



5-Year Plan (FY 2017 to 2021) Pine Creek Conservation District

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Organization of the Pine Creek Conservation District

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

- *The district was formed in 1942 and encompasses basically the North East Quadrant of Whitman County, WA.*

Function of the Pine Creek 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.*

We Serve & Why

- *To facilitate responsible stewardship of the land and its resources to the residents of the district..*

Mission of the Pine Creek Conservation District

- *The mission of the district is to work in cooperation with private landowners and other local, state and federal agencies to voluntarily protect, enhance and restore natural resources in the Pine Creek Conservation District. This mission will be accomplished with information/education, technical and financial assistance, and assessment of local natural resource conditions and concerns. The district will foster community involvement in natural resource issues and cooperation between private landowners, government agencies, nonprofit organizations and private business.*

Vision of the Pine Creek Conservation District

- *The district will be the first place that district landowners will go to for natural resource information and assistance, and will respond with first class service to its customers.*

Values of the Pine Creek Conservation District

- *Conservation of natural resources*
- *Wise Land Use*
- *Customer Service*
- *Voluntary Cooperation*
- *Professionalism*
- *Economic Viability*
- *Open Communications*
- *Integrity*
- *Public awareness of our goals and objectives*
- *Partnerships*

Natural Resource Priorities, Measures of Success and Goals:

- *Soil Erosion and associated Water Quality –*
 - *By FY2021, the district will be the recognized local leader in providing natural resource information and education by annually contacting 100% of the district farm operators.*
 - *By FY2021, Erosion will be reduced and water quality improved by the district providing technical assistance to an average of 10%, annually, of district farm operators.*
 - *Each year, the district will complete an average of 10 Conservation Sales Plans, targeting the steepest and most erosive land in the district.*

- *By FY2018, the district will have sought out and applied for funding to implement a comprehensive cost- share program, in this category, cost share will mainly be for direct seed/reduced tillage activities.*
 - *By FY2021, the district will have increased direct seeded and reduced tillage acres to 70% of farmland in the district.*
 - *By FY2021, the will have performed a quality check on approximately 5% (annually) of the CRP acres in the district by cooperating with NRCS through the TSP program.*
 - *Each year, the district will cooperate with Spokane County CD in providing tillage equipment loans to farm operators through the SRF Loan Program.*
- *General Water Quality –*
 - *By FY2021, the district will have a detailed inventory of livestock operations and all identified operations will have completed livestock/water quality plans.*
 - *By FY2018, the district will have sought out and applied for funding to implement a comprehensive cost- share program, in this category, cost share will mainly be for stream monitoring and livestock operations associated practices.*
 - *By FY2018, the district will have completed the development and funding application for a precision ag technology cost share program.*
 - *By FY2021, the district will have started 2 comprehensive precision ag technology demonstration sites/cooperators and have applied for demonstration funding.*
 - *Riparian Development and Enhancement –*
 - *By FY2021, the district will have completed a basic inventory for suitable riparian development areas in the district.*
 - *By FY2021, the district will have sought out and applied for funding to implement a comprehensive cost- share program, in this category, cost share will mainly be for riparian area development and plantings.*
 - *Air Quality –*
 - *By FY2021, ag burning will be reduced by 50%, by progressive reductions of 10% each year.*
 - *By FY2018, the district will work with Ecology to achieve minimal or zero impacts on populated areas from ag burning in the district.*

Critical Geographic Areas: (attached map)

- *The critical geographic area for natural resource conservation in the Pine Creek watershed and a portion of the Hangman Creek watershed.*

Information – Education Priorities, Measures of Success, and Goals:

- *By June 2017, and each succeeding year, the district will have contacted 100% of farm operators offering one-on-one information and benefits of natural resource protection/enhancement.*
- *By March 2017, and each succeeding year, the district will have organized and hosted a District Ag Information Day in combination with the annual meeting.*
- *By May 2017, and each succeeding year, the district will assisted the three other county conservation districts in organizing an envirothon for local schools.*
- *By October 2017, and each succeeding year, the district will have hosted, or co-hosted, a local landjudging contest for local schools.*
- *By September 2017, and each succeeding year, the district will have participated with the three other county conservation districts in setting up a local fair display booth.*
- *Each year, the district will have maintained a website providing natural resource information*
- *Each year, the district will maintain a local presence and point of service, by efficiently operating a local office to provide first class service to walk-in and phone-in customers.*

District Operations Priorities Measures of Success, and Goals:

- *By March 2017, and ongoing, complete effective and efficient operations including accounting, grant vouchering, personnel management, Supervisor elections & appointments, training & development, annual planning and reporting.*
- *Ongoing, maintain a local office with adequate supplies and modern equipment.*
- *Ongoing, secure stable funding through grants and any other legal means provided to conservation districts.*
- *By 2021, secure and maintain \$50,000 in savings account for cash flow.*
- *By 2018, the district will have updated its GPS unit and software.*

Trends Impacting Conservation in the Pine Creek Conservation District

- *Increasing input costs/relatively flat commodity prices*
- *Farms getting larger, small farms disappearing*
- *Farm equipment getting more expensive and complex*
- *Concerns over future availability of effective pesticides*
- *Loss of local banks/financing*
- *Decreased funding*
- *Funding sources*
- *Increased government regulations*
- *Increased demand on district services without financial support*
- *Increased district administrative overhead*
- *Conservative political base*
- *Increased public awareness*
- *Decreasing livestock operations*
- *Local NRCS service issues*

Strategies, Services & Products to Address Trends

- *The district plans to expand upon the long term relationships its board and staff have with the local landowners. We will work to be the first source that our customers seek out when needing natural resource information and assistance. When approached, we will strive to provide first-class professional services. When not approached, we will aggressively seek out and offer friendly, voluntary and professional natural resource information and assistance. The district will offer planning and technical assistance, facilitate meetings, informational/educational services, seek new/increased funding, GIS mapping and GPS measurements to help address the trends.*

Natural Resource Data:

- *There is little current and detailed data on the natural resource status in the district. In general, over the last 15 years, due to efforts by farm operators, the conservation district, NRCS and Dept. of Ecology, the condition of natural resources has been improving. Erosion and the associated water quality impacts are decreased due to less tillage, slow adoption of direct seed and grassing out of some critical areas. CRP has taken some of the steep land out of production, but has also been misguided in retiring whole farms and fields with portions that are not very erosive. CRP expansion has greatly enhanced wildlife in the district.*
- *Streams and waterways in the district have not been a huge concern in the near past, but can use improvement. Pine Creek is on Ecology's 303d listing. Water quality has improved due to less erosion and runoff into streams. The number of livestock operations in the district have greatly decreased in the last 40 years. There are currently no known large livestock operations in the district. Since the 1930's, many of the streams have been channelized and trees and shrubs removed. There are many areas where vegetation could be re-established and water quality improved. Precision Ag technology is just beginning to be used to accurately and prescriptively apply fertilizer and pesticides, which minimize or eliminate contamination of adjacent streams and groundwater.*

Staffing Needs

- *Minimum staffing needed to maintain a presence and be operational is one District Manager.*
- *If funding were available, it would be desirable to have: District Manager, District Technician and part-time office/clerical support.*

Annual Budget Needs

- *At a minimum, the district needs an operating budget of about \$95,000 per year, plus inflationary increases, to maintain a presence and be effective at providing services.*
- *It is desirable to have an operating budget of about \$130,000 per year to allow for increased services and a basic cost-share program.*
- *An operating budget of \$200,000+ per year would allow for full staffing and a comprehensive cost-share program.*

Key Decision Makers

- *PCCD landowners and farm operators*
- *PCCD Board of Supervisors*
- *WA Conservation Commission*
- *WA Dept. of Ecology*
- *NRCS*
- *FSA*
- *WA state elected officials*
- *Whitman County Commissioners*
- *Other state and federal agencies as may be appropriate due to regulations or associated funding to the district*

Benchmarks, Timeline, & Actions:

Strategic Priority:

Measurable Goal:

Benchmark	Timeline	12 Month Actions
Producers assisted	FY2017	Provide technical assistance for implementation of BMP's
Plans written	FY2018	Target most erosive land, develop Conservation Sales Plans
Cost share program in place	FY2018	Update cost-share policy, Apply for cost-share funding
Number of livestock operations	FY2018	Update inventory of livestock operations and rank according to greatest potential risk
Acres of potential riparian development	FY2018	Complete a GIS inventory of areas suitable for improving riparian condition
Number attending meeting	FY2017	Host annual Ag Information Day
Number of operators contacted	FY2017	One-on-one contact of 100% of district farm operators

Washington Conservation Districts assisting land managers with their conservation choices