

5-Year Plan (2020 to 2025) Wahkiakum Conservation District

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Organization of the Wahkiakum Conservation District

The Wahkiakum Conservation District is a political subdivision of the State of Washington whose authorities, powers and structure derive from Washington State Law, specifically the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 89.08. The Wahkiakum Soil and Water Conservation District was formed in 1952.

A board of five supervisors govern the District, three of whom are elected by residents within the District and two who are appointed by the State Conservation Commission. The board may also include an unlimited number of associate members. All of the member's time and effort in service of the District is on a volunteer basis.

Function of the Wahkiakum Conservation District

To coordinate the delivery of and maintain the District's capacity to provide technical assistance to landowners within the district promoting sound resource management.

- Provide technical assistance to walk-in and call-in customers, provide site visits, and prepare conservation plans that make efficient and effective use of the landowners' resources.
 - Assist in the delivery of current financial assistance programs, and technical assistance from our conservation partners.
 - The District obtains funds through local, state, and federal grants, in-kind contributions, and cost-share from public and private entities.
 - To make available educational resources and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local community.
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Who We Serve & Why

Land users in need of assistance in conservation and development of their resources may seek assistance from the District. Assistance is offered equally on a voluntary basis to all users of resources without regard to race, creed, or gender.

Those expressing need become cooperators of the District by entering into a cooperative agreement with the District. This sets the stage for the District to help the land user develop a conservation plan based on an inventory of the resources, assessment of the resource capabilities, limitations, and desires or goals of the resource user.

Professional and technical specialists from various agencies, both public and private, who assist the District through a memorandum of understanding, extend help provided by the District in this planning process.

The District also assists landowners in complying with regulatory programs administered by local, state, and federal authorities. Although the Conservation District has no autonomous regulatory authority it is officially recognized by such authorities as a local source of help to people required to comply with environmental laws, rules, and regulations.

Mission of the Wahkiakum Conservation District

Working voluntarily with our citizens and other organizations, Wahkiakum Conservation District will conserve and improve the natural resources within the District and guide resource development and use to provide the highest quality of life for present and future citizens.

Vision of the Wahkiakum Conservation District

Over the next five years, we see the Wahkiakum Conservation District assisting Landowners within our district and:

- Providing high standards of service for our customers;
 - Having stable financial backing to serve local needs;
 - Strengthening our partnerships with other natural resource organizations, both governmental and non-governmental;
 - Becoming locally perceived as the county leader for natural resource issues; and
 - Developing our locally led watershed planning process throughout the District.
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Values of the Wahkiakum Conservation District

- Support the rural character of the district
 - Education of local land users on conservation practices by means of technical assistance.
 - Sound resource management for agriculture, forestry, and other land uses emphasizing soil, water, air, plants, animals and human considerations.
 - Economic viability for community and landowners.
 - Monitor and encourage the use of new or technical developments that offer promise toward enhancing conservation of natural resources, or improving the quality of our resources.
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Natural Resource Priorities and Goals:

The Wahkiakum Conservation District Supervisors have developed, with input from the public and stakeholders, the following specific priorities regarding natural resources within the District. Additional input from the public obtained during annual meetings is provided in appendix C. The input remains consistent with priorities identified in this long-range plan. The priority natural resource issues are discussed in the following.

- Promote watershed health and water quality by assisting landowners, land managers, and resource agencies with coordinated watershed management plans that are ecologically and economically sound.
- Promote fish habitat restoration and provide technical assistance in the reduction of stream erosion-sedimentation and stream migration.
- Actively encourage conservation education through community outreach.
- Promote agriculture and land use management practices that incorporate best practices and are ecologically and economically sound. Encourage the retention of prime and unique agriculture land for agriculture use and work to increase farm production in ecologically sound ways.
- Reduce the burden of non-native, invasive and noxious plants in the District and educate landowners regarding such plants.
- Encourage the management of upland habitat in a manner that will retain its value and function.
- Encourage cooperative planning among agencies involved in land use activities in both urban and rural areas.
- Provide the County Commissioners and local planners with resource data and interpretations to assist them in making sound land use decisions.

Natural Resource Metrics

A set of metrics was developed for each priority area. It is difficult to specify metrics or measurable outcomes in distant outyears. Because of funding uncertainties, ecosystem changes and natural events, such as fire or flooding, it becomes difficult to set specific metrics for years into the future. Rather than setting metrics for years in the future, the Wahkiakum Conservation District has developed a set of metrics that involve monitoring specific parameters over time to measure improvement. In this way, outcomes can be measured against expectations and budget. The set of metrics for each priority area is provided below.

- Watershed health and water quality: The District will monitor the number of landowner agreements, the number of watershed management plans and will establish baseline water quality measurements for future monitoring.
- Fish habitat restoration: The District will monitor yearly the number of landowner agreements, species diversity by stream, number of instream structures and number of linear feet of stream bank protected from erosion. Estimate sediment load in applicable streams. The extent of riparian restoration will also be monitored.
- Non-Native and noxious plants: Track population density of invasive species in areas treated; monitor the extent of reestablished native plants and establish a baseline of invasive species critical areas.
- Agricultural land retention and land use management: Monitor acres under usage for agriculture. Track changes in land use based on assessor's data.
- Upland habitat: Monitor changes in upland habitat and acres under active management.

Priority Geographic Areas:

The Conservation District has conducted meetings and public outreach forums to identify areas that the Conservation District, stakeholders, and the public agree are priority geographic areas within the District. The priority areas were identified from a variety of perspectives including landowner issues, noxious and invasive weeds, instream habitat (both resident and anadromous fisheries), and forest and agricultural land use concerns. These areas include:

- Skamokawa Creek Watershed: Concerns include fish habitat restoration, noxious weeds, siltation and sediment control, and the Dead Slough bottomland.
- The community encouraged the District to try to find resources to expand work into the Gray's River and/or the Elochoman River watersheds while continuing work in the Mill/Abernathy/Germany Creek Sub-basin
- Mill/Abernathy/Germany Subbasin (shared watershed with Cowlitz CD). Work in cooperation with the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board and the Department of Ecology Intensively Monitored Watershed program in the Mill, Abernathy, and Germany Creek community watersheds.

The WRIA 25, 26, and 27 draft watershed plans identify critical geographic areas (watersheds) with respect to available water supplies. The Federal Clean Water Act 303(d) list that is maintained by Washington State Department of Ecology identifies critical geographic areas within the county with respect to water quality. A map of the Wahkiakum County priority geographic areas is shown in Appendix B.

Information – Education Priorities and Goals:

Continue providing community service activities and promote an understanding of land use through sponsorship of forums, meetings, training sessions, and participation in local natural resource-oriented events, and use of local media.

- The Conservation District will emphasize education and information sharing when delivering technical assistance to landowners or communities within the district.
- The Conservation District will foster a better working relationship with local media to keep our community informed of natural resource issues, concerns, and opportunities
- The Conservation District will collaborate with Department of Natural Resources Stewardship Forestry Program and Small Forest Landowners Office to continue to delivery of forestry, technical, educational, and financial assistance. (Forest Stewardship Coached Planning Course)
- The Conservation District will continue to collaborate with WSU Cooperative Extension to collaborate on local educational activities.
- The Conservation District will successfully collaborate to conduct the education/outreach activities including regional Envirothon, county fair, and the annual dinner meeting/banquets.
- Continue to participate when possible in local activities oriented around natural resources (e.g. earth day celebrations, Marine Resource Committee, and annual tree sale)
- The Conservation District will increase efforts to collaborate with Wahkiakum High School to assist with project implementation and monitoring.

District Operations Priorities, Goals:

- The Districts' goals are to be effective and efficient in accounting, grant vouchering, personnel management, Supervisor elections and appointments, Supervisor and Staff training / development, annual audits, and long range and annual planning and reporting. Wahkiakum Conservation District will properly manage public monies.
- Increase efficiency of District Operations resulting in conservation on the ground. Continue to promote the concept of a natural resource “One-Stop Center” for natural resource needs. Coordinate with NRCS, WSU Cooperative Extension, DNR Stewardship, WDFW, DOE, and others.
- Wahkiakum Conservation District will continue to develop and generate capacity needed to adequately meet the needs of our constituents. This includes maintaining the technical staff necessary and generating funds to help implement restoration projects or implement improved management practices to resolve natural resource issues and concerns.

Trends Influencing Conservation in the Wahkiakum Conservation District

- Population continues to rise in rural Wahkiakum County resulting in changing land use, fragmentation into smaller parcel sizes, and increased number of landowners who may not be aware of existing rules and regulations and may be uninformed regarding best management practices.
- Grant competition and complexity: There is increased competition for the local, state, and federal resources made available to address natural resources. Grant funds are becoming increasingly program driven; limiting the ability for the district to effectively utilize funds to address local resource issues and concerns. The district is at risk of being directed by funding rather than local need.
- It appears that the district needs to become more proactive and adopt a legislative strategy if the district intends to comply with provisions of RCW 89.08 and address the natural resource needs within Wahkiakum County.

Strategies to Address Trends

Conservation Strategy:

- Continue to develop and encourage communities to participate in Community Watershed Planning (CRM)
- Improve District capacity to provide technical staff capable of meeting the needs of the community we serve.
- Develop and implement a marketing strategy to increase awareness of the district and district activities
- Develop and implement a mechanism that will serve to inform and educate “new” landowners
- Keep abreast of growth trends in the county, become more active and provide input to county planning,

Funding Strategy:

- Strive to make the district more attractive to local government and agencies to secure local funds
- Continue to develop and build working relationships with resource partners to increase capacity and develop efficiencies at providing service to our customers
- Provide guidance to WSCC in the development of funding proposals so that districts may better accomplish their local mission
- Continue developing funding proposals to granting entities to advance the district’s goals and objectives

Legislative strategy

- Pursue a Legislative Resolution to evaluate state grant strategy vs. intentions. There are increasing numbers of granting entities resulting in less flexibility at resolving local issues and increased administration and project costs.
- Develop a district strategy to effectively engage local, state, and federal elected officials with regards to conservation issues.

Staffing Needs

- District Manager
- Bookkeeper / Education-Outreach Program Coordinator
- Resource Planner / Technician
- Engineer or Engineer Technician
- Forester

Annual Budget Needs

Current Budget needs \$225,000/year.

Anticipated Operating Budget based on desired staffing and full office space - \$350,000/year.

Key Decision Makers

The Board of Supervisors, district manager, grantors, resource partners, local government, state government, federal government, and local landowners are the key decision makers.

**Appendix A
Priority Actions –**

Program Area: District Operations
 Goal(s): To maintain effective and efficient operation including accounting, grant administration, personnel management, and implementation of district policies.
 Funding Source(s): The principal funding sources for this program include WSCC implementation, WSCC CREP, WSCC LV, WSCC Basic Funding, and GSRO grant funds.

Annual Activities	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time (Days) Required	Estimated Funding
District Operations Submit grant vouchers and misc. grant paperwork as required. Prepare business information for Board meetings/Board Meeting Mid Month AP/AR Annual Plan of Accomplishments Submit reports as required (quarterly and semi annual reports) 3 rd Quarter 4 th Quarter 1 st Quarter 2 nd Quarter Prepare Southwest Association Meeting Prepare for and conduct annual election Arrangements to participate in WACD Annual Meeting Continue to prepare and submit grant applications as needed Prepare annual plan of work/review Long Range Plan	Monthly Monthly Monthly Sept October Nov - April Oct - Nov Continuous May	Mgr/BK Mgr/BK/RT Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK Mgr/BK	6/60 6/36/6 2/24 2/1 2/2 .5/2 .5/5 .5/5 15/1 1/1	
Complete and submit annual financial report Complete internal audit Apply for WSCC Funding	May March June	Mgr/BK BK Mgr/BK	1/10 5 1/5	

Program Area: Watershed Management
 Goal(s): Continue to develop and secure funding to maintain the District's capacity to assist watershed communities with planning and implementation on a watershed level.
 Funding Source(s): The principal funding sources for this program includes WSCC implementation and Governors Salmon Recovery Office.

Annual Activities	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding
Watershed Management Planning and Implementation				
<u>Mill/Abernathy/Germany Subbasin (shared WS with Cowlitz CD)</u> Continute to collaborate with landowners, Cowlitz Conservation District, the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, and the Department of Ecology Intensively Monitored Watershed program in the Mill, Abernathy, and Germany Creek community watersheds Project Development Opportunities include: Current priorities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop and implement projects in the Germany Creek Watershed. • Close out the Andrews/Wood and Smith Ranch LLC project. Continue working with landowners to ensure that riparian restoration practices are maintained to ensure success. • Implement the Godinho project in the Germany Creek watershed. • Implement the Kosiba project in the Germany Creek watershed. 	Ongoing 5- year process 2020, 21,22, 23 By Fall 2020 By Fall 2021	Mgr/RT Mgr/FB Mgr/RT Mgr/RT Mgr/RT	3/2 5/2 2 7/2 10/2	
<u>Skamokawa Creek Community Watershed Project</u> Continue to assist the Skamokawa Community Watershed with project development, funding proposals, design, implementation, monitoring, and adaptive management. Goals include assisting a minimum of 2 landowners per year within each of the assistance categories. Current opportunities include: Goldinov, Petr project Stornetta Phase II Calvert Riparian Poulson (Fritsch) Project Maintenance	Ongoing	Mgr/FB/RT	5/5/5	
Design, Permit, and implement currently funded projects including Goldinov Restoration Johnston Project Spillman Cadman Creek Restoration	4 year process	Mgr/RT	20/20	
Implement the Skamokawa Creek Riparian Restoration Project which consists of managing Knotweed populations and restoring native riparian vegetation. Continue to seek and solicit	4 year project	Mgr/RT	2/20	

<p>funding to continue treatment in the Skamokawa Watershed.</p> <p>Work with partners to develop an effective noxious weed program in the County.</p>				
<p>Continue to assist local cooperators by through monitoring and adaptive management of project sites.</p>	June 2015	MGR/RT/	10/5/5	
<u>Historic Skamokawa Creek Project (Dead Slough)</u>				
<p>Continue to assist Diking District 5 and the community with managing the inlet and outlet structure.</p>	Ongoing	Mgr	1	
<p>Assist Diking District 5 to secure funding and implementing project that resolve issues with dike integrity.</p>	Until funded	Mgr	1	
<u>Elochoman River Community Watershed Project</u>				
<p>Continue to seek funding to allow the District to expand Community Watershed assistance to the Elochoman River Watershed.</p> <p>With existing resources, continue to plan, fund, design, implement projects in the community.</p> <p>Current workload includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Elkinton Restoration Project • Implement the Cothren Restoration Project • Implement the Bortner Restoration Project <p>Work with the Elochoman River Community Landowner Group to develop the Elochoman River Community Watershed Projects. Opportunities include: Cluster of landowners upstream of Beaver Creek Bridge Uncle Henry's Lake LLC Side Channel Project</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>3 year process 4 year project Ongoing</p>			
<p>Continue to implement the knotweed treatment and riparian restoration project in the Elochoman River Community Watershed.</p> <p>Continue working with local partners to develop and effective noxious weed program that can continue to assist landowners with invasive weed treatment.</p>	Ongoing	Mgr		

Program Area: Technical Assistance
 Goal(s): To coordinate the delivery of and maintain the District's capacity to provide technical assistance to landowners within the district promoting sound resource management.
 Funding Source(s): The principal funding sources for this program includes WSCC implementation, GSRO, and DOE CCWF.

Annual Activities	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding
Technical Assistance				
<u>Conservation Reserve Program</u> Provide continued technical assistance to four CREP contracts (4 sites-50 acres)	2 –years maint. Remaining	Mgr/RT/BK	2/7/2	
Provide assistance to landowners interested in the program by assisting with getting them enrolled in the program, conducting site inventory, preparing management plans, and implementing plans (2 additional anticipated)	Ongoing	Mgr/RT/BK	5/10/1	
<u>Category 3 Projects</u>				
Continue to identify, plan, and append the CPDS with Category 3 project proposal. Implement category three projects as they are funded (currently 2)	Ongoing June 2015	Mgr/RT/BK	2/5/2	
<u>Fish Passage Projects</u> Assist landowners and agencies to support applications for family forest fish passage project. Activities include conducting barrier assessments, generate project cost estimates, and sponsoring projects. (none at present)	Ongoing	Mgr/RT	1/1	
<u>General technical assistance</u> Assist walk-in/cal-in customers with technical assistance needs. Typically over 50 per year Assist a minimum of five landowners with the development of plans.	June annually June annually	Mgr/RT/BK Mgr/RT/BK	9/10/20 10/10/5	

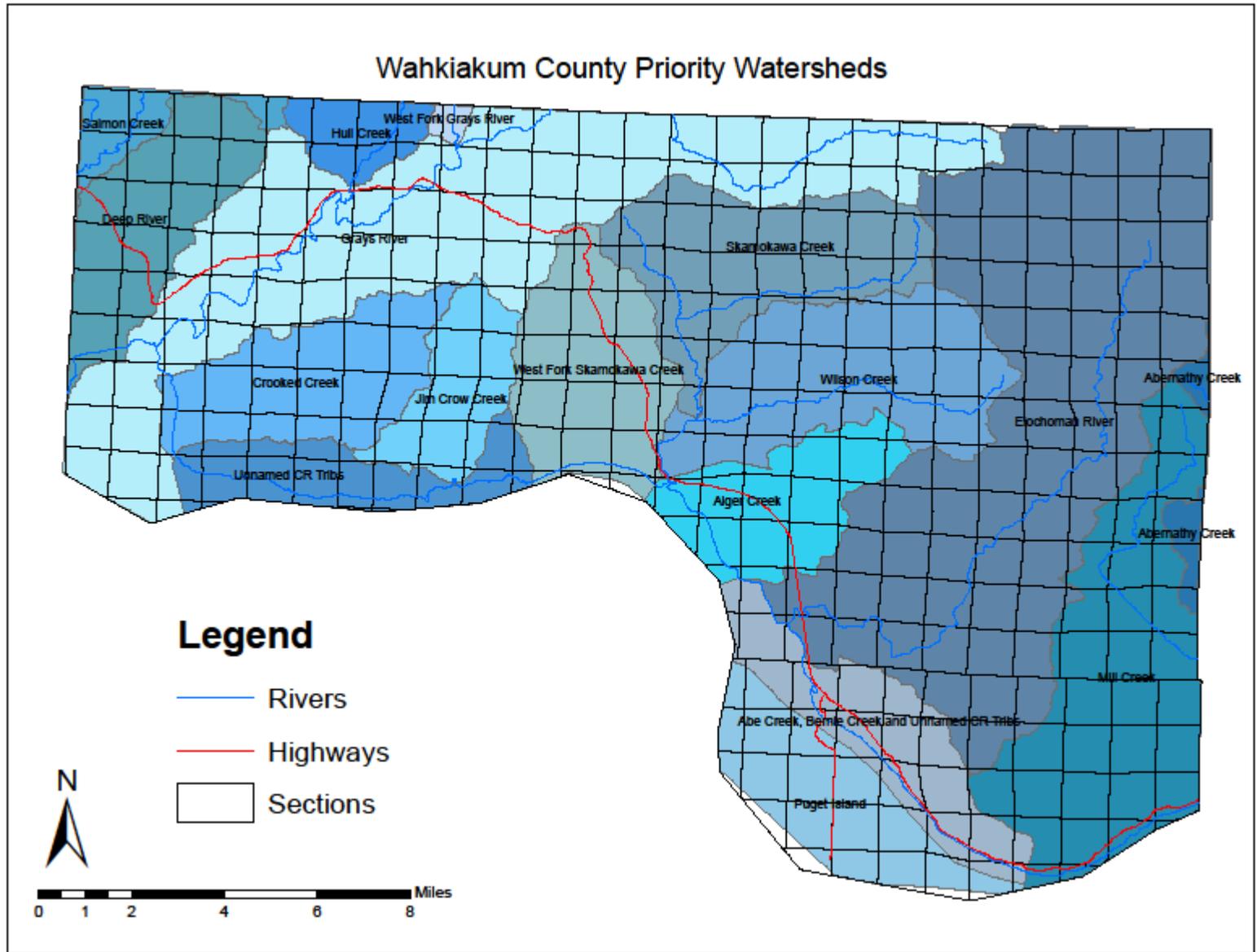
Program Area: Information, Education, and Outreach

Goals: Continue providing community service activities and promote an understanding of land use through sponsorship of forums, meetings, training sessions, participation in local natural resources oriented events, and use of local media.

Funding Source(s): The principal funding sources for this program is WSCC implementation funds.

Annual Activities	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time(Days) Required	Estimated Funding
<u>Education/Outreach</u>				
<u>Wahkiakum High School</u> Continue to aid Wahkiakum High School with technical assistance to conduct field assessments, implement best management practices. Work with Wahkiakum High School to develop and implement a summer jobs program for students interested in natural resource management and restoration.	June annually	Mgr/RT	1/1	
<u>Coached Planning Workshops</u> Partner with Department of Natural Resources and Cooperative Extension to host local workshops	Annually	Mgr	1	
<u>Envirothon</u> Participate in regional Envirothon	Annually	RT/BK	1/3	
<u>Wahkiakum County Fair</u> Participate in the county fair by developing and displaying an exhibit in the natural resource building. Cooperate with building exhibitors to foster a cooperative effort to manage the building and draw in fair-goers.	Fall Annually	Mgr/RT/BK	.5/1/5	
<u>Miscellaneous Activities</u> Continue to participate when possible in local activities oriented around natural resources (e.g. earth day celebrations, classroom partnerships, and assistance to student groups for tree planting days, and annual tree sale).	Annually	RT/BK	2/3	

Appendix B
Map of Wahkiakum County Priority Areas



APPENDIX C

Public Input to Long Range Plan

Wahkiakum Conservation District utilizes its annual meeting to solicit input from landowners in attendance regarding our annual and long-range plans. This typically takes the form of a questionnaire that landowners are requested to answer. Typical questions include :

- 1) What are your resource concerns?
- 2) What do you consider priority areas or projects that should be considered?
- 3) Do you have any suggestions on what we can do better?

The 2020 annual meeting was cancelled due to Coronavirus pandemic. Notes were compiled for both the 2019 and 2017 annual meetings. In 2018 we had large enough attendance across multiple watershed and the manager decided to do a natural resource concerns prioritization process with the group.

Wahkiakum Conservation District

Long Range Plan Work Meeting / Annual Meeting
Thursday March 23, 2017 @ River Street Meeting Room, Cathlamet

General Statement

We are very pleased with all the work the Conservation District has done and is doing.

Question –Resource Concerns?

- 1.) Fish Recovery
- 2.) Happy with the program thus far
- 3.) Soil Health
- 4.) Sustainability and conservative use of the counties natural resources.
- 5.) Restoring old growth forests and natural wetlands
- 6.) Sustaining wild game populations.
- 7.) Preserving and building soils (agriculture)
- 8.) Maintaining fisheries (spawning grounds, predators, healthy populations)
- 9.) Tying economic growth in with habitat restoration.

Question – Priority Areas, Specific Projects, Assistance Needs?

- 1.) Define what it takes to bring back habitat
- 2.) Noxious weeds (knotweed)
- 3.) As large farms are subdivided into smaller farms, proper land maintenance suffers
- 4.) Happy with all the work on my farm

Question – What can we do better?

- 1.) Keep it up
- 2.) Work with public to educate general population so they understand and possibly help.
- 3.) Programs for proper fertilization, pH levels, drainage, weed control, and proper number of animals

Wahkiakum Conservation District
Long Range Plan Working Meeting / Annual Meeting
Thursday, March 22, 2018 @ River Street Meeting Facility

The District lead the group through a process to identify then prioritize natural resource concerns. The group was asked to simply “shotgun” their concerns. The District then grouped the feedback into groups comparable to the soil, water, air, plants, animals, human categories used by USDA NRCS. The results allowed for prioritizing both the individual resource concern and the broader resource concern category.

Soil: Total of 10

- Soil Health- 5
- Hillslope Erosion (mass wasting) – 3
- Landscape Level Bio-diversity – 2

Water Quantity / Flood: Total of 19

- Streambank Erosion - 6
- Culvert Barriers – 4
- Fish – 4
- Sediment Aggradation – 2
- Flooding/Infrastructure – 1
- Climate Change – 1
- Flood Plain Function – 1

Water Quality: Total of 10

- Riparian Buffers – 4
- Stream Temp. – 4
- Shallow Water – 1
- Upland Wildlife – 1

Invasives: Total of 8

- Knotweed – 8
- Beaver – 0

Ag. Mgt. / Other: Total of 5

- Pasture Condition – 4
- Ag Viability - 4
- District Capacity – 0
- Project Maintenance \$ - 0

As with prior long-range planning input, water resources, in general, top the list of resource concerns in the county. Concern for invasive weeds (primarily knotweed) continues to surge and was identified as the single largest resource concern in the county. Compared to past efforts agriculture and soil related resource concerns made the list and received considerable priority

votes. It should be noted that identification of soil resource concerns and votes for these concerns were from board members.

The process affirms the Districts long range plans and the evolution of annual plans to address natural resource concerns for invasive weeds. The District does provide regular assistance with soil related questions from both walk-in and call-in cooperators.

Wahkiakum Conservation District
Long Range Plan Working Meeting / Annual Meeting
Thursday, March 21, 2019 @ River Street Meeting Facility

2019 Annual Meeting Comments

1) What are your priority resource concerns?

- Knotweed Removal
- Flooding of River
- Silting on the River Bank
- Knotweed, Bank stability, fish in river (salmon/steelhead)
- Knotweed Everywhere, Bank Stability at Cannon's, Fish in river – Elochoman
- Knotweed control – safely-
- Flooding
- Knotweed removal
- Knotweed
- Stream stability and more fish

2) What are your priority areas or specific projects?

- Buffer zone for logging companies at river's edge
- Elochoman system and off streams
- Wahkiakum

3) What can the District do better?

- Keep what you are doing
- I think you do a good job
- More money for conservation districts
- We are doing the best we can.
- Communication with public. People on the river didn't all get notices about meetings and aren't aware of anything being done. Dept of Emergency Mgmt has a list of all Elochoman land owners along the river. You could also get ahold of property owners and people will volunteer to help. We all love our river.