



Skagit Conservation District

FY2020 (7/1/20 – 6/30/21) Annual Plan of Work

For More Information Contact: **Bill Blake, Executive Director, 360-428-4313**

bill@skagitcd.org www.skagitcd.org

Mission of the Skagit Conservation District

The mission of the Skagit Conservation District is to bring voluntary, incentive-based natural resource solutions to citizens of Skagit County and beyond by providing technical, financial, and educational resources.

Natural Resource Priorities

Water Quality – Protecting, preserving and enhancing the water quality of Skagit County’s fresh and saltwater resources for all beneficial uses and users is a top priority for the Skagit Conservation District.

This is a local, regional, state, and national natural resource priority.

Data Sources: Skagit County, WAC 400-12 Watershed plans, Ecology TMDLs (Lower Skagit, Nookachamps, Samish), Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda, Puget Sound Shellfish Initiative, Skagit Conservation District Stream Team/Storm Team monitoring data, Skagit County Public Works monitoring data, Samish Indian Nation monitoring data, Natural Resources Conservation Service Resource Inventory, Governor’s Blue Ribbon Panel Report on Ocean Acidification, Governor Jay Inslee: Results Washington

Other entities engaged in addressing this resource concern: Skagit County, Samish Indian Nation, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, Swinomish Indian Nation, Washington State Conservation Commission, Puget Sound Partnership, Skagit Conservation Education Alliance, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Washington State Departments of Agriculture, Ecology, Natural Resources, and Health, Skagit Shellfish Growers, Skagit County Cattlemen’s Association, Skagit County Ag Advisory Board, The Nature Conservancy, Skagit County Dairymen’s Association, Western Washington Agricultural Association, Governor’s Shellfish Office, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, WSU Extension, and Puget Sound Conservation Districts.

Forest Health – With nearly 80% of Skagit County being used for forestry, maintaining vibrant and healthy forests is a priority not only for a sustainable forest industry, but is essential for watershed health.

This is a local, regional, state, and national resource priority.

Data Sources: Skagit County, Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda, Natural Resources Conservation Service Resource Inventory, Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan, Skagit Watershed Council Habitat Work Schedule, National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy: Phase III, Healthy Forest Restoration Act, Healthy Forest Initiative, Governor Jay Inslee: Results Washington Skagit County Envision 2060 Citizen Committee Final Recommendations, “Preserving Our Heritage, Shaping Our Future”

Other entities engaged in addressing this resource concern: Skagit County, Skagit County Forestry Advisory Board, Washington Department of Natural Resources, US Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Skagit Land Trust, the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, USDA Local Work Group, and Puget Sound Conservation Districts

Ecosystem Management/Appropriate Land Use/Conversion/Population Growth – A growing population puts growing pressure on agricultural lands, critical natural resources and the economical and beneficial uses they support. Skagit County is home to an abundance of fish and wildlife species as well as one of the strongest local agricultural economies in Western Washington. Maintaining the critical mass of resource lands is critical to their survival and helps to maintain our sense of place in the Magic Skagit.

Data sources: Skagit County Comprehensive Plan, WAC 400-12 Watershed plans, Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda, Puget Sound Shellfish Initiative, Natural Resources Conservation Service Resource Inventory, Department of Ecology - Instream flow rule, Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan, Western Washington Agricultural Association - Tide Gate Fish Initiative, Skagit Watershed Council Habitat Work Schedule, Governor’s Blue Ribbon Panel report on Ocean Acidification, Western Washington Agricultural Association - Drainage Fish Initiative, Mundy/Land “Skagit County Agri-Industrial Critical Mass Study (draft), American Farmland Trust “Cost of Community Services”, American Farmland Trust “Losing Ground: Farmland Protection in the Pacific Northwest”, WSU Skagit County “Skagit County Agricultural Statistics”, Healthy Forest Initiative, Governor Jay Inslee: Results Washington, Skagit County Envision 2060 Citizen Committee Final Recommendations, “Preserving Our Heritage, Shaping Our Future”

Other entities engaged in addressing this resource concern: Skagit County, Skagitians to Preserve Farmland, Western Washington Agricultural Association, The Nature Conservancy, Skagit County Ag Advisory and Forest Advisory Boards, Skagit County Ag Leaders Committee, all Washington State natural resource agencies, Washington State Conservation Commission Office of Farmland Preservation, American Farmland Trust, PCC Farmland Trust, Skagit Watershed Council, US Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Samish Indian Nation, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, Swinomish Indian Nation, Skagit River Systems Cooperative, The Nature Conservancy, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, Skagit Land Trust, Friends of Skagit County, Seattle City Light, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Puget Sound Conservation Districts

Soil Tilth Maintenance – Skagit County is recognized as having some of the finest soils in the world. It is imperative that we maintain and enhance the productivity of this finite resource.

This is a local, state, and national natural resource priority.

Data sources: Natural Resources Conservation Service Resource Inventory and Soils Survey

Other entities engaged in addressing this resource concern: Western Washington Agricultural Association, Skagitians to Preserve Farmland, Natural Resources Conservation Service, WSU Extension, USDA Local Work Group, the National Conservation Partnership, and Puget Sound Conservation Districts

Climate Change/Ocean Acidification – The Skagit Conservation District will work to increase awareness on what changes in our environment can/may occur, and how we will adapt our natural resource management strategies to address them. The District will provide input on modeling efforts of how climate change may impact landowner resource operations through temporal and physical changes.

Data Sources: Puget Partnership Action Agenda, Puget Sound Shellfish Initiative, National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy: Phase III, Governor’s Blue Ribbon Panel Report on Ocean Acidification, WWAA - Drainage Fish Initiative, Washington State Department of Ecology, USGS, NOAA, NASA, IPCC

Other entities engaged in addressing this resource concern: Skagit County, Western Governors Association, Washington State, Washington Shellfish Growers, Washington State Conservation Commission, Puget Sound Partnership and Puget Sound Conservation Districts, NOAA fisheries, local Tribes, Skagit Climate Science Consortium.

Water Quantity - High flows and low flows regarding water quantity are both concerns in Skagit County. Addressing problems caused by flooding and poor drainage as well as low stream flows and closed basins is critical. The District developed a proposal with United States Geological Survey (USGS) to install a “Super Gauge” in at least one location in the Skagit to better understand the relationship between surface flow and ground water elevation changes resulting from climate change. This understanding will help resource managers better adapt to avoid conflicts between irrigation, development and fish use. This project was put on hold while the Skagit Legislative water task force meets to further study the situation.

This is a local and state natural resource priority.

Data Sources: Skagit County, WAC 400-12 Watershed plans, Natural Resources Conservation Service Resource Inventory, Department of Ecology - Instream flow rule, Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan, Stillaguamish Chinook Recovery Plan, Skagit Watershed Council Habitat Work Schedule, Western Washington Agricultural Association - Drainage Fish Initiative, and USGS.

Other entities engaged in addressing this resource concern: Skagit County, Skagit County Dike and Drainage Districts, Western Washington Agricultural Association, Department of Ecology, WSU Extension, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians, Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland, The Nature Conservancy, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Washington State Conservation Commission, Puget Sound Conservation Districts, Skagit County Public Works, and Washington Department of Agriculture



Invasive Species – Controlling and eradicating harmful plant and animal species is important to maintain healthy land/seascapes.

This is a local, regional, state, and national natural resource priority.

Data sources: Natural Resources Conservation Service Resource Inventory, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Samish Indian Nation, and The Nature Conservancy field inventories

Other entities engaged in addressing this resource concern: Natural Resources Conservation Service, Samish Indian Nation, The Nature Conservancy, WA Department of Natural Resources, US Forest Service, Skagit Watershed Council, Washington Shellfish Growers, and National Association of Conservation Districts, Washington Department of Agriculture, and Seattle City Light

Natural Resources Program Areas



Program Areas: Water Quality Protection and Improvement, Ocean Acidification

Address negative human and animal impacts to water quality as well as non-point storm water from all sources; prioritizing lands impacting water bodies on EPA's 303(d) list in Skagit County.

Goals: By 2021, water quality in Samish Bay will have been improved through the implementation of District led planning and project work to have an annual reduction in the number of shellfish bed closures due to Samish river bacteria levels. By 2021, the SCD will provide farm planning support to four land owners in support of the Lower Skagit Tributaries TMDL implementation. By 2021, Provide all landowners better access to water quality and project effectiveness data to foster greater support towards the access and implementation of District programs.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: A minimum reduction of at least one closure of the Samish bay shellfish beds due to high bacteria levels measured in the Samish river during a high flow event.

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: Ten conservation plans will be developed or updated and implemented.

Funding Sources: Skagit County, Washington State Conservation Commission, City Interlocal Agreements, Puget Sound Partnership, Natural Resources Conservation Service

<p align="center">Activities for FY2020</p> <p>Estimated funding represents all associated costs of program</p>	<p align="center">Target Dates</p>	<p align="center">Person Responsible</p>	<p align="center">Time Required</p>	<p align="center">Estimated Funding</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Provide technical assistance to commercial and non-commercial agricultural producers</i> <i>Write 10 conservation plans, and update four comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMP) and DNMP utilizing priority schematic</i> ✓ <i>Locate and provide cost-share to implement BMPs identified in plans.</i> ✓ <i>Partner with WSU on two workshops for small scale/noncommercial agricultural producers and other audiences</i> ✓ <i>Coordinate with other agencies on watershed planning and implementation efforts</i> ✓ <i>Clean Samish Initiative participation</i> <i>Executive Committee</i> <i>Project Delivery Team</i> <i>Outreach/Education</i> ✓ <i>Skagit Conservation Education Alliance participation</i> ✓ <i>Coordinate Stream Team Monitoring</i> ✓ <i>South Skagit TMDL implementation</i> ✓ <i>Coordinate Marine Biotoxin Monitoring</i> ✓ <i>Implement Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)</i> ✓ <i>Expand partnership with NRCS and FSA to maximize their programs</i> ✓ <i>Seek match funding for equipment sharing program</i> ✓ <i>Implement a stormwater education and public involvement program, which includes Low Impact Development (LID)</i> <i>Maintain current interlocal agreements/programs with jurisdictions that are subject to stormwater regulations</i> <i>Develop and distribute stormwater educational fact sheets and brochures</i> <i>Conduct Backyard Conservation Short course</i> <i>Develop technical assistance and cost-share program for landowners to install rain gardens – seek additional funding for installation.</i> <i>Continue the storm drain labeling program in Mount Vernon, Burlington, and Urban Growth Areas of Skagit County</i> <i>Promote stormwater education and water quality protection through presentations utilizing the Enviroscape model</i> 	<p>June 2021</p>	<p>Jeff, Emmett and Bill: Technical Assistance Kristi: Adult Programs Cindy: Youth Programs Intern, Forester support</p>	<p>3.6 FTEs</p>	<p>\$478,471</p>

<p> <i>Provide resource materials for local schools</i> <i>Host public meetings and workshops</i> <i>Assist staff from the cities, county and drainage districts with Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) implementation</i> <i>Skagit Youth Conservation Tour</i> <i>Envirothon</i> <i>Annual Soil & Water Stewardship Poster Contest</i> <i>✓ Small cost share and grant match fund amounts available</i> </p>				
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Program Areas: Forest Health and Invasives (Currently not funded), Minimal forestry assistance provided with existing staff to provide basic information in resource management plans

Goals: By 2021, Maintain a list of landowners and resource plans needing forestry technical assistance once funding is restored.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: At least fifty acres of forest land having a completed forest health plan that allows the landowner to implement BMP's and pursue cost share funding.

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: Write references in five farm/forest plans regarding forest management recommendations that will assist with water quality and quantity.

Funding Sources: Skagit County CWD

Activities for FY2020 Estimated funding represents all associated costs of program	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time Required	Estimated Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Restore forestry position to provide baseline technical assistance to develop and implement forest stewardship plan outlines</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>participate in at least one workshop on forest health</i> ✓ <i>Leverage the DNR partner NTA grant to expand forest health in both urban and rural land uses</i> ✓ <i>Small cost share and grant match fund amounts available</i> ✓ <i>Identify climate change resilient tree species</i> ✓ <i>Provide hazard tree guidance to landowners</i> ✓ <i>Provide TA to riparian buffer landowners</i> 	June 2021	Bill: New Forester Management Intern	.5 FTE	\$85,563



Program Area: Land use planning/working land conversion/wildland/urban interface and intermix

Goal: By 2021, SCD will have worked with project partners and the community to ensure resource lands are protected in perpetuity from development.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: Assist Skagit County by introducing 5 new farmers to the Farmland Legacy Program, Skagit Land Trust or other resource land easement protection program.

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: Assist partners with securing 10% increase in funding for Resource land protection capacity

Funding Sources: Skagit County, Washington State Conservation Commission, Recreation Conservation Office, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Tribes, Private Foundations

Activities for FY2020 Estimated funding represents all associated costs of program	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time Required	Estimated Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support efforts to protect and preserve prime farm and forest lands and provide opportunities to promote sustainable natural resource industries ✓ Farmland Legacy Program (FLP)/Conservation Futures ✓ Participate in GMA update process ✓ Participate in RCPP funding program ✓ Coordinate with Skagit Land Trust 	On-going	Board Bill	.1 FTE	\$14,066



Program Area: Firewise Wildland Urban Interface, Land Use, Climate Change

Goal: Provide technical and financial assistance to landowners to develop and implement defensible space strategies

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: Implement 2 fuels reduction projects

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: Initiate two new Firewise Communities/USA in to the program.

Funding Sources: Skagit County Title III Secure Rural Schools Act

Activities for FY2020 Estimated funding represents all associated costs of program	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time Required	Estimated Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Implement the Skagit County Firewise Program</i> ✓ <i>Coordinate WA State Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, serve as liaison to participating communities</i> ✓ <i>Seek funding to increase program capacity</i> ✓ <i>Build state-wide Firewise program with partners, coordinate with DNR on maintaining certification of existing Firewise Communities</i> ✓ <i>Restore fire weather monitoring program</i> ✓ <i>Develop Skagit County WUI wildfire hazard model</i> 	June 2021	Jenny via Whatcom New Forester Bill Intern	0.8 FTE	\$71,066



Program Area: Ecosystem Management/Appropriate Land Use/Conversion/Population Growth

Goals: The District will work with landowners, project partners and coordinating agencies to develop and implement programs that help secure the long-term viability and success of Skagit's Natural Resource lands and industry. We will work to get 95% of our current CREP contracts renewed by 2021. Help establish an implementation plan for VSP.



Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: 2,000 feet of stream will be fenced and/or planted

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: 10 landowners will re-enroll in CREP, 10 VSP Landowners

Funding Sources: Skagit County, Washington Conservation Commission, Recreation Conservation Office/Salmon Recovery Funding Board (RCO/SRFB), additional funding to be determined

Activities for FY2020 Estimated funding represents all associated costs of program	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time Required	Estimated Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Implement the CREP Program</i> <i>Maintain and monitor existing easements</i> <i>Perform mid-contract mgt. inspections/report to FSA</i> <i>Continue to promote the enhanced CREP program</i> <i>Protection of resource lands</i> ✓ <i>Actively participate in Skagit Watershed Council activities</i> <i>Serve on Administrative Board</i> <i>Assist with implementation projects</i> <i>Assist with project review and prioritization</i> ✓ <i>Implement and maintain DFI riparian projects</i> ✓ <i>Participate in the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council</i> ✓ <i>Provide engineering assistance to partnering agencies to implement fish and wildlife habitat projects, including lead of NW Conservation District Engineering cluster</i> ✓ <i>Conduct a Native Plant Materials Sale</i> ✓ <i>Participate in partner project development</i> ✓ <i>Participate in the Skagit County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)</i> ✓ <i>Small cost share and grant match fund amounts available</i> 	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Joe: TA, Monitoring Tom: Engineering Bill: Policy, Projects Cindy: Database</p>	<p>2.0 FTEs</p>	<p>\$373,793</p>

Program Areas: Soil Tilth, Climate Change, Habitat - Promote and implement projects to sustain adequate drainage for agricultural land

Goal: By 2021, the SCD will provide technical and permit assistance for two drainage or stream improvement projects in the District.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: 200 acres will have improved drainage with improved stream habitat condition.

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: One Drainage Fish Initiative project will be planned and implemented

Funding Sources: Skagit County, Washington Conservation Commission, additional funding to be secured

Activities for FY2020 Estimated funding represents all associated costs of program	Target Dates	Person(s) Responsible	Time Required	Estimated Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Work in partnership with local cooperator to implement a minimum of one DFI project</i> ✓ <i>Continue to coordinate with other districts on soil health program</i> ✓ <i>Utilize funding to support soil sample processing and geodatabase collection for future modeling</i> ✓ <i>Aggressively pursue a robust cover crop program</i> 	June 2021	Joe, Tom and Bill	.1 FTE	\$14,066

Program Area: Maintain sufficient water for adequate food production, people, and fish and wildlife

Goals: By 2021, we will work with the Skagit Low Flow Committee to identify and secure funding for a Super Gauge in the sub-basin most dependant on real time ground/surface water availability to maintain irrigation during fish use periods.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: One pilot project resulting in surface or groundwater monitoring, conservation or infiltration practice is benefiting a flow limited sub-basin.

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: Hold at least one meeting with the major water managers in the basin to have a better understand of all water quantity management activities occurring. Develop accurate messaging for District Cooperators.

Funding Sources: DOE, Natural Resources Conservation Service, WSU Extension, USGS, Skagit County PUD

Activities for FY2020	Target	Person	Time	Estimated
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Estimated funding represents all associated costs of program	Dates	Responsible	Required	Funding
✓ <i>Monitor progress of Skagit water task force</i>	June 2021	Bill	.0 FTE	\$0

Program Area: Information – Education

Goals: Provide conservation education opportunities and volunteer activities to residents of all ages throughout Skagit County, increasing knowledge of resource issues while building community stewardship.
 By 2020, Provide educational workshops for small-acreage landowners.
 By 2020, Co-sponsor five continuing education seminars or workshops.
 By 2020, Provide information to the public through outreach efforts developed by the District and its Co-sponsors.
 By 2020, Provide volunteer opportunities that implement desired project outcomes. (tree plantings, sampling, storm drain marking, community events)

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: Practices completed by program participants tracked

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: Implement the number of workshops and outreach activities identified in Goals.

Funding Sources: Skagit County, Washington State Conservation Commission, City Interlocal Agreements, plant sale proceeds, Puget Sound Conservation District partners, sponsors, donations

Activities for FY2020 Estimated funding represents all associated costs of program	Target Dates	Person Responsible	Time Required	Estimated Funding
<p>✓ <i>Provide conservation education opportunities and volunteer activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Arbor Day proclamation and seedling distribution</i> <i>Soil and Water Stewardship Week proclamation and poster contest</i> <i>Envirothon</i> <i>Classroom presentations expansion to digital and virtual formats</i> <i>Sixth Grade Tour</i> <i>Watershed Masters</i> <i>Biannual newsletter</i> <i>Update District brochures fact sheets, and legislative packets</i> <i>Displays at local events and utilize betterground outreach</i> <i>Treeture appearances</i> <i>Coordinate and expand volunteer activities with 4H, FFA, Scouts</i> <i>Storm drain marking projects</i> <i>Expand curriculum on ocean acidification, carbon sequestration, STEM programs</i> <i>Backyard Conservation Stewardship Program</i> <i>Organize & Support Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program</i> <i>Restore historic annual awards and partnership breakfast</i> <p>✓ <i>Small cost share and grant match fund amounts available</i></p>	<p>June 2021</p>	<p>Kristi: Adult Programs</p> <p>Cindy: Youth Programs</p> <p>Jeff, Emmett, Bill</p> <p>Vacant: Print and social media</p> <p>Intern</p>	<p>1.2FTE</p>	<p>\$207,631</p>

Program Area: District Operations

Goals:

Through 2021, the Skagit Conservation District will continue to be in compliance with policies, procedures, and legal requirements.

Natural Resource Measurable Result Objective: Natural resource program results are tracked and reported

Programmatic Measurable Result Objective: The Skagit Conservation District meets statutory, administrative and fiscal responsibilities

Funding Sources: Washington State Conservation Commission, Skagit County, sponsors, donations

<p>Activities for FY2020 Estimated funding represents all associated costs of program</p>	<p>Target Dates</p>	<p>Person Responsible</p>	<p>Time Required</p>	<p>Estimated Funding</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Meet statutory, administrative and fiscal responsibilities</i> ✓ <i>Maintain Good Governance Standing</i> ✓ <i>Provide leadership and professional development opportunities for Board of Supervisors and staff</i> ✓ <i>Recognize those, including volunteers, who have made a positive contribution toward the protection, enhancement or preservation of Skagit County's natural resources</i> ✓ <i>Build reserve account for long-term capital expenditures</i> ✓ <i>Provide regular progress and performance evaluation on District programs and employees</i> ✓ <i>Provide leadership and professional development</i> ✓ <i>Continue to utilize an effective public relations program</i> ✓ <i>Coordinate with local, state, and national both public and private to avoid duplication</i> ✓ <i>Coordinate with other districts to leverage resources to implement mutually beneficial programs</i> ✓ <i>Maintain adequate and stable funding</i> ✓ <i>Update and secure a stable technology base for efficient operation</i> ✓ <i>Fund County assessor collection of fees</i> 	<p>June 2021</p>	<p>Board Bill Denise Carla Cindy</p>	<p>1.1 FTEs</p>	<p>\$154,724</p>



Skagit Conservation District FY2018 (7/1/20 – 6/30/2) Annual Budget

Revenues	
Conservation Commission (RCPD)	\$ 600,853
Resource Conservation Office	\$ 9,000
Interlocals	\$ 93,972
Skagit County	\$ 316,746
	\$ 178,864
Misc. contracts	
Sales	\$ 27,000
Sales Tax	\$ 2,500
Donations	\$ 2,000
Interest	\$ 3
Rates and Charges	275,000
Total Income	\$ 1,505,938

Expenses	
Salaries/Benefits	\$ 855,275
Rent/Utilities	\$ 39,000
Goods, Services , Dues, Supplies, Fuel	\$ 47,900
Postage, Mailing Services	\$ 7,000
Travel/training	\$ 16,000
Copier lease	\$ 4,600
	\$ 25,663
Equipment	
Sales Tax Paid	\$ 2,500
Professional Services, Publishing	\$ 27,000
Cost share	\$ 318,000
Items for Resale	\$ 20,000
Insurance	\$ 16,000
Taxes/Licenses	\$ 1,000
Intergovernmental Expense	\$ 45,000
Bank and Merchant Fees	\$ 1,450
Interest expense	50.00
Reserve	\$ 50,000
Assessor	29,500
Total Expense	\$ 1,505,938