



### WHERE CTD IS HEADED IN 2017-18:

- ▶ Provide conservation district trainings on topics identified in training needs inventory, including: ArcMap/GIS, climate change resilience in conservation planning, National Air Quality Site Assessment Tool, and water quality resource assessments.
- ▶ Offer special certification courses in dairy, farm, and riparian planning at the 2017 Washington Association of District Employees conference.
- ▶ Deliver quality assurance support for conservation planning.
- ▶ Finalize statewide farm conservation planning templates available to all district staff.
- ▶ Co-lead core conservation trainings with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, including: Basic Planner Certification, Nutrient Management Planning, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning, and Resource Stewardship Evaluation Tool.
- ▶ Provide query access to database of expert conservation staff across the state.

Want to learn more?

View the CTD work plan: <http://www.wactd.org/home/workplan>



CONSERVATION DISTRICTS  
OF WASHINGTON STATE  
*your window to healthy lands*



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Washington State  
**Conservation  
Commission**



### SUMMARY:

- ▶ Center for Technical Development (CTD) helps conservation district staff deliver consistent, high-quality service and results.
- ▶ Conservation district staff can authenticate their skills in conservation planning by completing CTD certification programs.
- ▶ CTD contributes scientific and on-the-ground technical knowledge to state and local conservation policy decisions.
- ▶ CTD offers trainings that cover topics identified in annual training needs inventory.



Washington State  
Conservation Commission  
**CENTER FOR  
TECHNICAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

*For the betterment of Washington conservation districts and employees*

### BACKGROUND

The Center for Technical Development (CTD) is the technical arm of the Washington State Conservation Commission. The CTD ensures that conservation district staff have the expertise to plan and implement effective conservation programs.

CTD objectives include:

- ▶ Offer all conservation district staff access to professional certification, training, and development opportunities.
- ▶ Maintain consistent, high-quality programs and expertise across conservation districts.
- ▶ Explore and coordinate efforts to monitor impacts of conservation practices.
- ▶ Connect expert staff to advise on natural resource policies using data and local knowledge.

### WHY THIS IS NEEDED

The CTD helps conservation districts support expert staff conservation planners and technicians, who are key to resource conservation. These staff help landowners create and employ plans to meet land use and resource goals on their property.

Conservation planners and technicians must have the skills to:

- ▶ Identify critical resource issues;
- ▶ Apply appropriate resource assessment and practice techniques to unique situations and planning disciplines (e.g., dairy, farm, riparian, urban, forestry).

Staff must consistently demonstrate these skills across all conservation districts to gain the trust of landowners and partner agencies that rely on their service.

Center for Technical Development

### THREE PILLAR APPROACH

Training and  
certification

High-quality  
conservation project  
implementation and  
policy advice

Monitoring and  
quality assurance

Learn more: [www.wactd.org](http://www.wactd.org)



## CTD ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Implement **planner certification process** for dairy, farm, and riparian conservation planners; add more high-needs certification programs as needed.
- ▶ Complete **quality assurance process** to evaluate and support the success of conservation planning across districts.
- ▶ Develop framework for state **research, implementation, and monitoring** program.
- ▶ Complete annual **training needs inventory** and provide professional training events.
- ▶ Create statewide **conservation planning tools and templates** and maintain clearinghouse of tools for planners.
- ▶ Foster **mentorships and job shadowing** opportunities.
- ▶ Create **database of experts** to coordinate staff across districts.
- ▶ Maintain system of **communication and outreach**, including a monthly newsletter and announcements.

## USING SCIENCE-BASED PRACTICE STANDARDS

Conservation district plans and practices follow USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service practice standards.

These scientifically based standards are reviewed and updated at the national level every five years. In Washington, this includes additional standards adopted at the state level to ensure applicability with state and local resource needs.

## WHAT ARE CONSERVATION PLANS?

Conservation plans provide a road map for landowners to maintain and enhance healthy natural resources on their property or farm.

**How it works:** Conservation planners meet one-on-one with landowners to evaluate soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources on the property and listen to land use goals. Then, the conservation planner writes a plan that identifies the “what, where, and when” for conservation efforts on the property:

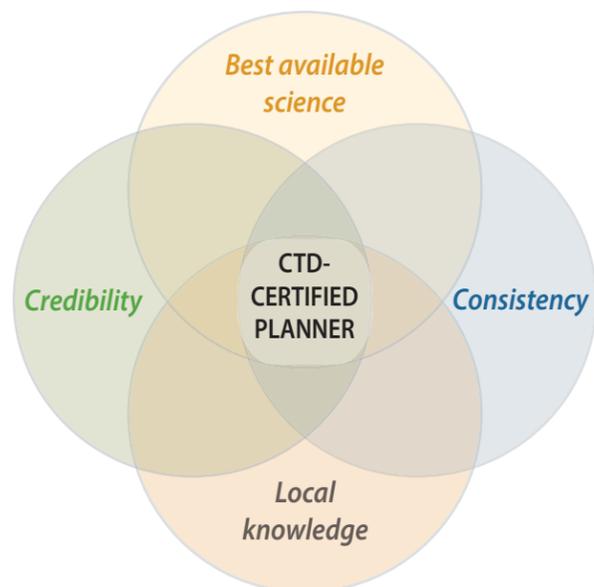
- ▶ *What:* Identification of conservation practices that meet natural resource and land use goals.
- ▶ *Where:* Location on the property where each conservation practice should be installed.
- ▶ *When:* Schedule of dates/years when practices should be installed and updated.

**Conservation plans are developed at no cost to the landowner.** Planning assistance is provided as a public service (as resources allow).

**Conservation plans are specific to natural resource and land use needs.** Conservation plans come in many types, including nutrient management plans (e.g. for dairies), farm plans, and riparian plans.

**Conservation plans are key to financial assistance.** Landowners must be implementing an approved conservation plan to be eligible for financial assistance through the federal Farm Bill.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CTD-CERTIFIED PLANNER?



- ▶ The CTD Planner Certification Program authenticates that staff have the necessary skill and ability to write conservation plans that meet all state and local requirements.
- ▶ CTD-certified planners represent a rigor of review, training, and knowledge-base to ensure they execute a consistent, high-level of planning.
- ▶ Planners are recognized for demonstrating advanced knowledge, skills, and expertise.
- ▶ The program provides a path for new and advancing planners to achieve the knowledge and mentor support needed to advance from beginning to expert planner through continuing education.

## CTD TRAINING ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2016



**60** conservation district employees attended core trainings developed by the CTD and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

- ▶ Trainings included Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning, Basic Conservation Planning, and Riparian and Instream Consideration in Conservation Planning.

**86** conservation district employees completed eight trainings led by conservation district and CTD staff.

- ▶ Topics covered ArcGIS (geographic information system), Waste Calc: Feed and Forage Balance, and Plant Identification.

The CTD also conducted a training needs survey to inventory and prioritize trainings for 2017.