



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

To: Board of Directors
From: Tom Salzer, Executive Director
Date: September 16, 2020
Subject: Proposed strategic plan (revised after September 15th Board meeting)
Section 1 – Mission, Vision, and Principles statements
Section 2 – Goals, Approaches, and Scorecard

Context of a proposed strategic plan

WACD members requested, and the WACD Board directed, that staff develop a strategic plan proposal for consideration by the Board of Directors. This proposal was reviewed by the WACD Board again on September 15th with edits and additions by board and staff. The Board approved seeking review and comment from conservation districts and partners on this latest version of the proposed strategic plan.

The strategic plan is intended to act as a framework document that will, in turn, serve as the foundation for more detailed annual work plans. The proposed strategic plan consists of two sections of three elements each. Section 1 covers “evergreen” elements that should rarely need to be changed: mission, vision, and principles. These three elements are fundamental values that act as guideposts as we perform our work.

Section 2 covers the more changeable elements of goals, approaches (think of them as actions without details), and scorecard (strategic metrics). They are intended to evolve as conditions change. These elements are transitional steps between the values/principles in Section 1 and annual work plans that provide more detailed descriptions of action steps and measures.

All elements should be reviewed annually as WACD prepares an annual work plan.

In summary: the mission, vision, and principles statements guide our formulation of goals and strategic approaches. These elements become the basis for constructing detailed, explicit annual plans to actualize our principles and intentions.

Section 1 – Mission, Vision, and Principles

Mission

Put simply, our mission is why we are here, describing in the briefest terms the unique value that WACD provides.

WACD serves as the collective voice of conservation districts to help them achieve their purposes.

Vision

The vision statement succinctly describes our ultimate desired destination.

WACD aspires to fully support conservation districts in their implementation of locally developed conservation programs.

Principles

Principles are descriptions of our most fundamental values. Our values frame and support specific goals and strategic approaches. Principles/values should be evergreen: not changing from year to year. They form the firmament upon which to build annual work plans and to guide our decisions along the way.

Ten guiding principles are proposed:

1. **We exist to advocate for, and support, member conservation districts.**
2. **We serve people with dignity and respect, acting with integrity and operating with transparency and accountability to all.**
3. **We continually seek to become more capable in serving members, including maintaining financial strength, enhancing board capacity, and improving staff capacity.**
4. **We value and recognize our people for excellence in performance, including teamwork, innovation, timely completion of tasks, and support of others.**
5. **Our responses to conservation issues are founded on proven methodologies and science.**
6. **We form and support strategic partnerships to maximize our effectiveness and to reduce duplication of effort.**

7. We seek to conserve natural resources in the way we operate our organization.
8. We believe in, and uphold, the practice of locally-led, voluntary, incentive-based conservation.
9. Private lands – and those who steward them – provide unique and valuable conservation of renewable natural resources to be used today and by future generations.
10. Because natural resources cross jurisdictional boundaries and ownerships, all lands – and the people and entities that manage them – are important in conserving renewable natural resources.

Section 2 – Goals, Approaches, and Scorecard

Goals and Approaches

Goals should reflect achievable ideals that spring from the mission, vision, and principles. Since they spring from MVP statements, some goals may be very similar (or even identical) to those statements.

Goals and approaches in the strategic plan are aspirational in character. In annual work plans that are based on the strategic plan, approaches become more explicitly defined as actions that must be time bound and assigned to accountable parties.

GOAL 1: Provide advocacy and support for member conservation districts, seeking continual improvement.

- APPROACH 1.1: WACD will coordinate continuously and closely with the Washington State Conservation Commission and with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in advising and supporting members.
- APPROACH 1.2: WACD will support budget and legislative requests that maintain or improve funding and capacity for conservation districts.
- APPROACH 1.3: WACD will defend and uphold the principle and practice of locally led, voluntary, incentive-based conservation on private lands, based on proven methodologies, science, and community support.

- APPROACH 1.4: WACD will facilitate the resolution of natural resource problems that impact the sustainable use of natural resources with reason and influence.
- APPROACH 1.4: WACD will investigate ways that advocacy and support to members might be improved.
- APPROACH 1.5: WACD will support resolutions adopted by the membership that direct us to advance initiatives that help to maintain or expand conservation district capacity and effectiveness.
- APPROACH 1.6: WACD will facilitate communication and coordination with conservation districts and partners at all levels.
- APPROACH 1.7: WACD will provide timely information, education, training, and leadership to conservation districts and partners.
- APPROACH 1.8: WACD will inspire and educate conservation district supervisors to a full understanding and acceptance of their responsibilities for leadership and governance.

GOAL 2: Act with fairness, integrity, and transparency, being accountable to members and partners.

- APPROACH 2.1: WACD will provide regular updates to members and partners about WACD business operations, priorities, and strategies.
- APPROACH 2.2: WACD will treat others (inside the organization and elsewhere) fairly, graciously, and honestly always.
- APPROACH 2.3: WACD will seek engagement throughout our conservation community and will respect feedback and suggestions from members and partners.
- APPROACH 2.4: WACD will serve others fairly, equitably, and with respect.
- APPROACH 2.5: WACD will act ethically, avoiding conflicts of interest that may impair our effectiveness or impeach our reputation.

GOAL 3: Maintain and strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of WACD.

- APPROACH 3.1: WACD will provide regular learning opportunities to board members to improve their governance capacity and effectiveness.
- APPROACH 3.2: WACD will value employees and help them meet or exceed expectations.
- APPROACH 3.3: WACD will reward superior performance of employees.
- APPROACH 3.4: WACD will operate the Plant Materials Center to provide conservation-grade native plants for conservation districts while meeting or exceeding costs.
- APPROACH 3.5: WACD will operate in ways that respect and conserve natural resources.
- APPROACH 3.6: WACD will seek diversified funding from multiple sources to reduce financial impacts to members and to improve stability in services and operations.

GOAL 4: Form and support strategic partnerships to maximize effectiveness and reduce duplication of effort.

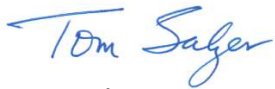
- APPROACH 4.1: WACD will lead efforts to expand understanding by governmental, non-governmental, and tribal partners of the locally led, voluntary conservation ideal and the critical role of conservation districts in addressing important natural resource issues on private lands by regularly hosting informational meetings between districts and partners.
- APPROACH 4.2: WACD will maintain existing partnerships while seeking new partners who can expand and strengthen our capacity and effectiveness.
- APPROACH 4.3: WACD will support partner associations, including the Washington Association of District Employees, the National Association of Conservation Districts, and the National Conservation District Employees Association.

Scorecard

The scorecard is a summary of activities and progress toward achieving goals and strategic approaches. The scorecard approach is better positioned to report progress in the context of the annual work plan, but it is also useful to review progress in the wider, longer-lived context of the strategic plan.

A scorecard for the strategic plan will be developed once the mission, vision, principles, goals, and approaches are deemed acceptable and supportable.

Sincerely,



Tom Salzer, Executive Director

Washington Association of Conservation Districts