

Strategic Plan

2015-2020



Benton Soil and Water
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

*Encouraging engagement in the conservation
of natural resources.*

The Strategic Plan A Response to Changing Needs

The development of the Benton Soil & Water Conservation District Five Year Strategic Plan comes at a time of significant transformation for conservation organizations in the State of Oregon. We face fundamental shifts in the most prominent conservation issues and the funding mechanisms available to support our work. Urbanization of the valley and a changing climate are increasing pressures on limited natural resources such as water and wildlife habitat. To stay relevant, we must adapt our programs and services.

Responsive to our community's interests and true to our values.

We value integrity, accountability, and responsible resource management.

With the best interests of future generations in mind, Benton Soil & Water Conservation District will be adaptive to stakeholder needs, remain true to our values, and build on our strengths. We will continue to responsibly manage our assets, lead and participate in new and existing partnerships, and revise programs to meet the conservation needs of our community.



About the District

Benton SWCD is located in Benton County, nestled in the heart of the Willamette Valley, about halfway between the capitol city of Salem and the city of Eugene. The Marys River watershed is the largest of more than ten watersheds that lie within Benton County.

SWCD Zones of Benton County

Benton Soil & Water Conservation District has a board of seven elected volunteer directors. Five of the directors represent the zones shown on the map below and two are at-large.



*We are non-regulatory,
and partially funded by
a County tax levy.*

Benton Soil & Water Conservation District is one of 45 conservation districts in Oregon. Conservation districts are special service districts like school or fire districts. Although we are technically considered a form of local government, we have no regulatory authority.

Benton SWCD was established in 1956 as an elected body of volunteers that provided local input to federal conservation programs. In 2004, Benton County voters granted us a permanent property tax rate, which enabled us to hire more staff and expand programs. In 2014, the tax levy provided about a third of the district's annual budget, and the rest predominantly came from grants and state funding.



Mission

Our mission is to engage Benton County residents in the conservation and stewardship of natural resources for current and future generations.

Vision

We envision a future where our services encourage people to value and enhance the resiliency and function of land and water from the floodplains of the Willamette River to the mountains and valleys of the Coast Range.

*To value and enhance
the land and water for
present and future
generations.*



2015-2020 Goals

In the next five years, Benton Soil & Water Conservation District will direct efforts in three key areas. Each goal area will be improved based on community input.

1. Deliver Adaptive Programs and Strengthen Partnerships

Informed by community feedback, our programs will address contemporary natural resource issues. We will continue to build partnerships that promote conservation and restoration efforts.

2. Effectively Spread Our Message

Our compelling communications plan will inform residents of the services available to them.

3. Strengthen Our Capacity

While continuing to responsibly manage district resources, we will increase our ability to serve our community by developing diverse and innovative funding strategies and by maintaining a knowledgeable and dedicated board and staff.



Goal 1: Deliver Programs

Our programs will engage residents in activities that improve water quality, soil health, and habitat value. Our technical, financial, and educational assistance programs will incorporate stakeholder input. We will facilitate partnerships that promote conservation on urban, rural, public, and private lands.

Programmatic Strategies

Assess stakeholder needs. A variety of assessment techniques will be implemented at the onset of program development and throughout all program phases. Stakeholders include funders, partners, adult audiences, and preschool through twelfth grade youth.

Offer programs that inspire stewardship. Consistent messaging and focus will be achieved through annual selection of topics. Thematic tours and workshops will be offered for target audiences.

Create and expand partnerships. The district will convene, inspire, and participate in cooperative conservation efforts. We will collaborate to create model landscapes, promote and deliver assistance opportunities, and conduct research and monitoring.



“The health of our waters is the principal measure of how we live on the land.”

- Luna Leopold

Goal 2: Spread Our Message

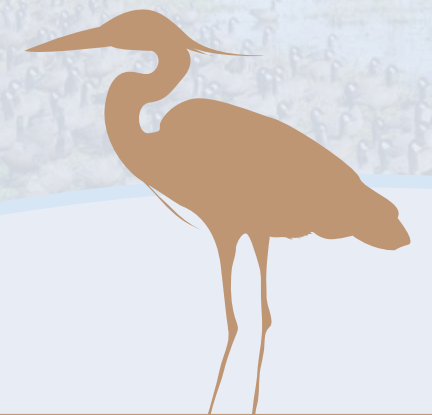
We will improve public awareness and perception of the Benton Soil & Water Conservation District and increase community participation in our programs. Stakeholders will know what our services are, how to access them, and how engagement with Benton SWCD will improve their quality of life.

Communications Strategies

Identify and understand our audiences. Both new and existing audiences will be surveyed to determine the most effective ways to interact with each audience.

Create audience-specific messages. For each message, the goal is to improve awareness of Benton SWCD and increase use of our services.

Distribute the messages. We will use a variety of marketing tools and media outlets to reach our target audiences. Effectiveness of the outreach campaign will be periodically evaluated.



Goal 3: Strengthen Our Capacity

Continued recruitment and retention of a knowledgeable, dedicated, and team-oriented board and staff is a priority, as is the responsible management of our financial and human resources. Furthermore, we must develop diverse and innovative funding strategies to strengthen our capacity and achieve our goals.

Capacity-building Strategies

Develop the Benton SWCD team. We recruit and support board members, volunteers, interns, and staff whose skills help us achieve district program goals. To extend our reach, all team members will be encouraged to engage with stakeholders on behalf of the district.

Streamline expenditures where possible. We will explore opportunities to reduce operating expenses and share resources with partners while maintaining compliance with laws and SWCD requirements.

Increase and diversify financial resources. The district will increase funding through grants, gifts, and donations. We will investigate innovative funding approaches such as social enterprise or fee-for-service models.

*“Take care of the land
and the land will take
care of you.”*

-Hugh H. Bennett

We welcome your support.

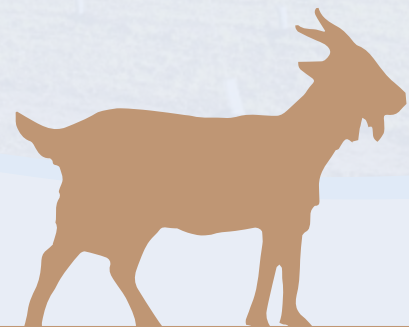
We rely on strong partnerships and committed funders to realize our vision of resilient landscapes from the Willamette River to the Coast Range. We invite you to join us in stewardship of the places where current and future generations work and play. Your participation strengthens the services we provide.

Opportunities

Fund our initiatives. As we refine existing programs and develop new ones, your input and investment will strengthen and extend our efforts.

Partner with us on projects. Effective partnerships help all the participants reach greater heights. Meet with us to discuss ways we can help each other.

Make a donation. Whether your offer is a one-time contribution, gift of property, or an endowment, we appreciate the support. Thank you.



BENTON
SOIL AND WATER



CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

Connect with us.

www.bentonswcd.org
office@bentonswcd.org
541-753-7208

*You can take steps to conserve natural
resources. We can help.*