

Spring 2006

Horizons

SERVING BENTON COUNTY OREGON SINCE 1956



Soil Organic Matter

The spring impulse to GROW is strong; to sow seeds, prune branches and tend perennials. It stems from some innate human connection to the Earth or dwells deep in suppressed survival instincts. Seeking increased yield, humans have modernized growing practices to include the use of specialized tools, genetically modified seed, state-of the-art equipment, and synthetic chemicals. Through time and the power of marketing, one simple, natural consideration has lost respect in the GROWERS community – Soil Organic Matter (SOM).

What is SOM? Much of SOM is in tissue form, either living or dead. The living biomass is made of countless soil organisms. The detritus is waste products or remains of organisms that have not decomposed. The rest of SOM is humus; non-living, non-tissue, organic matter which has undergone some degree of decomposition - a mixture of complex, decay-resistant residues and microbial goo. In our climate, soil organic matter makes up roughly five percent of a fertile loam soil.

This relatively small soil component provides HUGE benefits, including those listed below:

- The dark color of SOM speeds up solar heating of cold spring soil.
- SOM protects plant-available nutrients from leaching by rain and irrigation.
- SOM binds toxic heavy metals reducing availability to plants and soil organisms.
- SOM binds soil particles into aggregates, making it easier for plant roots to grow and tools to work. The improved soil structure reduces wind and water erosion resulting in improved air and water quality.
- Good soil structure allows water to infiltrate; reducing runoff, flooding and water erosion.
- SOM improves soil water holding capacity and water availability to plants which is important during dry summer months and droughts.
- SOM provides a food base for a diverse population of soil organisms that contribute to plant health through nutrient cycling and disease suppression.

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Use these conservation practices to improve or maintain SOM on your land

- Limit tillage to levels needed for weed control, and seed bed preparation.
- Use stubble mulching or no-till management to leave plant residue on the soil surface. This reduces decomposition and protects soil against erosion.
- Provide optimal nutrients and water for crop growth to increase SOM over time. Even when a portion of the plants are harvested, remaining plant residues and roots will contribute to the SOM pool.
- Apply compost, manure, plant residue or other organic wastes each year.
- Cover cropping systems provide three-fold benefits: growing vegetation reduces soil erosion, living plant roots contribute to SOM, and plant residues provide soil surface protection and microbial nutrient resources.
- Proper pasture management including, rotational grazing, will protect and maintain SOM.

For more tips on SOM management visit <http://soils.usda.gov/sqi/concepts/soil>

The Chair's Perspective



First, I want to welcome our new District Manager, Gordon Cumming. Since starting in mid-November, Gordon

hit the ground running, attending the annual meeting of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts where he got a comprehensive overview of how districts function and introductions to many state leaders. Gordon has a great deal of resource organization experience, obtained from a similar position in Minnesota, which he is putting to work here. See page 5 for Gordon's story.

WELCOME, GORDON!

Next, I want to thank all the volunteers who greatly add to the success of District accomplishments. Helping to further local conservation efforts through volunteerism seems to be one of the strongest, most positive things people do. The Benton SWCD greatly appreciates the efforts so many people make. We have many volunteer opportunities and I encourage those of you who have a little time and interest to contact us if you want to help. Read page 6 to see which of your friends helped during the Native Tree and Shrub Sale.

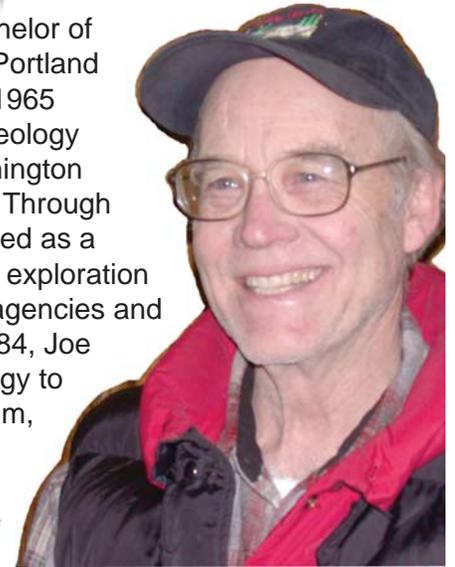
This winter's above-average rainfall reminds us that established ground cover is vitally necessary to keep soil in place. Loss of soil and its nutrients can be avoided or at least minimized through a number of practices, and ground cover is a basic key. We see muddy streams, but it is often difficult to know the source of the sediment. Erosion prevention practices, such as ground cover, are easier than remedies, but require foresight. The Benton SWCD offers foresight to landowners, in the form of technical assistance. We also provide information for potential funding sources, such as OWEB small grants, to assist with conservation practices like establishing ground cover. Contact our office by calling (541) 753-7208, to learn if your conservation concerns are eligible for OWEB or other funding consideration.



*The cycle of carbon on Earth
is the story of life on this planet.
Brady & Weil - The Nature and Properties of Soils*

Meet Joe Hinds: Zone 4 Director

Joe received a Bachelor of Science degree at Portland State University in 1965 and a Masters in Geology from Western Washington University in 1972. Through the years, Joe worked as a geologist in mineral exploration for various federal agencies and private firms. In 1984, Joe transferred his energy to the educational realm, teaching geology classes at Lane Community College while working in Christmas trees, construction and remodeling.



Joe's dedication to natural resource education is a driving force in the District's Education & Outreach program. An active member on the E&O Committee, he combines geology and soils technical knowledge with a wealth of local on-the-ground experience to enhance our activities and demonstrations.

Joe's involvement as a Benton SWCD Director spans two decades and merits his intense appreciation for the expansion of educational programs and conservation projects that we share with Benton County residents. **JOE ROCKS!!!**

Congratulations to
Allan Zuschlag *of Eddyville*
winner of the
Chinook Winds Casino Resort Raffle

Here is a special thanks to our generous
Annual Meeting donors:

Applebee's Neighborhood Grill
Tom Bedell
Borders Books and Music
Cardwell Hill Cellars
Chinook Winds Casino and Resort
Corvallis Police Department
Corvallis Public Works

Dirty Dog Pet Wash
Enchanted Forest
Chaz Matteson
Donald Matteson
Oregon Assoc of Water Utilities
Oregon Zoo
Safeway

Conservation Calendar - Spring 2006



Date & Time Location	Event	For more information contact:
Every month of the YEAR! <i>Various local sites</i>	Discover wildlife while tracking biking, and trekking!!! For a complete schedule visit http://www.geocities.com/donatsanda/pages/n-n_events.htm <i>FUN for all ages!!!</i>	Neighborhood Naturalist Don Boucher 753-7689
April 4 <i>Lane County</i>	Workshop: Goats in Small Farms & Woodlands: What are your options?	OSU Extension, Chrissy Lucas (541) 766-3556 smallfarms.oregonstate.edu
April 22 10AM - 3PM <i>Monroe Avenue 1st and 2nd Streets</i>	Earth Faire Procession of the Species <i>Celebrate Earth Day with a Corvallis tradition</i>	Corvallis Environmental Center (541) 753-9211 http://www.corvallisenvironmentalcenter.org
April 25 - June 7 7 - 9PM <i>Corvallis Fire Station #5</i>	Naturescaping Your Yard - a 6-week landscape design course Tuesday evenings with some Saturday activities. See page 8 for more details. Beth Young, instructor, is joined each week by guest speakers. See page 8 for info	Corvallis Environmental Center (541) 753-9211 http://www.corvallisenvironmentalcenter.org pre-registration required \$49
April 29 9AM - 2:30PM <i>Corvallis Fire Station #5</i>	Invasive Weed Workshop <i>learn to identify and control invasive weeds on your land - class and field session. See page 8 for info</i>	Marys River Watershed Council (541) 758-7597 outreach@mrwc.net pre-registration required \$10
April 29 - May 18 <i>Albany, Stayton and Salem areas</i>	5 Education Events sponsored by North Santiam and Calapooia Watershed Councils including Rural Residential, Small Grants, Woodland Restoration, and Urban Workshop Series.	North Santiam and Calapooia Watershed Councils, Erika Lang call 541-758-9262 ealang77@yahoo.com
May 6 9AM - 2PM <i>Tour schedule TBA</i>	Native Garden Tour - complementary to Naturescaping Your Yard course - this event is open to the public.	Benton SWCD - Teresa Matteson (541) 753-7208 teresa.matteson@oacd.org \$5 donation encouraged for non-course participants
May 7 11AM - 5PM <i>ArtCentric Plaza Central Park Corvallis</i>	18th Annual Spring Garden Festival <i>Kick off spring with this grand event - plant sales, garden art, gardening information and demonstrations, food, dancing and musical entertainment.</i>	Madison Avenue Task Force (541) 754-9517
May 15 7:00 - 9:30PM <i>LaSells Stewart Center</i>	Toby Hemenway - author of <i>Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-scale Permaculture; lecture and book signing. An Introduction to Permaculture for the Home Landscape</i>	Beth Young (541) 738-2971 beth@bygardendesign.com \$5 donation encouraged at the door
May 22 - 28	Oregon Weed Awareness Week	<i>Northwest Weed Management Partnership.</i> Vern Holm NOIWMP@onlinemac.com
June 18 - 23 <i>Oregon State University</i>	Summer Agriculture Institute for K-12 Educators - a dynamic, fun-packed week of learning how an Agriculture theme can be used in teaching math, science, social studies and English.	Andrea Kuenzi 503-874-9543 drea_001@msn.com Pre-registration required \$400 fee includes 3 graduate credits (OSU), housing, meals, transportation and classroom-ready curriculum and resources.
June 24 11AM - 5PM <i>Tyee Wine Cellars</i>	Solstice Celebration at Tyee Winery <i>History, Art and Culture - Our Connections to the Watershed. Join the Marys River Watershed Council for their annual celebration and fund- raising event. Local artists and craftspeople will share hands-on workshops. Music, Food, Wine, Silent Auction.</i>	Marys River Watershed Council (541) 758-7597 outreach@mrwc.net Tickets \$8-25 on a sliding scale
September 16 10AM - 4PM <i>Benton County Fairgrounds</i>	4th Annual Kids Day for Conservation - build a bird house, climb a rock wall, pet a snake, and more. <i>Over 40 FUN hands-on activities for kids of all ages!</i>	Benton SWCD - Teresa Matteson (541) 753-7208 teresa.matteson@oacd.org

Patti Warner Recognized with National 4-H Wildlife and Fisheries Award

Congratulations to Patti Warner who has been selected for the 2006 National 4-H Wildlife and Fisheries Adult Volunteer Leader Award. Patti's outstanding work as coordinator of the Jefferson Elementary 4-H Wildlife Stewards "Keepers of the Creek" program, has resulted in a hands-on wildlife habitat education site and urban stream restoration project for grades K-5.



In her award nomination Patti commented that "My 4-H work has been valuable to me in so many ways; from increasing my confidence, to my ability to work effectively with youth, adults, community agencies and organizations on a local, state, federal and international level".



Patti will receive her award plaque when she attends the 71st North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference to be held March 22-26, 2006 in Columbus, Ohio. There she will join five other recipients from across the country. This award was initiated in 1980 to honor adult 4-H leader volunteers who assist youth in learning about wildlife and fisheries conservation. The award is co-sponsored by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior and National 4-H Headquarters/Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service/US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Patti and the Benton SWCD staff have collaborated to provide funding and leadership for the Jefferson Elementary Dixon Creek restoration project. Since receiving her 4-H Leader training in 2002, Patti has become passionate about sharing nature with youth. Patti, a creative artist, encourages the integration of art with the physical and scientific aspects of creek restoration and monitoring. Under Patti's guidance, students at Jefferson Elementary have designed and painted banners and pictures depicting the Dixon Creek study areas and the site's flora and fauna. Patti has been instrumental in displaying Jefferson students' unique artwork in the community.

For more information about 4-H Wildlife Stewards Program contact Maggie Livesay at the Benton County OSU Extension Service 541-766-6750 or visit the web site at www.wildlifestewards.4h.oregonstate.edu.

Ecology Field Cards

Explore the Douglas-fir forest using a set of laminated *Ecology Field Cards* and complementary *Educator's Guide*. The cards, designed for use in the field or classroom, introduce 50 common plant, wildlife and fungus species of the Willamette Valley Douglas-fir Forest ecosystem. The *Educator's Guide* contains lessons that align with Oregon Education Benchmarks.

Buy a set (\$35) at the OSU Bookstore or Benton County OSU Extension Service. For more information visit http://extension.oregonstate.edu/benton/yfe_ecocards.htm.

*Donate a set to your favorite teacher
or community educator!*

On-line Course for 4-H Wildlife Stewards Program

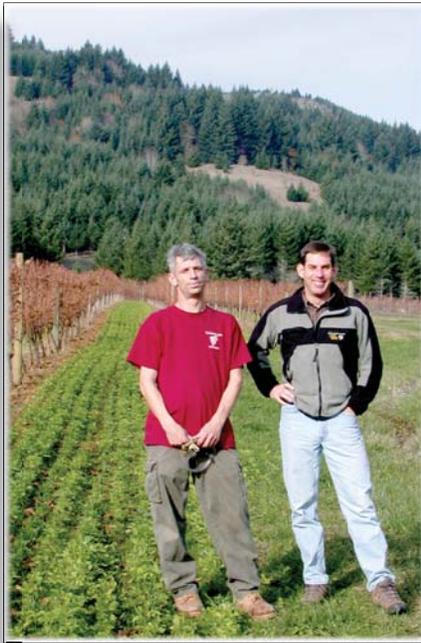


Are you interested in becoming a 4-H Wildlife Steward but can't seem to get to a training? In response to volunteer requests for alternative training, an on-line course has been developed. A training session started March 15 with plans for additional sessions in the future.

For on-line training information contact Maggie Livesay at 766-6750 or visit www.wildlifestewards.4h.oregonstate.edu. click on Volunteers and E-Module.

Volunteers must still meet with a County Agent and fulfill the requirements for becoming a volunteer for the Benton County OSU Extension 4-H Program.

When asked what he most looks forward to in his new position, Gordon said, "I am excited to work with our partners on the issues affecting the county. The Benton SWCD is a model organization for delivering technical assistance, outreach and education to residents. We will continue leading the way in the years to come."



Gordon, right, enjoyed a beautiful fall afternoon discussing cover crop methods with Scott at Cardwell Hill Vineyard.

WELCOME *Gordon Cumming* *Benton SWCD District Manager*

Gordon Cumming joined the Benton SWCD staff as District Manager in November 2005. A 1995 graduate of St. Olaf, Gordon continued his education at Oregon State University (OSU), receiving his Masters degree in Environmental Policy, Sociology, and Environmental Ethics. Gordon focused his graduate work on understanding the ability of watershed councils to address and make decisions on complex natural resources issues. Previously the Executive Director of the grass roots Cannon River Watershed Partnership, Gordon recognizes the need for collaborating with partners to address urban and rural conservation needs at the local level.

Gordon met his wife, Gabriela, while attending graduate school at OSU. Gordon and Gabriela are very happy to be back in Oregon - especially in Corvallis. You will likely see them, Gabriela, a passionate trail runner, Rex the dog, and Gordon, a zealous cyclist, on roads and trails throughout the year.

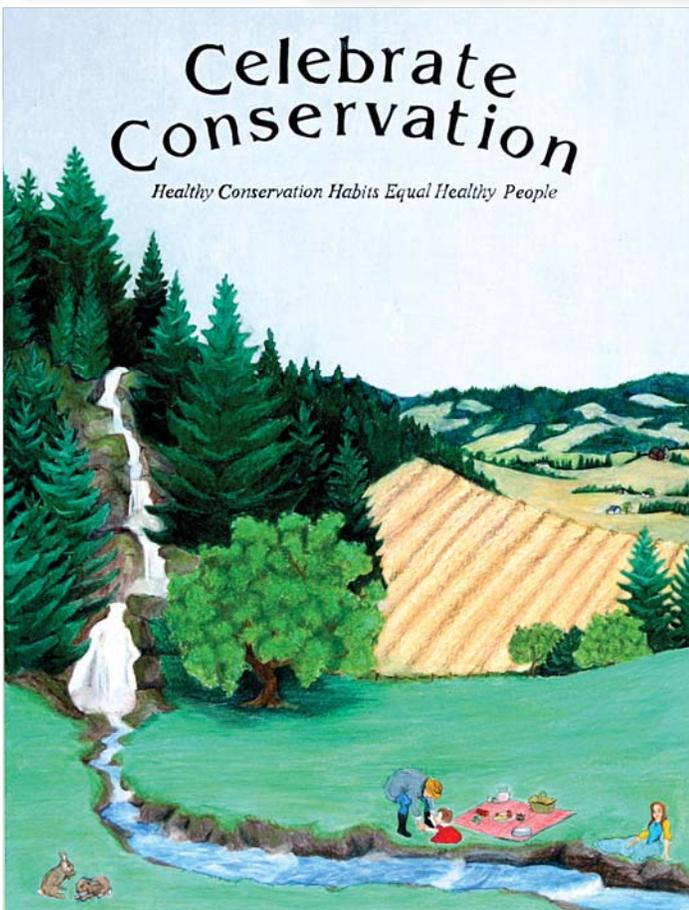
Molly Whitney Wins First Place in National Poster Contest

First place honor in the National Association of Conservation Districts' (NACD) 2005 Poster Contest was given to a beautiful colored pencil drawing by Molly Whitney, sophomore at Corvallis High School. Designed to promote the theme of Celebrate Conservation, Molly's poster, shown on the left, portrays folks enjoying a serene landscape in the foothills of Benton County.

Thrilled to receive the honor, Molly shared a funny story about her poster experience. While working on the sky late into the evening, Molly's blue pencil got shorter and shorter until she could only sharpen it with a knife. Finally, she split the pencil to use the last chunk of lead. The next morning, she bought another package of colored pencils to finish the last bit of blue sky. Her artistic persistence earned her a blue ribbon, a \$50 savings-bond from the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts and \$100 from NACD. Molly will include her first-place poster in her college application portfolio.

All Benton County residents, age K-12 grade, are invited to enter a poster in the 2006 competition. For more info contact Benton SWCD (541) 753-7208 or e-mail teresa.matteson@oacd.org. This year's theme is Water Wise.

The poster entry deadline date is April 24, 2006.



To view the national winners from 2003 and 2004 contests, visit <http://nacdnet.org/outreach/awards/posterIdeas.htm>. The 2005 winning posters will soon be added to that web site.



Benton SWCD Native Tree and Shrub Sale Coordinators gather at Corvallis Farmers Market: from left Tim Dehne (forever), Alice Fairfield (2006) and Kim Gossen (2003)

A heartfelt Thanks is extended to each and all of the Native Tree and Shrub Sale volunteers listed below:

Eric Anderson
 Angela Andre
 Holly Barnard
 Lyn Batchelor
 Tom Bedell
 Steve Bice
 Marcia Cutler
 Tim Dehne
 Matt Findley
 Lorne Fitts
 Jennifer Fleuret
 Andy Gallagher
 Ryan Gerl
 Jeff Goby
 Emily Gonzalez
 Louis Gordon
 Kris Graves
 Cliff Hall
 Luke Hall
 Andrea Heywood
 Sarah Hoffman
 Lucy Honig
 Meredith Howell
 Peggy Kavanagh
 Mona Jones-Romanisc
 Erika Lang
 Debbie Lauer

Don Lauer
 Jeffrey Mason
 Ann Mayes
 Makeda Mayes
 Karis McFarlane
 John McQueen
 Norina Nettleton
 Mike Presley
 Mike Prouty
 Susan Reithel
 Bill Richardson
 Jahnsam Richardson
 Jeni Richardson
 Anne Rigor
 Kris Rudolph
 Jana Seelinger
 Diana Sharps
 Sally Shaw
 Penny Signaless
 Alana Smith
 Dana Stepp
 Kelly Stepp
 Daniel Tucker
 Mayrah Udvardi
 Jon Willamson

Recipe for a successful native plant distribution program...

- Start with the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District Board which is committed to providing their constituents with low-cost native plants.
- Mix with a dedicated coordinator, *Alice Fairfield*, who toils for months evaluating previous sale records, contacting suppliers, organizing details, shuffling invoices and predicting purchasing trends.
- Stir in local native plant nurseries that are conscientious, friendly, and flexible:
 - SevenOaks Native Plant Nursery*
 - Robinson's Native Plant Nursery*
 - Carter's Green House*
 - Brook's Tree Farm*
 - Heritage Seedlings*
 - Oak Point Nursery*
 - Willamette Gardens*
- Add the Benton SWCD office staff who designs and publishes the order form, answers phones and manages money: Gordon, Jen, Donna and Teresa;
- Fold in two special community members, Mary and Wally Eichler, who host the sale on their property year after year;
- Season with donations from
 - Fred Meyer - food
 - First Alternative Co-op - food
 - Papa's Pizza - food
 - Inavale Students - native plant posters
 - Home Grown Gardens - garden carts
 - Peter Kenagy - blue eyed grass
 - Craig Edminster - grass seed
 - Goby Walnut Products - sawdust
- Chill in a cold barn bustling with cheerful, hard-working, knowledgeable volunteers who step forward to fill orders, address concerns and manage plant materials.
- Top with a community of residents who value the use of native plants in landscape beautification, erosion control, wildlife habitat enhancement, riparian restoration, reforestation, wind breaks and privacy screens.



MANY HANDS MAKE WORK LIGHT!

*This issue of Horizons is dedicated to
 Laurie Shonerd 1950 - 2006 ~ a steward of the land*

Alsea River Basin News by Linda Johnston & Jackie Nichols



Are you interested in developing a restoration opportunity in your own backyard? Do you want more elk and deer meadows? Would you like all those pushy, pesky blackberries gone without having to buy a goat? What about that culvert that does not allow for fish passage? Would you like to see a reduction in hazardous fuel for forest fires? Keep reading...

Here is how it works...through a process called stewardship contracting, the funds received from thinning on federal lands are retained locally, and a portion of that money is available for projects on private land within the Alsea Stewardship area, which extends south to Ten Mile and north to a section of the south Yaquina basin. Those projects can be any of those mentioned above, as long as they improve, maintain, or restore forest or rangeland health, restore or maintain water quality, improve fish and wildlife habitat, establish native plant species...well, you get the picture.

The Alsea Stewardship Group consists of local organizations and people, including watershed councils, timber companies, conservation groups, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, local community

Early History of the Marys River Watershed Council by Mark Taratoot

February 2006. Heavy rainstorms marched through Oregon. Rivers became reacquainted with their floodplains. Much of the Willamette Valley was underwater. Some people were trapped in their homes or neighborhoods. Some people went out to glimpse the power of water in our environment, and some even went paddling in odd places like parks and golf courses. The Marys River left its banks. You might say it was a watershed event of sorts.

Just about this very same time, another watershed event was taking place. This event involved a 10 year anniversary of a group of volunteers interested in the watershed where they lived. Yes, it was early 1996 when the group now known as the Marys River Watershed Council (MRWC) started meeting. The history of MRWC goes back farther than ten years.

MRWC started from an idea from directors of the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District (BSWCD). Jennifer Ayotte and Karen Finley developed a grant to fund the formation of three watershed councils. Cascade Pacific RC&D managed the grant funds and LeRoy Fish, a fisheries scientist and ex- commercial fisherman, was hired to lead the tri-council development process.

On January 20, 1996, a group of people met for the first time at Consumers Power headquarters in Philomath. They learned about grassroots watershed organizations

leaders, landowners and more. We are a diverse and vocal group that is thriving on learning to work together for a common goal – love of our land.

The Alsea Stewardship Group meets once a month, generally on the third Monday, somewhere in the extended Alsea basin. If you are interested in the formation of this group and would like your thoughts heard, come on down! We would be glad to have your participation. Mark your calendar for the next Alsea Stewardship Group meeting Monday April 10, 6-8PM Yachats Commons.

If you don't like meetings but are interested, ask Linda to be put you on the mailing list for information about field trips, funding availability, consultation on projects, community benefits, or job opportunities.

For more information about the Alsea Watershed Council or Stewardship Group contact Linda Johnston phone: 541-528-3221 or e-mail 5rivers@pioneer.net

Alsea Watershed Council meetings on the third Thursday of the month from 7-9 pm. The meeting location changes to accommodate attendees. Mark your calendar for the next three meeting dates:

April 20, May 18 and June 15.

and shared stories, experiences, & visions over juice and cookies. Each attendee had the opportunity to put a point on a watershed map to show where they lived. This gave a picture of where the participants called home.

The initial name, Marys River Watershed Alliance, was changed to Marys River Watershed Council. Volunteers developed a charter, and many people became charter members. By March, 1997, members developed a set of bylaws to guide the operation of the MRWC.

Also in March, 1997, Mark Taratoot, BSWCD director and OSU's Forest Engineering Department scientist, volunteered to serve as Acting Council Chair to run meetings, take meeting minutes, serve as a primary contact, and perform staff duties. Other volunteers dedicated their time and energy including Gary Blanchard, Bill Percy, Karen Bennett, Chuck Lane, Tom Bedell, and Paul Reeser.

For more information about the MRWC contact Sandra Covney phone: 541-758-7597 or e-mail outreach@mrwc.net.



MRWC meetings take place the first Wednesday of the month from 7:00-9:00 pm at Philomath City Hall.



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 Web: www.benton-swcd.org

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1. Switch from snail mail to email by sending an email to teresa.matteson@oacd.org with e-news in the subject line.
2. If you don't want to be on this mailing list, call us at (541) 753-7208 and we will remove you.

This newsletter is printed on 30% recycled paper.
 Please recycle it again,
 or better yet, pass it to a friend!



Naturescaping Your Yard

a six-week landscape design course
Tuesdays April 25 - May 30 from 7 - 9PM
 Beth Young, instructor, is joined by guest speakers from conservation groups and natural resource agencies. Held at Corvallis Fire Station #5 4950 NW Fair Oaks Drive off Walnut north of Harrison.

Pre-registration required. Fee \$49
 Includes Native Garden Tour, Saturday, May 6 and Design Workshop, Saturday, June 3. Register in person at the Corvallis Environmental Center, 214 SW Monroe Avenue or download a mail-in form at <http://www.corvallisenvironmentalcenter.org>. Call 753-9211 for more information. Sponsored by the Corvallis Environmental Center, Benton Soil and Water Conservation District, and Corvallis Public Works.



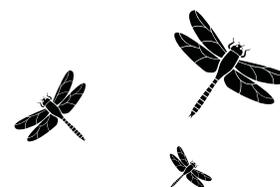
THE BENTON SWCD MISSION *is to provide leadership to Benton County residents through education and technical assistance for conservation and responsible use of soil, water and related resources through a balanced, cooperative program that protects, restores, and improves these resources.*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Bedell, Chair
 Eric Horning, Vice Chair
 Cliff Hall, Treasurer
 Anne Rigor
 Joe Hinds
 Andy Gallagher
 Tim Dehne

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Rana Foster
 Mark Taratoot



Weed Out the Invaders

Learn to identify and control invasive weeds!
Saturday, April 29
 Classroom: 9AM - Noon
 Field session 12:30 - 2:30PM (bring your lunch!) Held at Corvallis Fire Station #5 4950 NW Fair Oaks Drive off Walnut north of Harrison.

Pre-registration required. Fee \$10 per household
 Bring samples of your favorite weeds to identify!
 Register in person at Benton SWCD 305 SW C Avenue, Suite 2. For more information call 758-7597 or e-mail outreach@mrwc.net. Sponsored by Marys River Watershed Council, Benton Soil and Water Conservation District, OSU Extension Service, Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Northwest Weed Management Partnership.



EMPLOYEES

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

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