



The Mid-Columbia Agriculture Hall of Fame was formed in Year 2000 to recognize and honor distinguished individuals that have made significant contributions to the agricultural community in the Greater Franklin County region and its immediate surrounding areas; although nominees from neighboring counties of Franklin County within a 150-mile radius are often also considered for this prestigious award.

The Pasco Chamber Board has proudly created a Selection Committee comprised of quality individuals representative of our agriculture industry and has chartered them with the honorable task of reviewing all nomination submittals. Induction candidates are selected based on their outstanding performance in the agriculture industry and their bountiful support of the local and rural communities. Candidates are recognized by their peers for not only their dedication, generosity, and selflessness, but also their demonstrated achievements, noteworthy expertise, and creative innovations that often provide a legacy of impactful results and lasting benefit to the overall enhancement of the local agricultural industry and community at large. Farmers, growers, ranchers, and owners/employees of agribusiness firms are all eligible for nomination as either individuals and/or families.

The Ag Hall of Fame inductions will be presented at a special gala January 18, 2024 at the Pasco Red Lion. **Deadline for Application is November 1, 2023**

### **Mid-Columbia Agriculture Hall of Fame Intent to Nominate**

Nominee's Name: **Kara Kaelber**

Mailing Address: **8503 Packard Dr., Pasco, WA 99301**

Nominee's Phone: **509-416-0440 (office) 509-430-1455 (cell)** E-Mail: **kara-kaelber@franklincd.org**

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Death (if deceased) \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Name: **Washington Grain Commission**

Phone: **509-456-2481** Fax: **509-456-2812** E-Mail: **lmaricle@wagrains.org**

Family Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

## Mid-Columbia Agriculture Hall of Fame 2023

Nominee: Kara Kaelber, Assistant Manager, Benton & Franklin Conservation Districts



Nominated by: The Washington Grain Commission

Date submitted: Nov. 1, 2023

## **Years of Community and Agriculture Service**

August 2023- Present

**Assistant Manager, Benton & Franklin Conservation Districts**

July 2018 - October 2020

**Program Manager, AgForestry Leadership Foundation**

- AgForestry Class 37 graduate. Kara's tenure as a Program Manager at the AgForestry Leadership Foundation showcases her commitment to fostering leadership and growth in the agricultural industry.

January 2005 – August 2023

**Education Director, Franklin Conservation District**

- Wheat Week, a hands-on science program for 4th & 5th graders. Wheat Week is a series of five lessons, delivered over the course of one week. These lessons are aligned with Next Generation Science Standards educating students about systems, water, soil, conservation, DNA, energy, and wheat as well as how they impact our daily lives.
- Drain Rangers!, a program investigating storm water runoff for grades 3-5. Drain Rangers curriculum develops an understanding of the serious issues facing our community from stormwater runoff and to share specific actions we can take to improve the quality of our water.
- Jr. Drain rangers is a stormwater education program modeled after Drain Rangers! and adapted to the learning needs of students in kindergarten, first, and second grades.
- The Salmon in the Classroom program, established in 1991 by WDFW, was created as an educational project to encourage respect for water resources and promote responsible behavior towards the environment. The Franklin Conservation District began sponsoring the Salmon in the Classroom Program in 2002 for schools in Franklin County.
- Teacher workshops: Kara's dedication to enhancing the education of teachers in natural resource conservation, agriculture, protection, and sustainability, through workshops in collaboration with the Northwest Natural Resources Institute, has had a far-reaching impact on the educational landscape.

2014 – 2016

**Heritage University** (Tri-Cities Campus), Pasco, WA

- Adjunct Professor – Education Department, Methods of Science Class for undergrad and MIT preservice teachers

2010-2011

**Pasco School District**, Pasco, WA

- Administrative Intern - Curriculum & Professional Development Dept.

2002 – 2003

**Housel Middle School**, Prosser, WA

Teacher - 7th & 8th Grade Reading and Language Arts

### **Professional Development & Experience**

- Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design), 2006
- Fierce Conversations, 2018
- Facilitating Adult Learning – Laura Lipton, 2018
- R Factor Training with Focus 3 Leadership, 2019
- Power of Positive Leadership, 2020

### **Professional Activities & Achievements**

- 2008 Washington State Conservation Commission, South Central Area Employee of the Year
- 2011 Washington Association of Conservation District's President's Award recipient
- 2016 Washington AgForestry Leadership Program Graduate, Class 37
- 2016 Spokane Agri-Business Council, Excellence in Agriculture Award recipient
- 2021 Washington State Conservation Commission, South Central Area Special Recognition Award

### **Volunteer**

- Franklin County Water Conservancy Board, Alternate Member since 2020
- ESD123, Board of Directors, 2017-present
- Pasco School District Elementary Science Curriculum Review Committee, 2008-09 and 2016-17
- Pasco School District Instructional Materials Committee, 2007 – 2017
- Environmental Education Association of Washington, Board of Directors, 2008-2012

### **Bio of Nominee**

Kara Kaelber has a Bachelor of Humanities, Communication and English from Washington State University and a Master of Educational Leadership and Administration from Heritage University. Kara is also a member of AgForestry Class 37 and a recipient of the Carol Mercer Inspiration Award.

Kara's role in advancing the awareness and knowledge of the importance of agriculture in our communities statewide cannot be overstated. Kara's journey of service and impact spans several decades, and her dedication to her work is evident in the vast reach she has achieved as an educator, program manager, and community leader.

In her current role, Kara has continued to provide exceptional leadership and support to the Benton & Franklin Conservation Districts, furthering their mission and objectives.

Kara has been with the Franklin Conservation District since 2005, serving as their education director. Kara's extensive work in this role has been instrumental in bringing education and awareness of agriculture to our community. The Washington Grain Commission contracts with Kara and the Franklin Conservation District to provide education and outreach across Washington as part of the commission's mission and strategic education plan. Reaching over 1,000 teachers each year, Wheat Week not only teaches students about the importance of wheat, but also the adults in the room and at home. Wheat Week is geared toward 4th and 5th grade students, delivered by Wheat Week educators visiting classrooms across the state for an entire week to educate them and their students about wheat. Kara developed the Wheat Week program for the Washington Grain Commission, and since 2007 has been successfully overseeing program deliverables. Her role in developing and overseeing the Wheat Week program is a testament to her innovative thinking and dedication to promoting the wheat industry. Even throughout the COVID pandemic, she was able to expand the reach of the Wheat Week educational program by pivoting to a DIY at-home option.

Franklin Conservation District deliverables include:

- Provide a school based curriculum for classrooms across Washington with hands-on lessons integrating programs such as Wheat Week, teacher workshops and student events in coordination with Northwest Natural Resources Institute to include: educating students about the basic principles of water and soil interaction and environmental issues pertaining to the wheat industry; interactive presentations and experiments; problem solving skills related to the environment and understanding of best management practices related to wheat; and importance of dams in wheat transportation.
- Provide teacher workshops across Eastern Washington enhancing the educational effectiveness of curriculum of programs such as Wheat Week addressing the science, economic, and societal aspects of agriculture and the region's natural resources.
- Provide resource manuals, teacher guides, self-training materials and student workbooks at the elementary school level about agriculture as a primary industry; including publications that assist teachers in teaching about Washington geography, ag technology, stewardship and trade.

In 2023, Kara also provided the additional education and outreach services for the commission:

- Successfully piloted the Tri-Cities STEM Career Academy with 16 high-school aged students. The program goal was to expose students in Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla Counties going into grades 10, 11 and 12 to future careers in renewable and non-renewable energies and agriculture. The Career STEM Academy was held on June 20th-23rd at Kennewick High School. 21 applications were received, and 16 students ended

up attending the Academy. Kara's goal for next year is to increase attendance from 16 to 25. Agriculture will play a more significant role and be allocated a day and a half of the 5-day program.

- Conducted an efficacy study of the Wheat Week program through student surveys.

These initiatives reflect her commitment to providing students with exposure to future career opportunities and to continuously improving her programs. Kara's collaboration with the Washington Grain Commission has made a substantial difference and a significant impact on the understanding of agriculture, environmental issues, and best practices related to wheat. Her tireless commitment to education and community engagement is truly exceptional. She has touched the lives of countless individuals through her programs and has made an indelible mark on the agricultural and educational landscape of our region. Her dedication, vision, and innovative approach are qualities that make her a prime candidate for the Agriculture Hall of Fame.

High-resolution photos and teacher testimonials available at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9f1p6fqhv5nue9j/AABqsGGEER3sovAZhV-geWeEa?dl=0>

2022 RiverFest photos:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/sb9d81zp7vg0ww0on8552/h?rlkey=g91ukl6s0a8xjuj6kbduasa&dl=0>