



# Underwood Conservation District Long-Range Plan (2017 to 2022)

For More Information Contact: Tova Tillinghast or Ann Gross  
509-493-1936, [info@ucdwa.org](mailto:info@ucdwa.org)

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## Organization of Underwood Conservation District

- ❖ A conservation district is a political subdivision of the State of Washington – its authorities, powers and structure are contained in RCW 89.08.
  - ❖ Underwood Conservation District (UCD) comprises all of Skamania County, plus Klickitat County west of the Klickitat River. The District was formed in 1940, on Underwood Mountain (hence the name) and has since grown to serve landowners in both counties.
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## Function of Underwood 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.
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## Who We Serve & Why

- ❖ We serve landowners and managers in particular, but also the general public as a form of natural resource stewardship-in-commons (e.g. water quality improvements serve the public). We provide and coordinate resources in order to help improve management and conservation of natural resources.
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## Mission of the Underwood Conservation District

- ❖ The mission of UCD is to engage landowners and land users throughout Skamania and west Klickitat Counties in the voluntary conservation, enhancement, stewardship, and sustainable use of natural resources.
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## Vision of Underwood Conservation District

- ❖ The vision of Underwood Conservation District is to help all landowners within our region – whether private or public – meet their land management goals in careful consideration of our region’s common natural resources.
  - Common natural resources are those components of the earth, such as our air, water, vegetation, soil and wildlife, upon which we are dependent.
  - UCD will be a positive influence in establishing or supporting genuinely sustainable practices while enhancing the functionality and health of forests, water, native habitats and agriculture.
  - We believe that by working in concert with these natural elements with responsible stewardship, a healthy and happy economic future will be possible.
- ❖ UCD will:
  - Have outstanding, diverse programs that serve the multiple interests of a thriving and well-informed community who are managing their land more sustainably. Programs include water conservation, water quality, Firewise, and community engagement including:
    - Developed and/or ongoing projects showing actual improvement in fecal coliform and temperature; and
    - Engagement with water users on conservation practices and water use efficiency, resulting in



*Little Wind River Habitat  
Restoration Project*

- greater instream flows and less impacts on groundwater.
- Implement very visible projects to restore, protect and enhance the White Salmon, Wind, and other watersheds including fish, beaver, wildlife, native plants, and microorganisms which will involve:
    - An active army of volunteers on a regular basis; and
    - A backyard habitat program running and funded with associated facilities such as greenhouse space;
  - Have a good centralized database, available to the public, that supports district programs, helps in public education on impacts of climate change, and demonstrates the state of the landscape;
  - Have a comprehensive “go-to” program on forestry that includes better-prepared Firewise communities and better relationships with timber companies;
  - Build stronger bonds with our stakeholders and the public resulting in increased support and awareness;
  - Secure stable and robust funding to support district programs and leverage project grants;
  - Be housed in better facilities that will serve as a community center for natural resources that is more visible to the public with meeting/workshop space, demonstration sites, and is close to partner agencies and organizations;
  - Be always available to assist counties on Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP);
  - Be recognized as a key leader in maintaining the health of the watershed as well as private forest lands and agricultural land;
  - Remain a community-based neutral party to working to conserve and preserve the resources we all depend on;
  - Be a positive influence in establishing genuine sustainable health while preserving the beauty of forests, water, native habitats and agriculture;
  - Be a leader in creating systemic thinking among the populace on the impacts of actions;
  - Be part of a coordinated effort to deal with foodshed safety and security in our community;
  - Be the body that convenes a diverse set of stakeholders around ecosystem health for long-term planning and protection.

### **Values of Underwood Conservation District**

- ❖ Promotion of wise stewardship and conservation of natural resources
- ❖ Retention and promotion of working farm and forest land
- ❖ Education of the public on natural resource issues
- ❖ Tolerance of diverse land use practices
- ❖ Openness to work with all landowners
- ❖ Neutral, non-regulatory approach to natural resource issues
- ❖ Voluntary landowner participation
- ❖ Honesty, integrity and worthiness of landowner trust
- ❖ Fiduciary responsibility
- ❖ Incentive-based conservation
- ❖ Support for agriculture’s economic viability
- ❖ Service to landowners
- ❖ Community-based
- ❖ Streamlined, efficient, proactive and can-do approach
- ❖ Flexible, innovative, and early adoption of best management practices (BMPs)
- ❖ Cooperation with regulatory agencies while maintaining non-regulatory approach
- ❖ Balancing the impacts of humans on nature and nature on humans

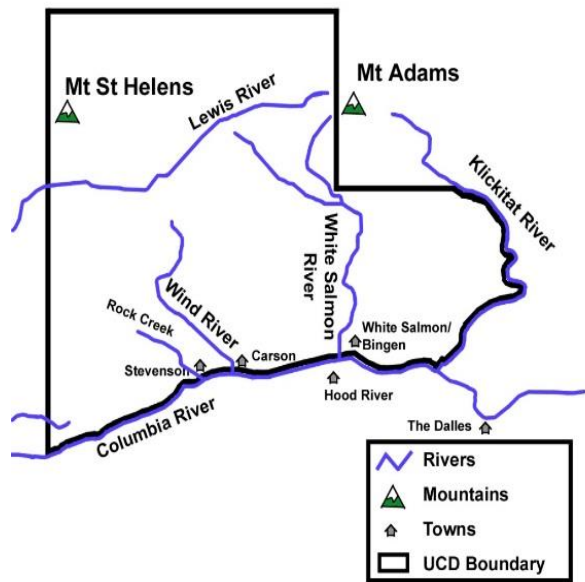
## Natural Resource Data and Information

UCD is a large district (1,395,819 acres total in the district, or 2,181 square miles) comprised of a variety of land uses and geographic features. The district straddles the Cascade Mountains and extends from the north banks of the Columbia River to Mt. St. Helens and the flanks of Mt. Adams. Within the district boundaries are moist westside forests and dry eastside shrub-steppe environments. Several large river systems are included in the district: a 52-mile stretch of the Columbia River, the Klickitat River, the White Salmon River, the Little White Salmon River, the Wind River, and parts of the Washougal River. Agricultural land uses include forestry, livestock, fruit orchards, vineyards, hay land, and some dairies. The major centers of population are the towns of Stevenson, White Salmon, Bingen, North Bonneville, Carson, and Trout Lake.

The following are natural resource data sources:

- [Dept. of Ecology impaired waters map.](#)
- [Federal Endangered Species Act \(ESA\).](#)
- [T & E Animal & Plant Species in WA](#)
- [State Natural Heritage Program](#)
- [Dept. of Archaeology & Historic Preservation](#)
- [WA DNR Report on Forest Land Conversion](#)
- [Forest Practice Application Review System](#)
- [US Geological Survey's StreamStats](#)

- [WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife's SalmonScape](#)
- [WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife's Living with Wildlife](#)
- [WSU Extension - Forestry](#)
- [WSU Extension - Native Plants](#)
- [US Forest Service Insect Aerial Detection Surveys](#)
- [USDA Web Soil Survey](#)
- [Klickitat County Parcel Information](#)
- [Skamania County Parcel Information](#)



## Criteria for Selecting Conservation Priorities

- ❖ Public dollars being spent wisely
- ❖ Impact of degradation that exists
- ❖ Potential for further degradation
- ❖ Degree to which resources will be improved
- ❖ Landowner interest or buy-in
- ❖ Public support
- ❖ Available technical expertise and workload capacity
- ❖ Coordination or cooperation with other agencies
- ❖ Available funding and regulatory support
- ❖ Potential to build long-term capacity for the district



*Buck Creek irrigation diversion*

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## Priority Natural Resource Conservation Needs, Goals and Priority Geographic Areas

See Addendum A for Strategies & Actions to Address Priority Natural Resource Needs & Goals

### ***Priority Conservation Needs and Goals:***

- ❖ Water (Quality and Quantity) and Watershed Protection
- ❖ Invasive Species Control
- ❖ Climate Change Resiliency
- ❖ Forest and Native Ecosystem Management, Health and Diversity including White Oak Forest Habitat
- ❖ Soil Health and Erosion Control
- ❖ Habitat Improvement and Protection including Fish and Wildlife, Riparian, and Pollinator Habitat
- ❖ Disaster Resilience and Recovery
- ❖ Small Farm and other Working Land Stewardship and Sustainability
- ❖ Pollution Prevention
- ❖ Air Quality
- ❖ Renewable Energy

### ***Priority Geographic Areas:***

- ❖ East side of UCD (east of Little White Salmon) where it is more water-limited, fire-prone, and experiencing higher development pressure
- ❖ Wildland-Urban Interface areas
- ❖ White Salmon River Watershed
- ❖ Trout Lake Valley
- ❖ Headwaters of major river systems and water recharge areas
- ❖ Riparian areas in the Wind River and White Salmon River
- ❖ Anadromous fish reaches
- ❖ Upper Rattlesnake Creek
- ❖ Urban areas
- ❖ White Oak Forestland
- ❖ Washougal River

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## Information/Education and District Operations Priorities and Goals

### ***Information/Education Priorities and Goals of Underwood Conservation District:***

- ❖ Raise awareness of UCD and our services throughout the district.
- ❖ Educate the district's school students on natural resource issues.
  - Involvement in the schools will help educate kids and parents. Assist



2017 UCD TreeFest and plant sale

- children, our future landowners, in being the driver of change.
  - Educate kids on stream health and forest health.
  - Develop an understanding that the health of the community comes from the health of the land.
- ❖ Provide forestry, livestock, and horticultural and water conservation training on an annual basis.
- ❖ Provide educational opportunities to small parcel landowners and managers on natural resource stewardship.
- ❖ Provide education and outreach to local land managers to reduce water consumption and solid waste.
- ❖ Increase education and outreach to minority populations.
- ❖ Investigate the opportunity for a facility that could serve as a community center for natural resources that may contain workshop space, demonstration sites, and work with partner agencies and organizations (See Addendum B).
- ❖ Serve as a convener and facilitator of discussions on relevant natural resource issues.
- ❖ Strive to meet the diverse information needs and electronic capabilities of the public.
  - Be seen as a real service to the public.
  - Be the source of hard copies of information.
  - Increase outreach to minority populations.
- ❖ Provide educational opportunities for volunteerism.
  - As there is a dwindling on-the-ground labor force, invite kids to work on projects with landowners to gain experience.

***District Operations Priorities and Goals of Underwood Conservation District:***

- ❖ Have all needed staffing and staff training to implement the Long Range Plan.
- ❖ Pursue funding and practice fiscal prudence to retain staff and provide district services into the future.
- ❖ Establish and maintain positive solid relationships with Klickitat County and Skamania County.
- ❖ Assess additional needs of district landowners, research solutions and implement.
- ❖ Have all facilities, vehicles, and equipment to meet the needs of the district. UCD will be housed in better facilities that are more visible to the public, with meeting/workshop space, demonstration sites, and close to partner agencies and organizations (See Addendum B).
- ❖ Work with neighboring districts and other entities to leverage and share resources and information.
- ❖ Achieve stable funding for conservation to allow for planning for the needs of the district.
  - Investigate creating an entity that can receive certain types of grant funds for the district.
  - Discuss the idea of a tax base.

**Staffing Needs**

In order to carry out the Long Range Plan, the following staff functions are needed:

- ❖ *District Manager/Director*
- ❖ *Financial Administrator*
- ❖ *Grant Writer*
- ❖ *Natural Resource Technicians*
- ❖ *Education/Outreach Coordinator*
- ❖ *Firewise Coordinator*
- ❖ *Forester*
- ❖ *Certified Conservation Planner*
- ❖ *Volunteer Coordinator*
- ❖ *Professional Engineer*

## Annual Budget Needs

In order to fully carry-out this Long Range Plan, we estimate a need, per year, of at least:

- \$400,000 for salaries
- \$100,000 for operations and overhead
- \$100,000 for cost-share programs and grant match
- Additional funds for specific projects

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## Key Decision Makers

- ❖ *UCD Board of Supervisors*
- ❖ *Washington State Conservation Commission*
- ❖ *Private and Public, Local, Regional, State, and Federal Land Owners and Managers*
- ❖ *City Councils, PUDs and other Local Governments*
- ❖ *Skamania and Klickitat County Commissioners*
- ❖ *State Representatives and Senators*
- ❖ *U.S. Congressional Representatives and Senators*
- ❖ *Columbia River Gorge Commission*



*Mt. St. Helens*

Washington Conservation Districts assist land managers with their conservation choices.

# Addendum A

## Strategies & Actions to Address Natural Resource Needs & Goals

All actions and milestones are to be implemented 2017-2022.

### ❖ Goal: Water (Quality and Quantity) and Watershed Protection

#### *Actions:*

- Assist irrigation districts, ditch companies, and Coordinated Resource Management Areas through facilitation and project sponsorship.

#### *Milestones:*

- *Work with Buck Creek water users and Trout Lake irrigators to improve withdrawal, screening, and delivery systems.*
- Assist farmers and ranchers, both small and large-scale, with farm plans, nutrient management plans, cost share and grant applications, technical assistance on site-specific projects, and serve as a liaison between the landowner and regulatory agencies.

#### *Milestones:*

- *Maintain and improve a prioritized list of projects that supports watershed health.*
- *Review this list annually.*
- Assist water users in the district with conservation and protection of water sources.

#### *Milestones:*

- *In coordination with others, implement ways to fill data gaps identified in watershed plans.*
- *Evaluate current and future water use and supply and identify areas of potential to conserve and manage water and look at the future of water use and climate change.*
- *Establish a positive environment to enable a watershed plan to move forward in the White Salmon River watershed.*
- *Work with Trout Lake to improve sewage management.*
- Work with livestock and irrigation operations to improve water quality metrics in the White Salmon River, Wind River and other major drainages.

#### *Milestones:*

- *Identify opportunities and willing cooperators to implement livestock and irrigation projects.*
- *Seek funding to implement livestock BMP projects.*
- *Seek funding to implement irrigation improvement projects.*

### ❖ Goal: Invasive Species Control

#### *Actions:*

- Maintain close working relationships with other entities engaged in invasive control and restoration practices in order to support collaborative implementation of control plans and projects within the district.

#### *Milestones:*

- *Meet at least annually with partnering entities, including the County Noxious Weed*

*Departments and Columbia Weed Management Area (CWMA).*

- *Engage partners and invasives experts to implement BMPs that reflect current, best available science and IPM techniques.*
- Engage in and educate the public to the practices of Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) as it pertains to invasive plants and animals and Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

*Milestones:*

- *Partner with Counties and the Columbia Weed Management Area (CWMA) to offer public outreach opportunities whenever time and funding allow.*
- *Make available current EDRR literature and information for the public at UCD outreach events.*
- Support projects that sustain awareness of invasive species.

*Milestones:*

- *Continue involvement with CWMA via regular meetings, public outreach events, and other activities.*

#### ❖ **Goal: Climate Change Resiliency**

**Actions:**

- Help plan for climate change, adaptation, and resiliency.

*Milestones:*

- *Where opportunities arise, and time and funding allow, engage in climate change planning processes with partnering entities and the public.*
- Ensure that climate change resiliency is built into programs, plans and projects.

*Milestones:*

- *Integrate planning for climate change into all BMPs and projects implemented by UCD.*

#### ❖ **Goal: Forest and Native Ecosystem Management, Health and Diversity including White Oak Forest Habitat**

**Actions:**

- Help small forest landowners maintain healthy, quality, economically viable forests as well as reduce the catastrophic effects on soil, water, fish, wildlife, plants, climate, and related social impacts of wildfires through forest health enhancement and fire hazard reduction.

*Milestones:*

- *Assist forestland owners in forest management plans, technical recommendations, implement those plans through district cost share agreements as well as state and federal grants/cost share, and serve as a liaison between the landowner and regulatory agencies.*
- *Coordinate with other agencies to maintain Firewise communities and provide resources to empower them to implement Firewise projects and principles.*
- *Continue mitigation of fire danger to wildland-urban interface areas, and strive to make Firewise common practice.*
- *Partner with USFS and other large forest landowners in mitigating risk in the wildland-urban interface.*
- *Build working relationships with fire departments and fire districts.*



- *Establish a viable community-based fuels reduction program and continue to expand the UCD chipper program.*
  - *Support sustainable use of forest products.*
  - *Support education and assistance to forest landowners as well as urban/suburban homeowners with problems of insects, diseases, and invasive species impacting our forests.*
- Help landowners to provide an environment for native species and do so in concert with agricultural production.

*Milestones:*

- *Continue to provide native plant sale and associated education on an annual basis, as well as technical assistance on the best available science regarding native ecosystem-friendly BMPs and agricultural practices.*
  - *Provide opportunities for landowners of every scale to engage in cost-share projects that implement native plant enhancements alongside agricultural operations.*
- Work with and build relationships with large, private land managers.

*Milestones:*

- *Continue to reach out to large private land owners and managers as opportunities arise to partner on projects, access expertise and serve needs.*

❖ **Goal: Soil Health and Erosion Control**

**Actions:**

- Help to educate landowners on the best management practices for improving and maintaining soil health.

*Milestones:*

- *Continue targeted outreach, education and technical assistance for landowners about soil health and related BMPs, including soil testing.*
- *Provide cost-share project opportunities for at least one soil health project.*

❖ **Goal: Habitat Improvement and Protection including Fish and Wildlife, Riparian, and Pollinator Habitat**

**Actions:**

- Continue to establish and improve riparian buffers and protect shorelines from erosion.

*Milestones:*

- *Provide targeted outreach and education to streamside landowners regarding recommended stewardship practices.*
- *Provide cost-share project opportunities for at least one riparian buffer project.*

- Help improve habitat for steelhead and salmon in the White Salmon River, the Wind River and other rivers and streams.

*Milestones:*

- *Continue to improve failing bridges and culverts that impact streams and fish habitat.*
- *Continue to plan and implement habitat enhancement projects throughout the district.*

- Help create healthy forage and habitat available for pollinators.

*Milestones:*

- *Educate the public on the challenges facing pollinators and best management practices supporting pollinators through written outreach, workshops, or project tours.*
- *Identify and provide cost-share opportunities for at least five pollinator or wildlife habitat enhancement projects.*
- Support programs that assist with wise growth and development.

*Milestones:*

- *Plan and, as funding allows, implement a backyard habitat program.*
- *Provide education and resources for residents and municipalities interested in Low Impact Development.*

❖ **Goal: Disaster Resilience and Recovery**

***Actions:***

- Ensure that disaster resilience and recovery is built into programs, plans and projects.

*Milestones:*

- *Identify ways UCD can participate in disaster resilience and recovery (e.g. floods, pest outbreaks, wildfire, drought) and develop resources to support community efforts.*
- *Build working relationships with emergency management offices, fire departments, and fire districts and work to define UCD's role in potential disasters.*

❖ **Goal: Small Farm and other Working Land Stewardship and Sustainability**

***Actions:***

- Help landowners develop and implement practices for better land stewardship.

*Milestones:*

- *Provide education and resources to assist landowners in improving grazing practices.*
- *Conduct active outreach to orchardists and vineyard operators to identify needs and ways to assist.*
- *Assess additional needs of district landowners, research solutions and implement programs to address those needs.*
- *Investigate opportunities to create a farm incubator program like the Headwaters Farm at East Multnomah SWCD.*
- *Assist farmers and ranchers, both small and large-scale, with farm plans, nutrient management plans, cost share and grant applications, technical assistance on site-specific projects, and serve as a liaison between the landowner and regulatory agencies.*
- Help prevent land conversion and assist with conserving working farms and forests.

*Milestones:*

- *Leverage expertise from partners such as WSU Extension to provide information and services to help farms and forestlands be more economically viable.*
- *Leverage expertise from partners such as Columbia Land Trust to provide education and resources to help landowners understand long-term conservation opportunities and successional planning.*

❖ **Goal: Pollution Prevention**

**Actions:**

- Support education for the public on least polluting Integrated Pest Management options, including chemical, mechanical, biological and preventive methods.

*Milestones:*

- *Educate the public on the less toxic options and best management practices that prevent pollution of all kinds through written outreach, workshops, or project tours.*
- *Identify and provide cost-share opportunities for pollution prevention projects.*

- Provide information to homeowners on proper use and alternatives to toxic products.

*Milestones:*

- *Develop webpage for homeowners to access current information on the risks of pollution prevention and less toxic alternatives.*
- *Integrate pollution prevention into UCD outreach and educational activities.*

❖ **Goal: Air Quality**

**Actions:**

- Support or participate in air quality programs where opportunities arise.

*Milestones:*

- *Support BMPs that protect air quality, including the continuation of the chipper program.*

❖ **Goal: Renewable Energy**

**Actions:**

- Support renewable energy projects such as methane digesters and other technology.

*Milestones:*

- *Provide support and information regarding alternative energy development where possible.*

## Addendum B

### UCD Conservation Center | Summary of Vision Components

#### Center Objectives:

- Provide demonstrations and education opportunities to area land owners and managers, as well as the general public and youth
- Establish a base of operations (headquarters or supplemental) for UCD's stewardship programming, equipment and supplies (e.g. spreader, drill, tools, etc.), and includes additional office and convening space for staff use, admin, and program delivery
- Facilitate/Organize holistic efforts to resolve complex challenges shared by diverse natural resource stakeholders in the Columbia Gorge

#### Need/Opportunity:

- The Gorge conservation community – while sharing common goals – lacks a place to convene, coordinate, learn, and participate in a diverse and sustainable working landscape in balance with natural systems
- UCD is in need of facilities and space for delivery of conservation programs and services

#### Potential Scope of Activities at the Center:

- Working farm, ranch, orchard, vegetable operation and forest
  - best management practices demonstration
  - experimental practices demonstration
- Firewise practices demonstration
- Composting
- Native plant nursery
- Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development demonstration
- Conservation/Stewardship Education
- Recreation and natural resource appreciation
- UCD facilities and equipment
- Convening space, with both indoor and outdoor classroom settings
  - public meetings
  - stakeholder coordination
  - workshops, classes, events, etc.

#### Facilities Wish List (these qualities may be part of future UCD office space/headquarters and/or a future Conservation Stewardship Center; *italicize* if it's required for UCD basic operations):

- *Covered equipment storage*
- *Office space*
- *Convening / meeting space*
- *Public visibility; convenient for walk-in traffic*
- Forest or farm acreage (1-20 acres)
- Greenhouse

## UCD Office Space | Summary of Required Components

For use in potential search for new office space

### Objectives:

- Provide a base of operations for UCD's stewardship programming, equipment and supplies, including office and convening space for staff use, admin, and program delivery.
- Provide space for demonstrations, educational opportunities, and convening of diverse stakeholders, land owners and managers, the general public and youth.

### Facilities Needs/Requirements for UCD basic operations:

- Office space for 5-7 individuals, ideally with closable doors (~800 square feet for this use)
- Additional convening / meeting space for at least 15 people, or as many as 30-40 (~300 square feet for this use at minimum)
- Entry area for displays and literature (~100 square feet for this use)
- Work room area (~125 square feet for office equipment, network server, photocopier, etc.)
- Kitchen area (~75 square feet for microwave, fridge, water, sink, and cupboard space)
- Space for file cabinets, shelves and other materials (~150 square feet)
- Total indoor space needed for items listed above is **1550 square feet** at minimum
- Covered, secure equipment storage (~200 square feet)
- Parking space for 3 vehicles and a utility trailer, plus day parking for 6 staff members and additional occasional visitors; total of 10-12 spaces
- Public visibility, easy to find, convenient for walk-in traffic from town; location for UCD sign
- ADA accessible space and at least two restrooms
- Natural lighting and screened, openable windows for workspaces
- Functional, controllable heat and A/C systems
- Ready/wired phone and internet; adequate capacity for typical office technology
- Available maintenance and custodial service
- Stable rent, long-term security (we would be willing to sign a long-term lease or possibly purchase the right property), and price range of \$0.50-1.00 per square foot (currently paying \$0.61/sq. ft. for ~1300 sq. ft. including maintenance and custodial service)

### Potential Scope and Wish List (or eventual Conservation Center):

- Convening space, with both indoor and outdoor classroom settings
  - public meetings
  - stakeholder/partner coordination
  - workshops, classes, events, etc.
- Working farm, ranch, orchard, vegetable operation and forest (1-20 acres)
  - best management practices demonstration
  - experimental practices demonstration
- Firewise practices demonstration
- Composting demonstration
- Native plant nursery ( and greenhouse)
- Green Infrastructure, LEED design, and Low Impact Development demonstration