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Hydropower Needs You—Write in Today

Hydropower and many other benefits of the lower Snake River Dams are under attack. This year the voices of proponents of dam breaching are being heard by state and federal politicians. Our representatives need to hear your voice, too.

Deadline Approaching to Speak Up for Hydropower

A public process to determine whether there are reasonable means for replacing the benefits of the lower Snake River Dams is underway in Washington. The draft report is scheduled to be released mid-May.

This joint federal-state process, led by Gov. Jay Inslee and Sen. Patty Murray, is called, the Inslee-Murray Process. It will conclude July 31. There is concern that the goal of this process is to justify dam breaching.

Simultaneously, the White House released a blog stating its support for dam breaching.

“We heard calls to support breaching the four dams on the lower Snake River to restore a more natural flow, also about the need to replace the services provided by those dams, and recognition that such a step would require congressional action. This approach has been supported by Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson of Idaho and is being evaluated by Washington Senator Patty Murray in collaboration with Washington Governor Jay Inslee We cannot continue business as usual.”

- THE WHITE HOUSE BLOG, MARCH 28, 2022

The Inslee-Murray Process will focus on the many benefits of the four Lower Snake River dams. These include:

- Navigation and transportation.
- Agriculture and irrigation.
- Energy.
- Tourism and recreation.
- Community resilience and economic health.
- Salmon recovery and habitat restoration.

A consulting team is gathering comments from citizens who would be impacted by the loss of these benefits. Benton REA will submit comments to the process.

The co-op urges all members who care about salmon as well as low-cost, reliable and carbon-free electricity to write in with comments expressing why they support keeping the lower Snake River dams. ■



Email Your Comments by mid-May

Make your voice heard before the draft report publishes in mid-May.

Write to the Inslee-Murray Process
info@lsrdoptions.org

Write to the White House Council on Environmental Quality
salmon@ceq.eop.gov

Make sure to #StandForHydro on social media.

For talking points and more information about the benefits of the lower Snake River Dams, visit www.BentonREA.org/LSRD.

Energy Assistance Is Available To Benton REA Members

If you have a past-due electric bill and your household income is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, you qualify for help paying your electric bill.

POWER TO CARE
APPLY TODAY

BentonREA.org/PowerToCare 509-786-2913



The Benton REA offices will be closed Monday, May 30, in observance of Memorial Day.

We remember and honor all who sacrificed their lives for our freedom.



IS YOUR POWER OUT?

If your electricity is out for more than a few minutes:

- Check your breaker box to see if a circuit breaker has tripped.
- Check to see if your neighbors have power.
- Report Benton REA outages by calling 800-221-6987 or 509-786-1626 or use the SmartHub app.

COOPERATIVE INFORMATION

BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Prosser Office
402 7th St. | P.O. Box 1150
Prosser, WA 99350
509-786-2913

Office Hours: Mon. - Fri., 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.

West Richland Office
6095 W. Van Giesen St.
West Richland, WA 99353
509-967-2921

Office Hours: Mon.- Fri., 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Toll Free: 800-221-6987
www.BentonREA.org

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MEMBER SERVICES

This newsletter is produced by the Benton REA Member Services and Economic Development Department:

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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Even in summer months, adding insulation to your attic can keep your home more comfortable and save energy used by your cooling system. If your attic insulation is level with or below your floor joists (meaning you can easily see your joists), you should add more. If you can't see any of the floor joists because the insulation is well above them, you likely have enough insulation.

Attic insulation should be evenly distributed with no low spots. Make sure the areas along the eaves are adequately covered.

Source: energystar.gov



Benton REA Awards Eight Scholarships in 2022

Five high school seniors were each awarded an \$8,000 Benton REA academic scholarship to aid with college or university tuition. Three seniors were awarded a \$4,000 trade and technical scholarship toward their trade school education.

When unclaimed ownership credit checks are returned to Benton REA, the money is used to fund member education programs, including scholarships for students whose parents or guardians are members of Benton REA.

Read about these scholarship recipients on pages 28-29 of your May Ruralite or at www.BentonREA.org. ■



Coral Bears

Trade & Technical



Ethan Henning

Trade & Technical



Garrett Collins

Trade & Technical



Shreya Mehta

Academic



Madison Slade

Academic



Ella Stam

Academic



Brooklyn Peterson

Academic



Sydney Smith

Academic

It's Electrical Safety Month

Benton REA's top priority is public safety around electrical power lines.

Free electrical safety demonstrations are available for classrooms and community events. Both tabletop and high-voltage options are available by calling 509-786-2913.

Electrical Safety Tips:

- Look up and live! Be aware of overhead power lines.
- Stay away from downed power lines. Always assume they are still electrified.
- Call before you dig. Locate underground power lines and other utilities by calling 811.
- Never use electrical equipment or tools near a pool or wet areas.
- Fly kites and model airplanes in open areas well away from trees and power lines.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

Make electrical safety a priority this month, and every month.

- Inspect power tools and electric lawn mowers for frayed power cords, broken plugs and cracked or broken housings.
- Do not plant vegetation or build permanent structures in

front of underground electrical equipment devices or pad mount transformers. ■

For more tips and to watch electrical safety videos, visit www.BentonREA.org/safety.

Plant Money-Saving Landscaping

Solar heat absorbed through windows and roofs makes your air conditioner work harder and consume more electricity. But incorporating shading into your landscape design can help reduce both solar heat gain and your electricity bill.

Shading from trees can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 9° F. Because cool air settles near the ground, air temperatures directly under trees can be as much as 25° F cooler than air temperatures above nearby blacktop.

To block solar heat in the summer but allow it in during winter, plant deciduous trees. To provide continuous shade and block heavy winds, use dense evergreen trees or shrubs.

Deciduous trees with high, spreading crowns (leaves and branches) should be planted on the south side of your home to provide maximum summertime roof shading. Trees with lower crowns are more appropriate to the west, where shade is needed from lower afternoon sun angles. Trees should not be planted on the southern sides of solar-heated homes in cold climates because branches will block some winter sun.

Although a slow-growing tree may take many years before it shades your roof, it will generally live longer than a fast-growing tree. Also, because slow-growing trees often have deeper roots and stronger branches, they are less prone to breakage by windstorms or heavy snow loads. Slow-growing trees can also be more drought resistant.

A 6- to 8-foot deciduous tree planted near your home will begin shading windows the first year. Depending on the species, the tree will shade the roof in five to 10 years. If you have an air conditioner, shading the unit can increase its efficiency by as much as 10%.

Trees, shrubs, and groundcover plants can shade the ground and pavement around the home. This reduces heat radiation and cools the air before it reaches your home's walls

and windows. Use a large bush or row of shrubs to shade a patio or driveway. Plant a hedge to shade a sidewalk. Build a trellis for climbing vines to shade a patio area.

Vines can also shade walls during their first growing season. A lattice or trellis with climbing vines, or a planter box with trailing vines, shades a home's perimeter while admitting cooling breezes in to the shaded area.

Shrubs planted close to the house will fill in rapidly and begin shading walls and windows within a few years. Avoid allowing dense foliage to grow immediately next to a home. The resulting humidity will create maintenance-related problems and in dry conditions could be a fire hazard.



Whatever your landscaping plans are this year, consider the benefits of shade trees and plants to reduce your home-cooling costs. ■

Benton REA Plants Trees at Wine Country RV Park

Visitors to Prosser's Wine Country RV Park will enjoy two new trees donated by Benton REA on April 13, Washington State Arbor Day.

Benton REA planted a Linden tree and a Hot Wings Maple tree because they will only grow 25 to 30 feet tall at maturity. They were planted far enough away from utility power lines so they will not need to be pruned to prevent power outages.

Louann Rockney, manager of Wine

Country RV Park, says several trees came down in a wind storm and the park is happy to receive these shade trees from Benton REA.

Tree maintenance is an important piece of Benton REA's reliability plan. "Trees bring value to communities, but if not cared for, can cause power outages," says Brian Cramer, tree program coordinator for Benton REA.

Benton REA was recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree Line USA utility every year since 2013.

Benton REA proudly donates trees to parks, schools and areas where its members will enjoy them for years to come. Tree Line USA promotes delivering safe and reliable electricity while maintaining healthy community trees. For questions about a tree on your property, call 509-786-2913 or visit www.BentonREA.org/Trees. ■



Benton REA planted trees at Wine Country RV Park on April 13 as a part of the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree Line USA program. From Left: Brian Cramer, area utility tree coordinator; Troy Berglund, Benton REA vice president of member services; Louann Rockney, Wine Country RV Park manager; Mike Freepons, Benton REA trustee. PHOTO BY ELECIA COPENHAVER