Eric Horning, current BSWCD Vice Chair, chose not to stand for Zone 5 Director this past election. A number of factors undoubtedly drove that decision as Eric has become the principal operator of Horning Farms in south Benton County and wants to spend more time with his family.

During his eight years on the BSWCD Board, Eric has faithfully represented the Benton County agricultural constituency. He always considered the possible effects of decisions on the farming community, supported the preservation of private property rights, and worked to keep onerous regulations reasonable. continued page 2
Eric's practical experience in his farming operation, where cost cutting practices must always be on the table, gave him insight into the fiscal concerns of the District which benefited from his careful scrutiny of expenditures. His technical understanding of conservation practices helped the BSWCD Board make astute decisions on conservation plans and on-the-ground issues.

Eric has represented our Board on the Mid Willamette Agricultural Water Quality Plan and Rules Local Advisory Committee (LAC) since 2001. During LAC planning and administrative rule development phase, he sought to ensure that rules would be fair and impartially implemented. Eric also has served on the Board of Directors of the Cascade Pacific Resource and Conservation Development Council.

Eric, an ingenious and creative farm manager, recently coupled a used school bus diesel engine with new applicator guns to modify his worn out swamp buggy for increased power, fuel efficiency, and application precision at a considerable savings over purchasing a used or new sprayer. He does not consider biodiesel an affordable alternative on his farm, but may consider meeting future farm fuel needs with a wheat fueled ethanol production facility.

The Benton SWCD staff has also benefited from his practical farming background. Eric has welded a broken bucket auger and cut infiltration rings from irrigation pipe for Outdoor School. We all fondly remember the harvest season board meetings when he arrived, tired and sunburned, with a huge box of tasty Willamette Valley sweet corn.

The Benton SWCD will miss Eric's valuable insight and subtle sense of humor. The staff and Directors wish him well and thank him for his long time service to the citizens of the District and especially his dedication to the agricultural community.

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**2005 - 2006 Annual Meeting ~ Celebrating 50 Years**

A dedicated group braved the November 28th weather to celebrate 50 Years of Conservation. The party attendees represented a wide swath of the District’s history. Past Board members who reunited for the occasion included Don Hector, the 1956 Chair (pictured right) and his daughter Karen, Gracen “Bud” Bush, John Caputo, Travis Hill, George Ice and his wife Becky (the District’s first paid employee) Avery Jones, Dave Schmedding, Steve Smith, and Mark Taratoot.

Benno Warkentin, OSU Emeritus Professor of Soil Science and author, shared a crowd-pleasing presentation titled “Development of Soil Knowledge: Ideas and People”. Benno’s historical overview, spiced with his personal charm and humor, told of humankind’s relationship with soil, surveyed the development and use of soil management tools, and touched on trends in soil study.

**Annual recognition was given to the following folks:**

- **Making Ripples Award**: Dick Powell - Starker Forests
- **Conservation Teacher**: Gail O’Malley - Cheldelin MS
- **Director of the Year**: Tim Dehne
- **Volunteer of the Year**: Jason Hotchkiss
- **Golden Dirt Award**: Mary Eichler
- **District Appreciation**: Eric Horning
- **Staff Appreciation**: Tom Bedell

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**Online Organic Fertilizer Calculator**

*If you practice or are pondering organic production check out this nifty tool!*

Nick Andrews (Oregon State University) and John Foster (Oregon Tilth) have teamed up to create an online organic fertilizer calculator to help you fine tune applications, minimize spending, maximize yield and protect water resources from leaching nutrients.

To access the calculator, visit either the OSU Extension or Oregon Tilth web page at [http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/fertcalc.php](http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/fertcalc.php) or [http://www.tilth.org/Resources/index.html](http://www.tilth.org/Resources/index.html)

This Excel format calculator includes five worksheets with instructions for plugging in the percent dry matter, “as-is” nutrient analysis, crop nutrient requirements, suggested fertilizer application rates and the price/pound for fertilizers that you use.

The calculator estimates plant-available nitrogen from organic fertilizers, and includes instructions that explain how to use it, how it works, and what limitations it has.

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**Congratulations!!!**

*to Molly Whitney, CHS junior and Mikayla Crystal, Wilson Elementary 5th grader.*

Their 2006 Water Wise Conservation Posters won

**FIRST PLACE**

at the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting.

Next their posters will compete at the National Annual Meeting in Los Angeles - February 2007
Karen Strohmeyer, pictured right, has been awarded the 2006 Outstanding Performance by a Coordinator from the Pac Rim Regional Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils. Next, she will compete at the national level with the other regional association winners.

In 18 years of service, Karen has been very busy! She implemented the Willamette Initiative with EPA, organized 10 still-active watershed councils, partnered with the US Forest Service to facilitate the internationally recognized Siuslaw Stewardship Program and provided direction for the Northwest Invasive Weed Management Partnership. She also implemented the Bylund Floodplain Restoration Project returning 1.2 miles of the Willamette River’s forested riparian buffer and back sloughs to health, developed the upcoming Farmer-Fisher-Chef Connection and organized the Willamette Valley Birding Trail Project which will link rural businesses to a popular recreation activity that promotes resource conservation throughout 180 miles of the Willamette Valley. Karen applies unique organizational and leadership strategies to create strong partnerships, craft successful work plans, and secure solid project funding. Her sound reputation as a skilled leader channels a steady flow of resource conservation and development projects through the Cascade Pacific RC&D office.

Congratulations, Karen!
Help us save valuable resources two ways...

1. Switch from snail mail to email by sending an email to tmatteson@bentonswcd.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.

Thanks so very much!

2006 Conservation Grant and Scholarship Awards

Benton SWCD Conservation Grants support education projects that are long-term, possibly school-wide, district-wide, or county-wide, and/or collaborative. 2006 recipients, grant awards and (project titles) are listed below:

- Jeff Mitchell - $4047.29 (Wildlife Blind)
- Jeff Picton - $900 (Chintimini Wildlife Rehabilitation Center Field Study Program)
- Blodgett Elementary School/Julie Torkelson - $224.09 (Weather Station)
- Lincoln School PTO - $860 (Lincoln Nature Trail)
- Kings Valley Charter School/Courtney Moore - $2373.30 (RARE Greenhouse Supplies)
- Benton County OSU Extension 4-H - $1000 (Beazell Curriculum Kit Development)
- OSU Extension $575 (Urban Soil Study Project)

For more information on Conservation Grant projects, watch for the upcoming Making Ripples page on our website at www.bentonswcd.org

Four 2006 Benton County high school graduates each received $1000 Benton SWCD Natural Resource Scholarships to support their pursuit of higher education related to Natural Resources. Congratulations to Emily Anderson, Tessa Marks, Hattie Olson and Jory Harding.

2007 scholarship criteria and applications will be available in February. Check our web site www.bentonswcd.org. These scholarships are funded by Native Tree and Shrub Sale proceeds.

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

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 (Zone)  Associate Directors
Tom Bedell, Chair (3)  Rana Foster
Cliff Hall, Treasurer (1)  Mark Taratoot
Anne Rigor (2)  Joe Hinds (4)
Eric Horning (5)  Andy Gallagher (At Large)
Tim Dehne (At Large)

Staff
Gordon Cumming, District Manager
Jennifer Floro, Office Manager
Donna Schmitz, Resource Conservationist
Chris Stebbins, Fish Passage Program Coordinator
Teresa Matteson, Education and Outreach Director
Heath Keirstead, Education Coordinator
Alice Fairfield, Native Tree Sale Coordinator

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