# 2020 Annual Work Plan *(1/1/20 – 12/31/20)*
# Thurston Conservation District

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**Mission of the Thurston Conservation District**
*We educate and assist the citizens of Thurston County in the management of natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations, inspiring voluntary, incentive-based conservation practices.*

**This Thurston Conservation District 2020 Annual Work Plan links directly to the content and format of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and aligns with the adopted annual budget.**

## Natural Resource Priorities, Goals and Actions

### 1. Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

To help producers and community members understand and adapt to the changing climate, we continue to engage in and relay the best available science through education and technical assistance services. We seek to support our community in proactive climate change adaptation measures such as flood and fire prevention, drought, ocean acidification in local marine waters, suitable crops, and forest regeneration incorporating climate adaptability, and alternative pest and plant disease control. We are committed to work with our community to conserve and protect our natural resources in response to climate change. In addition, we strive as an organization to demonstrate sustainable practices in our work and office culture.

| GOALS | ACTIONS |
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| **1) Assist with drought mitigation.** | A. Provide water use technical recommendations to 10 urban and suburban community members. |
| **2) Enhance fire safety for land and homeowners.** | A. Develop fire safety strategies and recommendations at 10 sites. |
| **3) Mitigate flood impacts on residents in the Chehalis Basin.** | A. Host 2 community meetings focused on the Chehalis Basin Strategy to keep residents informed. |

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| | B. Develop 1 floodplain restoration guidance documents for landowners.<br>C. Participate in Chehalis Basin Strategy and protect landowner involvement in the process. |
| **4) Assist farms in mitigating and adapting to climate change.** | A. Host 4 workshops to help farmers adapt to climate change.<br>B. Facilitate the installation of 1 alternative on-farm energy project.<br>C. Work with 2 farms to implement carbon sequestration practices.<br>D. Improve emergency readiness for community members. |
| **5) Improve community resilience to climate change.** | A. Host 2 professional development opportunities for teachers. |

## 2. Local Food Production & Consumption

By increasing engagement in the local food system, Thurston Conservation District is supporting working lands, rural economic development, reduction of pollution caused by product processing and transportation, equitable access to healthy local food, and the economic viability of our agricultural community and geographic region. Locally produced food connects people to the land, improves our region's food security, creates more informed land stewards, and fosters support for resource conservation, the agricultural community and farmland preservation.

| GOALS | ACTIONS |
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| **6) Support urban and suburban food production.** | A. Provide technical assistance to 2 community gardens, tribal gardens, school gardens or garden clubs.<br>B. Provide technical assistance to 60 urban and suburban community members.<br>C. Implement conservation BMPs on 1 farm within urban or urban growth areas.<br>D. Host 2 workshops on backyard food production. |
| **7) Increase accessibility to healthy local food for community members of Thurston County.** | A. Partner to expand food bank services with fresh local food in 1 areas without current or sufficient support.<br>B. Strengthen partnerships with local organizations to support community gardens, school gardens, and home-based food production (could name Bounty for Families and TCFB).<br>C. Partner to host 1 workshop for families on cooking with fresh |

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| food. |

## 3. Producer Support & Preservation of Working Lands

In an effort to continue to support the preservation of working lands, Thurston Conservation District will continue offering technical assistance and conservation planning services to community members (supported through measures and goals in *Rural and Urban Stewardship)*. We are the technical provider for the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP). The VSP is an alternative approach for counties to meet critical areas ordinance goals on private lands, while maintaining agricultural viability. In addition, we will work to educate new and beginning stewards of working lands. We assist small and large producers and commercial and non-commercial operations. We will continue to work with existing land stewards to implement Conservation Practice Standards and Best Management Practices and assist with planning for their future and beyond retirement. We will continue to partner with key organizations and individuals to provide quality technical, financial and educational resources. We promote regenerative agriculture and sustainable forestry encouraging conservation of natural resources, and economic viability of the operation.

| GOALS | ACTIONS |
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| **8) Work with partners to protect critical working lands through easements and acquisitions.** | A. Facilitate 1 new easement through the Chehalis Basin Strategy.<br>B. Facilitate 1 working lands easements through partnerships (RCPP, Sentinel Landscape Partnership, Conservation Grazing Partnership) |
| **9) Increase voluntary stewardship.** | A. Increase participation in the Voluntary Stewardship Program to 100 participants.<br>B. Develop 50 Individual Stewardship Plans.<br>C. Support community members through regulatory processes such as inspections and referrals. |
| **10) Support viable farms.** | A. Support the enrollment of 10 producers in business planning training courses.<br>B. Connect local producers to consumers through online tools and marketing support.<br>C. Support streamlined application and permitting processes for community members. |
| **11) Increase support for forest stewardship.** | A. Facilitate the development of 4 forest management plans (FMP's).<br>B. Secure access to a local forester serving Thurston County. |

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| | C. Support efforts to preserve working forest land. |
| **12) Increase technical assistance to producers.** | A. Facilitate 200 site visits with producers.<br>B. Develop 2 NRCS Certified conservation plans.<br>C. Provide technical recommendations on 300 BMPs. |
| **13) Bridge the gap between retiring and beginning producers.** | A. Offer 1 successional planning training course.<br>B. Seek sustainable funding for South Sound FarmLink program.<br>C. Provide resources to 10 new farmers.<br>D. Collaborate with existing land matching programs. |
| **14) Support sustainable shellfish production.** | A. Work with 1 shellfish operation to implement conservation BMPs.<br>B. Conduct a needs assessment for local shellfish producers to identify areas to support and innovative ideas.<br>C. Support recovery of Olympia Oyster. |
| **15) Increase inventory and use of equipment rental service.** | A. Identify additional pieces of equipment needed by the community to expand TCD's rental program.<br>B. Ensure appropriate use of the equipment by creating technically sound guidance documents for all equipment.<br>C. Increase marketing and outreach to maximize appropriate equipment usage. |

## 4. Protect and Restore Ecosystems

Thurston Conservation District recognizes the quantity and diversity of critical ecosystems within our region and strives to protect intact habitat, while also working to restore degraded areas. Thurston County is home to state and federally listed endangered species, prairie ecosystems, vital marine and estuarine habitat, forestland, sensitive riparian areas and shellfish beds. Flood mitigation projects are complex and combine elements of river restoration, floodplain reconnection, and flood harm reduction strategies. Education is the first step to resource conservation on private lands and the District will continue to engage the community to raise awareness of the vital role of our critical ecosystems and their processes. We will also continue to coordinate financial resources and facilitate ecosystem recovery at the local level.

| GOALS | ACTIONS |
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| **16) Work with partners to protect critical habitat through restoration easements and habitat enhancement contracts.** | A. Develop 1 new CREP contract.<br>B. Facilitate 2 conservation easements (termed or permanent) through TCD and partner programs.<br>C. Strengthen partnerships with local accredited land trusts. |

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| **17) Increase restoration of degraded habitat.** | A. Create 2 pollinator habitat projects.<br>B. Complete 1 wetland habitat enhancement projects.<br>C. Treat 15 acres of invasive species.<br>D. Develop 5 planting plans.<br>E. Provide technical assistance to 50 community members.<br>F. Facilitate 100 site visits with community members. |
| **18) Restore marine and freshwater habitat to support healthy aquatic species populations and functional floodplains.** | A. Plant 12 acres of riparian habitat to support salmon recovery.<br>B. Develop 2 restoration projects in freshwater systems with salmon runs.<br>C. Support 30 shoreline community members to improve shoreline habitat. |
| **19) Enhance ESA listed species habitat (plant & animal).** | A. Work with 1 community members to improve Oregon Spotted Frog habitat.<br>B. Host 1 Orca Recovery Day events to bring awareness to endangered salmon and orca populations.<br>C. Work with 10 community members through VSP to support on-farm management and recovery of listed species. |
| **20) Develop local riparian restoration cost-share program.** | A. Work with local and state partners to secure funding for local riparian restoration program. |

## 5. Soil Conservation and Health

Thurston Conservation District recognizes that soil is a living and life-giving natural resource. As world population and food production demands rise, keeping our soil healthy and productive is of paramount importance. By farming using soil health principles and systems that include no-till, cover cropping and diverse rotations, more and more farmers are actually increasing their soil's organic matter and improving microbial activity. As a result, farmers are sequestering more carbon, increasing water infiltration, improving wildlife and pollinator habitat—all while harvesting better profits and often better yields.[1]

| GOALS | ACTIONS |
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| **21) Establish a soil health management program.** | A. Provide soil analysis recommendations to 200 community members.<br>B. Host 2 soil health focused workshops. |

[1] https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/soils/health/

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| | C. Develop cost share opportunities focused on soil health practices, including: cover cropping, reduced tillage, permanent groundcover integrated into production fields, etc.<br>D. Develop guidance resources for farm equipment use to protect soil health.<br>E. Seek additional funding to support a soil health program. |

## 6. Water Quality and Quantity

As a valuable and vital resource, water quality and quantity impact every sector of life. We will continue to provide education and technical assistance to all community members within our district that aims to inform and mitigate the individual's impact to water quality and quantity. We strive for clean and plentiful drinking water, the upgrade of 303(d) listed stream segments to meet Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) pollution reduction targets and in-stream flow targets, and upgrades to commercial and recreational shellfish harvesting areas. To achieve these goals we partner with community members and local organizations to implement Best Management Practices, green stormwater infrastructure strategies, and other innovative actions to meet water quality and quantity goals. We also provide ongoing education to community members in our sensitive shellfish producing areas across Thurston County.

| GOALS | ACTIONS |
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| **22) Improved shoreline conditions.** | A. Work with partners to facilitate the repair/upgrade of 1 septic systems in shellfish production areas.<br>B. Support healthy shellfish growing areas by providing education and guidance on shoreline BMPs for 20 homeowners. |
| **23) Reduce surface & groundwater impacts from urban and rural land uses.** | A. Implement 2 conservation BMPs to reduce nutrient runoff. |
| **24) Improve water use efficiencies and water conservation strategies.** | A. Implement 2 conservation projects to support in stream flow targets.<br>B. Develop 4 Irrigation Management Plans for local agricultural operations.<br>C. Develop written irrigation guidance resources for backyard gardeners. |

## District Operations Priorities: Information / Education Priorities and District Operations

### 1. Community Outreach and Engagement

It is of foundational importance to the Thurston Conservation District to engage the community in active conservation and the regenerative use of natural resources. Through volunteer projects and participation in district programs and services, we seek to facilitate a strong relationship with community members in our area. By increasing our presence and continuously adapting to meet the communities' needs, the Thurston Conservation District can provide effective conservation programs for working lands and community members.

| GOALS | ACTIONS |
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| **25) Build robust volunteer program to increase organizational impact and engagement.** | A. Engage 30 community volunteers.<br>B. Host 5 restoration work parties.<br>C. Dedicate 120 hours of community service to conservation.<br>D. Develop a youth volunteer network, engaging 10 youth in TCD volunteer opportunities. |
| **26) Build relationships with elected officials.** | A. Host 3 virtual or field tours for elected officials.<br>B. Present CD information and updates at 5 local jurisdiction meetings (ex. BOCC, City Council, Port).<br>C. Connect with legislators twice annually. |
| **27) Improve accessibility of CD information.** | A. Develop relevant multi-lingual resources.<br>B. Ensure TCD website meets current accessibility standards.<br>C. Host 5 events appropriate for families and people of all ages.<br>D. Showcase CD projects and programs on 3 local and TCD-owned media platforms. |
| **28) Demonstrate the impact of our work to our community.** | D. Host annual gathering to showcase our community impact, our strong partnerships, and to recognize the stewardship accomplishments of community members and partners.<br>E. Create a storymap to showcase TCD projects and partnerships. |

### 2. Adult and Youth Conservation Education

The Thurston Conservation District seeks to provide in-depth natural resource conservation education to both youth and adults. Education is the first step to conservation. In collaboration with our partners, we provide workshops, on-site tours, training courses, and other events that help individuals become stewards of our shared natural resources. Providing education to youth education opportunities helps to create a lifelong stewardship ethic. Education fosters and a strong connection with - and understanding of - natural resource conservation issues that can create future stewards of our local natural resources. We also make strive to inform Thurston County community members about training and education opportunities by acting as a clearing house for information in about natural resources and related topics.

| GOALS | ACTIONS |
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| **29) Support the implementation of South Sound GREEN's Vision for the Future** | A. Engage 1,200 students in water quality testing<br>B. Educate 400 students through watershed and water quality related classroom lessons<br>C. Host 3 professional development opportunities for teachers to strengthen their knowledge of water quality and local conservation issues.<br>D. Increase involvement in the South Sound GREEN program by 2 percent. |
| **30) Promote careers in natural resources.** | A. Provide instruction to 1 secondary or college class.<br>B. Offer alternative service opportunities for local AmeriCorps volunteers. |
| **31) Educate our community about natural resources conservation.** | A. Host 30 educational opportunities for our community (workshops, tours, trainings, etc.).<br>B. Engage 500 community members through our Annual Native Plant Festival. |

## 3. District Operations

As an organization, Thurston Conservation District operates in a transparent and ethical manner. We leverage funding from multiple sources to increase our conservation impact on the ground. We pride ourselves in accountable financial processes, diligent and wise use of public and private dollars, and clean audits. In addition, we will continue to find sustainable avenues to grow as an organization and increase our positive impact in Thurston County.

| GOALS | ACTIONS |
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| **32) Sustainable and consistent funding to achieve our mission.** | A. Demonstrate impact of current Rates and Charges funding in the community. |
| **33) Design and plan for TCD's Conservation and Education Center.** | A. Set aside funding annually.<br>B. Develop conceptual designs.<br>C. Locate and engage in securing land by 2024 |
| **34) Thurston CD Board and Staff represent our community and have the capacity to support its needs.** | A. Ensure on-going professional development for all staff positions.<br>B. Develop and practice inclusive recruitment strategies.<br>C. Explore partnerships with the Vets on the Farm program and the Veteran's Conservation Corps.<br>D. Hire to meet staffing need identified in 2020-2024 Strategic Plan as funding becomes available.<br>E. Begin conversations to encourage all cities in Thurston County to become part of the district boundaries. |
| **35) Improve data management and internal tracking systems.** | A. Develop SmartSheet platform for programmatic and financial data tracking. |
| **36) Improve office sustainability and lower TCD's carbon footprint.** | A. Move towards paperless practices (where feasible).<br>B. Purchase goods and services from local businesses first.<br>C. Purchase/lease hybrid vehicles for District use. |
| **37) Conduct transparent, accountable, and ethical operations.** | A. Begin updates to Policies and Procedures Manual to reflect Collective Bargaining Agreement.<br>B. Timely responses to Public Disclosure Requests.<br>C. Include opportunities for public involvement in organizational planning and budget processes.<br>D. Maintain clean audits from the State Auditor's Office.<br>E. Establish a citizen advisory committee to provide input on TCD priorities and activities |

# 2020 Budget
# Thurston Conservation District

## Income

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| ***Unrestricted Income*** | |
| District Services | 30,725 |
| Overhead | 88,500 |
| Rates and Charges | 551,475 |
| WSCC Implementation | 95,600 |
| ***Unrestricted Income Total*** | **766,300** |
| ***Restricted Income*** | |
| Chehalis | 86,888 |
| CREP | 18,643 |
| DOE Deschutes | 57,433 |
| ESRP Shore Friendly | 159,251 |
| JBLM - SLP | 9,375 |
| Livestock | 25,000 |
| NRI Cost Share | 88,828 |
| Riparian NTA | 18,500 |
| Shellfish Cost Share | 143,518 |
| Shellfish NTA | 82,055 |
| South Sound Green | 179,927 |
| VSP | 97,229 |
| **Restricted Income Total** | **966,646** |
| **Income Total** | **1,732,946** |

## Expense

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| ***Unrestricted Expense*** | |
| Conferences, Trainings & Travel | 20,000 |
| Facility, Vehicles and Maintenance | 113,640 |
| Insurance and Banking | 17,336 |
| Professional Services | 108,916 |
| Program Allocations | 86,300 |
| Salaries, Benefits & Staff Time | 305,248 |
| Savings and Debt Pay Down | 75,000 |
| Supplies | 34,860 |
| TCD Cost Share | 5,000 |
| ***Unrestricted Expense Total*** | **766,300** |
| ***Restricted Expense*** | |
| Construction | 6,770 |
| Cost Share | 197,054 |
| Equipment | 1,000 |
| Goods & Services | 150,439 |
| Overhead | 61,014 |
| Salaries & Benefits | 546,050 |
| Travel | 4,319 |
| **Restricted Expense Total** | **966,646** |
| **Expense Total** | **1,732,946** |