



5-Year Plan (FY 2015 to 2019) Cascadia Conservation District

For More Information Contact: (509) 436-1601; cascadiacd.org



Organization of the Cascadia Conservation District

A political subdivision of the State of Washington – authorities, powers and structure contained in RCW 89.08.

- *The Chelan County Conservation District was formed on October 15, 1973 when the Wenatchee-Entiat Soil Conservation District (formed on March 24, 1948) and the Lake Chelan Soil Conservation District (formed on March 30, 1948) combined. The name was changed to Cascadia Conservation District in June 2007. The current district boundaries include all of Chelan County except the incorporated cities of Wenatchee and Chelan.*
- *The District is governed by five supervisors; three are elected and two are appointed by the Washington State Conservation Commission.*

Function of the Cascadia Conservation District

To make available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.

Who We Serve & Why

- *We serve all those who have a connection to Chelan County resources by working with Chelan County landowners.*
- *We are enthusiastic about conservation and people, and work to reach cooperative solutions that create the greatest good for the greatest number of people.*

Mission of the Cascadia Conservation District

To encourage wise stewardship and conservation of all natural resources for current and future residents in Chelan County by:

- *Being an active advocate for wise land use and water management decisions.*
- *Promoting a reasonable approach to environmental problems.*
- *Providing locally-led, voluntary, non-regulatory solutions to local environmental problems.*
- *Educating both adults and youth about natural resources stewardship.*
- *Monitoring and responding to future trends that affect the environment.*

Vision of the Cascadia Conservation District

- *To have all private landowners in the county aware of the District, what it does, and how it can help them.*
 - *To encourage landowners to actively participate in conservation actions, personally and collectively.*
 - *To have enough available water for all beneficial uses including domestic, irrigation and fish by developing water storage and implementing water conservation practices, and by leveraging the maximum amount of funding possible for these activities.*
 - *To drastically reduce the need for regulatory agency intervention by working collaboratively with landowners and these agencies to address issues before regulation becomes necessary.*
 - *To implement strong conservation programs that address the quality and quantity of water resources in the county, and balance competing demands on those resources.*
 - *To improve the ability to get financial and technical assistance to the appropriate and most beneficial projects.*
 - *To improve efficiency and reduce duplication of effort in the various basins.*
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Values of the Cascadia Conservation District

- *Trustworthy, honest and transparent*
- *Local solutions to local issues*
- *Customer service to landowners, partners, vendors and funding sources that is friendly, personable, respectful and responsive*
- *Help landowners with voluntary and non-regulatory stewardship on the ground*
- *Fiscally responsible, committed, efficient, results-oriented, quality work*
- *Partnership approach to projects*

Natural Resource Data & Information:

Chelan County is located in the north-central part of Washington State, between the crest of the Cascade Mountains to the west and the Columbia River to the east. Chelan County is the third largest county in Washington at about 2,996 square miles (1,868,800 acres). The county is drained by three primary watersheds (Chelan, Entiat and Wenatchee) and several small drainages that flow directly into the Columbia River (*Chelan County Fire Plan*, 2009). Only 18.2% of Chelan County is privately owned, with 78% federal land (mostly forest), 3.5% state, and the remainder in county, city or other local government ownership. The 93,000 acres of private land includes about 900 farms, with roughly 1,528 acres classified as woodland (2007 Census of Agriculture). More than two-thirds of these farms are less than 50 acres.

Over 1.5 million acres of forest, both public and private, coupled with dry climate, drought, insects, overcrowding due to historic fire suppression, and abundant understory fuels have created a high risk for catastrophic fire activity in the county. Therefore, **forest health / fire management** is the highest priority natural resource concern at this time. In addition, the four major watersheds include more than 73 square miles of water. 33,280 acres of that total are contained in Lake Chelan, and the remaining 13,440 acres include several smaller lakes along with hundreds of miles of navigable or salmon-bearing creeks and rivers. Characterized by rolling foothills and highly incised river valleys, many individual properties have a mix of resource concerns. Although water quality is generally good in the county, pressure from concentrated suburban and rural residential non-point pollution, legacy chemicals from historic use, and disturbances ranging from visiting recreationists to construction and stormwater add to water quality concerns for the future. Most farmers and land managers in the county depend on irrigation water. Nearly all of the non-forest agriculture in the county is irrigated. This resource's continued availability and efficient use is in the best interest of all residents, as well as fish and wildlife. Additionally, ongoing education is important to encourage good stewardship for **water resources**. Both in-stream and upland **habitat enhancement** are a focus of Cascadia's programs to implement watershed and salmon recovery plans, as well as individual farm plans and habitat projects. Tools such as development easements and water rights management are important to the goal of assisting landowners with reasonable, practical, long-term **land use** stewardship options. Farmers and residents also face negative impacts from **noxious weeds, invasive species and pests**. Helping to control and prevent the invasion of these threats will assist with both economic health and habitat protection. Population growth and a highly mobile society result in the ongoing need for **education and outreach**, both to inform the population about the unique characteristics and resource concerns of this area, and to enlist voluntary cooperation in best management and personal stewardship activities.

Criteria for Selecting Conservation Priorities:

Landowner assistance, stewardship, and resource needs such as water quality, water quantity, and habitat are considered in developing priorities. Known or potential threats to various resources and regional economic concerns are also considered.

Priority Natural Resource Conservation Needs & Geographic Areas, Measures of Success and Goals:

Forest Health – Fire Management

Goal(s): Reduce potential impacts from wildfires in Chelan County by supporting implementation of the countywide Fire Plan and partnering with other agencies to seek funding and project opportunities. Due to

the vast amount of heavily fueled public forest land and adjacent private land in the region, this is expected to be an ongoing need.

Measures of Success: Reduce wildfire fuels on 500 acres of private land. Mitigate risks such as emergency access for 15 communities. Assist 10 communities to become FireWise; provide risk assessments for 100 landowners.

Water Resources

Goal(s):

Implement conservation practices that will help maintain and improve the quantity and quality of the water supply in Chelan County. Due to the abundance of shoreline and diverse land uses in the region, this is expected to be an ongoing need. The Entiat Watershed Plan and the Wenatchee River Watershed Plan contain detailed implementation targets developed and approved by local landowners in cooperation with local, state and federal agencies and multiple stakeholders. The Salmon Recovery Plans for the region also provide guidance and goals for related work. In addition, the Intensively Monitored Watershed program for the Entiat River identifies targeted projects and a prescribed sequence. Most of the District's work fits within the framework of these plans and meets multiple planning objectives.

Measures of Success: Water quality will be improved through voluntary implementation of best management practices such as Irrigation Water Management, Integrated Pest Management, Livestock Exclusion Fencing, Riparian Forest Buffers, and various Forest Health practices, and fire / flood damage restoration on multiple properties. Water quantity will be protected by improving water conveyance and application efficiency on 10 systems. 4000 landowners will be contacted with information about water quality improvement opportunities. 200 landowners will be provided with planning and/or technical assistance for natural resource concerns.

Habitat Enhancement

Goal(s):

Improve instream, riparian and upland wildlife habitat in all watersheds with willing landowners. In 2014, 2016, and 2017, implement the Intensively Monitored Watershed (IMW) plan in the Entiat watershed. Monitor project implementation and maintain sites as needed.

Measures of Success: Install at least 4 instream projects and at least 8 riparian / upland projects. Plan, secure funding and prepare to implement at least 2 projects in 2020 per IMW schedule. Re-vegetate at least 5000 feet of stream bank. Work with partners to develop 40 habitat project proposals. Submit at least 25 applications or requests for funding to implement projects.

Land Use

Goal(s):

Assist landowners interested in farmland preservation / development easements and water conservation within the water rights framework. Build strong connections between agricultural producers and the community, and continue serving as liaison between farmers and regulatory agencies. Participate in Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) process. Conduct a countywide resource inventory and prioritized action list to assist with coordinated funding recommendations.

Measures of Success: Conduct farm planning for at least 10 landowners or as needed, assist 10 landowners with conservation easement, water conservation and / or water rights planning and management, and engage the community in at least 10 agricultural awareness events or programs. Complete countywide resource inventory and incorporate prioritized action list into planning activities. Participate in VSP process.

Noxious Weeds / Invasive Species / Pests

Goal(s): Incorporate noxious / invasive plant and pest control into District projects, where appropriate. Make Integrated Pest Management and bio-control practices available through cost share and other programs. Coordinate with the Chelan County Weed Board to distribute information.

Measures of Success: Coordinate with partners to implement 10 weed / pest control treatments. Promote bio-control program with partner agencies and facilitate access for Chelan County residents. Contact 25 landowners regarding weed and pest control options. Evaluate 25 sites and provide BMP information.

Information – Education & District Operations Priorities, Measures of Success, and Goals:

Information - Education

Goal(s):

Promote awareness of, and encourage participation in Cascadia's voluntary natural resource programs. Secure sufficient staff and funding for a coordinated, comprehensive, organized outreach program.

Measures of Success: Conduct Information-Education Program yearly, including the following:

- Produce and distribute quarterly newsletters (4) and annual report (1).
- Utilize 3 electronic media outlets as well as multiple radio and print outlets to announce opportunities as well as inform and educate landowners and residents about resource concerns and District programs.
- Host or participate in at least 10 public events.
- Conduct 5 outreach and education programs.

District Priorities

Goal(s):

Maintain effective and efficient operations including accounting, grant vouchering, personnel management, Supervisor elections & appointments, training & development, annual planning, budgeting, and reporting and have enough staff, office space and equipment to support all goals.

- Keep informed and work proactively on policies affecting voluntary implementation of conservation practices.
- Continue to monitor natural resource-related policy development at local, regional and state level.
- Be available to the citizens of Chelan County as a liaison and technical resource for local environmental solutions.
- Seek creative and cost-effective solutions to funding and operations challenges.

Measures of Success: Keep the office open, attend WACD Annual Meeting and WADE training, conduct annual District election and ensure efficient operations.

Land Manager Needs

- *Technical assistance and cost share: design, planning, permit applications, compliance information.*
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See our Annual Plan for short-term goals, milestones, staffing and budget projections.

Washington Conservation Districts assisting land managers with their conservation choices

