The Making Ripples Program (MRP) was created in 1999 as the education program of Benton SWCD. The program originally focused on stream restoration efforts at schools in Benton County. One of the first projects was the creation of the book, “How to Adopt a Stream in Benton County.” Another important effort was the restoration of Dixon Creek in partnership with 4-H Wildlife Stewards and Jefferson Elementary. This successful joint venture now serves as a model for present and future community restoration activities, and a “Keepers of the Creek” Guidebook is being written by Patti Warner, a parent volunteer involved in the project.

The MRP vision has expanded since its inception. Now, our goal is “to unite and support the separate efforts of local agencies, groups, educators and volunteers and to support collaborative efforts of watershed education partners to improve K-12 and adult citizen watershed knowledge.” (Teresa Matteson, Benton SWCD Education & Outreach Coordinator)

Here is a sampling of the ways in which we plan to support and enhance natural resources education around Benton County:

- Offering mini-grants & informing educators of other funding sources (see p. 2 mini-grant article)
- Serving as a clearinghouse for natural resources activities and opportunities in the county
- Creating & distributing a semi-annual conservation education newsletter (This is our first issue!)
- Coordinating public speaking opportunities for students
- Producing laminated maps of Benton County watersheds for schools
- Supporting the creation of the “Keepers of the Creek” Guidebook
- Partnering with OSU Extension to bring you 4-H Wildlife Stewards and Project WILD Aquatic trainings
- Co-sponsoring “Naturescaping Your Yard” courses with Beth Young and the Corvallis Environmental Center
- Teaching natural resources conservation principles/soil and water basics
- Mobilizing volunteers

Let us know what we can do to help you enhance or restore the watersheds and streams of Benton County! Contact Heath Keirstead (heath.keirstead@oacd.org) or Teresa Matteson (teresa.matteson@oacd.org) or call us at 541-753-7208.
The water underground—too often out-of-sight and out-of-mind and commonly omitted from watershed education. Groundwater provides cool water to streams in summer, drinking water for virtually all rural residents in Benton County, and irrigation that allows our bounty from the land.

The OSU Extension Well Water Program helps Oregonians better understand drinking water and groundwater. A special effort is being made to educate people living and working in the Willamette River corridor because that groundwater is vulnerable to contamination. One goal of the program is to inform these residents that their well water may be high in nitrate, and possibly other contaminants. Another goal is to share information about ways to protect the groundwater resource.

The Well Water Program is offering its services to classroom teachers who would like to incorporate groundwater in their watershed education curriculum. Well Water staff are available to help you develop your ideas and for classroom assistance. For example, nitrate test kits and sand-filled groundwater models can be used in activities addressing a variety of science benchmarks.

Benton SWCD is offering three grants for natural resources education:

- We are offering one-time curriculum grants of $200. These funds will provide materials, such as books, field guides, and curriculum sets, for improving teacher understanding of watershed processes. Also, materials used for teaching K-12 students about the many elements of watershed science can be purchased with these funds. See the Web Corner on page 2 and the Book Nook on page 4 for Curriculum Grant ideas.

- Each Benton County School is eligible for Making Ripples Mini Grants of $250/year. These funds are available to support activities that improve watershed knowledge while building community pride and cohesion. Use your imagination when applying for this support. If nothing comes to mind right away, we have some ideas!
  - Buy supplies for a school greenhouse or garden project where students learn about reducing chemical and water use.
  - Buy supplies to make bat boxes or quail nesting sites for habitat improvement.
...Do With a Mini-grant? (continued from p.2)

- Get a substitute and bus so you can take a field trip to the fish hatchery or waste water treatment plant
- Purchase scientific equipment to help students appreciate water and its importance in our world, like a microscope, thermometers, water quality test kits, stopwatches, or bug boxes (http://www.acornnaturalists.com/store/)
- Start a composting project
- Send teachers or volunteers to training programs like 4-H Wildlife or Watershed Stewards
- Hire a guest scientist to come to your class

Not satisfied with $250?? Benton SWCD is also interested in funding larger, collaborative efforts of natural resources educators. If you have a dream to work with other teachers at your school or from other schools on a large scale project, let us hear your ideas! We are waiting to fund one (or many) such projects.

To request an application for these funding opportunities, call Heath at 541-753-7208 or e-mail heath.keirstead@oacd.org.

An Integrated Curriculum Approach

By Pam Wilson & Heath Keirstead

Here’s a great way to reinforce your science lessons with language arts!

After studying an ecological topic like the water cycle, introduce your students to some examples of poetic forms. Haiku, windspark, or diamante poems are several options. Check http://www.catskillcenter.org/programs/edn/cip/H20/Lesson1/poetry2.htm for descriptions.

Once you’ve familiarized your students with the forms, take them outside. Have them describe what they hear, feel, smell, and see, and embellish with adjectives. Ask, “What are you reminded of sitting out here?” Then have students write poems (using a poetic form) that incorporate the relevant science concepts.

This fun lesson is based on Project Learning Tree’s Activity 5: Poet-Tree, and was shared by Pam Wilson at the PLT workshop held this summer in Corvallis.

Contact Oregon Forestry Education Program for more information: http://www.cof.orst.edu/cof/extended/ofep/.

Stream Cycle

Where did you come from, noisy burbling stream?
High in the mountain Where snows fall white and silent.
Then seep slowly into the soil
Drawn down through days and decades Of rock and sediment To spill out in a sylvan spring and Fall again with splash and spray.

Where are you going, clear sparkling satisfying stream?
Down, always down Over boulder and branch Past fern, alder, spruce, and pine Past sumac, salmonberry, cedar, and fir To field, grasslands, marsh, and estuary Home. And then to return.

Written by Jacqueline Farah, a Neskonew Valley School teacher, during a Project Learning Tree Workshop

Soda Creek Falls Photo by Denise W. Ross www.dwrphotos.com
### Upcoming Events in Benton County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/ Time/ Location</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>Who to Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Global Climate Change Workshops</strong></td>
<td>9/23-24/06 at OSU</td>
<td>$75 stipend</td>
<td>Vicki Osis <a href="mailto:vjosis@peak.org">vjosis@peak.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compost Workshop</strong></td>
<td>Friday 9/1/06 1-4 pm Benton County Fairgrounds South Lawn</td>
<td>Sponsored by Allied Waste</td>
<td>Corvallis Disposal 754-0444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Naturescaping in the City</strong></td>
<td>9/12/06-10/31/06 Firehouse #5</td>
<td>$49</td>
<td>Beth Young: 738-2971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kids Day for Conservation</strong></td>
<td>9/16, 10am-4pm at Benton County Fairgrounds</td>
<td>free</td>
<td>Dick Powell 541-929-2477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Naturescaping Your Rural Property</strong></td>
<td>8 sessions by garden designer Beth Young</td>
<td>free</td>
<td>Maggie Livesay <a href="mailto:maggie.livesay@oregonstate.edu">maggie.livesay@oregonstate.edu</a> 766-6750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Advances in Fisheries, Wildlife and Ecology Symposium (RAFWE)</strong></td>
<td>11/9/06 LaSells Stewart Center, OSU</td>
<td>free</td>
<td>Judith Jobse <a href="mailto:jobsej@onid.orst.edu">jobsej@onid.orst.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project WILD Aquatic Workshop</strong></td>
<td>01/03/07-02/21/07 Firehouse #5</td>
<td>$49</td>
<td>Beth Young: 738-2971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benton SWCD Native Tree and Shrub Sale</strong></td>
<td>Order forms available mid-September; Plant pick-up Sat 02/03/07 one day only! Eichler Hay Company E of Hwy 20, N of Circle Blvd</td>
<td>See price list on order form</td>
<td>Alice Fairfield 766-8083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board**

has generously funded four issues of the Making Ripples Newsletter. The second issue, available January 2007, will focus on growing community partnerships for watershed education. Connect with natural resource education partners in Benton County, learn ways of harvesting volunteer energy, and explore existing conservation networks.