



5-Year Plan (2015 to 2020) Lewis County Conservation District

For More Information Contact: Bob Amrine/District Manager
(360) 748-0083 x115 bob.amrine@wa.usda.gov



Organization of the Lewis County Conservation District

The Lewis County Conservation District (LCCD) is a political subdivision of the State of Washington and abides by the authorities, powers and structure contained in RCW 89.08.

- *On January 4th 1943 Washington State Secretary of State Belle Reeves signed the certificate creating the Lewis County Conservation District. The Conservation District boundaries encompass all the area in Lewis County including the incorporated cities.*
- *The District is governed by 5 supervisors; three are elected and two are appointed by the Washington State Conservation Commission.*

Function of the Lewis County Conservation District

To take available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land managers with conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.

Who We Serve & Why

- *The Lewis County Conservation District serves all stakeholders in the county and works with all those interested in protecting and preserving natural resources.*
- *We provide assistance to promote and maintain best use(s) of natural resources: to achieve good stewardship of natural resources; to enhance, sustain and protect natural resources and to educate those we serve in the importance of natural resources for sustaining the quality of life in Lewis County for future generations.*

Mission of the Lewis County Conservation District

Lewis County Conservation District provides technical, educational and financial assistance for the conservation, protection and development of natural resources within Lewis County.

Vision of the Lewis County Conservation District

- *To have all private landowners in the County aware of the District, what it does and how the District can assist them. Have all landowners understand that the District is **not** a part of County government and is **not** the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.*
- *To encourage landowners to actively participate in conservation actions, personally and collectively.*
- *To have enough available water for all beneficial uses including domestic, irrigation and aquatic habitat by developing water storage and implementing water conservation practices, and by leveraging the maximum amount of funding possible for these activities.*
- *To reduce the need for regulatory agency intervention by working collaboratively with landowners and regulatory agencies to address issues before regulation becomes necessary.*
- *To implement strong conservation programs that address the quality and quantity of water resources in the county and balance competing demands on those resources.*
- *To improve the ability to get financial and technical assistance to the appropriate and most beneficial projects.*

Values of the Lewis County Conservation District

- *Trust*
- *Local solutions to local issues*
- *Help landowners with stewardship*
- *Voluntary*
- *Non-regulatory*
- *Quality of Product*
- *Efficiency*
- *Results-oriented*
- *Commitment*
- *Transparency*

- *Partnerships*
- *Honesty*
- *Fiscal responsibility*
- *Dynamic*
- *Responsive*
- *Friendly, personable*
- *Respectful*

Natural Resource Data and Information:

- *Current acreage in agriculture in Lewis County is approximately 98,658 acres and current acreage in forestry in Lewis County is approximately 583,662 acres. Both agriculture and forestry landowners request assistance regularly to keep their property in good production and to follow current regulatory requirements. While many landowners are cooperators of the District, there are still numerous properties that the District has not made contact with. The land use trend continues to be larger parcels split into small acreages. This creates additional landowners with small farms and small forestry plots. Some of the property is being divided into residential housing but the trend has slowed in the last five years.*
- *The main issue of concern seems to be the stream bank erosion concerns that have followed the 2007 and 2009 flood events. These areas of concern will give the District the ability to assist the residents in habitat projects that will stabilize the stream banks while creating salmon habitat.*

Criteria for Selecting Conservation Priorities:

Our first criteria is depending on the funding sources and their criteria for ranking funding opportunities. Once those are determined we look at internal ranking criteria based on the type of project. Criteria is based on the goal of a project. For example; A fish passage project is based on amount and quality of habitat that will be made available for fish. Flood damage reduction projects criteria are based on the highest elevation of past floods on site specific locations as well as animal and equipment numbers. All conservation projects are included in The District's Long Range and Annual Plans.

Projects benefiting water quality requesting cost share are ranked using the following criteria.

- *Number of animal units per acre*
- *Is the landowner a cooperator with the District*
- *How likely is the project to prevent water quality degradation*
- *How well can the BMP be monitored to show positive impacts to water quality*
- *Based on site specific considerations, the evaluation of the overall cost/benefit of the project on water quality*
- *Evaluation of the quality of the project location, land use, flood potential, stream type, TMDLs and Endangered Species Act*
- *Is the project in a priority location designated by federal, state, local or tribal partner natural resource initiatives*
- *Will the landowner promote his/her project to the community or be a demonstration/outreach/educational site helping to promote the benefits of participation*
- *Does the project leverage other sources of funding*
- *Is the project part of a local water quality, salmon recovery, watershed planning, Coordinated Resource Management and/or collaborative process plan or local resource plan*
- *The landowners willingness and readiness to proceed with the project*
- *Local ranking based on knowledge of District personnel.*

Natural Resource Priorities and Goals:

Water Quality

- *Measures of success*
 - *Number of acres in conservation plans and number of acres implemented*
 - *Number of cooperators served*
 - *Water quality standards and number of times parameters do not meet standards*
 - *Number of stream segments removed from the 303d list*
 - *Number of water quality restoration plans and acres implemented*
 - *Number of habitat/streambank protection projects implemented*
 - *Work with cities and landowners on stormwater projects if opportunity arises*

Goals

- By May 2020 have a demonstrated increase in acres in conservation plans & implementation of plans including increase in numbers of people served
- By May 2020 have an increase in stream segments with water quality standards being met and stream segments removed from the 303d listing
- By May 2020 increase the CREP cooperators with contracts by at least 25 totaling a minimum of 200 acres
- By May 2020 re-sign expiring CREP areas with 15 cooperators
- By May 2020 complete a minimum of four habitat projects
- By May 2020 get involved with stormwater projects

Flood Control and Water Quantity

- *Measures of success*
 - *Lower reported losses from flooding*
 - *Increase water storage capacity*
 - *Livestock/Equipment pads installed*
 - *Evacuation routes requested and installed*
 - *High and low water flows*
 - *Hydrologically recovered watershed area*

Goals

- By May 2020 have a decrease in losses from future flooding and an increase in water storage capacity
- By May 2020 have a minimum of 7 cooperators install 7 equipment/livestock pads
- By May 2020 work with additional landowners who request equipment/livestock pads or evacuation routes to design, permit and construct the practices
- Strive to be able to show demonstrated decreases in high water flows and increases in low water flows

Salmon Recovery

- *Measures of success*
 - *Number of barriers removed and miles made accessible to fish*
 - *Length and area of instream and riparian habitat improved*
 - *Install salmon habitat projects*

Goals

- By May 2020 remove a minimum of 8 fish passage barriers and open up a minimum of 8 miles of habitat
- By May 2020 increase the CREP cooperators with contracts by at least 25 totaling a minimum of 200 acres
- By May 2020 complete a minimum of 4 salmon habitat projects

Enhancing Agriculture and Forestry Production

- *Measures of success*
 - *Number of cooperators served and conservation plans completed including acreage*
 - *Number of conservation practices implemented*
 - *Lowering of water turbidity and sedimentation*
 - *Maintain number of acres of productive agriculture and forestry*
 - *Incentives for agriculture and forestry production*
 - *Increase in acres of pollinator habitat created*
 - *A completed Voluntary Stewardship Plan with implementation activities*

Goals

- By May 2020 increase the number of cooperators served, conservation plans completed including acres and number of practices implemented
- By May 2020 have incentives for agriculture and forestry production
- By May 2020 have an increase of pollinator habitat created
- By May 2020 have maintained number of acres of productive agriculture and forestry land
- By May 2020 have a viable VSP program working with County and stakeholders

Water Quantity

- *Measures of success*
 - *Number of irrigation water management plans completed*
 - *Number of cooperators served*
 - *Implementation of irrigation water management plans*

Goals

- By May 2020 have completed 20 irrigation management plans
- By May 2020 have started implementation of irrigation water management plans

Invasive Species

- *Measures of success*
 - *Number of acres treated compared to number of new acres infested*
 - *Number of locations and acres reported to local weed board*
 - *Number of people reached with technical assistance*

Goals

- By May 2020 increase the number of areas treated compared to number of new acres infested
- By May 2020 increase the number of locations reported to the local weed board

Critical Geographic Areas: (attached map)

- *WRIA 23 – Upper Chehalis River watershed area in Lewis County*
- *WRIA 26 – Cowlitz River watershed area in Lewis County*

Information – Education Priorities and Goals:

- *By May 2020 increase the number of people reached through various media and outreach activities and related impact including irrigation, CRM and other events*
 - *By May 2020 increase the number of people reached with technical assistance*
-

District Operations Priorities and Goals:

- *By May 2020 increase funding dollars available for conservation services and programs*
 - *By May 2020 increase the amount of requested funding compared to funding attained and priority targets*
 - *By May 2020 increase the percentage of stable funding compared to grant funding*
 - *By May 2020 continue the participation in the Chehalis Basin Partnership, the Lead Entity Habitat Work Group and the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority*
 - *Continue to complete effective and efficient operations including accounting, grant vouchering, personnel management, Supervisor elections and appointments, training and development, annual planning and reporting through May 2020*
-

Trends Impacting Conservation in the Lewis County Conservation District

- Land use changes – increase in fragmentation and part time farming operations
 - Flood frequency is increasing
 - Lack of funding for conservation
 - Increase in certified organic production operations
 - Increase in variety of conservation requests and needs
-

Strategies to Address Trends

- Educational activities
 - Conservation planning services
 - Serving the land managers on fragmented ownership
 - Financial assistance for conservation implementation
 - Assessment or county funding for local needs
 - Technical assistance (and funding) for land managers
 - Work out a better relationship with NRCS for USDA programs
 - Maintaining / fortifying technical services by district personnel
 - Watershed restoration services
 - Interact more with the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority about districts role in working with land managers in riparian, water retention, and/or a flood control zone district with inter local agreements
-

Natural Resource Data:

- *Two major watersheds include the Cowlitz and Chehalis*
 - *See attached map*
-

Land Manager Needs:

The Lewis County Conservation District consistently receives request for completing and updating conservation and dairy nutrient management plans. This leads to requests for cost share to implement plans to protect natural resources and to manage nutrients to optimum levels for forage production.

We also get numerous requests for assisting with bank stabilization and habitat projects.

Annually, we sponsor land managers in completing fish passage projects. We have culvert assessments for hundreds of barriers that still need to be addressed.

We continue to assist landowners with assessing, planning and implementing the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

We recently began working with cooperators on Irrigation Water Management Plans. We are anticipating several cooperators requesting to have plans completed

Milestones, Timeline, & Actions:

Priority: Water Quality

(Includes stormwater, nutrient management, sediment, riparian buffers, bank stabilization)

Measurable Goals:

- By May 2020 have a demonstrated increases in acres in conservation plans & implementation of plans, and an increase in the number of people served
- By May 2020 have an increase in stream segments with water quality standards being met and stream segments removed from the 303d listing
- By May 2020 increase the CREP cooperators with contracts by at least 25 totaling a minimum of 200 acres
- By May 2020 re-sign expiring CREP areas with 15 cooperators
- By May 2020 complete a minimum of four habitat projects
- By May 2020 get involved with stormwater projects

Milestones	Timeline	12 Month Actions
Complete and/or update 40 to 50 conservation plans	May 2020	8 to 10 plans annually
No new water quality listings for bacteria	May 2020	Assist in implementing conservation plans
Complete a minimum of 25 CREP plans totaling 200 acres	May 2020	Complete a minimum of 5 plans totaling 40 acres annually
Re-sign expiring CREP areas with 15 cooperators	May 2020	Re-sign an average of 3 CREP cooperators annually
Complete a minimum of 4 habitat projects to lower sediment amounts entering surface water	May 2020	Install habitat projects 4 out of 5 years
Get involved with stormwater projects	May 2020	Communicate with county and cities on cooperating with stormwater BMPs

Priority: Flood Control and Water Quantity

Measurable Goal:

- By May 2020 have a decrease in losses from future flooding and an increase in water storage capacity
- By May 2020 have a minimum of 7 cooperators install 7 equipment/livestock pads
- By May 2020 work with additional landowners who request equipment/livestock pads or evacuation routes to design, permit and construct the practices
- Strive to be able to show demonstrated decreases in high water flows and increases in low water flows
- By May 2020 have completed 20 irrigation management plans
- By May 2020 have started implementation of irrigation water management plans

Milestones	Timeline	12 Month Actions
Maintain influence of Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority	June 2015 through May 2020	District personnel attend Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority meetings and provide input and technical advice

Construct livestock/equipment pads and evacuation routes	May 2020	Implement a minimum of 7 livestock/equipment pads
Open up off-channel habitat and/or construct wildlife/groundwater recharge ponds	May 2020	Apply for/receive grant funding and construct a minimum of 2 projects
Complete 20 irrigation water management plans	May 2020	Complete a minimum of 4 irrigation water management plans annually as requested
Implementation of irrigation water management plans	May 2020	Work with cooperators to implement 1 or 2 plans annually after 2015 (4 to 8 plans)

Priority: Salmon Recovery and Habitat

(Includes fish passage, culverts, habitat projects and riparian buffers)

Measurable Goal:

- By May 2020 remove a minimum of 8 fish passage barriers and open up a minimum of 8 miles of habitat
- By May 2020 increase the CREP cooperators with contracts by at least 25 totaling a minimum of 200 acres
- By May 2020 complete a minimum of 4 salmon habitat projects

Milestones	Timeline	12 Month Actions
Complete a minimum of 8 fish passage projects and open up a minimum of 8 miles of habitat	May 2020	Annually Implement 2 fish passage projects opening up 2 miles of habitat
Complete a minimum of 25 CREP plans totaling 200 acres	May2020	Complete a minimum of 5 plans totaling 40 acres annually
Complete a minimum of 4 habitat projects to provide additional salmon habitat	May2020	Install habitat projects 4 out of 5 years

Priority: Enhancing Agriculture and Forestry Production

(Includes wildlife and pollinator habitat)

Measurable Goal:

- By May 2020 increase the number of cooperators served, conservation plans completed including acres and number of practices implemented
- By May 2020 have additional incentives for agriculture and forestry production
- By May 2020 have an increase of pollinator habitat created
- By May 2020 have maintained number of acres of productive agriculture and forestry land
- By May 2020 have a viable VSP working with the County and stakeholders

Milestones	Timeline	12 Month Actions
Increase the number of cooperators served, conservation plans completed and practices implemented	May 2020	Complete or update a minimum of 8 plans annually, assist in implementation of plans as funds allow

Increase incentives for agriculture and forestry production	May 2020	Pursue incentives for agriculture and forestry production annually
Increase in pollinator habitat	May 2020	Work with cooperators annually to increase pollinator habitat
Maintain acres in productive agriculture and forestry land	May 2020	Strive to keep land from being converted out of productive agriculture and forestry
Viable VSP working with Lewis County and stakeholders	May 2020	Assist with the VSP as funds allow

Priority: Invasive Weed Control

Measurable Goal:

- By May 2020 increase the number of areas treated compared to number of new acres infested
- By May 2020 increase the number of locations reported to the local weed board

Milestones	Timeline	12 Month Actions
Increase acres treated for invasive weeds and educate cooperators in controlling the spread of invasive weeds	May 2020	Annually work with cooperators and the local weed board to control invasive weeds
Continue to inform the local weed board of locations where we see invasive weeds	May 2020	During routine site visits continue to inform the local weed board where invasive weeds are located

Staffing Needs

- Current Staff - 4.6 positions – District Manager, GIS/CREP Specialist, Special Projects Coordinator, Southwest Washington District Engineer and Administrative Assistant
- Would add an additional conservation planner, and perhaps a technician through a technical service provider contribution agreement with NRCS

Annual Budget Needs

- Annual Budget - \$1,000,000.00
- The major portion of funds are allocated through the Washington State Conservation Commission. Some technical and financial assistance funds are received from United States Fish & Wildlife Service, Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office, Washington State Department of Ecology, and the Rose Foundation

Key Decision Makers

Strategic Priority	Key Decision Makers
Water quality while maintaining productive (sustainable) agriculture & forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Board and staff ▪ Conservation Commission ▪ Land Managers
Flood Control & Water Quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Board and staff ▪ County Commissioners

Soil & land management (erosion, soil quality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Board and staff
Fisheries Habitat, Recovery & Passage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Board and staff
Responsible Development & Small Acreage Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Board and staff
Invasive Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ County Commissioners ▪ Weed Control Board ▪ General Public
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Board and staff
District Operations & Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Board and staff ▪ Conservation Commission

Washington Conservation Districts assisting land managers with their conservation choices

