile society, more and more kinds of these invasive weeds are making their way into Oregon. False brome poses a threat to timber lands by depleting surface water needed by seedlings and intensifying wildfire risk. Japanese knotweed threatens riparian areas by out-competing native vegetation and promoting erosion. These are just two of many species that are posing problems.

Developed to promote partnerships between agencies and individuals who are working to manage and/or control weeds, The Northwest Oregon Invasive Weed Management Partnership is a non-governmental, non-regulatory organization. Cascade Pacific RC&D acts as the Partnership's fiscal agent and behind the scenes hero. The Partnership was created with the premise that weeds know no boundaries, and no single organization has the staff or money to do landscape-level weed management. It has demonstrated that since partnered efforts cover larger areas, they are more likely to receive grant funding. Such funding goes to locally planned, managed on-the-ground projects.

Any organization is welcome to join the Partnership.

In order to promote local decision making and control, there are five Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs) throughout NW Oregon. Benton SWCD will join SWCDs, Watershed Councils, state and federal agencies, BPA, and others in the Upper Willamette CWMA to share information and work on weed control projects as time and interest allow.

There is one thing for sure, invasive weeds are never going away. Sometimes this thought is discouraging, but the alternative is to do nothing which will cost us all in the long run.

Upper Willamette CWMA partners include:

Benton Soil and Water Conservation District; Bonneville Power Administration; City of Eugene; Willamette National Forest; Linn Soil and Water Conservation District; East Lane Soil and Water Conservation District; Calapooia Watershed Council; McKenzie Watershed Council; Oregon Department of Transportation; Oregon Department of Agriculture; United States Army Corps of Engineers; Bureau of Land Management, Salem District; Bureau of Land Management, Eugene District; Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development, Inc.; Long Tom Watershed Council; Benton County Department of Public Works; Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council

Get the annually updated **Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook** free online at <http://pnwpest.org/pnw/weeds> or hardcopy (\$40) through OSU Extension 1-800-561-6719.

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Chair's Perspective

by Tom Bedell



What a difference in growing conditions from the spring issue until now! At that time, low moisture levels had us making plans on how best to cope with dry conditions. I suspect not everyone is happy with the wet, cool spring. It surely didn't turn out the way we planned. In Oregon's variable climate, flexible planning continues to be a key management factor.

Wet spring weather prompts lush vegetative growth, including undesirable plants. Especially important are noxious weeds that, if given a foothold, can wreak havoc. Oregon now has 105 plants on its noxious weeds list. See page 7 for Benton County's 10 most wanted! Page 1 highlights a recent action by the District to join other organizations in the Upper Willamette Cooperative Weed Management Area effort. This summer, the NOIWMP will contribute funding for the inventory and control of Japanese Knotweed, an aggressive, long-lived plant. In cooperation with the Polk SWCD and Luckiamute Watershed Council, we will help landowners in Benton County battle this noxious weed.

Local governments budget their activities/operations on a July-June fiscal year. This next year, Benton SWCD will operate under stable funding through the passage of the five cents per \$1000 permanent tax by voters in last fall's election. Although grant funding is a laborious, fickle way to run an operation, the District will continue to apply for various special program grants. One example is the Fish Passage Improvement Program (FPIP). Chris Stebbins is doing an excellent job coordinating the FPIP and a database of useful information is being acquired. However, funding for FPIP is expected to terminate in another year and lack of funds may cause that program to be discontinued.

The Board has adopted the next years' budget as approved by the Budget Committee. The District expects to expand regular programs through needed staffing and have resources for contingencies that we have not had in the past. Our highest priority identified and approved by the Budget Committee will be employing a district manager. Additional expectations are to expand both the technical assistance and education/outreach capabilities starting in 2006. A District Manager position description has been developed. If you know of anyone interested and qualified for the job, or would like more information, please contact us at 753-7208.

The Board just approved an ambitious work plan focused on meeting your conservation needs. We are here to address your conservation interests, whether they include planning and carrying out projects, technical assistance, or alerting us about problems. Our meetings, open to the public, are the first Monday evening of each month, at 7 PM. Please call to confirm meeting location.



2005 Well Water Clinics in Benton County

OSU Extension Service Office
1849 NW 9th Street, Corvallis

Tuesdays: July 26, Aug 16, Sept 27, Oct 18
also

**Saturday Farmers Market: June 11 Albany
July 16 Corvallis**

- Nitrate tests for well water
- Assess the condition of your well & septic system
- Publications
- Questions answered
- Mini-class (topics vary) 12:15—12:45 PM

For a free nitrate test
bring about a 1/2 cup of
untreated well water in any
clean, water-tight container.



For more information contact
Jacqueline Fern 737-6295
OSU Well Water Program
Well.Water@oregonstate.edu

*Well Water Clinics are presented free of charge by the OSU
Extension Service Southern Willamette Groundwater Project
<http://groundwater.orst.edu/willamette>*

Benton SWCD has seven elected Board Directors and two appointed Associate Directors. All are volunteers!

Pictured here in his kayak is **Mark Taratoot**, a BSWCD Associate Director and the Water Resource Specialist for Corvallis Public Works. For fun, Mark paddles with the Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club. For water information contact Mark at Mark.Taratoot@ci.corvallis.or.us or call 541-766-6916.

Photo: Gary Adams

Fun and the River

**It's fun to play in the river. It keeps me cool in
the summer. I like to play
with the salamanders that live there.**

**Nehemiah Niles
1st Grade**

*This poem is from **Honoring Our River: 2004 A Student Anthology**
Collected From Throughout the Willamette River Watershed. 5th
Anniversary Edition. For information or be published, call 503-585-
8789 or email bridgetma@aol.com.*



Conservation Calendar of Events ~ Summer and beyond

Sustainable Studies Institute and Soil Foodweb Inc. are offering 3 FREE workshops

7 - 9 PM
728 Wake Robin Ave
in Corvallis



• **Biological Lawn Care on July 21**

with Shepard Smith, Soilsmith, Reece Speas, W & W Lawn Care, and Robert Shepard, Soil Food Web, Inc.



• **Backyard Composting on August 18**

with Joe Richard, NW Vermicompost, Andy Westlund, Harmony J.A.C.K Farms and Merry Bradley, Grass Roots Gardens



• **Preparing Plants for Winter on September 15**

with Dr. Elaine R. Ingham and Robert Shepard, Soil Foodweb Inc.



Kids Day for Conservation *September 17 10 AM to 4 PM* Join us and many of our conservation partners as we explore the **Roads to Conservation** with kids of all ages. **FREE!!!!**
Benton County Fair Grounds Arena



Wildlife Stewards Training *October 14, 15, 16* - see page 7 for the details.



iSNAP Education Project
Workshop

**Integrated Pest and Nutrient Management Options:
Practices and Tools to Protect Water Quality**

October 25-26, 2005
Vancouver, WA

Cost: \$125 for early registration (by Oct. 14), including lunches, breaks and notebooks

Workshop brochures and online registration available at
<http://isnap.oregonstate.edu/>

Continuing Education Credit available from Oregon and Washington State Departments of Agriculture.

Learn how to implement the latest research in pest management and nutrient management systems that protect water quality. Work cooperatively to design solutions to site-specific problems. Explore linkages between nutrient, pest, and water quality management practices. **Questions:** Please contact Mary Staben mary.staben@oregonstate.edu or 541-737-2683

The Winners Are...

We are pleased to announce the winners of the Conservation Poster Contest!

Jefferson Elementary students cleaned up the 2nd – 3rd grade division. The artistic talents of **Sam Winograd** (right) and **Sierra Anthony**, both second graders in Christy Schloss's class, earned first and second place. **Chloe Rodman's** poster, from Maryanne Pulam's 3rd grade class, won third place.

Wilson Elementary teacher, Sandy Whitney, coached her fourth grader, **Alexa Peters**, to win first place in the 4th - 5th - 6th grade category. Second and third places were taken by Jefferson Elementary students, **Abby Schroff** and **Gabrielle Mason**, both fourth graders in Faye Cummins' class.



First place winner, **Molly Whitney**, a ninth grader at Corvallis High School, created an outstanding colored pencil poster. Our judges predict that her artistic talent should show well at state competition in November.

All first place posters travel to the state competition. State winners will advance to the national level and be judged in February 2006.

Watch for local displays of these winning posters at the following locations: Benton SWCD office (June & July), Corvallis Public Library meeting room (August), Oregon State University Soils Department (September), and The Book Bin window (October).

Volunteers needed for FUN TECHNICAL FIELDWORK with the BSWCD Fish Passage Improvement Program

What is the Benton Fish Passage Improvement Program?

Every year thousands of Oregon fish are denied access to their ancestral spawning grounds due to artificial fish passage barriers. These barriers block thousands of acres of spawning and rearing habitat for native anadromous fish including Coho and Chinook salmon, and Steelhead and Cutthroat Trout. In addition to blocked spawning and rearing grounds, refuge needed in high or low water conditions may be inaccessible. The Benton Fish Passage Improvement Program mobilizes volunteers to help define and prioritize the removal of barriers, such as culverts and dams, to improve access to habitat for threatened or endangered fish species. The barrier inventories conducted by the Benton Fish Passage Improvement Program are voluntary. Permission is requested prior to inventory conducted on private property. In addition, we work with landowners to secure construction funding, if they choose to improve fish passage on their property.

Volunteer recruitment: The Benton Fish Passage Improvement Program is looking for community volunteers, including students, who would like to perform fun and technical fieldwork. Participants will be trained to use GPS mapping software to find culvert structures along roads throughout Benton County, then measure the culvert's dimensions. This fieldwork contributes to a larger effort to inventory and remove barriers to migrating fish throughout western Oregon.

Basic volunteer requirements:

- Be available 8 hours/week
- Have an interest to learn about GIS and Global Positioning Systems (GPS)
- Enjoy working outside
- Have a valid drivers license - vehicle & gas are provided.

For more information, please contact:

Chris Stebbins, Coordinator
Benton Fish Passage Improvement Program
chris.w.stebbins@co.benton.or.us
(541) 766-6821 ext. 4532



Volunteers assess a Soap Creek culvert in the Luckiamute watershed.

OREGON CELEBRATES EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY FOR RIPARIAN BUFFER PROGRAM

by **Stephanie Page**, ODA Water Quality Team Leader

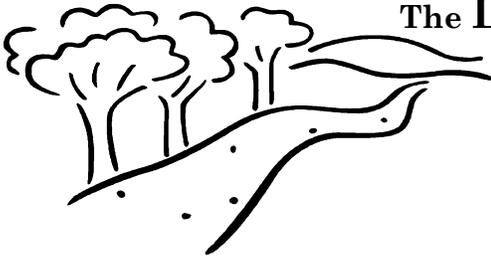
Agricultural landowners and their federal, state and local natural resource partners are celebrating across Oregon this month because of important changes to a funding program for near-stream area restoration. The Oregon Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), formerly available only along streams with threatened and endangered fish, is now open to agricultural landowners along streams throughout the state.

The revised CREP also includes more riparian restoration options for pasture and rangeland. Agricultural landowners can enroll eligible near-stream lands into a 10 to 15 year CREP contract and receive annual conservation payments for the contract period, reimbursement for 75% of the costs

of riparian restoration practices, and other financial incentives.

CREP was created in 1998 through a unique partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the State of Oregon. Its purpose is to establish vegetation on agricultural land along streams, protecting water quality and restoring fish and wildlife habitat.

To learn more about the program, Benton County landowners can contact the local Farm Service Agency at the Tangent Service Center, 233630 McFarland Road in Tangent or call (541) 967-5924.



The Local Agricultural Water Quality Rule for Streamside Areas What Does It Mean?

By Stephanie Page & Michael Powers
Oregon Department of Agriculture

The Oregon Department of Agriculture recently completed the first biennial review of the Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan and Rules for the Middle Willamette in cooperation with a Local Advisory Committee and the Benton and Polk Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The Area Plan and Rules apply to all agricultural activities, including large commercial farms and ranches and small acreage rural residential properties with a few livestock.

ODA developed the Area Plan and Rules under direction from the Oregon Legislature. Senate Bill 1010, passed in 1993, directed ODA to develop water quality plans and rules wherever water quality problems have been identified. Area plans and area rules use a goal-oriented rather than prescriptive approach, to address agricultural water quality issues. Together the plans and rules:

- Accommodate geographic differences
- Focus on voluntary efforts
- Provide clear enforceable backstop
- Satisfy multiple water quality needs
- Proactively address water quality issues
- Address fish habitat where possible

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) identified stream temperature and bacteria problems in the Middle Willamette through its monitoring program, the most common concern being excessive stream temperature.

Continued on page 6 with a Q & A section...

The streamside vegetation rule for the Middle Willamette is intended to address temperature concerns, but also helps to control dissolved oxygen, sediment, and other water quality parameters. Here are some important elements of the streamside rule:

- The streamside rule requires landowners to allow vegetation to grow and establish in streamside areas. Vegetation must eventually be able to promote infiltration of overland flow, provide stream bank stability, and provide moderation of solar heating.
- The rule applies to agricultural activities along perennial streams.
- Minimal breaks in shade vegetation for essential management activities (e.g. water gaps for livestock or space for irrigation pumps) are appropriate.
- Activities regulated by Department of State Lands Fill-Removal laws, such as cleaning out a ditch or stream, are exempt from the streamside rule.



 **Benton County Watershed Councils** Listed from north to south, these councils merge the energy and interests of watershed stakeholders. Their collective efforts focus on improving and protecting Benton County's water resources. You are invited to attend the meetings and join the flow.

Luckiamute Watershed Council www.wou.edu/luckiamute Monthly Meetings are the 2nd Thursday each month from 7-9pm. Contact Dave Vesely, interim Watershed Council Coordinator, via email veselyd@mail.wou.edu or call (503) 838-8804 for agenda items and meeting place.

Marys River Watershed Council www.mrwc.net Council meetings are held on the 1st Wednesday of the month from 7 - 9 PM at the Philomath City Hall, 10th and Applegate Streets. Contact Sandra Covey, coordinator, at mrwc@peak.org or call (541) 758-7597. Projects include Fish Passage Improvement, Education & Outreach, Land & Water Use,

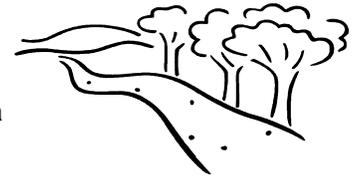
and a Healthy Waters Institute Pilot Program.

Alesea Watershed Council contact Linda Johnston, coordinator, at 5rivers@pioneer.net or call 541-528-3221 for meeting agenda, times and locations.

Long Tom Watershed Council www.longtom.org Currently working on council development and conservation strategy, next monthly meeting and tour will be held June 28. Please see latest newsletter posted on the web site for more details about meetings and the September Annual Celebration. Dana Erickson, coordinator, coordinator@longtom.org.



Local Agricultural Water Quality Rule continued...



The streamside rule has been in effect for over 2 years. We thought now would be a good time to review it. As a rule review, below are **A**nswers to common **Q**uestions.

Q. Does the streamside rule prohibit grazing near streams? Do I have to fence out my stream?

A. No. While many landowners use fencing as a management tool to limit livestock access to streamside areas, fencing is not required. As long as vegetation, such as trees, shrubs, grasses and forbs, can grow and establish, landowners can allow grazing in streamside areas.

Q. Will I have to plant trees along the streams? What if I just have a bunch of blackberries, shrubs, or reed canary grass along the streamside area? Am I out of compliance because it is not shading the stream?

A. No. Agricultural land managers are required to **allow** site-appropriate vegetation, such as trees and shrubs, to grow and establish in streamside areas. Tree and shrub planting is recommended in the plan as an optional practice, and landowners interested in streamside plantings may be eligible for federal or state conservation funding programs.

Q. Is there a minimum buffer width required in the rule?

A. No. Appropriate widths of streamside vegetation vary with stream size and location within the watershed. For guidance on appropriate vegetation for your property, contact the Benton SWCD, ODA, or the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Q. How will I know if I am in compliance?

A. A landowner is probably in compliance if vegetation appropriate to the streamside area is growing and becoming established. Possible indicators of non-compliance include bare soil or streambank erosion associated with excessive livestock grazing or cropping right up the streambank, or evidence of sufficient livestock browsing on streamside vegetation to prevent it from establishing.

Q. Is funding available to protect or restore streamside areas on my property?

A. Yes! Landowners may be eligible for several local, state, and federal conservation funding programs. For more information, contact the Benton SWCD, your local Watershed Council, or NRCS.

For more specific guidance or other questions, landowners can contact ODA and find out whether an educational review visit might be appropriate. Give Mike Powers a call at (503) 986-4761, or email him at mpowers@oda.state.or.us. You can also contact the Benton SWCD for assistance. Note that SWCDs are not regulatory entities. Their mission includes service to agricultural and rural land managers.



Jon & Flip Anderson
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Visit these web sites:

Natural Resource Conservation Service
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs>

Farm Service Agency
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>
Call Benton SWCD with additional questions...753-7208

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Managing Benton County's Roadside Areas

Donna Schmitz and Teresa Matteson, BSWCD staff

Managing the vegetation on Benton County road rights-of-way is a Herculean task. Benton County's 270 miles of hard surface and 190 miles of gravel roads pass through urban, rural, agricultural, forest, wetlands and riparian areas. These roads connect diverse neighbors with varied opinions on best management techniques. Such management must aggressively suppress errant vegetation, combat noxious weeds, protect endangered species, maintain road integrity, improve water quality and ensure traffic safety *while* complying with citizens' wishes and road management statutes.

Find someone who can juggle these conflicting demands and make the most efficient and effective use of public resources and you'll have **Laurie Starha** - Benton County Public Works Roadside Vegetation Manager.

Laurie supervises the crew responsible for monitoring, mowing and spraying Benton County and contracted public roads. Battling noxious weeds is high on her list of priorities.

Benton County's web site has pictures to help identify some noxious weeds at <http://www.co.benton.or.us/pw/road/VEG/nw.html>

Benton County's

Ten Most Wanted Weeds list:

- Meadow Knapweed
- Scotch Broom
- Tansy Ragwort
- Thistle
- Blackberries
- Japanese Knotweed
- Puncture Vine
- English Ivy
- Gorse
- Giant Hog Weed

Other vegetation controlled by the Benton County Roadside Crew are:

- Poison Oak - public nuisance
- Grasses - collection of sediment and water (ice) on road shoulders creates a safety hazard
- Equisetum – breaks up the road surface edge and causes a safety hazard

Interested in roadside volunteer work? Contact Laurie at 766-6002 about the following opportunities:

- **No Spray Program:** Benton County offers a no-spray option to roadside landowners. This no-fee program requires roadsides to be maintained at the County standard. Noxious weeds **MUST** be controlled and grasses **MUST** be mowed by landowners. Two no-spray signs **MUST** be correctly posted. The no-spray program permit is renewed annually.

The **No Spray Program Agreement Form** and Sign Placement Diagram can be found at <http://www.co.benton.or.us/pw/road/VEG/nsp.html>

- **Adopt-A-Road Program:** About 25 groups are currently involved in this litter control program. Benton County provides permits, vests, tools. Read more at <http://www.co.benton.or.us/pw/adopt.html>
- **Noxious Weed Control:** Hand cut or pull weeds. Make arrangements with the County to dispose of the bagged waste.
- **Threatened and Endangered Plant Species:** Identify and work in special management areas.



Benton County's Crew clears vegetation from roadside ditches

Please note: date change!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



4-H Wildlife Stewards Volunteer Leader Training Workshop October 14, 15, 16 2005 / Salem 4-H Center

Do you enjoy sharing your love of nature with children?

The 4-H Wildlife Stewards program is an Oregon State University Extension 4-H program that pairs trained volunteers with member schools to enhance wildlife habitat and create spaces where students practice and expand their science skills right outside their classroom doors.

4-H Wildlife Stewards volunteers receive training in:

- *Native plants*
- *Wildlife management*
- *Mapping and inventorying a site*
- *Curriculum lessons for the habitat*
- *Teaching science inquiry*

Volunteer Keys to Success

- Use training to assist students and teachers
- Work in partnership with public and private organizations to "make it happen."

To learn more about Wildlife Stewards visit www.wildlifestewards.4h.oregonstate.edu

See the latest 4-H WS newsletter under "News & Events", click "Current Issue".

In Benton or Linn County, contact Jody Eirerson at wildlife.benton@oregonstate.edu or call 766-6750 for local school program information.



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This newsletter is printed on 40% recycled paper. Please recycle it again, or better yet, pass this issue to a friend!

HUGE Thanks

to the following people and businesses for helping with Education and Outreach activities during April and May:

Native Tree and Shrub Sale Analysis: Margi Willowmoon

Ag Expo: Sarah Hoffman and Tim Drake

Wildlife Stewards Youth Summit: Avery House Nature Center

Spring Field Day: Dana Devin-Clarke

Envirothon: Sarah Hoffman, Donna Schmitz, Andy Gallagher, Tom Thomson

Corvallis High School GPS/GIS Field Day:

Laurie Becker - OSU Geosciences Department
 Pete Bower - OSU Geosciences Department
 Andy Gallagher - Red Hill Soils
 Keldah Hedstrom - OSU Geosciences Department
 Doug Sackinger - Benton County
 Chris Stebbins - Fish Passage Improvement Program
 OSU Extension 4-H Wildlife Stewards Program
 Woodstock's Pizza

Conservation Poster Contest:

Day Dreamers Bead Shop
 Pegasus Gallery
 Old World Deli

Sustainable Alternatives for Water Conservation in Landscape Design: a presentation

Bonnie Bayard and the First Alternative Co-op

The Benton SWCD mission:

is to provide leadership to Benton County residents through education and technical assistance for conservation and responsible use of soil, water and related resources through a balanced, cooperative program that protects, restores, and improves these resources.

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Jennifer Floro, Office Manager
 Donna Schmitz, Watershed Technical Specialist
 Chris Stebbins, Fish Passage Program Coordinator
 Teresa Matteson, Education and Outreach Director

A sincere thanks to **Scott White** for sharing his internship as our Conservation Assistant.

The Benton SWCD is an equal opportunity employer, providing services to the public without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.