



5-Year Plan (2015-2020) Clark Conservation District

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Mission of the Clark Conservation District

Mission of the Clark Conservation District is to assist land users and others to protect, conserve, and manage water quality, soils, and natural habitat areas of the District to benefit present and future generations.

Function of the Clark Conservation District

To provide technical, financial and educational resources and coordinate them to meet the needs of the local landowner and others for the conservation of natural resources.

Long Range Vision of the Clark Conservation District

The Board of Supervisors recognizes that our quality of life is dependent on our natural resources; not only for a place to live; but for economic growth and sustainability, through resource development, restoration, and conservation.

Description of the Clark Conservation District

- Clark Conservation District is located in southwestern Washington. Its boundaries are the Columbia River on the south and west, the Lewis River to the north, and the foothills of the Cascade Range on the east. The overall area is nearly 656 square miles, of which 28 square miles are water. Clark County is the most rapidly developing county in the state, due in part to its proximity to the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area.
 - A non-regulatory subdivision of the State of Washington – authorities, powers and structure contained in RCW 89.08.
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Natural Resource Data:

In general, urban growth and development, construction of residential homes, industry, schools, etc., along with the associated support systems of roads, parks and utilities, are increasing pressure on the resources of this county. Land users will need educational and technical assistance in conserving natural resources for a rapidly changing landscape.

Water Resources

- In July of 2006, the Troutdale Aquifer system in Clark County was determined by the EPA to be a Designated Sole Source Aquifer, providing for federal oversight of projects in majority of the District.
- There are sixteen separate drainage basins and more than 100 ponds and lakes within the District.

Fish Resources

- Clark County is in the Lower Columbia Evolutionarily Significant Unit. Stream basins provide spawning grounds for five salmon or trout species listed as either endangered or threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Timber Resources

- More than half the District is currently in woodland use, either commercially or otherwise. Of this woodland, more than 80 percent is in private ownership.

Plant and Wildlife Resources

- Wildlife is an important renewable resource of the District. Habitat is continually lost by land use conversion from natural characteristics to urban and suburban development, along with damage to wetlands and prairies from siltation, land filling, and excessive human traffic.
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Critical Geographic Areas:

- East Fork Lewis River
 - Salmon Creek
 - Critical habitat areas
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Trends Impacting Conservation in the Clark Conservation District

- Decreasing agricultural land
 - Increasing value of agricultural land
 - Increase need for statistics on type, and use of agricultural land
 - Decrease in land management experience among land owners/managers
 - Increase in development and population growth
 - Increase restrictions on funding sources including restrictions on administrative/infrastructure costs
 - Increase in interest for buying locally grown produce & increase in farmers market
 - Declining water quality
 - Increase in “city” influence in agriculture and natural decision making
 - Increase in community support agriculture
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Strategies to Address Trends

- Education and support for agricultural landowners for keeping land in agriculture – development rights, easements, equipment, new technology, buffering pressures from developers
 - Make available conservation equipment through the district
 - Supporting landowners with natural resource conservation education and marketing and/or business classes
 - Make staff available for natural resource presentations and meetings with partners and community groups.
 - Conservation planning activities – emphasis on action, follow-up, practical approaches, maximize ownership through involvement in planning process, making available the “tools” for implementing, demonstration sites
 - Training in stewardship compatible to Clark County – e.g. native plants, new plantings, how to maintain and enhance
 - Create educational materials for school-age children about natural resource conservation
 - Supporting the existing community groups in natural resource activities
 - Forest land management technical assistance for small forest acreages
 - Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) streamlined permitting assistance
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Program Priorities (in order of importance)*

- Conservation Planning & Assistance
- Animal Agriculture
- Farmland Preservation
- Engineering Services

*Conservation Information & Education and District Operations are included in all programs

Strategies & Priority Actions:

Water Quality (stormwater, water leaving property, infiltration issues, contaminants, septics, sediments)

- By June 2020 have improvement in water quality parameters in major streams and tributaries in Clark County through partnerships, assistance to septic tank owners, engineering services, assisting animal agriculture landowners, implementing voluntary conservation practices, assistance to urban areas for stormwater management and contacting owners of properties on or adjacent to waterways.

Strategies:

- Work with partners for grant funding and programs
- Implement water quality activities within the watershed plans
- Participate in community groups and events
- Outreach to and assist animal agriculture producers about mud and manure management

- Outreach to and assist rural and urban home owners with stormwater and other water quality issues
- Outreach to and assist landowners along waterways and wetlands with water quality practices
- Work with the Health Department to provide possible assistance or grant support for septic system owners

Water Quality Key Decision Makers:

- WA Department of Ecology
- Clark County Environmental Services
- Clark Public Utilities
- Clark County Public Health
- City of Vancouver

Actions:

- Develop relationships and work with partners and community groups
- Continue work on assessment and rates and charges
- Develop and implement water quality projects and obtain grants for funding
- Develop educational tools and events for water quality in schools

Habitat (loss or changes in critical & unique habitats, connectivity, native wildlife & plants, wetland)

- By June 2020 partner on or create programs with funding for upland wildlife habitat restoration and protection, riparian area enhancement including fisheries habitat in multiple mile reaches (highest priority private & county ownership) in the East Fork Lewis River for steelhead spawning, rearing and holding areas.

Strategies:

- Work with partners for grant funding and programs
- Identify key riparian habitats for improvement and develop projects
- Identify critical upland habitat and develop projects

Habitat Key Decision Makers:

- WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife
- Clark County Environmental Services
- Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board
- Columbia Land Trust

Actions:

- Work with partners and stakeholder groups to develop habitat improvement activities and explore options and opportunities for funding projects
- Continue work on assessment and rates and charges
- Develop outreach materials and educational tools and participate in community events

Land Use (open space, open lands, farm land & forest land preservation, soil productivity, intensive land use, development issues, maximize the working lands capacity)

- By June 2020 farmland is inventoried and identified and farms are actively engaged in farmland preservation discussions strategies, or activities.

Strategies:

- Identify possible opportunities or actions for farmland preservation that meets the needs of local land owners and partners
- Participate in outreach events to provide soil information and provide landowners support with the soil survey
- Assist landowners in complying with local, state, and federal regulations regarding land use

Land Use Key Decision Makers:

- Board of County Commissioners
- Community Groups such as Farm Bureau, Food Systems Council
- Columbia Land Trust

Actions:

- Work with partners to gather data and identify possible opportunities or actions for farmland preservation that meets the needs of local land owners and partners
- Continue work on assessment and rates and charges
- Develop outreach materials and educational tools and participate in community events
- Research funding sources and program options

Education- Information

- Develop a comprehensive information and educational program to inform citizens about natural resource capabilities and limitations, existing resource programs, conservation by incentive, and proper use and treatment of resources.
- Stimulate appreciation of the value of a strong resource base with renewable, natural resources, particularly among those who do not directly manage land. Both students and adults will be addressed.
- By June 2020 reach 200 citizens annually with conservation education activities

Strategies:

- Fair booth displays – changing and adding technology – interactive
- Workshops tailor topics to targeted groups
- New ways to connect to public – going to businesses and hosting questions and answer activity
- Work with school districts to engage students

Key Decision Makers:

- Partners and community groups –emphasis on native plants, soil, water quality, and habitat.
- School districts and teachers

Actions:

- Booth display – interactive attention getters – fair, home & garden fair, Small Acreage Expo, feed stores, businesses
- Hold workshops for targeted groups
- Create a resource library – clearing house of data, information, tools
- Develop presentations and curriculum that can be used in classrooms

Staffing Needs

Summary of the staff positions needed to carry out the plan of the Clark Conservation District: District Manager, Financial Administrator, Resource Technician, and Engineering Technician.

Annual Budget Needs

The annual budgets needed to carry out the plan of the Clark Conservation District based on the above information are attached to this document.

Priority Actions – 12 Months

The Annual Plan of Work is attached for reference.

Washington Conservation Districts assisting land managers with their conservation choices