



## 5-Year Plan (2016-2021) Clark Conservation District

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### Organization and Description of the Clark Conservation District

The District was first organized as the Clark-Skamania Soil and Water Conservation District in 1942. In 1971, the Clark and Skamania District split and Clark's boundaries were officially changed to the same as those of Clark County, excluding areas incorporated before 1942 in Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Washougal, and Yacolt. Therefore, if you live in unincorporated Clark County, the City of Vancouver, or Battle Ground you are a District resident.

The work of the Clark Conservation District is directed by the Board of Supervisors and Associate Supervisors. The Board and Associates are local volunteers from the community. There are five voting Board Members with three members elected by ballot and two members appointed by the WA State Conservation Commission. The District can have any number of volunteer community members as Associate Members.

The District is not regulatory and does not have an enforcement role. It is a political subdivision of the State of Washington with authorities, powers, and duties contained in [RCW 89.08](#).

### Function of the Clark Conservation District

Clark Conservation District provides technical, financial and educational resources and coordinates them to meet the needs of the local landowner and others for voluntary, action-based conservation of our natural resources.

### Who We Serve & Why

Clark Conservation District serves the communities of Clark County to protect and enhance natural resources and help individuals, groups, and agency partners solve their resource concerns.

### Mission of the Clark Conservation District

Clark Conservation District works with individuals and communities to protect, conserve, and manage water quality, soils, and natural habitat areas of the District for the benefit of present and future generations.

### Long Range Vision of the Clark Conservation District

The Board of Supervisors recognizes that the sustainability of our quality of life and economy depends on our natural resources. The District accomplishes this through natural resource management, education, restoration, and conservation.

### Values of the Clark Conservation District

- We value helping people to conserve, protect, and enhance natural resources for current and future generations.
- We believe voluntary conservation programs should be locally led, educational, economically feasible, socially acceptable, and sustainable over the long term.
- We value maintaining the viability of working lands for agricultural and timber production.
- We value serving our diverse community.
- We value honesty, integrity, and fairness in all we do.
- We value being financially responsible and accountable.

## Natural Resource Data & Information:

In general, urban growth and development, construction of residential homes, industry, schools, etc., along with the associated support systems of roads, parks and utilities, are increasing pressure on the resources of this county. Land users will need educational and technical assistance in conserving natural resources for a rapidly changing landscape. Click [here](#) for an interactive map of Clark County land and water resources.

### Water Resources

- In July of 2006, EPA determined the [Troutdale Aquifer System](#) in Clark County to be a Designated Sole Source Aquifer, providing for federal oversight of projects in majority of the District.
- There are sixteen drainage basins and more than 100 ponds and lakes within the District.
- [Dept. of Ecology impaired waters map.](#)

### Fish Resources

- Clark County is in the Lower Columbia Evolutionarily Significant Unit. Stream basins provide spawning and rearing habitat for five listed salmon or trout species.
- [Federal Endangered Species Act \(ESA\).](#)
- [T & E Animal & Plant Species in WA](#)

### Timber Resources

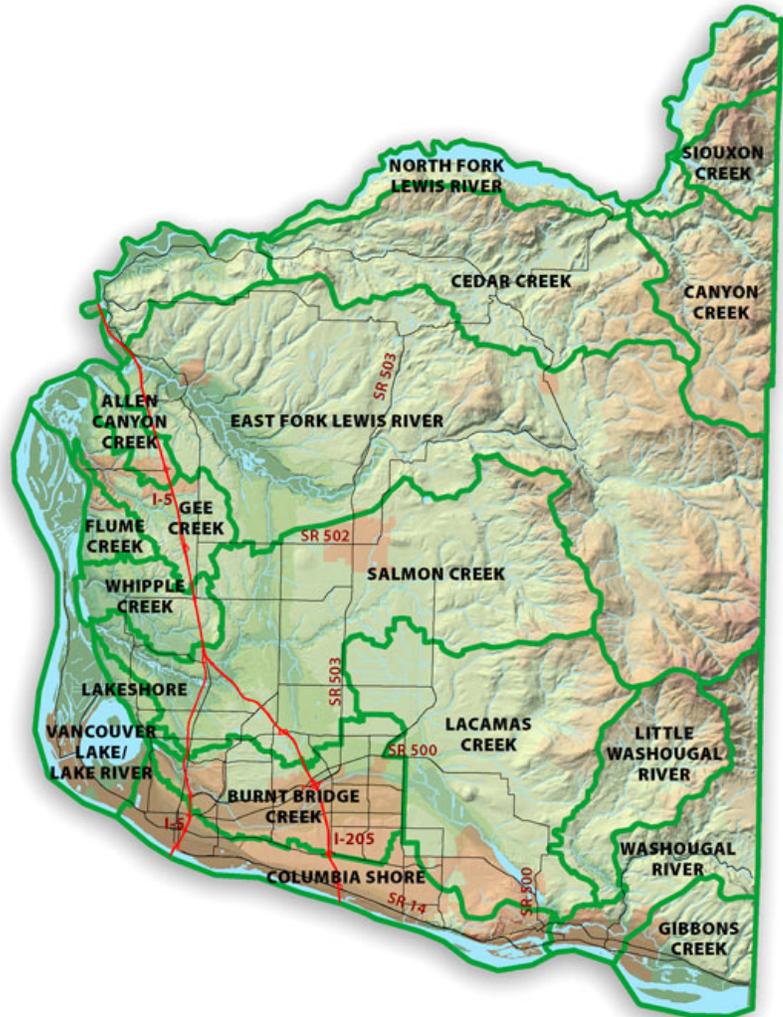
- More than half the District is currently in woodland use, either commercially or otherwise. Of this, over 80 percent is in private ownership.
- [Forest Practice Application Review System](#)

### Plant and Wildlife Resources

- Wildlife is an important renewable resource in the District. Habitat is lost by conversion from natural characteristics to urban and suburban development, damage to wetlands and prairies from siltation, land filling, and human impacts.
- [WA DNR Report on Forest Land Conversion](#)

### Cultural/Historical Resources

- It is our continuing policy to help preserve these sites now and in the future.
- [State Natural Heritage Program](#)
- [Dept. of Archaeology & Historic Preservation](#)
- Tribal designated cultural and sacred sites



## **Trends Impacting Conservation in Clark Conservation District and Strategies to Address Them:**

### **Declining water quality and variable quantity Increase in stormwater concerns with development Increasing number of private wells**

- Develop and support a variety of best management practices (BMP) demonstration sites
- Promote improved stormwater management on urban and rural parcels
- Conservation planning activities – emphasis on action, follow-up, practical approaches, involvement in planning, implementation, monitoring and feedback.
- Urban and rural conservation activity in association with development

### **Rapid development and population growth Fragmentation of agricultural land and other natural lands**

- Encourage conservation-minded land use policies that protect working lands and natural areas
- Provide technical comment and input on development proposals
- Provide assistance to landowners purchasing new property for proactive conservation approaches
- Implement actions in the Clark County Agricultural Strategies Report

### **Increased restrictions on funding**

- Work for a local funding source for the district to address local priorities
- Partner with the agencies, county, cities, Tribal governments, and others to address local priorities
- Inform funders and policy makers on districts and locally led conservation
- Marketing and outreach – utilize WSCC Marketing Toolkit and other tools
- Make board and staff available for natural resource presentations and meetings with partners and community groups

### **Decreasing wetland and riparian habitats as well as habitat corridors**

#### **Lack of activity on fish passage improvements**

- Technical and financial assistance for enhancement and restoration of fish and wildlife habitat

### **Rising demand for locally grown products**

- Promote and assist in the development of programs to connect people to local food producers.
- Implement actions in the Clark County Agricultural Strategies Report

### **Growing need for conservation and land management education**

- Assist landowners with environmental ordinances and permitting for conservation projects
- Natural resource and land use education for landowners, realtors and developers
- Education and support for agricultural landowners for keeping land in agriculture
- Forest land management technical assistance for small forest acreages
- Firewise education for home owners
- Develop and fund programs to assist homeowners to manage stormwater
- Creation and maintenance of parks, demonstration sites, and community gardens
- Create educational opportunities for school-age children about natural resource conservation

## Priority Natural Resource Conservation Needs & Geographic Areas to Address Trends:

### Priority Targeted Areas (in alphabetical order):

- Columbia River Shoreline and Estuary
- Critical habitat areas (wetlands, oak prairies, etc)
- East Fork Lewis River Watershed
- Farmland
- Salmon Creek Watershed
- Washougal River

### Priority Resource Conservation Goals, Strategies, & Actions to Address Trends:

**Water Quality** (stormwater, water leaving property, infiltration issues, contaminants, septic systems, sediments)

**Goal** - By June 2020 show improvement in water quality parameters in major streams and tributaries in Clark County through partnerships, assistance to septic tank owners, engineering services, assisting animal agriculture landowners, implementing voluntary conservation practices, assistance to urban areas for stormwater management and contacting owners of properties on or adjacent to waterways.

#### Strategies:

- Outreach to and assist rural and urban home owners with stormwater and other water quality issues
- Work with partners for grant funding and programs
- Implement water quality activities within the watershed plans
- Participate in community groups and events
- Outreach to and assist animal agriculture producers about mud and manure management
- Outreach to and assist landowners along waterways and wetlands with water quality practices
- Work with the Health Department to provide possible assistance or grant support for septic system owners

#### Water Quality Key Partners or Decision Makers:

- WA Department of Ecology
- Clark County
- Clark Public Utilities
- Clark County Public Health
- Cities within Clark County

#### Actions:

- Develop relationships and work with partners, landowners, and community groups
- Develop and implement water quality projects commensurate with funding at the District as well as leveraged with other sources
- Develop educational tools and events for water quality learning in schools

**Habitat** (loss or changes in critical & unique habitats, connectivity, native wildlife & plants, wetland)

**Goal** - By June 2020 partner on or create programs with funding for upland wildlife habitat restoration and protection, riparian area enhancement including fisheries habitat in multiple mile reaches (highest priority private & county ownership) in priority steelhead spawning, rearing and holding areas.

**Strategies:**

- Work with partners for grant funding and programs
- Work with Clark County and local municipalities on growth management and comprehensive planning, including zoning and allowable uses, designation of critical areas, etc.
- Provide technical and financial assistance for mitigation sites, conservation lands, and parks
- Identify key riparian habitats for improvement and develop projects
- Identify critical upland habitats and develop projects
- Develop and support conservation easements

**Habitat Key Decision Makers:**

- Army Corps of Engineers
- Bonneville Power Administration
- Clark County Columbia Land Trust
- Department of Ecology
- Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership
- Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board
- NOAA Fisheries
- Tribal Governments
- WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife

**Actions:**

- Work with partners and stakeholder groups to develop habitat improvement activities and explore options and opportunities for funding projects
- Develop outreach materials and educational tools and participate in community events

**Land Use and Protecting Working Lands** (open space, open lands, farm land & forest land preservation, soil productivity, intensive land use, development issues, maximize the working lands capacity)

**Goal** - By June 2020 farmland is inventoried and identified and farms are actively engaged in farmland preservation discussions strategies, or activities.

**Strategies:**

- Identify possible opportunities or actions for preservation of working lands that meet the needs of local land owners and partners
- Participate in outreach events to provide soil information and provide landowners support with the soil survey
- Work with Clark County and local municipalities on growth management and comprehensive planning, including zoning and allowable uses, designation of critical areas, etc.
- Assist landowners in complying with local, state, and federal regulations regarding land use
- Promote and assist in the development of programs to connect people to local food producers

**Land Use Key Partners or Decision Makers:**

- Board of County Councilors
- Planning Commission
- Landowners
- Community Groups such as Farm Bureau, Food Systems Council
- Columbia Land Trust

**Actions:**

- Work with partners to gather data and identify possible opportunities or actions for farmland preservation that meets the needs of local land owners and partners
- Develop outreach materials and educational tools and participate in community events
- Research funding sources and program options

**Education-Information****Goals -**

- Develop a comprehensive information and educational program to inform citizens about natural resource capabilities and limitations, existing resource programs, conservation by incentive, and proper use and treatment of resources
- Continue building relationships with school districts and teachers to bring good technical information to students
- Stimulate appreciation of the value of a strong resource base with renewable, natural resources, particularly among those who do not directly manage land. Both students and adults will be reached
- By June 2021 reach 1,000 people annually with conservation education activities.

**Strategies:**

- Fair booth displays – changing and adding technology – interactive
- Workshops tailor topics to targeted groups
- New ways to connect to public – going to businesses and hosting questions and answer activity
- Work with school districts to engage students
- Build partnerships with local tribes
- Firewise education for home owners

**Key Partners or Decision Makers:**

- Clark County
- Cities within Clark County
- Local Tribal governments
- Partners and community groups – emphasis on native plants, soil, water quality, and habitat.
- School districts and teachers
- Neighborhood Associations

**Actions:**

- Booth display – interactive attention getters – fair, home & garden fair, Small Acreage Expo, feed stores, businesses
- Hold workshops for targeted groups
- Create a resource library – clearing house of data, information, tools
- Develop presentations and curriculum that can be used in classrooms

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**District Operation Components Necessary to Address Trends and Priorities****Program Priorities**

- Administration
- Backyard Conservation
- Stormwater Management
- Conservation Planning & Assistance
- Engineering Services
- Preservation of Agricultural and Working Lands
- Clark County Local Food Programs
- Habitat Restoration and Enhancement
- Small Forest Land Management

- Rural Land and Livestock Management
- Firewise education for home owners
- Conservation Information & Education

## Staffing

Summary of the staff positions needed to carry out the plan of the Clark Conservation District:

- District Manager – At the direction of the Board of Supervisors, directs and coordinates the activities of the district;
- Financial Administrator – At the direction of the District Manager, serves as the District Treasurer and accounts for all district financial resources and other administrative duties as required;
- Conservation Resource Technicians – A multi-disciplinary team of conservationists who work directly with landowners and others on projects related to their expertise (i.e. Forester, Urban Stormwater Specialist, Local Food System Coordinator, etc.);
- Professional Engineer – Shared with the other Southwest Washington Conservation Districts, designs and/or reviews and approves designed conservation practices;
- Engineering Technician – In partnership with the shared Southwest Area conservation district engineer, provides services to CCD staff on projects requiring additional design work;
- Community Outreach Coordinator – At the direction of the board and manager, create and implement information-education strategies to connect the community to their conservation district;

## Annual Budget Needs to Implement 5-Year Plan

- Historically, the Clark Conservation District has relied on unstable funding sources such as grants which severely restrict their capacity to serve the residents of Clark County based upon competitive grant funding alone. In order to meet the resource needs identified in this plan, the Clark Conservation District will need significant, stable funding. Conservation districts are authorized, using the mechanism described in [RCW 89.08.405](#), to propose a system of rates and charges to provide that stable funding source.
- A stable funding source will also provide a cash match for grants and significantly increase the probability of receiving grant funding. In most cases the required match is only 25 % thereby leveraging the grant funds at a 4:1 ratio. It is the intent of Clark Conservation District to greatly leverage local funds with state and federal sources to meet the needs of landowners and our partners.
- District Operations (Estimated)
 

○ Management and Administration:	\$195,000
○ Conservation Technical Assistance:	\$375,000
○ Conservation Project Implementation:	\$200,000
○ Information and Education:	\$135,000
○ Office & Overhead	<u>\$180,000</u>
Total:	\$1,085,000