



Lewis and Clark Conservation District

790 Colleen Street, Helena MT 59601 406.389.3895 <https://lewisandclarkcd.org>

Strategic Plan 2022-2026

Mission Statement

The mission of the Lewis & Clark Conservation District (LCCD) is to provide leadership in the conservation and wise use of natural resources to the people of Lewis and Clark County Montana.

Future Vision

LCCD Lewis and Clark Conservation District encourages the people of Lewis and Clark County to preserve/protect and promote the quality of their land and water for present and future generations by providing quality resources.

Values

- Locally Led Conservation-Conservation efforts in Lewis and Clark County are locally led and focus on issues sourced by landowners.
- Leadership-LCCD Lewis and Clark Conservation District is a leader in natural resource conservation in the county.
- Education-LCCD Lewis and Clark Conservation District provides quality education at a variety of levels, from in-person to web-based.
- Service-LCCD Lewis and Clark Conservation District provides quality service to the people of Lewis and Clark County
- Collaboration-LCCD Lewis and Clark Conservation District collaborates with partners to leverage resources for projects, programs, and programs as well as education efforts in Lewis and Clark County
- Accountability-LCCD Lewis and Clark Conservation District has the trust of the people of Lewis and Clark County in handling tax-payer funds allocated to their management.

Goal #1-Education & Outreach, ~~Information and Outreach~~ to Landowners

Provide pertinent information to landowners in Lewis and Clark County, including agriculture, small acreages and urban settings, to assist them in property management goals using best management. Increase and diversify our marketing and communication strategies to ensure that our target audiences are aware of and know how to access our resources.

EDUCATION

Goal: LCCD will continue to develop and expand educational resources for CD target audiences

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Develop **and maintain** robust online resources for distance learning, including webinar content
- Maintain an active presence in the school districts in the county
- Explore potential urban conservation education topics and programs to include in CD resources
- Ensure that Legislators in the Conservation District are kept up to date on resource concerns and activities through quarterly communication and local legislator 'meet and greet' events
- Continue collaboration and support of partner education organizations, such as Helena Community of Resource Educators (C.O.R.E), ~~and~~ the Lake Helena Watershed Group, **and the Sun River Watershed Group**
- Sponsor County Envirothon team(s) and support event through volunteer efforts as available
- Establish and participate in annual education events
- Provide natural resource camp sponsorships for young people

OUTREACH/COMMUNICATIONS

Goal: Improve public awareness and perception of value of CD and our programs

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Develop and enhance CD brand and brand recognition through audience specific messaging
- Add to catalog of 'success stories' for outreach purposes
- Continue activities begun in 2023 ~~into 2024~~ **into 2025** to highlight history and relevance of LCCD
- Actively engage in outreach activities in historically underserved areas of the county
- Continue development of website to improve resource access and navigability

- Maintain and improve social networking communication tools, with the creation and posting of relevant, engaging content
- Maintain and improve CD's annual newsletter *The Explorer*

Goal #2-Projects and Programs

The programs and projects that we participate in will be done collaboratively with landowners and partners. We will work with existing and new partners to promote the wise use and conservation of natural resources in Lewis & Clark County.

PROJECTS

Goal: Implement and support locally-driven projects across Lewis & Clark County

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Identify and understand community-emphasized resource concerns through public outreach, partner collaboration, and outlets like the Resource Needs survey (website) and Local Work Group meetings
- Host Local Work Group meetings with NRCS to define priorities for the district's and NRCS long range plans
- By 2026 develop pilot project prioritization matrix to maximize limited CD resources and overall project impact
- Explore funding sources for high impact projects that fall outside CD's budget
- Participate, as able appropriate (volunteer, funding, and/or outreach) in partner projects

PROGRAMS

Goal: Establish, maintain, and improve conservation programs that support locally-led conservation and education efforts.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- ~~Reassess cost share program and its implementation, taking into account budget and staff resources~~
- Oversee facilitation and maintenance of area Rolling Rivers trailer, including overseeing partner scheduling and educator training

- Continue Pollinator Initiative, with ~~particular~~ focus on collaboration with **partner** entities such as ~~Helena Community Gardens~~ and ~~more~~ rural areas of the county

Goal #3- Stream Permitting & Riparian Health

One of the key natural resource concerns in Lewis and Clark County, riparian health, is a focus as the Conservation District implements the state mandated Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act of 1975. Stream permitting will be viewed as a “value added” activity, allowing us to make contact with landowners we may not otherwise have communication with.

STREAM PROJECTS

Goal: LCCD will implement and fund effective stream restoration projects that provide value, both environmentally and educationally, to the District.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- ~~Identify~~ **Work with** landowners interested in stream improvement projects and provide technical and/or funding assistance
- ~~Develop pilot project prioritization screening tool to maximize limited CD resources and overall project impact~~ **Develop a process for evaluation and prioritization of requests for stream project assistance.**
- Collaborate with partners on stream improvement projects to best utilize limited CD resources
- Monitor long term effectiveness of projects ~~by developing project verification process~~ by follow up photography and communication with landowners

FLOODPLAIN PERMITTING ISSUES

Goal: LCCD will continue efforts to streamline the floodplain permitting process for small-scale stream restoration work with the ultimate goal of facilitating good projects in the state that currently would be limited by the current floodplain permitting program.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Continue work with the Montana Joint Stream Restoration Committee
- **Karl Christians and Jeff Ryan to work with Lieutenant Governor regarding Red Tape Initiative**

- Work with representatives of MACD, NACD, FEMA and other agencies to streamline permitting process/requirements for small-scale restoration **projects** work on water resources

NATURAL STREAMBED AND LAND PRESERVATION ACT (“310 LAW”)

Goal: LCCD will implement the 310 permitting process as mandated by state law, advocating for community-minded, environmentally-sound projects in the District.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Manage permit applications, complaints and emergencies and maintain a database of past and present applications
- Utilize site inspections as “value-added” opportunities for education on riparian health principles and general CD mission
- Work with agency partners to develop creative, cost-effective solutions to common stream resource issues
- **Archival project of permit files from 2014 forward; index earlier hard copy files; move to electronic-only files moving forward in 2025**

Goal #4-Capacity Building

LCCD will focus on staff and board development in an effort to build personnel capacity, create resources for internal use, and facilitate organizational continuity.

ORGANIZATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

Goal: Establish organizational independence through development of a Conservation Center

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- **Work with Vulk family on negotiating agreement-Jan-June-2024**
- **Plan out phased development of center-Jan-Dec 2024**
- **Assess potential and need for Conservation Center**
- **Create committee for development of plan to identify and secure site**
- **Develop funding plan for acquisition of property and new building**

- Apply for grants or seek other funding for different project phases

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Promote an involved and informed Board of Supervisors

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Assess Supervisor training needs and provide training
- **Supervisor Skills Assessment**
- ~~Identify individual board member interests and priorities for the CD to encourage participation~~
- Adhere to organizational priorities through the review of strategic and operational plans at board meetings on a quarterly basis and an annual planning meeting in December
- Identify potential associate Supervisors to build CD capacity and to facilitate supervisor succession

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Goal: LCCD will maintain a positive and supportive work environment through the creation of **with updated job descriptions, **policies and procedures** infrastructure, and **sufficient** qualified, trained, and competitively compensated staff to administer programs and manage the organization.**

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Develop annual work plan for office—and for individual staff members as requested—and provide a robust evaluation process with board member feedback
- Provide training and professional development opportunities
- Regular contact with Chair and other board members to review pertinent information
- Develop strategies to secure income to provide competitive salary and benefits and retain outstanding staff
- Provide support to the Montana Conservation District Employee Organization

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LONGEVITY

Goal: LCCD will establish systems and operations to carry out its mission effectively, including smooth handling of staff and board transitions, and organizational development.

Key strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- Complete and ~~maintain~~ ~~update~~ Policies and Procedures Manuals that will improve staff and board transition over time
- **Maintain updated job descriptions, governance calendar and other documents**
- Complete plan for dealing with emergency situations (flood, fire etc.) that will allow the District to prioritize activities and functions during emergencies-**Draft in 2025**
- Identify and obtain adequate funding for District objectives through grant programs, sponsorships, and potential incorporation of municipalities currently outside of CD jurisdiction
- Strengthen existing partnerships and actively seek out new partners with shared organizational goals
- Ensure that diversity, equity and inclusion are part of development of the board and staff

Member Signature

Member Signature

Member Signature

Member Signature

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